

MICHELE SANVICO

MY WEBSITE AT LAST!



THE ESSENTIAL GUIDEBOOK TO BASIC WEB DESIGN UNLEASHING YOUR CREATIVITY AT NO COSTS

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FOREWORD

«I wish to set up my own website, my own way. I'd like to invest no money at all. **Where can I start from? And how can I do that?»**

This ebook provides an answer to all these questions.

We are not going to use neither Office Word nor WordPress, not even specialised sites such as "1and1": **our website shall be precisely as we imagine it**, without using "templates" and with no locked graphical solutions. Text blocks and images shall be placed just where we wish them to be, not courtesy of the tool we make use of. Because this is our site and we want to create it the way we like it.

In addition, **we wish to introduce changes in our website, when and where we want to**. We want to be given a full "hand-on" capability, in total freedom and without asking for permission to anybody.

We want our site to be **properly rendered on a PC, on a smartphone**, and on any other handheld device like a tablet. And we want to be in full control as to what to render, and how.

Finally, we want to spend no money. In fact our site is just the very beginning of a personal journey across the web: if revealing itself a success, then - and then only - we will invest our money in it.

«Yet I definitely am not a computer nerd! How can I achieve all that?»

Sure you can! We will achieve that together with a step-by-step approach, keeping the tech jargon to a minimum and sticking to the essential, **with extensive use of "cut and paste" operations from this guidebook**.

So, **no programming classes**: by cutting and pasting code chunks, **everybody will be able to build up their own site, right now** and with no need for further insight, by simply learning how to place text blocks and pictures where it is required within the web page.

From a technical standpoint, we will design a very simple website, including no HTML tricks, advanced CSS formatting and complex Javascript coding. And yet, our site will be **ideal for showcasing and spreading our views or selling a product or service**, without turning to expensive business services for web development and

management.

All the examples and methods presented in this ebook are easily replicated at will: **you will be able to customise all the available code chunks to create your own site**, with your graphical settings, your preferred images and your edited text: you will just have to change the instance code provided in the ebook, pasting it where you wish, **and you will achieve all your goals!**

So let's start **creating together our own website!**

1. WHERE TO PLACE YOUR SITE IN THE WEB



To begin with, we must select a place in the web where to store our site.

A simple and easy solution is **Freewha (Free Web Hosting Area)**, a web space that provides free hosting services featuring no compulsory advertisement. In the future, we may decide to easily move our site to more advanced web hosting services, such as "HostGator" or "1and1".

To register our new website, for instance with the name www.mywebsite-atlast.orgfree.com, perform the following steps:

- in your browser, go to the site www.freewha.com
- in the "Free subdomain hosting" box, insert your desired name, for instance 'mywebsite-atlast' (with no quotes), then select the subdomain name 'orgfree.com' and press the "PROCEED" button
- in the next screenshot, insert a valid email address and choose a password
- tick the service agreement terms checkbox and press the "CREATE" button



A welcome page will be displayed with all the information you need for use in the next chapter (important notice: copy the info shown under the "Your Personal FTP Information" headline, we are going to use it very soon!)

My website at last!



Now the web space for the new site www.mywebsite-atlast.orgfree.com is already up and running. Try and insert the name of your new site in your browser: a standard page will appear with the message "New Account, upload your files!"

We are not going to use the tools provided by Freewha in their panel. We will work with a set of tools of our choice. So for the time being let's leave the Freewha site and proceed right to the next step: how to communicate with our new site.

2. HOW TO SEND FILES TO YOUR WEBSITE



The second step is to download from the web an application establishing a link to our new site for file upload.

A most popular free communications software is [CoreFTP](http://www.coreftp.com), an application that can easily transfer files from our local PC to our website, and the other way round as well.

