Setting up Class Websites

Today we'll be setting up our simple class websites locally and on Neocities.

Essentially, your class website is where all your class projects and exercises will live.

The beauty of the web is being able to link to anything, so you can link to your projects, wherever they live on the world wide web...

Here is an example of what you'll be creating:
https://2025-fall-washu-laurel.neocities.org

(Mine is very basic, but you can feel free to style yours and make it your own as the semester goes on — as long as it contains the links to the projects you do in this class.)

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Vocab:

- local — on your computer, the URL starts with file:///

- online — on the web, the URL starts with https://

  - We're using "Neocities" to host our website, but there are other hosts too, like GitHub Pages. You can host yours anywhere, but we're using Neocities for ease and general friendliness of use. It's still a little clunky but will get the job done, and it's free.

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Instructions:

1. **Create a folder on your computer where your "local class site" will live.**

   This is a folder you put somewhere safe on your computer where your class website will live. I would title my folder something like "visual-principles-class-homepage" or something similar.

2. **Create a local profile.html**

   If you were with us for the first class, go to the site you made on Neocities (most likely 2025-fall-washu-yourname.neocities.org) and visit the "profile card" you made. View the source code. Copy the code. Create a new file in your text editor. Paste the code. Save

this file as profile.html *inside of* the class folder you just created.

3. **Create a local index.html**

   Go to the example I created: https://2025-fall-washu-laurel.neocities.org and view the source code. Copy it. Create a new file in your text editor. Paste the code. Save this file as index.html *inside of* the class folder you just created.

4. **Test that you can click on profile.html from index.html locally**.

   Open up your "index.html" (that is inside of your class homepage folder) in your web browser, or fire up a live preview server in VSCode to do this. Ensure that when you click on "My Profile Card" link, it goes to your profile.html.

   Note that the other links won't work because we haven't updated them yet. But maybe you can guess how they will work…

(Pause to make sure everyone got here)

5. **Upload this index.html and profile.html to Neocities.**

   You should be able to drag and drop in the "Dashboard" area.

   Ensure that your online version is the same as your local version.

   If something isn't showing up as expected, try "refreshing" the page in your web browser.

(Pause to make sure everyone got here)

6. **Put the Are.na Channel for your visual texts into your local index.html.**

   Copy the URL to your Are.na Channel for your visual texts. For example, mine is: https://www.are.na/visual-principles-for-screen-fall-2025-washu/laurel-s-visual-texts-xmo kl5sql3u

   In my index.html on my computer, I will put this URL in the link near where it says "Project 1. Visual Texts."

   Then, open your local index.html in a web browser. Test that when you click "Project 1.

Visual Texts" it goes to your Are.na Channel for your visual texts.

7. **Create a folder called "25-variations" locally with an index.html inside of it.**

I'd recommend dragging your whole class folder to your code editor. That way, the folder structure appears on the left.

Create a new folder inside your class website on your computer. Name it "25-variations." Inside, create a new file called index.html.

Note that you will now have two index.html's. One will be at the "root" (the home), and the other will be inside the "25-variations" folder. The index means the "home" for that directory.

Inside of this index.html, put a normal HTML skeleton. Then place your variation HTML files inside of this folder. Then use the <a> tag to link to each of the individually on the index.html.

Test that it works by opening up your "index.html" (the one that's inside of the "25-variations") folder inside your web browser, and clicking on the links.

8. **Upload your revised index.html and "25-variations" folder to Neocities**.

Once everything is working locally (on your computer), drag and drop your revised index.html and the entire 25-variations folder to the Neocities dashboard.

