

USING FETCH FTP TO UPLOAD WEB PAGES

What is Fetch?

Fetch is a Macintosh program for transferring files. The basic concepts described here can be used to figure out other FTP programs that are available. FTP is a short name for "File Transfer Protocol." A common use for File Transfer Protocol is transferring web pages to web servers. Web authors create their HTML, GIF, JPEG, etc. files on a personal computer, and use FTP to transfer the files to the server that will actually serve the files over the Internet. This tutorial section is aimed at walking you through such a transfer using one of the most popular FTP programs, Fetch.

Please note that Fetch has a built-in help system available through the menus if you need details beyond those presented here.

Can I use Fetch from off-campus?

In order to use Fetch or any other FTP program from off-campus, you must first connect to the network via VPN. VPN is a virtual private network. If you require VPN access, contact the help desk to obtain a copy of VPN. helpdesk@vassar.edu x7224

Getting Started With Fetch

You will need three important pieces of information:

1. The hostname of the server that will hold your pages. As a student, your hostname will be students.vassar.edu. As a faculty, it will be faculty.vassar.edu. As an administrator or staff member, it will be adminstaff.vassar.edu.
2. Your userid. Your userid is your Vassar email username, which is typically the first to letters of your first name and your last name. If your name were Sally Sims, for example, your username would be "sasims".
3. Your password (which you specify when you initiate your web account).

To set up your web account initially, you will need to do the following:

1. Visit <http://computing.vassar.edu/getweb/>. You will be prompted to enter you email username and your email password, then select a web password. For security purposes, we recommend that your web password be different from your email password.
2. It will take a few minutes for your web account request to be processed. As soon as it is processed, you will receive an email from webmanager@vassar.edu. Once you receive the email, you can begin using your web account.

Run Fetch:

If you do not have Fetch, you can download it from <http://www.fetchsoftworks.com/> (there are many free and commercial FTP clients. You can search for them at <http://versiontracker.com/>). Be sure you get a version that will work with your computer.

Secure vs non-secure FTP: beginning spring term 2007, we are supporting sFTP (secure FTP). The main advantage of using sFTP over standard FTP is that the information being sent is encrypted. This means your password cannot be intercepted the way it might be with FTP. Since some older FTP programs do not support sFTP, we have not required its use yet. But it is recommended you upgrade your FTP client to a version that supports sFTP and that you use this important function. Another benefit is that connections to the server will be quicker.

Launch the Fetch application. If the New Connection window does not open automatically, select the New Connection... command from the File menu.

New Connection

Make a new connection to this FTP account:

Host: students.vassar.edu

User ID: sasims

Password: ●●●●●●●

Add to Keychain

▼

Initial directory: []

Non-standard port number: []

Try to connect [] times.

Shortcuts: [] [Help] [Cancel] [OK]

Keep in mind that the information is CASE SENSITIVE!

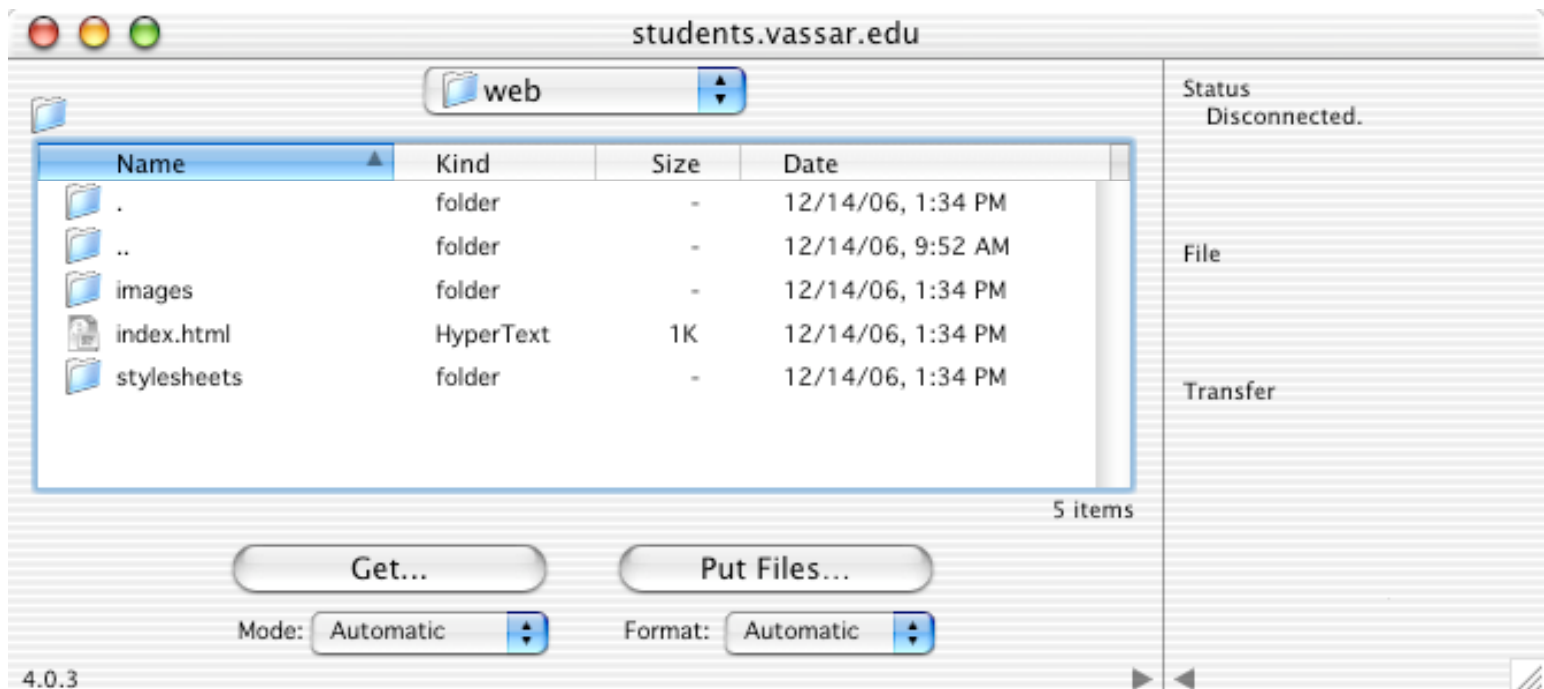
Enter the three pieces of information in the text fields, and press OK. If everything goes well you will see the folder "web" in the file list displayed to you. Double click on "web" to open it. You are now in the directory where you will place all of your webpage files. Alternatively, you can enter "web" (without the quotation marks) in the Initial directory field and you will be placed directly in the web folder of your web account.