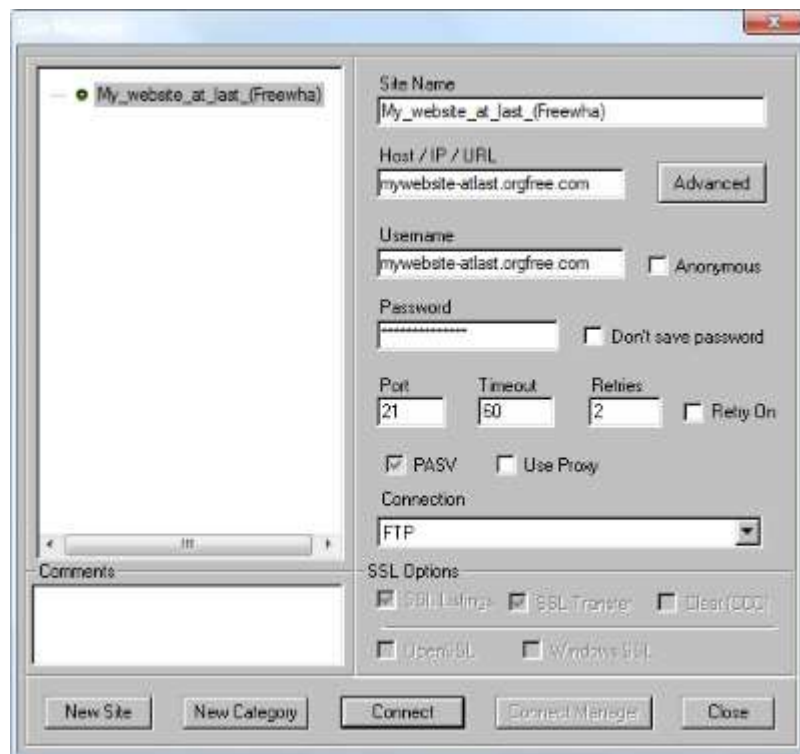
To download CoreFTP, we must carry out the following steps:

- connect to www.coreftp.com
- click "Download Core FTP now"
- under the heading "Core FTP - free version", click "www.coreftp.com" (select 64bit or 32bit according to the operating system already installed on your PC)
- when the download of the .exe application is over, click it to start the installation
- click "I agree" in the License Agreement screenshot
- click "Next" in the subsequent screenshot and then "Install"

Now CoreFTP is ready for use. You will only need to configure the application to establish a communication link to our new website.

Let's start CoreFTP by clicking the icon now positioned on our desktop. Open the "File" menu (in the top-left corner), then select "Connect" and finally press the "New Site" button. The mask shown in the following figure will pop up: we must fill it in with the access data that we got from Freewha in their welcome screen ("Your Personal FTP Information" section).

My website at last!



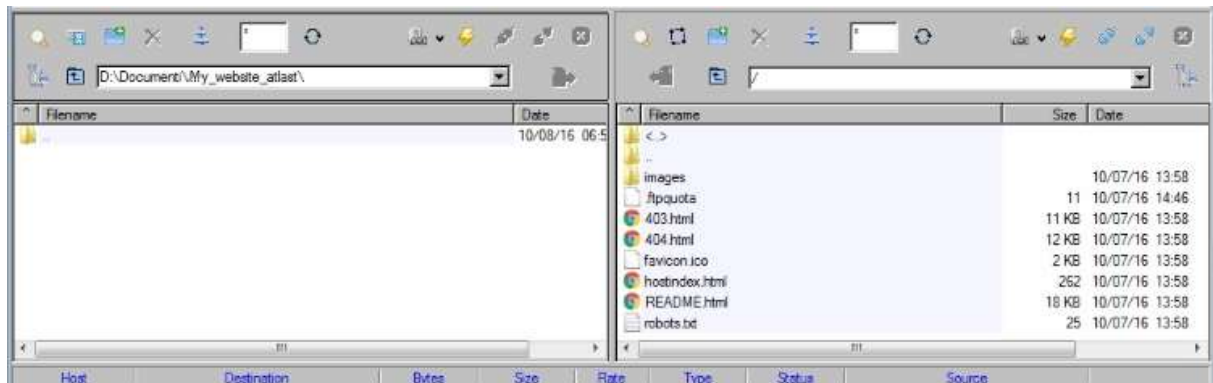
In this example we have entered the info pertaining to our test website www.mywebsite-atlast.orgfree.com. For your personal site, you will have to enter the specific name you have defined in Freewha.

Now press the "Connect" button located at the bottom: CoreFTP will connect your PC to your new website. You can now talk to your site and upload to it all the files you want!

In your local PC, create a new folder (you may use the same name as that of your new website): in it you will store all the files to be uploaded to your website.

