

CHAPTER 3: FTP SOFTWARE

Okay, take a deep breath, sit back and think about what you've done so far.

- You've set up a web domain
- You've arranged for web hosting
- You've created or settled on a design theme (template)
- You've designed the layout of your site
- You've picked the pictures for your site
- You've optimized those pictures for the web
- You've created all the documents, files and folders needed to deploy your website

In the words of Stuart Scott from ESPN – You are “**¡en fuego!**” Now, my friend, you are ready to publish your website. This means you need to upload all the files and folders to your public address. But, how do you accomplish this? After all, when you used the software, you had it publish everything to your hard drive, not the web, right? (If not, then you deployed it to the web during testing and shame on you!)

Well, fear not, for uploading to the web from your local hard drive is easier than you think. All you need is some FTP software. Huh? What's that? Now I've gone all cyber-geek on you again and started using the techno-lingo. Okay, sorry about that. All you need is some software to act as an interface between your local computer and the web server that hosts your files (remember the web server in Chapter 1?). You need software that allows for fast transfers, because you have a lot of files to move. Well, you are in luck, because the “FTP” software is just what you need.

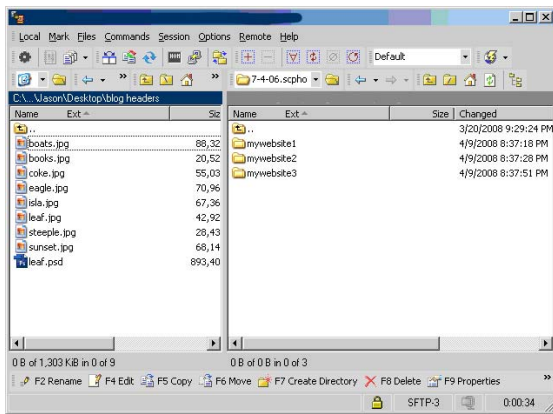
The letters FTP stand for File Transfer Protocol. In internet terms, there are several types of protocols that allow for movement of data from one source to another. For the web, we have internet protocols (IP), hypertext transfer protocols (http), simple mail transfer protocols (SMTP), and many more. Well, the FTP designation is just an easy way of saying file transfers. This allows files to move in a unique format that makes for faster and more efficient transmission from one location to another. So, when you see the term “FTP Program, you can rest easy, because you know what that is now. So, which one do you need?

Well, it really doesn't matter a whole lot, because they all operate on the same principle: move file/folder A from location 1 to location 2. The differences lie in the interface – how it appears to you on screen (often referred to as the GUI – or graphical user interface). Some people like an interface that is like their operating system (command line or graphical), while others really don't care one way or another. For some, other features that drive their decisions are security and reliability (some FTP programs are more secure and reliable than others. One thing to keep in mind is the operating system you use. Sometimes software is specific to a particular operating system family, so that will also play into your decision-making on which FTP program to choose, because some programs are only available for certain operating systems. The following ones are what I would recommend for both Windows and Macintosh.

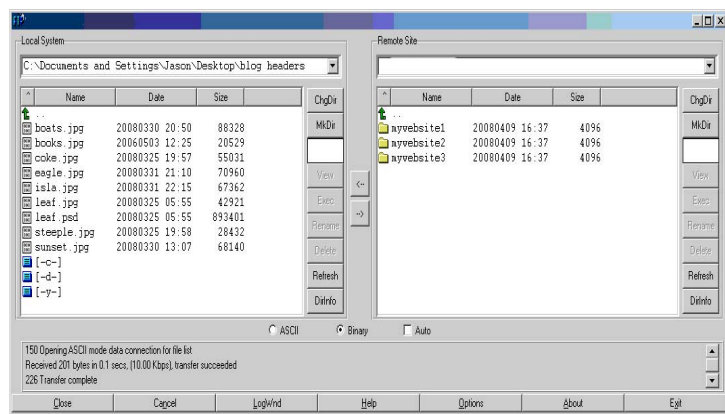
Windows

Two that I like (and both are free) are WinSCP and WSFTP_LE. The reason I like these two is because of the way they fit into the Windows scheme of things. It's all done via folder views. You can see the folder structure on each side and can browse each side the same way. They both also offer drag-and-drop functionality, where all you have to do is drag them from the one pane to the other and the files will be copied over for you automatically. I have included screenshots for both of these so you can see what each is like.

WinSCP



WSFTP_LE

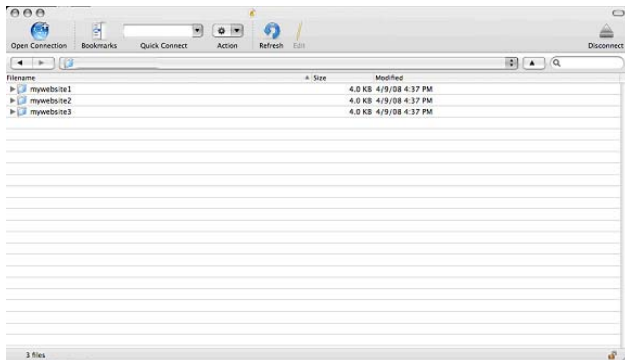


Macintosh

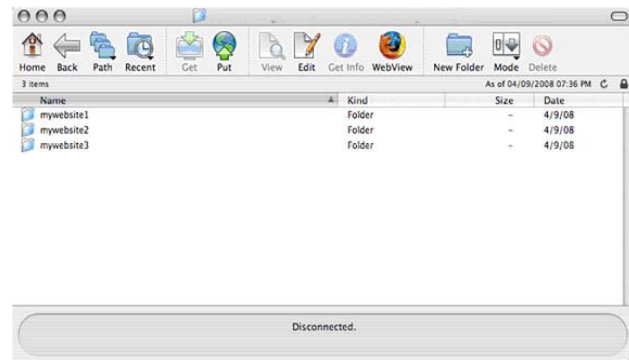
For the Mac, I am particular to Cyberduck. Like its Windows counterparts, Cyberduck is free for individual use (although I would encourage you to donate a few bucks to help maintain its status as free software). It also allows for secure file transfers, shows you the destination folder structure, and has the drag-and-drop technology.

Another popular FTP client for Mac users is one called Fetch. The one downside to Fetch is that it's not free for most uses. If you are a student, or other qualifying individual such as a charitable organization, then you can get it for free. Otherwise, it's \$25. When it comes to software prices, \$25 really isn't all that bad. Since my wife works at a University, I was able to download a free license of it to evaluate for this article, and to enclose a few screenshots. Here are the interfaces for both Cyberduck and Fetch.

Cyberduck



Fetch



Most software packages these days offer these basic features, and you may well find something else that suits your needs better, but these four are the ones I recommend for the Windows and Mac platforms respectively. All four offer drag-and-drop technology, secure FTP transfer (SFTP), and shell environments for quick edits of files on your hosted server. The main difference is that you get two folder views in the Windows interface whereas the Mac gives you a single folder view (but you can still drag and drop from your Mac folders as desired). Other than that, the function of FTP really isn't meant to do much more, so there's really no need for lots of bells and whistles that you'll likely never use.

Pick whichever interface appeals to you the most! Now, on to Chapter 5!