

# Chapter 1: Domain Registration and Hosting

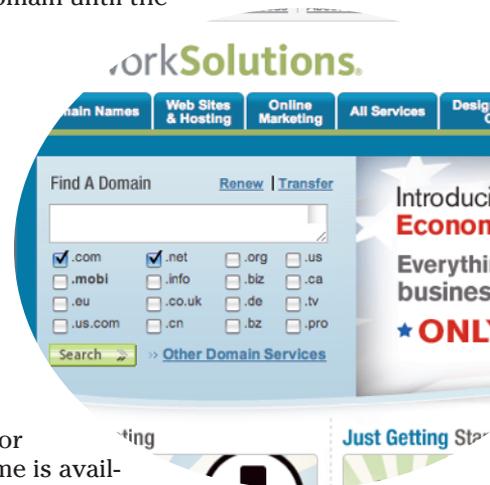
## In This Chapter

- ✓ Selecting a domain name for your site
- ✓ Getting help from domain name generators
- ✓ Registering a domain name
- ✓ Finding the best hosting plan
- ✓ Designing a placeholder page for the new domain
- ✓ Uploading a placeholder page to the new domain

This chapter focuses on what you need to do to prepare your site for publishing. You find out about domain name selection, name generators, domain verification, and domain registration. You also discover how to find a good hosting plan, including what to look for in a plan, where to find a host, and general pricing structures. The last part of this chapter shows you how to create a customized *placeholder page*, which is a single, simple Web page with company branding, an e-mail link, and a smattering of other contact information that can hold the place on a new domain until the new Web site is fully built and ready to publish.

## Understanding How to Get Your Site Online

Before you can make a new Web site available on the Internet, it must first be assigned its own special Web address, which is commonly referred to as the *domain name*. The process of acquiring a domain name can be a fun adventure and only requires a little bit of work. To start with, someone needs to think of a good name for the site and then check to see whether that name is available for use or whether it has already been taken. If the desired name is available, the name needs to be registered, and that can be done either through a domain registrar or a host provider.



After the domain name is registered, the site needs a hosting plan so that it can reside on a server and thus become available to the public. All of this needs to be done before you can publish the site. Most people like to register the domain and get a hosting plan at the start of any new Web project to ensure that the domain name is secure during the site-building process. And, because building a site takes a good bit of time, most folks also like to have a customized placeholder page designed and uploaded to the domain until the new Web site is ready for publishing.

If you are working as a freelance Web designer, some of your Web clients will have already registered their domain and secured a hosting plan before contacting you about your design services. Other new clients, however, will not have done any of these things and will need a fair amount of hand-holding from you as you take them through each of the steps. Being able to provide information about these topics to your clients can both enrich your skills as a Web professional and enhance their experience with you as a designer. This fact alone can be very good for business because happy clients are more likely to return to you for Web site maintenance services after their site gets published, as well as refer other friends and business acquaintances to you if they feel confident in all your Web-related skills.

If this is your first time dealing with domain names and hosting plans, you may want to try setting up a domain name and hosting plan for your own Web site before handling these tasks for any Web clients.

### *Selecting a Domain Name*

Choosing a domain name for a Web site is something that you, in your role as a designer, may or may not be involved in when working with Web clients, depending on their individual needs and how Web-savvy they are. Some Web clients will have already selected a domain, registered it, and secured hosting, whereas others will say they don't really understand anything about all that stuff and are relying on your experience to help them figure it all out, or in some cases do it all for them because they don't care to know. Some clients, of course, will fall somewhere in between these extremes, needing a little help with some but not all of these domain-related responsibilities.

In the following sections, you find out more about domain names, how to help select a domain name for your client, and then how to check to make sure the name is available.

## Understanding what a domain name is

Simply put, a *domain name* is a name that is used to identify an address on the Internet for a particular Web site and any e-mail addresses configured for that site, such as `http://www.cleanfordreams.com` and `info@www.cleanfordreams.com`. The Web address itself is composed of four distinct parts, as diagrammed in Figure 1-1:

- ✓ **Protocol:** The first part of a Web address, `http://`, is the HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP), which identifies the protocol that allows a computer to browse the Web by getting information from a remote server. Secure access to the Internet (that is, anytime a domain has an SSL [Secure Sockets Layer] certificate installed on the host server for encrypting private data) requires the use of the `https://` (note the *s* for secure) protocol.
- ✓ **www:** The second part refers to the World Wide Web and identifies the type of page that will be delivered in a browser window. You might notice that some sites still display in your browser without the `www` part of the address, such as typing just `google.com` into your browser's address bar instead of `www.google.com`, but that function is typically server dependent and isn't a universal feature of domain names. Another type of Web address includes domains where the `www` is omitted, such as in `http://maps.google.com`. This type of address refers to a subsite or subdomain that resides on the main domain's servers but is separate from it.
- ✓ **Domain name:** The third part identifies the unique name of the Web site as registered by the owner of the site. Domain names may contain any combination of uppercase and lowercase letters and numbers. In addition, though less often used, domain names may also include hyphens but no other special characters, as in `www.Jet-StreamShowerhead.net`.
- ✓ **Extension:** The fourth part identifies the type of site visitors should expect to see at the address, such as `.com` for commercial business sites, `.org` for nonprofit organizations, and `.edu` for educational sites.

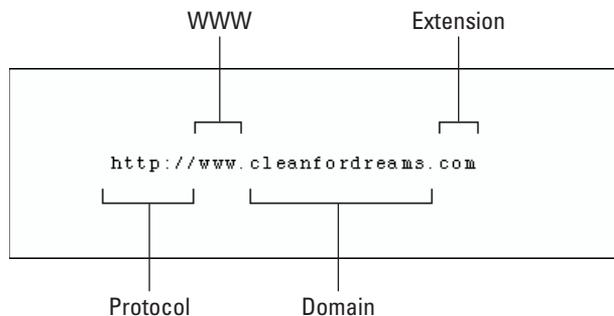


Figure 1-1: The four distinct elements in a Web address.

Although several unrestricted domain extensions are in use by all kinds of businesses around the world, the most familiar extensions should really be used as they were intended. For example, the `.org` extension should be used for nonprofit organizations, and the `.gov` extension should be used exclusively for government agencies. Table 1-1 lists the more common extensions from around the world.