A last step: in CoreFTP, find the small icon shaped as a driver and click it, then select the driver and folder on your PC that you have just created for storage. CoreFTP will present you a screenshot similar to the following one:

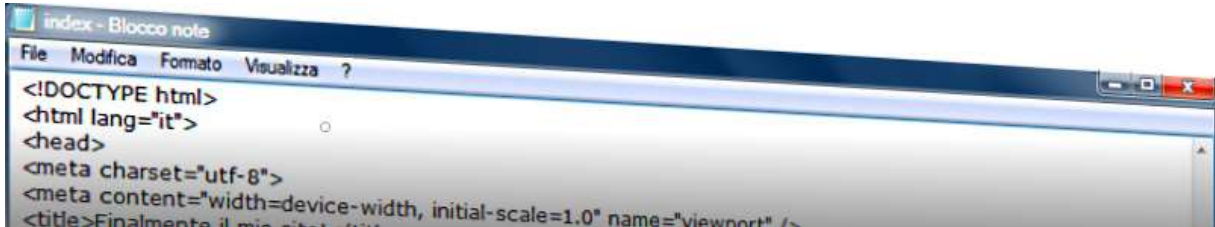
My website at last!



Now you are ready to perform your first file transfer from your PC (on the screen's left side) to your new website (on the screen's right side, where you can see a number of files already present, provided by Freewha).

So let's try and upload our first file to our new site.

3. HOW TO UPLOAD INDEX.HTML TO YOUR SITE



We are now going to replace Freewha's "hostindex.html" file with our new file, named "index.html".

All the files mentioned in this ebook (with the exception of images) will be edited with a very simple application: old good Windows Notepad, the free text editor available on all PCs.

To open Notepad, click the Windows start menu button (bottom-left corner on your PC's screen) and write "Notepad" in the "Search programs and files" box. When the search is over, click the "Notepad" icon and open the editor.

We will use Notepad to write our website's first homepage, creating an "index.html" file. Copy the code presented in the box below and paste it to the Notepad editor:

