Using Windows Explorer as an FTP Client

An FTP client is a software that enables you to upload files to your webhost server. If you are using Windows, you don’t really need to buy or download any extra FTP client software, because Windows Explorer has built in FTP functionality. In this lesson, we will learn how.

Your web host might have an “control panel” interface for you to upload file to the webhost. And if you are doing it for the first time, you might want to give that a try. But as you become more experienced, you might find the interface a bit limiting since you often have to select a file at a time. A more efficient way is to use an FTP client where you can manipulate the webhost files directly. This gives you added power, but you also have to be more careful as to not alter the critical files used to maintain your account.

Let’s learn to use Window Explorer as a FTP client to upload and manipulate our website on our webhost.

**Step 1:** Open Windows Explorer and type in **ftp://*yourusername*@*yourdomain*.com** in the address bar. Replace “***yourusername***” with the actual login username that you webhost had given you. And replace “***yourdomain***” with your domain name. A lot of web hosts automatically set up your login in such a way that you can FTP to your account via this method. However, because of the diverse variety of webhost out there, I can not say that this will work for all web hosts. You will have to try or ask your web host. For some other web host, typing ***ftp.yourdomain.com*** might work also.

**Step 2:** Enter the password for your login provided by your webhost.

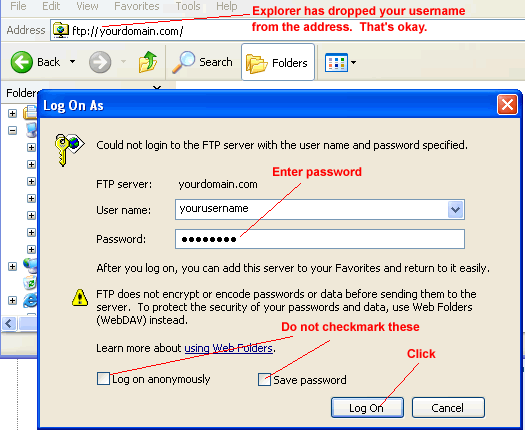


Image . Window's FTP login

**Step 3:** Once you have logged on, double-click to go into the **public\_html** folder — at least that the the folder name used by most webhosts. This is where you would put your HTML files that you want to be accessible on the web.

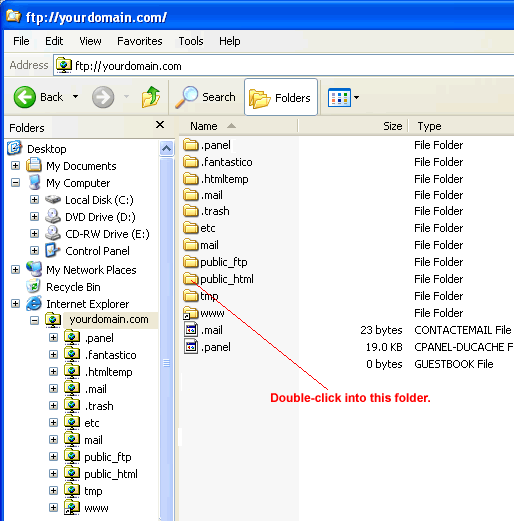


Image . Viewing the webhost server files

Files or folders outside of this **public\_html** folder are not visible on the web. They control the functioning of your account.

**Step 4:** Inside the **public\_html** folder, you will see various files and folders depending on your webhost. There are some files or folders that start with a dot and they control the functioning of your account. Same thing in regards to the **cgi-bin** folder. The first thing you want to put in this public\_html folder is a file called **index.htm** or **index.html**.

This file will be the default home page of your site. When users browse to **http://www.yourdomain.com**, the browser will automatically look for the **index.htm** or **index.html** file in the **public\_html** folder and display that HTML page to the user.

To copy this file to our **public\_html** folder, simply open another Windows Explorer window and navigate to our local copy of our index.html file and then drag and drop the file there to the webhost server.

Alternatively, you can drag the entire directory structure from you local disk to the webhost and the directory structure will be maintained.

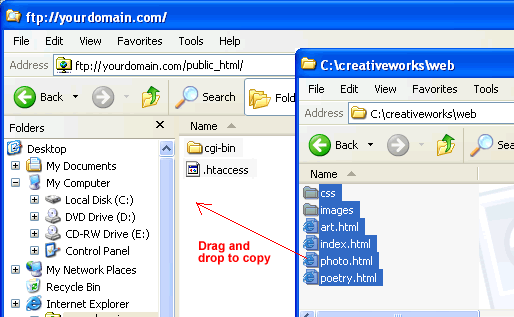


Image . Drag to copy files to webhost

Note that if you are trying to copy a large amount of files at one time to the webhost, there is a possibility that the host might “timeout”. If that happens, you would just have to re-do the copy. Or better yet, copy a fewer files at a time.

If you already have existing files on the webhost with the same names, Windows Explorer will prompt you prior to updating them.

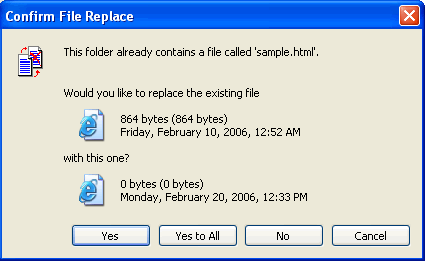


Image . File replacement

**Step 5:**

Now you see that the operation of the ftp folder works similar to the operations that you are used to in Window Explorer.

So, it is no surprise that if you want to delete a file from your webhost, simply highlight it in the **public\_html** folder, press the **Del** key, and confirm when prompted…

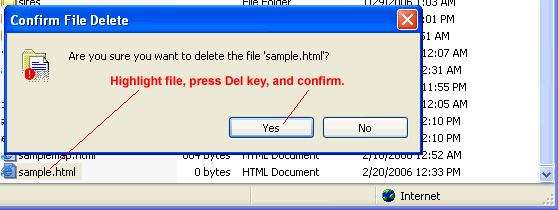


Image . Deleting files

**Step 6:** We often will need to create additional sub-folders in our webspace. For example, we might want to create an **images** folder to store the image for our website. Do this by, right-clicking in the **public\_html** area and select **New Folder**…

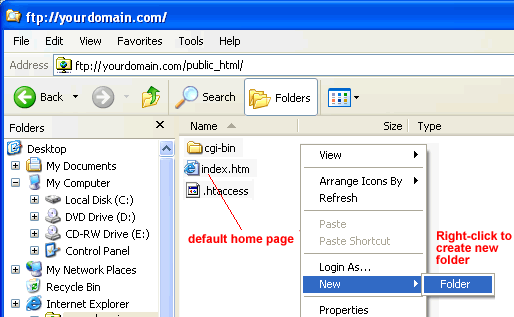


Image . Creating new folder

**Step 7:** Don’t forget to log out by closing the Explorer window.

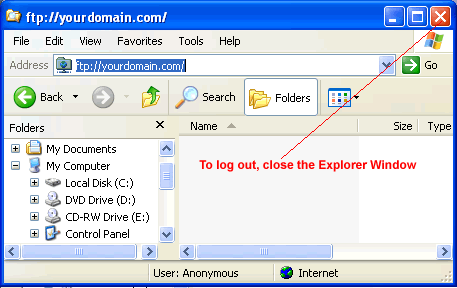


Image . logout FTP

**Note:** This tutorial is valid for Windows 7.