

How do you create a good personal website?

A personal website is different from LSE's own People Profile Pages.

People Profile Pages are typically hosted within a section of the LSE website that is dedicated to either a LSE Department or other academic unit at LSE, and are also featured in the LSE website's [People Finder](https://www.lse.ac.uk/People/Search-People) (<https://www.lse.ac.uk/People/Search-People>).

The CMS template used to create People Profile pages enables you to enter information such as your 'key expertise' areas, research publications and more as well as provide a link to your personal website from there.

The most important thing is to keep your LSE People Profile page up to date. Your LSE page will always feature higher in search results. Make sure your 'key expertise' are all listed, this is how people will find you (if they don't know you already) through the 'LSE experts' search.

Why might you need a personal website?

- If you have more information to share than can comfortably fit on your LSE profile page and you have the time to keep it updated.
- So that you have a website with a life beyond your time at LSE.
- If you are aiming at a non-academic audience (so you need more than just a Google Scholar page, e.g.)
- Useful if you have something particularly big to promote, e.g. a book.

Which platform could you use to build it?

We would recommend using a platform like Square Space <https://www.squarespace.com/>.

This does come at a cost (of around £10 per month) but comes with the benefits of pre-designed and easy-to-use templates that are responsive to different devices and browsers and includes access to metrics. LSE does not provide technical support for these types of third party suppliers but the platforms tend to come with online manuals for web editing and are also supported technically by their own Customer Support teams. The offering may vary between different vendors in terms of design features, ease of use and technical support.

What should you put on it?

Visitors will likely spend a very short amount of time on your site – you need to make sure your content is clear and well structured, so your visitors can easily find the information they need whilst hopefully finding out a bit more along the way.

Content you might want to include: A short bio (about me), news/events, research interests and publications (academic and non-academic), any major projects or initiatives you are involved with, contact details. If you have lots of publications you could divide them by type – articles, books, broadcasts, media etc. This will all depend on your audience – is it primarily intended to be academic, student, or public? If public, which kind of public – corporate sector? policymakers? media?

Visual design is important – you want your content to be in engaging chunks, not just long lists.

Think about including video and podcasts as well as text and images. Ensure that the website is responsive, so it works for different platforms (including tablet and mobile) and that the site is accessible, for example to the visually impaired.

For the majority of personal websites users will be visiting to find ways to engage with you (i.e. your contact details), and to find out more about your areas of expertise.

Make sure you are communicating the right message – remember that on a global platform, with audiences accessing your content from different cultures/languages, things are open to misinterpretation.

How should you structure your content?

Information architecture is key, both on each webpage or across the site.

Avoid lots of clicks (the more clicks the more likely you are to lose your audience). A good rule of thumb is to make key information accessible within three clicks from the entry point, which is often the homepage.

Two common reasons for lengthy ‘user journey’s’ through a website are that; a) the site architecture is not logically structured from a user perspective, and/or that b) content on each webpage is not sufficiently condensed, so try to do a content audit – make a list of everything you want to include on the site and try to map out how it could best be structured and always question whether a particular piece of content really justifies a page of its own or if it can be combined with other content.

Take a look at these examples for some inspiration

<https://consonlocke.com/> Great book promotion

<https://cs.harvard.edu/malan/> More simple site, but good embedding of videos

<http://www.marieeberry.com/> This site is particularly successful in its use of imagery

<https://www.anneapplebaum.com>

<https://lindayueh.com/>

If you build a website make sure you link through to it

On your LSE profile page, your Twitter and other social media accounts.

Make sure the page metadata is filled in so that you feature in search engine results.

Further reading

Please read this guide for more information about creating People Profile Pages:

<https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/communications-division/digital-communications-team/assets/documents/guides/How-to-create-a-People-page-guide-V2.pdf>.

Here is a guide on how to write for the web: <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/communications-division/digital-communications-team/assets/documents/guides/A-guide-to-writing-for-the-web.pdf>

Here is some information on site architecture: <https://www.uxpin.com/studio/blog/web-structures-explained/>