Connecting to the server using FileZilla
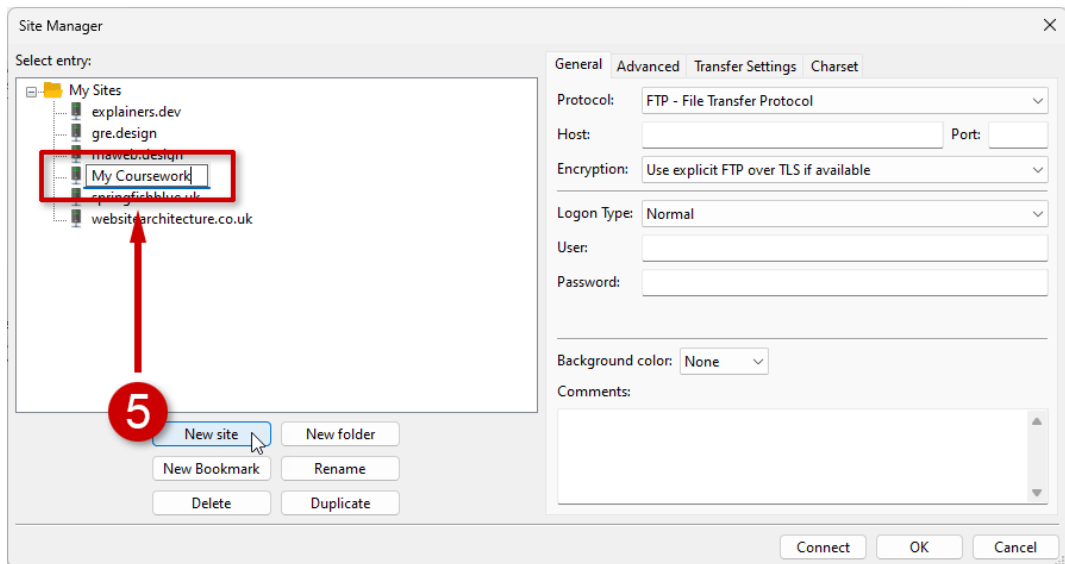
MA Web Design + Content Planning

Once you have created your FTP account, you are ready to use the account to connect to your hosted web space via FTP using an application called FileZilla. FileZilla is an *FTP Client*, meaning that it is used to make requests to the web server in a client/server relationship.

There are many other FTP clients, and if you already have a favourite, you should continue using that. We like FileZilla because it is an Open Source project (meaning we can use it for free), and it can be used on just about any operating system and therefore provides consistency in an educational setting where some students will use Windows and others will use Mac OS.

Before you begin this process, make sure you have set up a local folder where you will keep a local copy of the files that will be uploaded to the server. Something like *Documents/Coursework/public_html* would be ideal.
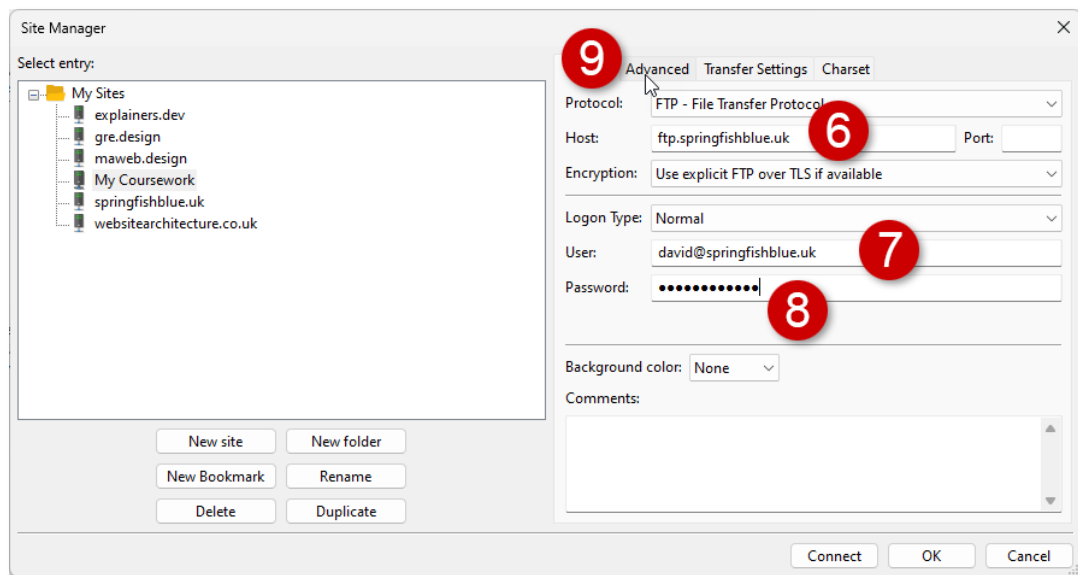
1. Go to https://filezilla-project.org/ and click the grey "Download FileZilla Client" button.