Code to be copied to index.html

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
<title>My website at last!</title>
<meta charset="utf-8">
<meta name="description" content="The site made with my
hands, the way I want and at absolutely no costs">
<meta name="author" content="my name">
<meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width,
initial-scale=1.0" />
</head>
<body>
<span>Ladies and gentlemen... MY NEW WEBSITE!</span>
</body>
```

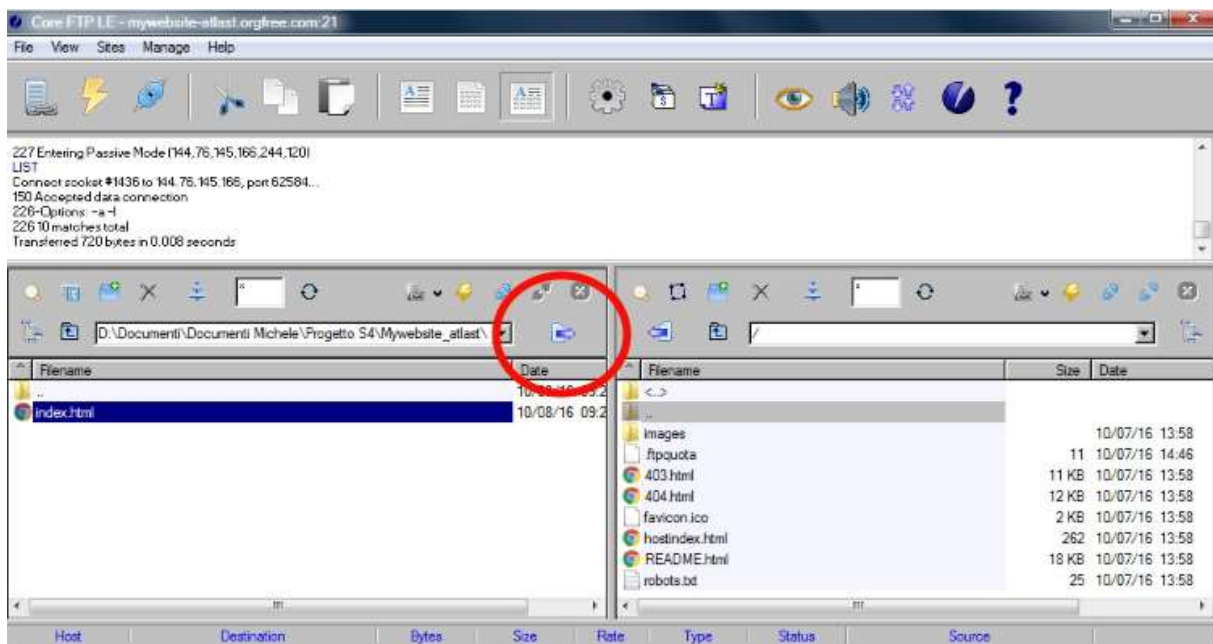
Now save your Notepad file: open the "File" drop-down menu, select "Save as" and

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save the text file in a new folder to be created in your local PC for storage purposes. You have to name the file exactly "index.html" (without quotes and capital letters), otherwise your site will not work!

Time has come to send your "index.html" file to your new website. Open CoreFTP (connect again to your site if your connection was shut down meanwhile; to re-connect you may use the "Reconnect" button shown on the top-left corner of the CoreFTP's screen) and select your storage folder in your local PC (left screen) using the driver icon.

In the left-side screen, click the file "index.html" once so as to select it. Then, find the icon with a small arrow ("upload") highlighted in the figure below with a red circle and...



... click it: your "index.html" file will be thrust across the web towards your site and will instantly reach it, popping up in CoreFTP's right-side screen.

You have just created your first homepage ever. In fact, if you now connect to your site (in our example www.mywebsite-atlast.orgfree.com) with your browser, you will see the following text on your homepage: "Ladies and gentlemen... MY NEW WEBSITE!"

Warning... You must be aware that you have already established your full presence in the World Wide Web: your new homepage is now visible from all over the world!

Your "index.html" file is now ready to be stuffed with all the content you wish. Close the file for the time being. To re-open it, you must right-click it with the mouse, select "Open with..." and pick "Notepad" as opening application (please note that if you just double-click it, your "index.html" will open in your predefined browser, with no chance to edit it).