<b>Table 1-1 Common Web Domain Extensions</b>	
<i>Extension</i>	<i>Usage</i>
<code>.com</code>	Commercial, but is commonly used for just about any kind of business
<code>.net</code>	Internet administrative site, but is also commonly used for other types of sites
<code>.org</code>	Organization, most often used by nonprofit groups and trade associations
<code>.info</code>	Information, the fourth most popular extension
<code>.biz</code>	Business
<code>.us</code>	United States
<code>.name</code>	Personal Web sites
<code>.at</code>	Austria
<code>.be</code>	Belgium
<code>.bz</code>	Belize
<code>.cc</code>	Cocos (Keeling) Islands
<code>.cn</code>	China
<code>.de</code>	Germany
<code>.eu</code>	European Union
<code>.gs</code>	South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
<code>.ms</code>	Montserrat
<code>.mx</code>	Mexico
<code>.nz</code>	New Zealand
<code>.tc</code>	Turks and Caicos Islands
<code>.tv</code>	Tuvalu, but often used for television
<code>.tw</code>	Taiwan
<code>.uk</code>	United Kingdom
<code>.vg</code>	British Virgin Islands
<code>.ws</code>	Western Samoa, but is often used for Web sites



For a complete listing and description of all the domain name extensions available to you and your Web clients, visit the following Web site:

[www.networksolutions.com/domain-name-registration/popup-extensions.jsp](http://www.networksolutions.com/domain-name-registration/popup-extensions.jsp)

### *Finding a domain name for your client*

The first thing to do when researching a domain name for a business is to see whether the name of the business is available. For example, if your Web client's company is Station Organization, the most fitting domain name for the company would be `www.stationorganization.com`. With an unusual or unique business name, selecting domains can be fairly quick and easy. It is when a client has a common business name, which is likely to have been already taken by someone else, that things can become tricky.

If the desired domain name is already taken, you or your client needs to come up with a new name, and tinkering with the desired name is a good place to start. Easy solutions work best, such as adding a city name or state reference, inserting a hyphen between certain letters, or using common abbreviations within the name. For example, if the company name is Rochester Apartments and it's located in New York, the client could consider using `rochesterapartmentsny.com`, `rochester-apartments-ny.com`, `rochesteraptsny.com`, or `rochester-aps-ny.com`. Conversely, the client might also consider using a different domain extension, either with or without the other name adjustments, such as `rochesterapartments.net` or `rochester-apartments.info`. If your client gets really stumped trying to find the perfect domain name, you can help him find the right one using a domain name generator, as described in the next section.



Part of your job in helping a Web client choose a domain name also includes helping to select an appropriate domain extension. In some cases, the domain names with the chosen extension will already be taken by another company with the same name. In those instances, the Web client needs to use a different extension with the desired domain name, alter the spelling of the desired domain name, or come up with a similar but different domain name with the desired extension.

### *Using domain name generators*

To get help finding a suitable domain name, whether the one you want is already taken or you are just interested in seeing what kinds of domains are available based on a few keywords, turn to one of the popular online domain name generators. In addition to helping you come up with new and unusual name ideas, these services can also suggest suitable alternatives based on real-time domain name availability. Most generators take whatever word or words you'd like to include in the domain name, then shake them out in a

variety of combinations either with or without other words, and present a resulting list of potential names for you to choose from.

The most popular and useful domain name generators can be found at NetworkSolutions.com, DomainsBot.com, NameTumbler.com, and NameBoy.com. At Nameboy.com, shown in Figure 1-2, you can enter a primary and optional secondary word to begin the search and choose whether returned results include hyphens between characters and rhyming, which can sometimes make the domain name easier to remember. It also allows you to verify domains you're interested in with its handy WHOIS search form. You can even search for and register domains that have expired or are about to expire.



The screenshot shows the Nameboy website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Nameboy logo (a cartoon boy with spiky hair) and the text "nameboy® domain search". To the right of the logo, it says "The world's most popular domain appraiser is now offering Free Domain Name Appraisals". Below the navigation bar, there are links for "New Search", "FAQ", "About Us", "Affiliates", "Appraisals", "Renew Domains", and "Clubhouse". On the right side of the navigation bar, it says "Not logged in. Login".

The main content area has a heading "Available domain names and domain name ideas from Nameboy domain name generator." Below this heading, there is a paragraph: "Find domain names, creative domain names and domain names search. Nameboy has been called the ultimate domain name maker, domain name picker, domain name chooser, domain name search, website name generator and the best way to find domain name and register domain names." Below this paragraph, there is a bolded instruction: "Enter a few keywords to find, register and back-order related available domain names. NameBoy will generate domain names based on the keywords you enter, and you can register or back-order them right here!"

There are two input fields for "Primary Word:" and "Secondary Word: (optional)". Below the "Primary Word:" field, there is an example: "Example: portland". Below the "Secondary Word:" field, there is an example: "Example: food". To the right of these fields, there is a link: "Free domain name appraisals. Appraisals are now free!".

Below the input fields, there are two checkboxes: "Allow hyphens" and "Rhyme". To the right of these checkboxes, there is a tip: "tip: Enter words that describe the domain name you're looking for. Nameboy will generate available domain names based on your keywords." Below the tip, there is a promotional banner for ".COM .NET .ORG" with a price of "\$15" and a "Find the keywords you" button.

**Figure 1-2:** A domain name generator can help you find suitable alternatives for your ideal domain name.

No matter which service you use, be sure that you verify the domain name availability (as described in the next section) before plunking down any money to register the domain. You may also want to find out about registration services and hosting plans before you ultimately commit.

### *Checking domain name availability*

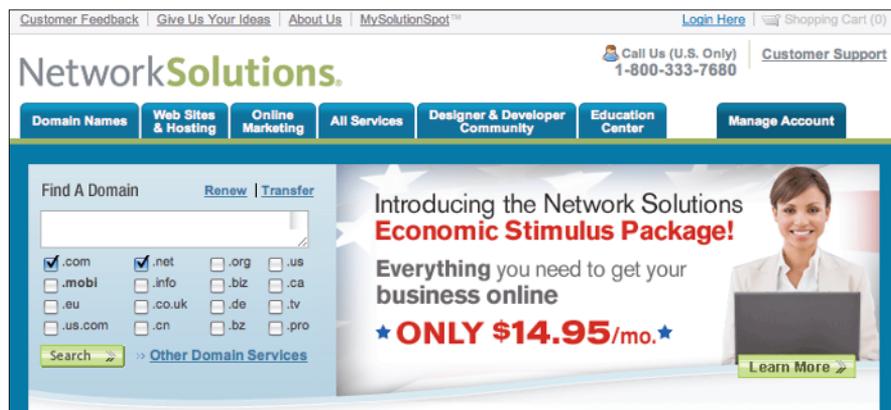
Even if you do not require the services of an online domain name generator, you still need to verify that the domain name you have chosen for your Web site is really available for registration. This means ensuring that no one else

is currently using the domain you want, or has already registered it but hasn't begun using it yet.