2. On the next screen, click the green "Download FileZilla Client" button, and finally click the green "Download" button below the first of the options presented in the modal.

3. When the download is complete, locate the setup file and install FileZilla.

4. Once installation is complete, open FileZilla and from the menu bar, select **File > Site Manager…**

5. In the Site Manager dialogue box, click the "New Site" button and give your site a name. The name can be anything you like. Most often it will be the domain name or something meaningful like "My Coursework".
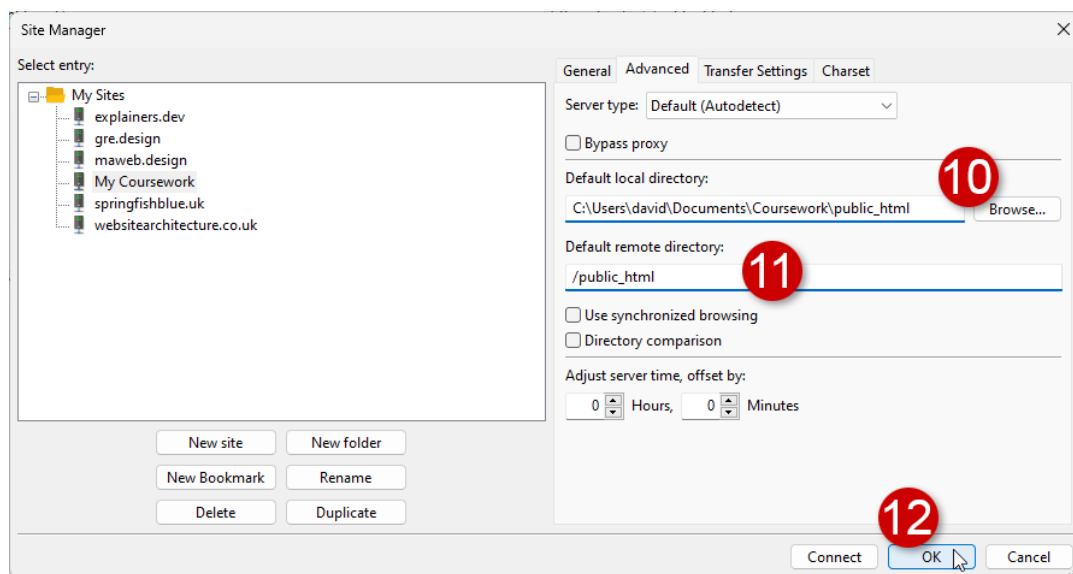

For the most part, the default settings on the right-hand side of Site Manager are good for your new site connection. There are just three bits of information we need to add.

6. **Host:** enter your domain name preceded by "ftp.". It should look something like this: *ftp.mydomain.uk*

7. **User:** enter your FTP username. This is the name you chose when creating the FTP account: *name@mydomain.uk*

maweb.design

8. **Password:** enter the password you set when creating the FTP account.

9. All the other settings on The General tab should remain unchanged. Click the **Advanced** tab to display the local and remote directory settings.

10. **Default local directory:** click the Browse button and navigate to the folder where you will keep your website files. ideally, this will be called public_html and will be a mirror of the same folder on your web server.

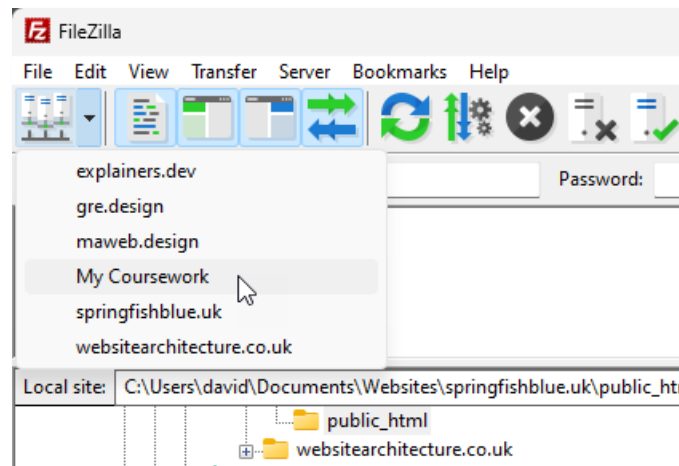11. **Default remote directory:** In the text box, enter */public_html*

12. Finally, click the "OK" button to save your new site connection and the settings. The Site Manager dialogue box will close.

    Note: We'd like FileZilla to remember the password we entered so that we don't have to enter it every time we connect, so if you are prompted to confirm this, you should do so.