Before proceeding further, we just get rid of all Freewha files in the website that are of no use for us: cancel "403.html", "favicon.ico", "hostindex.html", "README.html" and "robots.txt" and the subfolder "images" by simply selecting them all in the CoreFTP right-side screen and then pressing the "Canc" key. When you are finished, the view will be much cleaner, with only your new "index.html" file and a system file (".ftpquota") to be seen.

The next step is to edit a second file, one of primary importance for your site (the first one was "index.html"): this is the file containing all graphic info, "stylesheet.css", the fundamental tool to gain full control of your site's design (selection of colors, text block formatting, image location, etc.)

**Chapter 4 and Chapter 5
are not included
in this preview**

6. MAKE YOUR PICTURES UNIQUE AND UNRIVALLED



We need an application to edit, color and merge at will the pictures we plan to use in our site, in a view to making our web pages attractive and challenging.

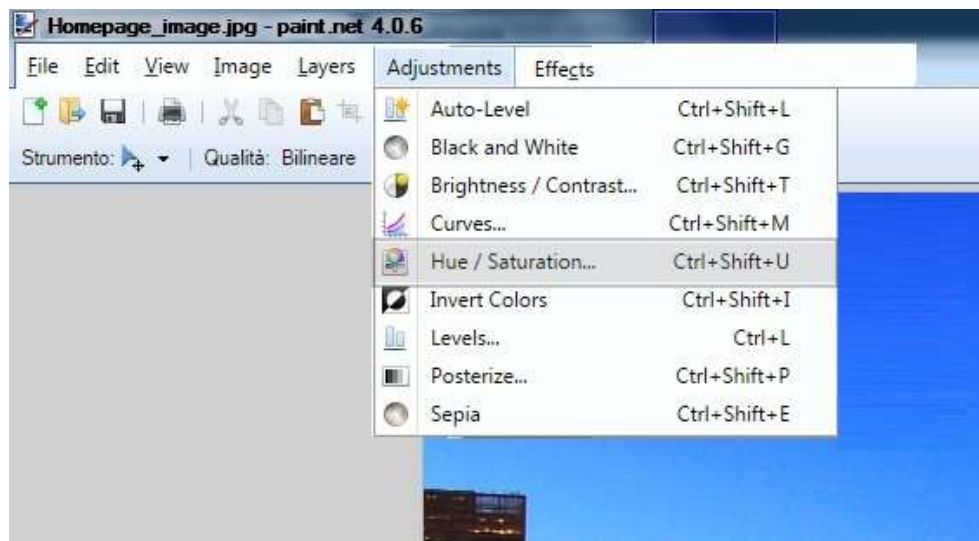
Sure enough, we have no intention to purchase any expensive professional tools. Instead, we are going to use a powerful freeware: Paint.NET. As you will find out yourself, by using this program we will be able to do everything we want with pictures to create a truly original website.

Connect to the [Paint.NET](#) site. To download the latest version of the program click on the top-right side of the screen under the heading "Get it now (free download)". In the next screenshot, click the icon "Download Now - dotPDN", download the installer and launch the compressed .zip file to install Paint.NET on your local PC.

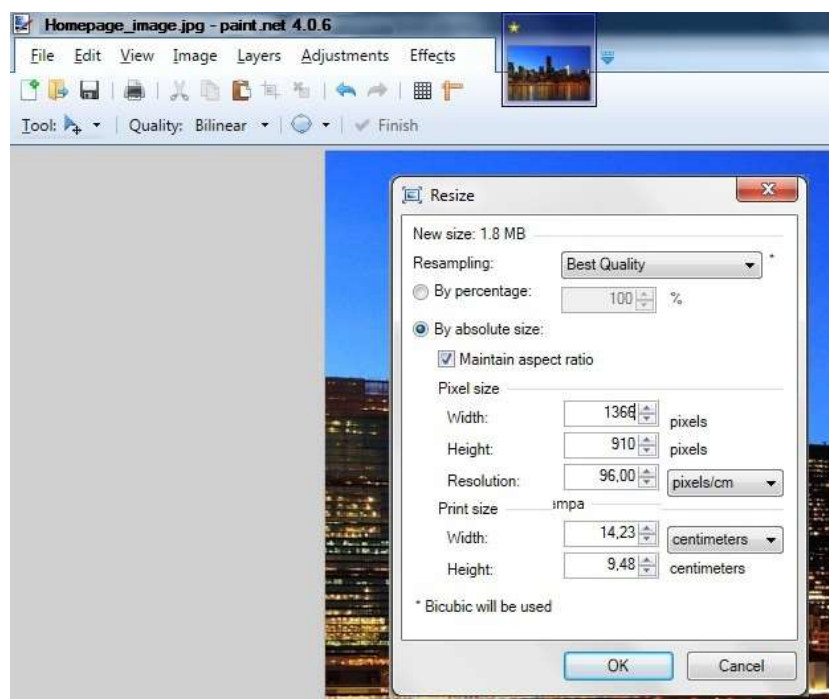
When the installation is completed, open Paint.NET: in the program's main page, click the "Open file" icon on the top-left side of the screen and select the "Homepage_image.jpg" file which you had saved in your "PCimages" subfolder. Our picture of New York is now displayed with the Paint.NET program: we can go and change it the way we want.

To begin with, let's enhance the colors of our picture: open the drop-down menu "Adjustments" and click "Hue/Saturation". Increase the saturation by dragging the control slider up to "115": now our homepage image will prove more colored and charming.

My website at last!

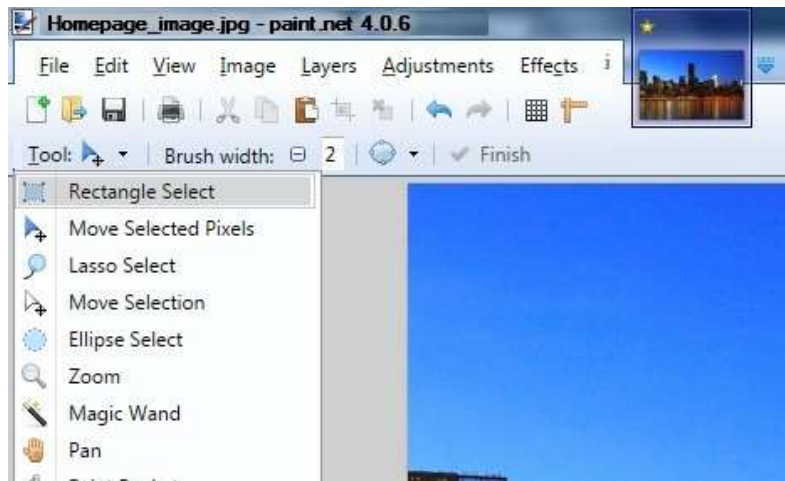


Now we must resize the picture to a width of 1366 pixels (i.e. the width of a laptop's screen): open the drop-down menu "Image" and select "Resize". Be sure that the "By absolute size" and "Maintain aspect ratio" checkboxes are ticked, then type "1366" in the "Width" box and press "OK". The picture will resize to fit the standard width of laptop screens.



