BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL WEBPAGE

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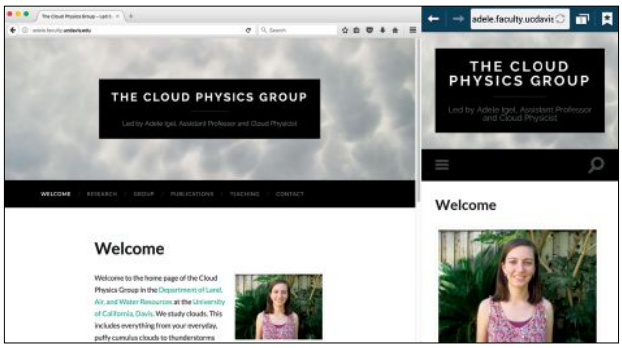
During the 16th Annual AMS Student Conference, this past January in Seattle, Adele Igel, assistant professor at the University of California, Davis, spoke to conference attendees about web development and how to put together a personal webpage as part of the "Tools of the Trade" session.

According to Igel, a webpage is a great way to make it easy for people to find out more about you. It also allows you to control the layout and content, unlike platforms with fixed formats such as LinkedIn.

To develop a webpage, you first need somewhere—a domain or subdomain—where you'll be able to post your content, as well as a server to host your content. A server is a computer that stores your files and provides them to people viewing your webpage. A domain is something like "yourname.com," and a subdomain is something like "yourname.yourschool.edu." As the subdomain example implies, often it is possible to obtain a website through your school, which will provide both a subdomain and a server. Igel, who is not a professional web developer, had the following experience: "When I was an undergrad, my university provided me with a webpage, and all I had to do was access it and start putting HTML code on it." If you are already in graduate school, Igel suggested asking your advisor to host your page on their page. There are other websites, such as weebly.com or wix.com, that will allow you to create a webpage for free as a subdomain and will provide a server. If you would like to have your own domain name, expect to pay an annual fee.

Once a server and domain or subdomain are in place, what should you put on your webpage? You can post a short biography about yourself and your research or career interests. To supplement your biography, consider posting a resume or CV. Finally, examples of your work, such as class projects, research papers, or even PDFs of research posters, can help to showcase your skills.

Now that you've decided what to put on your webpage, what will it look like? According to Igel, "Your webpage doesn't have to be fancy or showy…but it can be, and it's not really that hard to have a fancy webpage." It is possible to design a "fancy" webpage without knowing any HTML or coding at all. Although as an undergraduate she coded up her webpage using HTML, now, as a faculty member, Igel designed her website using WordPress. She recommended, "Don't start from scratch! There are lots and lots of HTML templates out there on the web." Igel added that "in this new age of mobile devices, tablets, and full-sized desktop screens all able to access the web, new kinds of templates have come into existence that are called 'fully responsive templates.' These will automatically make sure that your webpage looks good regardless of what device you're looking at the page on." The figure below shows the homepage of Igel's website, which uses a fully responsive template, with the two panels showing the desktop version and mobile version of the webpage, respectively.



Adele Igel's professional webpage uses a fully responsive template, which changes format according to the size of the screen being used to view it.

Igel recommended that even if you plan to use a template, you should know a few basics about how a webpage works. There are two main types of files: the HTML file and the CSS file. The HTML file contains the content of the webpage, and the CSS file contains the formatting: things like fonts, colors, and picture sizes.

"There are lots of websites and books available if you want to teach yourself about these two languages," Igel advised, and she recommended the website w3schools.com.

As part of the "Tools of the Trade" session, each speaker put together some supplemental materials to help attendees get started with the "tool" (web

development, in this case) that was being described. Once you are ready to start building your webpage, we recommend taking a look at Igel's recorded presentation, as well as the supplemental material that she put together, which includes a sample webpage that you can edit and make your own. Igel's talk and the rest of the "Tools of the Trade" presentations can be accessed at https://goo.gl/ITQ6hB, and the supplemental materials can be found at https://goo.gl/EqYo9y.

MEET THE AMS

MEGAN VALCOUR
Peer Review Support Assistant

Megan Valcour began working at AMS when she moved to Boston last year to attend graduate school at Emerson College.

"I'm earning my MFA in creative writing and was looking for a work position that would complement my school work," explains Megan. "As you would expect, the world of publishing and the world of writing go hand in hand, so a position where I worked with not one but several highly regarded journals seemed perfect. Plus, I was also drawn in by the idea of specifically working to support the weather, water, and climate sciences."

As a peer review support assistant (PRSA), Megan is part of the Peer Review Support Team, who work together to support editors, and in some cases chief editors, throughout the peer review process—the time between when a manuscript passes technical check in production to when it's accepted and moves into production on its way to publication. While each load differs from PRSA to PRSA, Megan personally supports 14 different editors throughout seven different journals.

"Some have been serving as editors since before I arrived at AMS, while others have started their term since I've arrived, and we've learned the ropes together," Megan says. "Working with the editors themselves is often the best part of my day—they're such wonderfully nice, brilliant people who have made the choice to volunteer their already limited time to AMS. And being an editor is quite a lot of work. For instance, one of my busiest editors is currently handling 24 different manuscripts!"

The role of a PRSA is to offset some of that work by managing the more administrative aspects —following up with reviewers and authors, troubleshooting the online submission system, providing status updates, sending invitations to reviewers, nudging editors when a manuscript has fallen behind, and so on. With those sorts of things firmly on a PRSA's plate, editors have more time to focus on the scientific merit of a given manuscript. They leverage their knowledge of their field and its community to find reviewers, evaluate the manuscript, and work with authors to make their manuscript as strong as possible.

"This is actually something I don't think a lot of people understand," Megan notes. "Editors at AMS aren't just accepting or rejecting manuscripts; they're working with authors during the revision process, and because of the collaboration between the editor, the authors, and the anonymous reviewers, a stronger paper with better science is published."

In addition to being a PRSA, Megan is also a senior web development specialist for the Publications Department. The Publications Web Team is in charge of updating the Publications pages of the AMS website as well as working with outside vendors to update the content on their platforms. Some of the team's recent projects include the new Publications home page, revamping the journal author resources (a personal project of Megan's), the new "Get Involved in Publications" area that aims to solicit volunteers to review or edit for the journals (this came from the Publications Commission), and quite a bit more. They also help maintain the journal masthead information as it displays online, which they do in coordination with the technical editors.