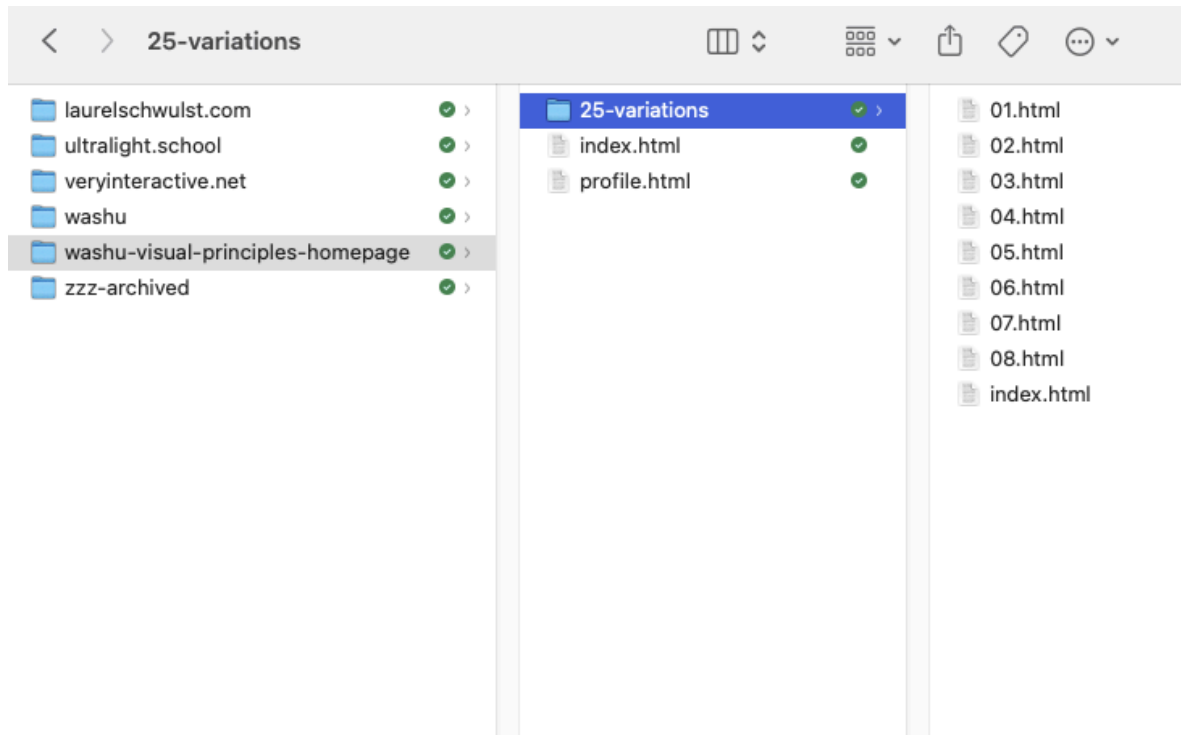Ensure that your class website (online version) is working.
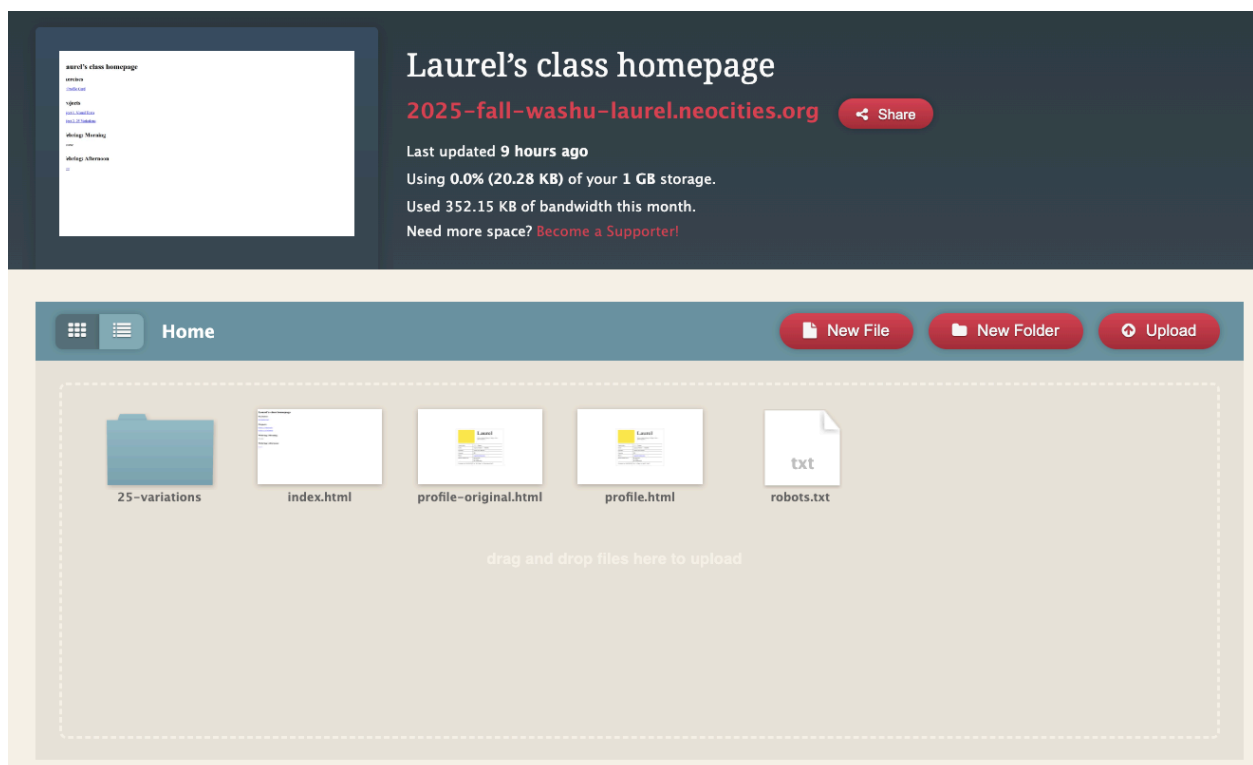
The URL should be something like:

https://2025-fall-washu-yourname.neocities.org

9. **When you're done with your class website, add it to our Are.na Channel:**

https://www.are.na/visual-principles-for-screen-fall-2025-washu/class-homepages

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Last thing: Structure of Class Homepage

The structure of your class website should look something like the above. (Although you can organize it however you want, as long as your index.html is at the root directory and links to all the other things. On Neocities, this should look like:

That is, don't upload your whole class site folder to Neocities, just upload the contents of the folder. Does that make sense?