My website at last!

Now the issue is that the resulting picture is too high, so we have to select a strip of it with a smaller height. Open the tool list on the top-left side of the screen and pick the "Rectangle Select" tool.



Now position the cursor shaped as a "+" to the far-left side of the New York picture, just slightly below the top side of the image: while pressing your mouse's left button, drag the cursor across the image to its far right, so as to select a wide strip of the picture (highlighted by the dotted lines, as visible in the image below).

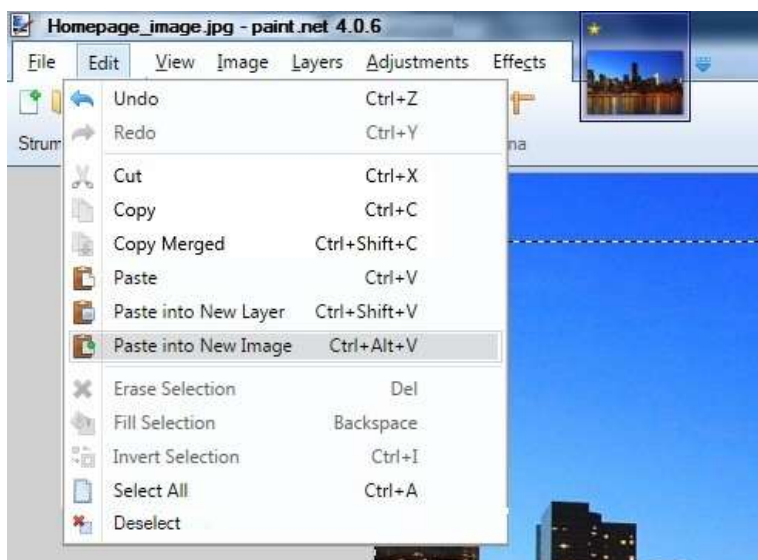


My website at last!

You can select the strip you like the most (the strip's height must be smaller of the screen's height: as to our New York picture, we defined a 548-pixel height, you can do the same by checking the strip's actual height in the bottom-left message area "Size of rectangle selection"). Finally, copy the selected strip by opening the "Edit" drop-down menu and clicking "Copy".



And now let's create our new homepage image: paste the copied strip by opening the "Edit" drop-down menu and selecting "Paste into New Image".



Finally we save the picture by opening the "File" drop-down menu and selecting "Save As...": store it with the name "Homepage_image_OK.jpg" next to the already existing "Homepage_image.jpg" file.

Now we are ready to upload our new cover image to the website's homepage. We will also create the site's title and display our first text boxes and pictures.

**Chapter 7 and Chapter 8
are not included
in this preview**

9. TEXT, PICTURES AND LINKS



Let's improve our homepage by including more text and pictures.

Connect once more to [Pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com) to find a new image. In our example we will use a picture showing yellow cabs in New York, but you are free to pick any image you like the most. Download it to the "PCimages" folder with the name "Cab_image.jpg" and - with the help of Paint.NET - resize it to 500 x 300 pixels. Then send it to the "WEBimages" folder in our website using CoreFTP.

Now, in "index.html" and "stylesheet.css", copy the following instructions (right below the codes we included earlier in the two files), save the files and send them to our website with CoreFTP:

Code to be copied to index.html