Thankfully, verification is free and quick to do on a number of Web sites, including many of the domain registrar and domain name generator sites. For example, NetworkSolutions.com provides fast results along with providing automatic alternate name suggestions should the name you enter already be taken. With a good verification tool, finding the right name for your site should be only a matter of a having a bit of patience and open-mindedness while you perform the search and verification process.

To show how easy it is to use these domain name verification services, follow these steps to check for the same name on both NetworkSolutions.com and DomainsBot.com:

1. **Point your browser to `www.networksolutions.com`, as shown in Figure 1-3.**



**Figure 1-3:** Network Solutions is a reputable place to register your domain name.

2. **In the Find a Domain text box in the upper-left corner of the page, type the domain name you want to register (leaving the .com and .net options selected) and click the Search button.**

For example, type **rochesterapartments**.

In the search results that appear, you see that this domain is already taken for the .com, .net, .org, and .info extensions. Other extensions that are available include .mobi, .us, .us.com, .tv, and .biz.

3. **Do another search. This time, enter a variation of the desired domain name in the Find a Domain text box and click the Search button.**

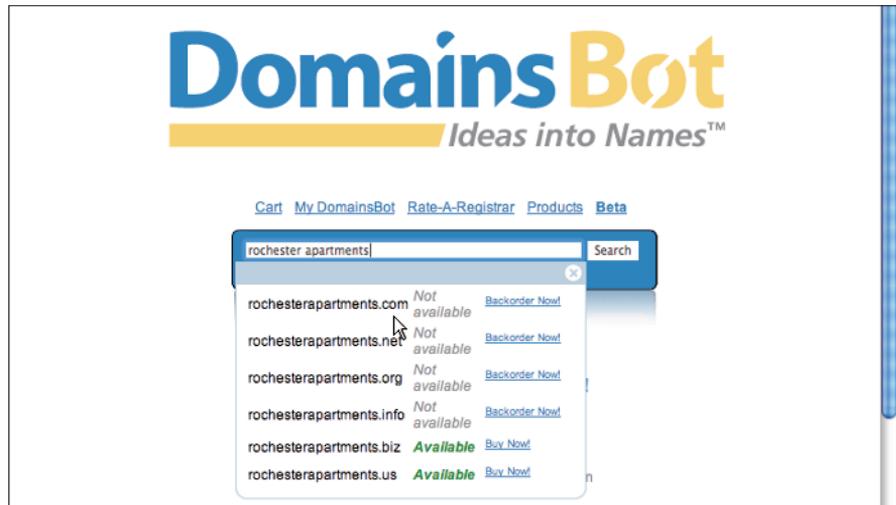
For example, type **rochester-aps**.

Aha! This domain name is available with both the .com and .net extensions and could be registered today if you wanted it (presuming that no one has registered this domain since the time of this writing).

**4. Now go to the DomainsBot.com Web site and type the words your first choice of domain name into the search field.**

For example, enter **rochester apartments**.

Before you click the Search button, notice how a little pop-up message window, like the one shown in Figure 1-4, opens to reveal the availability of any domains that use the two words in the search field. The rochesterapartments.com domain name is included in this list and is noted as Not Available.



**Figure 1-4:** DomainsBot can help you find suitable alternatives for domain names that are already taken.

**5. Click the Search button to have DomainsBot run a search.**

As you can see, these search results are more detailed than those from NetworkSolutions.com. In addition, the page includes extra tools to help you refine the search based on selected criteria.

**6. To modify the domain search results, adjust the settings in the LiveBot panel on the right side of the page.**

For example, adjust the following settings:

- Under Apartments, select lofts and suites.

- Under View Only, deselect all the extensions except .com, deselect everything under Include except for Hyphens, and deselect the Expiring and For Sale options under Status.

**7. Click the Update Results button.**

Almost immediately, the results listing updates to show the availability of domains that match the new search criteria. If the apartments are located somewhere in East Rochester, for example, EastRochesterLofts.com and EastRochesterApartments.com might be good choices, for example. However, if the domain name really needs to exactly match the company name, the client may be out of luck and will need to come up with some other ideas to find a suitable domain name to register.

If you can't find exactly what you're looking for the first few times around, be open to new ideas and try searching on other domain name generator Web sites. The more you search, the more likely you are to come upon a domain name that really works.

## Registering a Domain Name

As soon as you find the right domain name for your Web site, try to get it registered as quickly as you can. Think of registering a domain name like reserving a rental car: To reserve the car, you must provide the car agency with your name and contact info, credit card, car preference, and rental dates. To actually use the car, you must go to the rental car agency, sign a contract to rent the car for a predetermined period of time, and provide payment information before the agency gives you the car keys. Likewise, registering the domain is a means of placing the name on reserve for later use.

To register your domain name, you can go about it in one of two ways; Register your site with a domain registrar or sign up for a hosting plan and have the host provider register the domain for you as part of your hosting package. Both options have unique benefits and drawbacks.

### Using a domain registrar

When registering a domain name through a domain registration service, you get the benefit of quick and affordable registration without having to worry about hosting until you are ready to publish your site. In most cases, you should be able to choose a time frame for the rights to use your chosen domain name. Typical terms for domain registration are for one, two, three, five, and ten years. Rates for the registration range from as low as \$1.67 to over \$35 per year. Many services include e-mail accounts and other services for this fee; however, some do not, so be careful to understand exactly what you are paying for. Most domain registration rates fall somewhere in the \$10–20 per year range, and the rate often drops significantly when you

increase the term of the registration to two years or more. The .com domains are usually the most sought-after domains and tend to cost more, whereas the less trendy .info and .mobi extension domain names can now be grabbed up for as little as \$.99 per year.

