






# Web Publishing Pitfalls

## Common Web Publishing Problems and Solutions

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 =Shortcut  =Advice  =Caution

### Introduction

Student Computing Services (SCS) has found that the vast majority of problems students experience in publishing websites from FrontPage to the student Web server *Tiger* come from the same origins. Except where noted below, these potential problems apply also to Faculty and Staff publishing to the Web server *Pages*. The purpose of this document is to describe these common pitfalls and offer advice on how to avoid them.

### The Misleading Menu

FrontPage allows users to open and edit a single Web page (HTML file) independent of the other pages and files with which it is associated. However, this approach disregards many of the application's powerful features, including **File > Publish Site**. FrontPage is designed for developing, editing, and managing an assembled collection of **all** files (HTML, image, and other) that comprise a website.

Figure 1





When opening a website in FrontPage that is hosted on a server, it is important to select **File > Open Site** rather than **File > Open** from the menu bar (Figure 1). Likewise, when creating a new website, it is important to select **File > New > New Web Site** rather than **File > New > New Page**. The difference is that when using **File > New > New Web Site** you are adding just a new page to the website currently being worked on. Selecting **File > New > New Page** starts a whole new website that will have its own pages.

### Trouble with Tildes

*This section is not applicable to faculty/staff publishing to Pages.*

You may open your home page in a **Web browser** either using your site's actual address (URL) or a more *user friendly* alias. The chief distinction is that the actual address includes a tilde character (~) and the alias does not. However, when using FrontPage to open your site on Tiger or to publish your site to Tiger, **you must use the actual address**.

-  Actual Address: <http://tiger.towson.edu/~username>
-  Alias Address: <http://tiger.towson.edu/users/username>

This issue is further complicated by Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE) and the TU Student Web Directory. If FrontPage is installed on a given computer, IE adds an **Edit with FrontPage** tool to its own toolbar. This allows you to open your website for editing in FrontPage directly from Internet Explorer. The problem is that your login will fail if you have opened your site by entering your alias address or clicking on your name in the TU Student Web Directory at <http://tiger.towson.edu/studenthomepages/homepages.shtml>.

You can avoid this problem altogether by not using the alias (tilde-less) version of your address. I think Blue Oyster Cult said it best: "Seasons don't fear the *tilde*; nor do the wind, the sun and the rain. We can be like they are."

### The Fault of Corruption

Student accounts on *Tiger* include a set of special files called FrontPage extensions. Hidden from view under most circumstances, these files interact with FrontPage to allow users with basic skills to incorporate



advanced components and features into their Web pages and sites. For example: Extensions support hit counters, scheduled content, search tools, discussion boards, web forms, and more.

FrontPage extensions also support opening and publishing websites. Consequently, Web publishing efforts may fail if one or more of these files becomes damaged. There are a number of ways in which this can happen. In some case, users inadvertently delete or rename the files while accessing their accounts outside of FrontPage. But, whatever the cause, the fix is clear. Students can contact Student Computing Services (410-704-5151, [scs@towson.edu](mailto:scs@towson.edu), CK-35) to request that their extensions be repaired. Faculty and Staff may contact the Help Center (410-704-5151, [helpcenter@towson.edu](mailto:helpcenter@towson.edu), CK-5).

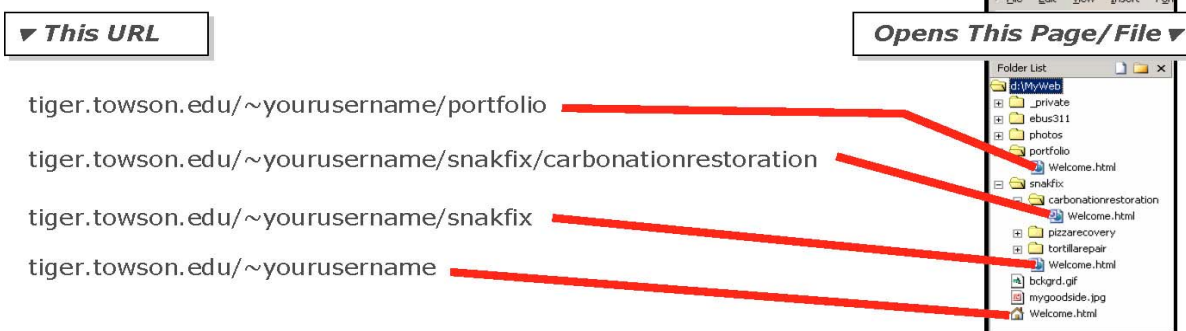
## Corruption of Default

Every server on the Web uses a default file naming convention. Thus, if you do not include a specific filename at the end of the **url** you type in your browser's "Address" box, the server sends the appropriate default file (usually the home page).

For example, if you enter **www.towson.edu/scs** into your Web browser, you haven't actually specified a Web page (HTML file) you wish to view; just the domain (Towson.edu) and account (scs) within which it resides. Nevertheless, your browser displays the SCS home page. The reason is that the SCS home page is named **Welcome.html**—the *default* home page filename at Towson University. Another way of looking at it is that both **www.towson.edu/scs** and **www.towson.edu/scs/Welcome.html** open the SCS home page.

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 OTS creates all Tiger accounts with a temporary default page named Welcome.html. In developing your website, if you choose to name your new default page something other than Welcome.html, your new page will not overwrite (replace) the temporary page. Consequently, a visitor opening your website will see the less impressive temporary page instead of your aesthetically superior custom start page.
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 The simplest way to avoid this problem is to use the filename **Welcome.html** for the default page in each of your website's folders. **Figure 2** illustrates how a website organized in this way might appear in the Folder List area of FrontPage. Be sure to capitalize the "W" and include all four characters (html) in the file extension.

**Figure 2: Correspondence Between File Structure and URL**



## Commit Yourself

FrontPage offers an excellent balance of power and ease-of-use for the average Towson student, faculty member, or staff member. However, there are alternate products and methods of Web publishing in use on campus as well. Whatever your conventions, it is important to be consistent! If you choose an application, stick with it. You are far less likely to experience problems than if you follow a mixed method approach.