```
<div id="Image_box3">  </div>
```

Code to be copied to stylesheet.css

```
#Image_box3 {
float:left;
margin:0;
padding:0;
position:absolute;
overflow:visible;
left:750px;
top:565px;
background:none;
```

My website at last!

```
border:none;  
}
```

By refreshing your homepage in the browser, the image with the yellow cabs will properly appear (this time with no background box):



Now we are going to add a text block below the new image. Copy the following code to "index.html" e "stylesheet.css", then save both files and send them across the web with CoreFTP as usual:

Code to be copied to index.html

```
<div id="Text3">  
<span>Many people believe they will never be able to  
build up a website with their own hands. This is not how  
things should be looked upon: everybody can design their  
own site, including pictures and text in any position  
and with any format they wish, with no need to purchase  
expensive commercial programs nor complex content  
management systems. It is just a matter of using a few  
simple code chunks, freely available application  
software and a bit of imagination... and everything
```

My website at last!

```
becomes easy!</span>  
</div>
```

Code to be copied to stylesheet.css

```
#Text3 {  
position: absolute;  
left:760px;  
top:880px;  
width:480px;  
font-family: 'Lora';  
font-size: 16px;  
font-weight: 400;  
line-height: 120%;  
text-align: justify;  
color: #C6FFC6;  
}
```

Here is the resulting screenshot:



Now let's try to connect the yellow cab picture and its text block to a new webpage (an external page or a subpage in our website).

In the "index.html" file, replace the "Image_box3" code we just inserted with the following code:

Code to copied to index.html

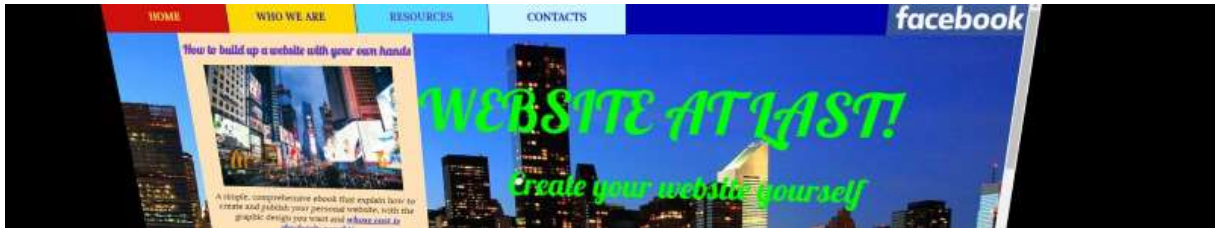
```
<div id="Image_box3"> <a href="http://www1.nyc.gov/">
</a> </div>
```

Then click the cab image in your browser: you will jump to the [New York City's official website](http://www1.nyc.gov/).

What if we wish to link our text block to a new subpage in our website? First, copy the "index.html" file to a new file whose name is "subpage.html". Open the new file with Notepad, delete all instruction code between <body> and </body> and, right below the instruction <body>, paste the following code:

**The remaining part of Chapter 9,
Chapter 10, Chapter 11, Chapter 12 and Chapter 13
are not included
in this preview**

14. IMPROVING YOUR SITE: DROP-DOWN MENUS WITH JAVA



As an interesting example, we are going to illustrate a smart effect which is based on a Java script: a drop-down menu that opens and closes automatically by just moving the mouse across it.

Let's start designing the menu. Open the "index.html" and "stylesheet.css" files and insert the following code (just before the footer instructions we have already included), then save both files and send them to your website with CoreFTP:

Code to be copied to index.html

```
<div id="Menu2">
<span></span>
</div>

<div id="Menu2_text1">
<span>How to build up a website with your own
hands</span>
</div>

<div id="Menu2_image">  </div>

<div id="Menu2_text2">
<span>A simple, comprehensive ebook that explains how to
create and publish your personal website, with the
graphic design you want and <a href="subpage.html"
style="color:#0B1AC1;font-weight:bold;text-
decoration:underline">whose cost is absolutely
nought"</a></span>
</div>
```

Code to be copied to stylesheet.css

```
#Menu2 {
position: absolute;
left:116px;
top:50px;
width:370px;
height:340px;
background: #FFE1B7;
z-index:10;
visibility:visible;
}

#Menu2_text1 {
position: absolute;
left:116px;
top:63px;
width:370px;
font-family: 'Lobster';
font-size: 20px;
font-weight: bold;
text-align: center;
color: #6235C4;
z-index:10;
visibility:visible;
}

#Menu2_image {
float:left;
margin:0;
padding:0;
position:absolute;
overflow:visible;
left:150px;
top:100px;
background:none;
border:none;
z-index:10;
visibility:visible;
}

#Menu2_text2 {
```


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```
position: absolute;
left:124px;
top:310px;
width:350px;
font-family: 'Lora';
font-size: 14px;
font-weight: normal;
font-style: italic;
text-align: center;
color: #000000;
z-index:10;
visibility:visible;
}
```

If you save it all and transfer both files to your site via CoreFTP, after refreshing your homepage in the browser, you will see that just below the "Who we are" button a drop-down menu is now shown, with a heading, a picture, a text block and an active hyperlink.



However, the drop-down menu we just designed is always visible. How can we make it visible only when the cursor travels across the "Who we are" heading?

First, take the code we have just inserted in "stylesheet.css" and replace the four words "visible" with the word "hidden" (save the file once again and send it via CoreFTP). Now the new drop-down menu has vanished, as it is not visible anymore under normal conditions.

Then, in "index.html", look for the code line which defines the heading "Who we are" (<div id="Text_button2">), delete and replace it with the following code:

Code to copy to index.html

```
<div id="Text_button2" onmouseover="Script_java_button2()">
```

Again, in "index.html", look for the code line which defines the cover image of New York (<div id="Cover_image">), delete and replace it with the following code:

Code to copy to index.html

```
<div id="Cover_image"  
onmouseover="Script_java_deleteall()">
```

One more time, in "index.html", look for the code line which defines the site's title (<div id="Site_title">), delete and replace it with the following code:

Code to copy to index.html

```
<div id="Site_title"  
onmouseover="Script_java_deleteall()">
```

And finally go to the initial part of your "index.html" file. Just before the instruction </head>, insert the following code:

Code to copy to index.html

```
<script>
function Script_java_button2() {
document.getElementById("Menu2").style.visibility="visible";
document.getElementById("Menu2_text1").style.visibility="visible";
document.getElementById("Menu2_image").style.visibility="visible";
document.getElementById("Menu2_text2").style.visibility="visible";
}

function Script_java_deleteall() {
document.getElementById("Menu2").style.visibility="hidden";
document.getElementById("Menu2_text1").style.visibility="hidden";
document.getElementById("Menu2_image").style.visibility="hidden";
document.getElementById("Menu2_text2").style.visibility="hidden";
}
</script>
```

Save the "index.html" file and send it to our website with CoreFTP so as to see what effects are now visible in our browser.