REMEMBER: All web content goes inside your "web" directory.

If you receive a connection error, you will need to correct one or more of the pieces of information.

Though we will not cover this feature here, it is possible to save your connection information as a shortcut. This makes it easy to reconnect later when you wish to update your web pages.

Once you are connected and moved to the web folder (subdirectory), you will see the following window open:



Notice that you are in the folder called "web" (indicated by the drop-down at the top of the window) and that the status reads "connected." If you have never used your account before, your list will be empty. Since the example account in the window above has example web content, the web folder contains a file and several folders. We use folders and directories interchangeably. To open one of them and start working with the files inside, double click on the directory. That directory's name will appear in the drop menu that currently says "web." The only individual document in this window at this time is titled "index.html." Notice that it has a different icon to indicate its type.

IMPORTANT NOTE: "index.html" is the name that you MUST give the page that you want to appear when the user types in your url (<http://students.vassar.edu/sasims/>). If you do not have an index.html page, the user will need to know the exact directory and filename of the file they are attempting to access.

When FTPing your revised files up to the server, you should always ensure that you maintain the same directory structure as the source. It is recommended that you open your folder that contains your files so that you can drag it over to your Fetch window. This enables you to look at both directories at the same time.

Using Fetch to Upload :

The normal method of creating your site will be to create all pages on your local computer, then use Fetch to move the files to the server. Later, when you edit your site, you will change the version on your local computer and upload the changed files. This overwrites the existing files. If you wish to keep both versions (which is usually a good idea), do so on your local computer.

Fetch makes it easy to move files between your computer and the web server. You can use the "Put Files" button to move items one by one but it is easier to place your local Finder window containing your web pages next to a Fetch window and drag the files from one to the other. **IMPORTANT NOTE: Be very sure that you drag the correct direction or you may replace newer items with older ones!!** To upload TO the server, drag files from the Finder window to the Fetch window. Should you find it is necessary to retrieve the files from the server (e.g. if you lose the original or decide a change you just made is not as good as the current version), you can drag the other direction. Please re-read the IMPORTANT NOTE: above.

Once the pages have been uploaded you should check them with ALL of the major web browsers: Mozilla, Netscape Navigator and MS Internet Explorer.

NOTE:

A URL (Universal Resource Locator) is simply an address where you can find a file. You commonly see a URL written as <http://www.someplace.com/directory/filename.html>. The http:// means the browser will use HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) to communicate with another computer. The www.someplace.com is a domain name.

Enter your URL (ex. <http://adminstaff.vassar.edu/sasims/>) in the browser's Location field and check to make sure that all the images show up, and that all the links work. (In this example, the filename is omitted because index.html is the page that is returned when no page is entered.) If there are problems you should double-check your HTML tags to make sure that they have the right file references. You may also have made a mistake while using Fetch. It is imperative to get all of your files into the right place so that your HTML references match the actual location of your files.

There is no move function in Fetch. If a file has been inadvertently placed in an incorrect location on the server, you can delete it using "Delete Directory or File" command from the Remote menu or drag the file to your computer's Trash icon. Then re-upload it to the proper location.