Choosing the right domain registrar — if you want to use one instead of doing it through your host provider — depends on your time frame, budget, and needs. The most popular domain registrars tend to be the ones that charge the least amount of money. Keep in mind, though, that while more affordable, the less expensive services may not necessarily provide the best customer care, which depending on your level of knowledge, might be an important factor to you and your client. Therefore, shop wisely and do your research before you procure a domain for yourself or a Web client. Alternatively, you could pass on this part of the process and recommend that your client registers on his own through a particular registrar or host provider.

In addition to domain registration, most registrars these days provide additional Web-related services, including domain verification, domain name generators, domain transfers, hosting, and Internet access.

If you just need to register the domain name for a time before the site is ready to publish, but aren't interested in e-mail or hosting until right before the site gets launched, it would probably be fine for you to use one of the cheaper domain registrar services. However, if you know you will be needing other services such as Web hosting and e-mail, obtaining an SSL certificate, and setting up an e-commerce shopping cart, go with one of the companies that also provides those services, such as NetworkSolutions.com, Enom.com, Tucows.com, DomainDirect.com, LunarPages.com, DirectNic.com, GoDaddy.com, and Register.com, or any of the myriad hosting services that might have been personally recommended to you by friends and business associates.

Before you do that, however, consider your long-term needs:

- ✓ **Your site is ready or will have a short turnaround time (say, 30 days or less):** You may want to speed the domain registration process by registering the domain through the host provider that will be hosting the site.
- ✓ **Your site will not be ready for publishing for quite some time:** You can save some money by registering the domain and not worrying about hosting until you're ready to publish the site. If this is the route you decide to take, just make sure that you understand that if you register the domain with one company and use another company for hosting, you will need to do the DNS transfer when the hosting plan has been secured. To avoid having to do the DNS transfer, simply register the domain name while you sign up for a hosting plan with your preferred host provider.

## Using a host provider

When registering a domain name through a host provider, all you need to do is tell the provider your chosen URL when you sign up for your hosting account. It registers the domain for you as part of the hosting plan, often without any additional fees. To find out more about hosting, see the later section “Finding the Best Hosting Plan.”

## Activating your domain

To use the registered domain name and allow visitors to access an actual Web site through that name, you must secure a hosting plan and activate the domain name. When you register a domain with one company and host with another (which a lot of people do to try to save a few bucks), the site can be activated for hosting only through a *DNS transfer*. By contrast, when you register your domain and host with the same company, the site becomes active almost immediately after payment.



The DNS (Domain Name Server or Domain Name System) helps create a permanent address for every domain name. Every computer and server that connects to the Internet has its own IP (Internet Protocol) address, typically written in four sets of numbers separated by dots, as in 123.45.67.890. By parking a domain name on a server and creating an alias for the IP to match the domain name, you let visitors begin to use the domain name to find a site.



To get the IP address of your computer, go to <http://whatismyipaddress.com>.

A DNS transfer, therefore, means that the host provider’s servers are pointing to the domain name as an alias for the server’s IP address. For the host provider to create that alias, the domain must be transferred from the registrar to the host provider. This ensures that the domain name points to the server that hosts the site so that the site can be properly accessed by everyone on the Web. You find out how to select a hosting plan later in this chapter.

## Finding the Best Hosting Plan

A hosting plan is like a parking space for a Web site that you rent out by the month (or year) on a host provider’s server. While there, and as long as the domain name is pointing to the host’s servers, the site will be accessible to anyone surfing the Internet with knowledge of the Web address.

In the following sections, you find out how to find the right host provider and evaluate hosting plans.

## Researching host providers

Like domain registrars, host providers are everywhere online, which means that finding the right one for your needs may require a little research. You could consult one of the hosting plan review sites, like [Hosting-Review.com](#), [Top10WebHosting.com](#), or [TheHostingChart.com](#), to find the names of the most popular host providers. However, bear in mind that the host providers on those kinds of lists might be rated more for their pricing than for quality hosting and customer service.

Ideally, you want to pay a reasonable rate, get great technical support and customer service, have enough Web space on the server to host all your files, get the right number of e-mail accounts for your needs, have access to some good site-reporting tools, and be eligible for any special services and discounts that the host provider may have to offer.

On a personal note, having worked with many different host providers over the years, and having experienced firsthand the difference between good and bad customer support, I can highly recommend [LunarPages.com](#) for both domain registration and hosting plans.

[LunarPages.com](#), as shown in Figure 1-5, is a full-service Web development and hosting company that offers competitively priced domain registration and hosting plans with top-rated 24-hour telephone and e-mail technical support. Right now, [LunarPages.com](#) is offering two special discounts to readers of this book who sign up for new 12/24-month hosting plans.



**Figure 1-5:** LunarPages has fantastic customer support and offers both domain registration and hosting services.



Both discounts include unlimited storage, unlimited data transfer, and \$775 worth of free bonus programs included with your hosting account:

- ✓ **Save \$10:** Mention coupon code WebDesign10 and save \$10 when signing up for any 12 or 24 month Basic Hosting Plan.
- ✓ **Save \$30:** Mention coupon code WebDesign30 and save \$30 when signing up for any 12 or 24 month Business, Windows, or LPQuicksite Plan, or any 3, 6, 12, or 24 month VPS or Dedicated Account.

To find the right host provider for your (or your client's) project, keep the following tips in mind:

- ✓ **Referrals:** A friendly recommendation can often be the best method for finding a reputable hosting plan. Most people either love or hate their host providers. If you keep hearing praise for the same host provider from different people, that can be a good sign.
- ✓ **Customer service:** The single, most important feature of any hosting plan is customer service. Having 24-hour telephone and e-mail support is absolutely essential, so make sure that the host provider you are interested in offers this. If it doesn't, keep looking. Customer service is so important because you will, at some point, need help and shouldn't have to wait a long time to get it. Ideally someone should be there, 24/7, to help answer your technical questions and resolve any server-related issues. Furthermore, if you keep irregular work hours, it would be nice to be able to have your questions answered anytime, day or night.

Make a list of all the host providers you are interested in and then call them to ask questions about their hosting plans. You can get a good sense about a company's customer service by talking to one of its customer service representatives about hosting plans and customer support.

- ✓ **FTP and control panel:** Be sure to inquire about ways that each hosting plan allows site access. At a minimum, you should be able to upload files using FTP (File Transfer Protocol). Some host providers offer only a custom-built "site console" or "control panel" with limited capabilities for uploading files. With FTP access, you have better control over uploading files when it's time to publish the site.
- ✓ **Cancellation policy:** Be sure to also ask each company about its cancellation policy and whether that includes a refund. If for any reason you decide you want to switch plans to another host provider sometime in the future, it would be nice if you could get a refund. The host providers that do offer prorated or partial refunds are often the ones with the best customer service and hosting plans.