You will see that the drop-down menu we had previously defined, now normally hidden, pops up when our mouse moves across the "Who we are" button and disappears when the mouse travels across the neighbouring areas (the picture of New York, the website's title).

The above is but an example, but it's crystal-clear how wide the collection of effects you might produce by using a Java script can be. If you apply this method to all website buttons, the user navigation experience will get more attractive and unique. With a little bit of trials and errors, you will be able to implement additional effects at will.

15. YOUR WEBSITE FOR SMARTPHONE



We complete this comprehensive ebook with additional information on how to configure our website so as to have it correctly displayed on smartphones and other devices.

How can we render our site "responsive" to the device where it is displayed on? How can we adapt the site visualisation according to the user terminal?

To begin with, we must configure our website so as to become aware whether it's being displayed on a screen as large as 1366 x 768 pixels (a typical laptop screen size; the iPad uses a screen as large as 2048 x 1536 pixels) or on a smaller screen like the ones commonly implemented in smartphones (the iPhone has a screen ranging from 320 x 380 pixels in older models up to 414 x 736 in the latest models).

To achieve responsiveness, open the "index.html" and - after the instruction `<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="stylesheet.css" />`, add the following code:

Code to be copied to index.html

```
<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" media="only
screen and (max-device-width: 800px)"
href="stylesheet_smartphone.css" />
```

Save the file and send it to our site through Core FTP.

Now take our "stylesheet.css" file and copy it to a new file named "stylesheet_smartphone.css". Open this new file with Notepad, find the code line `background: #0000AA;`, delete and replace it with the following code:

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Code to be copied to stylesheet_smartphone.css

```
background: #AA0000;
```

Save "stylesheet_smartphone.css" too and send it to the website with Core FTP.

You can see the effect that our changes induce in the website by refreshing the homepage in our browser, and then on our smartphone: on the PC screen the site background will be blue as usual; yet if we display the same homepage on our smartphone, the background will appear in red color.



The trick is now clear: with larger user terminals, our website will use the "stylesheet.css" file, while when sensing the presence of a smaller terminal our site will be displayed according to the formatting instructions referenced in "stylesheet_smartphone.css".

Now let's see how and where to introduce changes in our "stylesheet_smartphone.css" file to ensure proper visualisation on smartphones (first be sure to restore the code line

in the stylesheet file to `background: #0000AA;`, so as to have a blue background in all conditions - we implemented the red background as a mere example; if after having restored the code line you still see a red background on your phone, reset its cache memory and refresh your homepage once more).

What we are going to do is to display the whole site on a single column with a width of 360 pixels (instead of displaying it on a 1366-pixel-width screen, as we did up to now). We choose this smaller size among other possible sizes because we are using an Android smartphone as a test platform featuring a screen of this specific width. To achieve the above, we will shrink the size of all the existing images that are too large to fit the target column width. Furthermore, we will adapt the existing text blocks to the smaller available width.

Let's start shrinking the homepage's cover image (its width is 1366 pixels, we will reduce this value to 360 pixels). In the "stylesheet_smartphone.css" file, look for the code chunk named `#Cover_image`, delete them all and replace them with the following code:

**The remaining part of Chapter 15,
Chapter 16 and Chapter 17
are not included
in this preview**

A FINAL REMARK

We built up our website. By clicking www.mywebsite-atlast.orgfree.com you can consider the offspring of our effort.

Please remember that "My website at last" is but an example: **you are free to use the code blocks we have defined together as if they were a set of building blocks**, which can be positioned according to your specific needs (by changing the values embedded in them, such as positions, colors, widths, fonts, picture names, etc.) **to create your personal website.**

You can download the different files edited in this ebook for www.mywebsite-atlast.orgfree.com at the following hyperlinks (in PDF version):

- "index.html": [click here](#)
- "subpage.html": [click here](#)
- "stylesheet.css": [click here](#)
- "stylesheet_smartphone.css": [click here](#)

For any questions, requests of information or suggestions, write to michele.sanvico@italianwriter.it.

Don't forget to drop by at www.italianwriter.it!