### Evaluating hosting plan packages

While you are researching the different hosting plans from the various hosting companies, make sure to look for the type of hosting package that's appropriate to your needs. Shared hosting plans tend to come in four distinct flavors: the bare-bones starter plan, the small-business plan, the big-business plan, and the e-commerce plan. Most plans have certain features in common, with tiered levels of benefits, as outlined in Table 1-2.

<b>Table 1-2 Typical Web Hosting Plan Features</b>				
<i>Feature</i>	<i>Starter</i>	<i>Small Biz</i>	<i>Big Biz</i>	<i>e-Commerce</i>
Monthly fee	\$8	\$14	\$19	\$40
Account	24-hour uptime, customer service, and technical support			
Technical features	5GB hard drive space, 200GB data transfer, 20 million page views, dedicated IP address, 3 user accounts	10GB hard drive space, 400GB data transfer, 40 million page views, dedicated IP address, 6 user accounts	20GB hard drive space, 600GB data transfer, 60 million page views, dedicated IP address, 12 user accounts	40GB hard drive space, 1000GB data transfer, 100 million page views, dedicated IP address, 24 user accounts
Domains	Dedicated domain name, domain transfers, registration of new domains, domain pointers, and so on			
Site management	Online control panel, Web site builder, FrontPage extensions (scripts that provide dynamic functions on sites built with Microsoft FrontPage), 24-hour FTP access, free Web-based statistics, access to raw log files, and so on			
E-mail	250 accounts + 1GB hard drive space, spam guard, virus protection, online e-mail access, autoresponders, forwarders, and so on	500 accounts + 1.5GB hard drive space, spam guard, virus protection, online e-mail access, autoresponders, forwarders, and so on	750 accounts + 2GB hard drive space, spam guard, virus protection, online e-mail access, autoresponders, forwarders, and so on	1,000 accounts + 3GB hard drive space, spam guard, virus protection, online e-mail access, autoresponders, forwarders, and so on
Scripting	ASP, ASP.NET, CGI-BIN folder, Perl, PHP support, and so on			
Database and indexing services	mySQL max, 25MB hard drive space	+ mySQL server, 2 odbc data source names, ms access, 100MB hard drive space	+ mySQL server, 4 odbc data source names, ms access, 250MB hard drive space	+ mySQL server, 6 odbc data source names, ms access, unlimited hard drive space
E-commerce services	SSL secure servers, shared SSL certificates, merchant tools with and without credit card processing, Google Checkout, and so on			
Data center	Firewall and antivirus protection, daily backups, redundant servers with UPS			

features power backups, and so on

Although monthly rates can run as low as \$1.50 and as high as \$99, most plans range from about \$4.95 to \$39.95 per month and differ by the terms of service they provide:

- ✔ **Uptime:** The total time within any 24-hour period where the site is accessible to visitors on the Internet. Anytime a host provider's server goes down, for whatever reason, domains on that server go offline, which is commonly referred to as *downtime*. An uptime of 100 percent is the ultimate goal of all host providers, but most will only guarantee a 99 percent uptime rate.
- ✔ **Hard drive space:** This is the total number of megabytes (MB) or gigabytes (GB) of space allotted for the domain on the host provider's server. To determine your Web site's hard drive space needs, multiply the number of pages by 30K and then factor in enough space to account for all the additional files required for the site, including all the graphics, documents, PDFs, and multimedia files. You may also be able to estimate the total number of megabytes for your site through your HTML code editor. For example, in Dreamweaver, you can select all the files through the expanded Files pane and read the total byte count in the status bar. Typical small sites can make due with as little as 500MB–1GB of space, whereas e-commerce sites can require upward of 30GB, depending on the number of products being sold.
- ✔ **User account:** Depending on the Web site's needs, the hosting plan can accommodate from one to several user accounts. Each account provides password-protected host server access to site management tools such as passwords, e-mail setup functionality, and billing information.
- ✔ **Data transfer and page views:** The data transfer and page view figures refer to the maximum allowable number of times that visitors can access the pages (that is, the text, graphics, and other content) on the hosted site within a given time frame, such as a 30-day period. If the site is very popular, there could easily be over 30 million page views in a month!
- ✔ **Web-based statistics:** Web-based stats can help site owners track the number of visitors to their site, including such details as the entry and exit URLs, the number of hits and page views, keyword analysis, and the number of returning versus new visitors.
- ✔ **Dedicated IP address:** Domains with a dedicated IP address will be hosted on their own servers as opposed to sharing a server with other domains. Dedicated IP plans are more expensive than Web sites that use a shared IP address, but they are also ultimately more reliable because a dedicated server can more accurately monitor its own Web traffic and provide faster server response times. A dedicated IP address can also sometimes be a requirement for sites that need an SSL certificate

depending on the host provider's setup, so be sure to ask about this if you intend to get an SSL certificate.

- ✓ **Domain pointer:** This feature, which may cost a few extra bucks per month, allows one domain to automatically reroute visitors to another domain. Domain pointers can often be useful when a business wants to provide for misspellings of a domain name so that anytime visitors try to view the misspelled domain, they're automatically directed to the correctly named site, such as `www.yahooo.com` pointing to `www.yahoo.com`.

Shop around, do your research, speak to friends and business associates, and make your decision. After you choose a host provider, just sign up for the desired hosting plan. If you're also registering a domain for the first time when signing up for the plan, the site should be ready for use right away. If the domain was registered elsewhere, you can do the DNS transfer from the registrar to the host's servers as soon as you are ready to publish the site. You (or your client) can also set up e-mail boxes and adjust them at any time after the plan is paid for. Later, if you (or your client) are not happy with a particular host provider, you can always switch to another provider at any time.

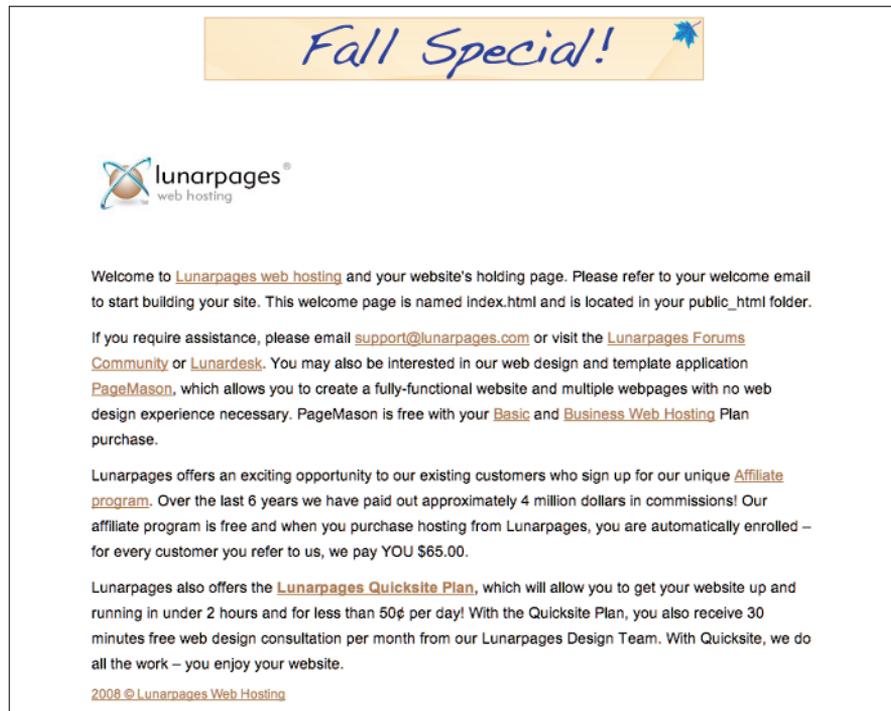
The only thing left to do now, until the new site is ready for publishing, is to design, build, and upload a placeholder page, as described in the next section.

### *Creating a Custom Placeholder Page*

A *placeholder page* is exactly what it sounds like: It's the default home page that visitors will see at a particular Web address — your domain name — when you (or your client) have both registered the domain and set up a hosting plan, but have not yet published the new Web site there.

The default placeholder page provided by the host provider can vary. Sometimes that page may identify the domain name and IP address of the domain, and sometimes it doesn't. More often than not, what you will see are some instructions to the site owner on how to access the host's servers to manage the new hosting account. The rest of the page is usually filled with information and links to the services of the domain registrar or hosting company where the site is parked, as in the example from LunarPages.com shown in Figure 1-6.

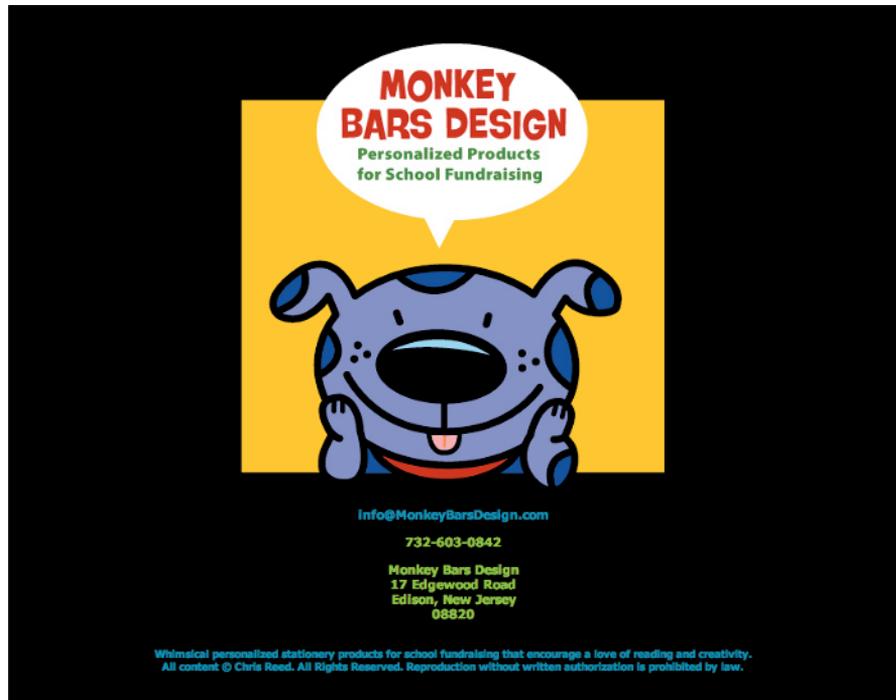
Fortunately, the domain registrar or host provider placeholder page will only stay online until it is removed or overwritten by either you or the site owner (or the Webmaster or whomever else the client might hire to manage the site after you design it). The smartest thing to do, then, is to take advantage of this paid-for open advertising space and design a customized placeholder page for the domain that can sit there until the new site is ready to publish.



**Figure 1-6:** A host provider placeholder page often provides site setup tips to the site owner but no information to potential visitors about products or services.

The best custom placeholders are simple HTML Web pages that identify the site (logo, name, tag line, and other branding) and offer a means of contacting the site owner by both snail mail and e-mail. Anything else on the page, like a blurb about the company or some recent news items, is gravy. Figure 1-7 shows an example of a typical placeholder page that includes company name, an encrypted contact e-mail address, and general information.

In the following sections, you find out how to design your own placeholder and then publish it.



**Figure 1-7:** A customized placeholder page can include the company logo, an (encrypted) e-mail address, and a statement about the company's services.

### *Designing a placeholder page*

To create your own custom placeholder page, you need access to the following things:

- ✓ A text or HTML code editor to build the placeholder page
- ✓ The site owner's company name/logo in GIF, PNG, or JPG format
- ✓ The descriptive statement about the site that will be included on the placeholder page
- ✓ The site owner's e-mail address, which should use the new domain name rather than a personal e-mail address from AOL, Gmail, AT&T, or Yahoo!, for example

The following two sections show you how to create a customized placeholder page styled with internal CSS.

## Creating the page

Follow these steps to create the placeholder page:

1. **Create a new folder on your computer desktop called Placeholder, and inside that folder, create another folder called images.**

The placeholder page and image you're about to create will be saved to this folder structure.

2. **Save the company logo to your new images folder inside the Placeholder folder on your desktop.**

If you want to follow along with the example, point your browser to [www.dummies.com/go/webdesignaio](http://www.dummies.com/go/webdesignaio) and download a copy of the logo graphic named Luau-a-go-go (`luauagogo.gif`).

To save a copy of the graphic, as shown in Figure 1-8, right-click (Windows) or Control+click (Mac) the image and choose Save (This) Image As. This opens the Save As dialog box, where you can choose the save-to location.



3. **Using your preferred code editor, or your computer's text editing program, open a new blank document.**

To use your computer's default text editing program, choose Start⇨All Programs⇨Accessories⇨Notepad if you're using a PC, or on a Mac, launch your Applications folder and double-click the TextEdit icon.



**Figure 1-8:** Use this logo to create a sample placeholder page.

A new untitled document should open automatically. If that doesn't happen, choose File⇨New to open a new file.

4. **If you're using a text editor, type the following basic HTML page structure, including the HTML 4.01 Transitional DTD and Content-Type meta tag:**

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
    "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
<html>
  <head>
    <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8">
    <title></title>
  </head>
  <body>
  </body>
</html>
```

Otherwise, if you're using an HTML code editor, which automatically drops in the structural code for you, skip ahead to Step 5.

**5. Between the opening and closing <title> tags, type a title for the page (for example, Luau-a-go-go).**

Your code should now look like this:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
<html>
  <head>
    <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8">
    <title>Luau-a-go-go</title>
  </head>
  <body>
</body>
</html>
```

This code sets the title for the page, which appears in the browser's title bar.

**6. Between the opening and closing <body> tags, type the company name, a descriptive statement or tag line, and an e-mail address (which you convert into an encrypted e-mail address in Step 10).**

For example, type the following bold text, making sure to add the paragraph <p> and break <br> tags where indicated:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
<html>
  <head>
    <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8">
    <title>Luau-a-go-go</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <p>Luau-a-go-go</p>
    <br>
    <h1>Hawaiian Themed Catering</h1><br>
    <p>Luauas * Special Events * Birthdays * Anniversaries *
    Celebrations<br>
    Santa Monica, CA<br>
    For further information contact<br> info@luauagogo.com</p>
  </body>
</html>
```

The <body> tags hold the text and other content that appear in the browser window.

**7. Choose File → Save to open the Save As dialog box.**

You need to save the document to your new Placeholder folder.

**8. In the File Name field, type index.html; in the Save In field, select the Placeholder folder; and in the Save as Type field, select the All Files option. Then click the Save button.**

This document does not include any logo graphic yet, so you'll need to modify the code.

9. Delete the line of code that says `<p>Luau-a-go-go</p>` and replace it with the following line of code, which inserts the logo graphic onto the page:

```

```

Replace the text in italics if you're using your client's logo.

10. Convert the e-mail address into a working hyperlink using an e-mail encryption service (instead of the regular `mailto: e-mail link`, which is vulnerable to spambots), like the one found at `www.dynamicdrive.com/emailriddler`.

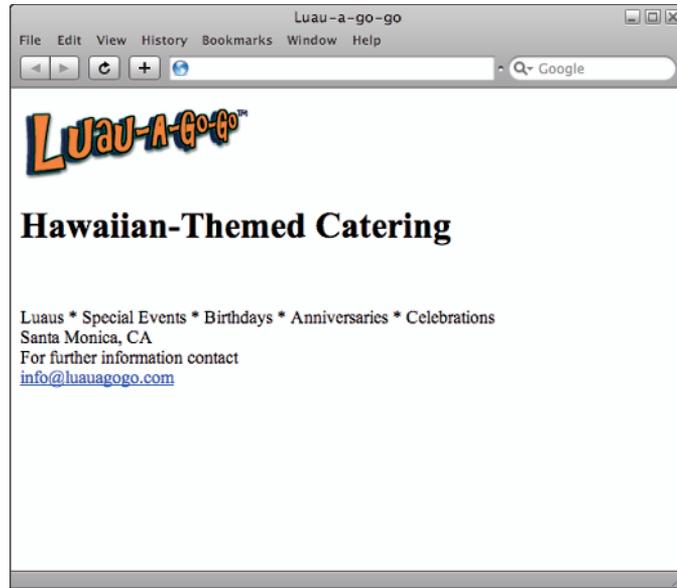
Your page code should now look something like this:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
<html>
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8">
<title>Luau-a-go-go</title>
</head>
<body>

<br>
<h1>Hawaiian Themed Catering</h1><br>
<p>Luauas * Special Events * Birthdays * Anniversaries *
Celebrations<br>
Santa Monica, CA<br>
For further information contact<br>
<script type="text/javascript">
/**]
/*****
* Encrypt Email script- Please keep notice intact
* Tool URL: http://www.dynamicdrive.com/emailriddler/
* *****/
&lt;!-- Encrypted version of: info [at] *****,*** //--&gt;
var
    emailriddlerarray=[105,110,102,111,64,108,117,97,117,97,103,111,103,
    111,46,99,111,109]
var encryptedemail_id62='' //variable to contain encrypted email
for (var i=0; i&lt;emailriddlerarray.length; i++)
encryptedemail_id62+=String.fromCharCode(emailriddlerarray[i])
document.write('&lt;a
    href="mailto:'+encryptedemail_id62+'&gt;'+encryptedemail_id62+'&lt;/a&gt;')
/*]]&gt;*/
&lt;/script&gt;&lt;/p&gt;
&lt;/body&gt;
&lt;/html&gt;</pre>
</div>
<div data-bbox="121 797 208 868" data-label="Image">
<img alt="REMEMBER icon: a hand with the index finger pointing up, inside a yellow circle with the word 'REMEMBER' above it."/>
</div>
<div data-bbox="261 814 843 850" data-label="Text">
<p>For more on e-mail encryption, see the sidebar “Protecting your e-mail addresses from spam” in Book III, Chapter 1.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox="231 856 809 890" data-label="List-Group">
<p>11. Save the changes to your file and preview the page in a browser window.</p>
</div>
```

To preview the page in a browser, drag and drop the icon of your new `index.html` page into any open browser window. No Internet connection is required to preview the page locally.

The page looks okay, like the one shown in Figure 1-9, but it could definitely benefit from a little styling, as described in the next section.



**Figure 1-9:** Before you add CSS styling, a placeholder page can often look bland with just graphics and text.

### *Styling the page*

Follow these steps to add CSS styling to the placeholder page:

- 1. Above the closing `</head>` tag in your code, type the internal CSS markup you want to use on your page. (See Book III, Chapter 3 for more on CSS.)**

If you're following along with the example, type the following markup:

```
<style type="text/css">
<!--
#luauagogo {
  height: 250px;
  width: 500px;
  margin-right: auto;
  margin-left: auto;
}
```

```

margin-top: 15%;
margin-bottom: auto;
text-align: center;
font-family: Georgia, "Times New Roman", Times, serif;
font-size: 12px;
color: #F60;
padding-top: 20px;
padding-right: 0px;
padding-bottom: 0px;
padding-left: 0px;
background-color: #FFF;
border: 1px dashed #0CC;
}
a:link {
    color: #0CC;
}
-->
</style>

```

This CSS markup contains instructions that tell the browser to do the following: Center the content in the browser window, style the text in the Georgia font in 12px and an orange color with the hexadecimal color of #ff6600 to match the logo, add a blue dashed border around everything, and use blue as the link color to match the border.

Before this CSS markup can work, you must apply this style to the page's content.

- 2. Wrap a pair of DIV tags around the page content. Put the opening <div> tag directly after the opening <body> tag and the closing </div> tag directly above the closing </body> tag.**

DIV tags are container tags that can be styled and positioned with CSS when you include the `id` attribute in the opening tag that matches the name of the style in the CSS markup.

- 3. Add the attribute `id="uniqueid"` (for example, `id="luauagogo"`) to the opening <div> tag.**

Replace `uniqueid` with the ID of your choice.

The body part of your code should now look like this:

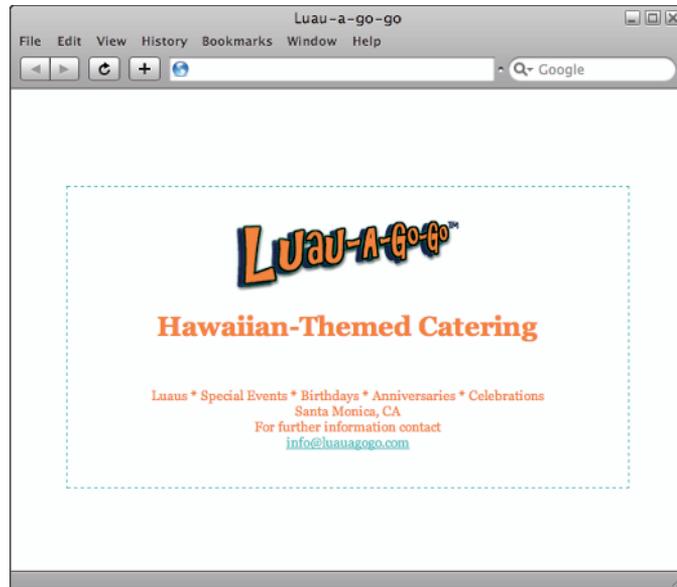
```

<body>
<div id="luauagogo">
  
  <br>
  <h1>Hawaiian Themed Catering</h1><br>
  <p>Luau * Special Events * Birthdays * Anniversaries *
  Celebrations<br>
  Santa Monica, CA<br>
  For further information contact<br>
  <!-- encrypted email address code here --></p>
</div>
</body>

```

4. Save the file again to save the changes you just made and preview the page in a browser window.

Figure 1-10 shows what the page example should look like.



**Figure 1-10:** Use CSS to give your placeholder page more style and personality.



When creating your own placeholder page, feel free to generate as many graphics and other CSS styles as needed to make the page look exactly as you'd like it to. If you've already created a mock-up for the Web site, you may even want to use some of the same design features within the placeholder page. When the page is finished, you need to upload the page to the host server so that the page can brand and identify the domain until the new site is ready to publish.

## *Uploading a placeholder page*

When a custom placeholder page is created for a Web client, be sure you get your client's approval on the page before publishing it. This gives the client the opportunity to review your work and suggest any changes that need to be made. After all, this page represents the client's company and she will want to put her best face forward. If the client does recommend some changes, make any adjustments to the code as needed and then resubmit

the page for approval. When the client grants approval, you can then upload the placeholder HTML file, the `images` folder that contains any graphics, and any other files needed to support the page, to the host server.

To transfer the placeholder page and supporting files to the host server, you can use the host provider's control panel, a stand-alone File Transfer Protocol (FTP) program, an FTP program that is built into an HTML editor (Dreamweaver has one), or a browser that supports FTP. You discover more about FTP in Book V, Chapter 2, so for now, I discuss how to upload your files through a browser.

Follow these steps to transfer your local placeholder files to the remote host server using Internet Explorer:

**1. Get the FTP address, username, and password for the domain from the host provider or from your Web client.**

This information is typically sent by e-mail to the person who signed up for the hosting account. The FTP address should be something like `ftp.domainname.com`.

**2. With a live Internet connection, open Internet Explorer, type the FTP address into the browser window's address bar without the `http://` protocol (as in `ftp://ftp.domainname.com`), and press Enter (or Return on the Mac).**

A Log On As dialog box, like the one shown in Figure 1-11, should appear, inside which you can enter your FTP access information.

**3. Enter the site's username and password in the appropriate fields and click the Log On button.**

To save the logon information, select the Save Password check box before clicking the Log On button.

The browser window then automatically refreshes and displays all the files on the host server for the domain. Those files will probably include a default placeholder home page named `index.html`, a CGI-BIN folder for processing scripts, and possibly a few other preinstalled files and folders that the host server requires to make the site accessible to visitors.



**Figure 1-11:** Enter the FTP username and password in the Internet Explorer Log On As dialog box.

4. **Drag and drop a copy of the Placeholder folder's index.html file along with a copy of the images folder into the open IE browser window.**

Your browser begins copying the files to the remote host.

5. **If prompted to overwrite the index.html page, click the Yes button so that your new custom placeholder page will appear as the new default home page.**

When the files have fully been copied to the server, you are finished *ftp-ing*.

6. **To test the success of the file transfer, type the URL of the domain into the browser's address bar, such as `http://www.mydomain.name.com`.**



Your new placeholder page should appear. If you do not see it, try refreshing the browser window (usually by pressing F5) and/or clearing your browser's cache. For simple directions on how to clear your browser's cache, visit [www.bn1.gov/itd/webapps/browsercache.asp](http://www.bn1.gov/itd/webapps/browsercache.asp). If you still do not see your placeholder page, your server might use the default.html homepage naming convention. To test that theory, rename index.html to default.html and upload the file to the server. The new placeholder page should appear if your theory is correct.

If you still have any difficulty with the FTP process or the viewing of your placeholder page, contact the host provider for the domain for assistance.