Now that you have saved your new site, you can connect to your web space with just a couple of clicks.

Use the drop-down menu at the top left of FileZilla to select your site. If all the settings have been entered correctly, you will be immediately connected to your web space.

Note: the first time you make a connection, you may see an "Unknown certificate" warning. If you do, check the box at the lower left of the dialogue which says, "Always trust certificate in future sessions", and click the "OK" button.

Once connected, you will see all the files and folders on your web server displayed in the right-hand pane of the main FileZilla interface.

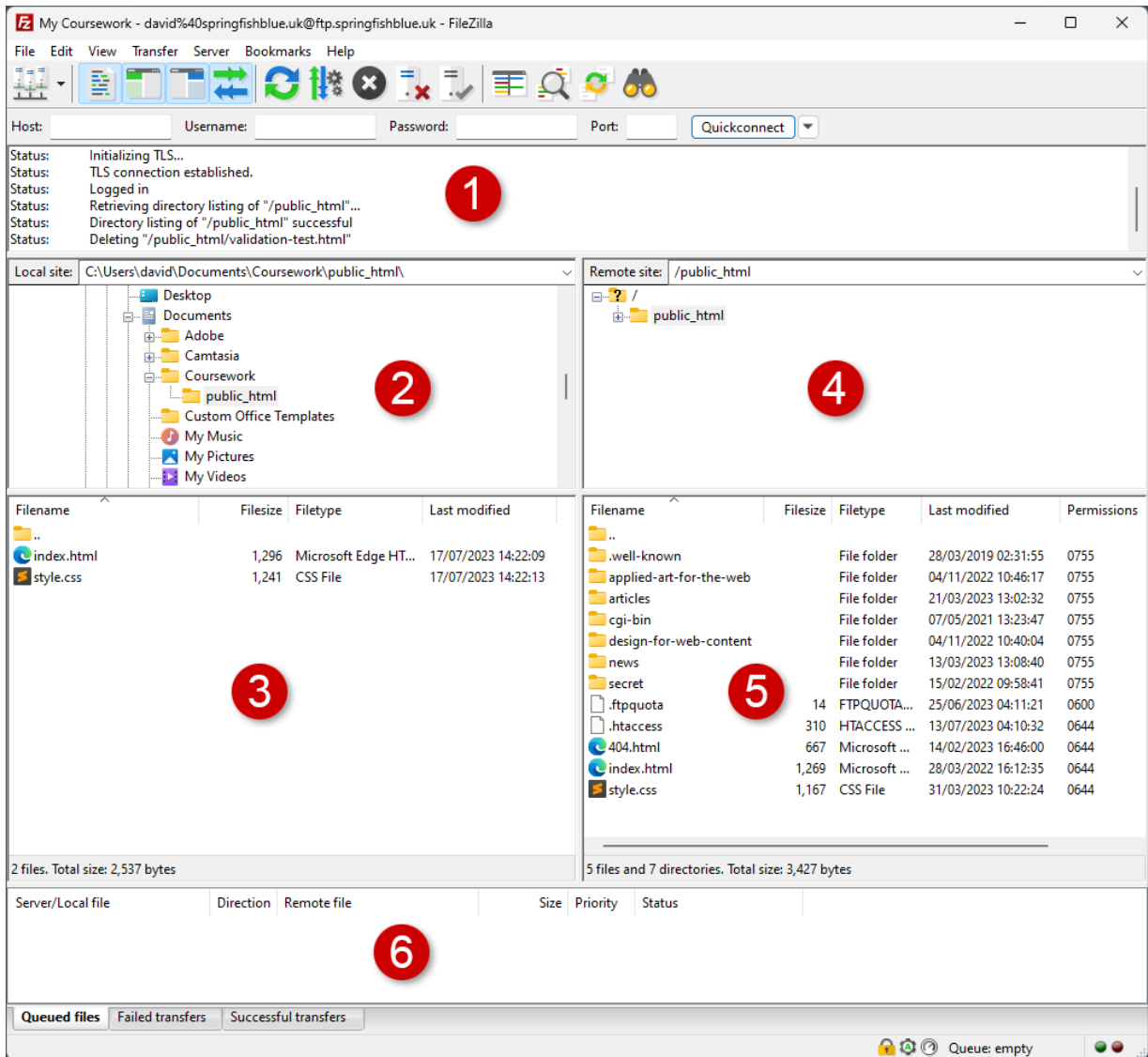## What if I get an error when I try to connect?

If the connection fails, there are two likely reasons:

1. The username and/or the password are incorrect. Check the credentials you chose when you created the FTP account.
2. FTP Enforcer has not been disabled in cPanel. Go to cPanel, find the Security group, and disable FTP Enforcer for a set time period, or whitelist your current IP address.
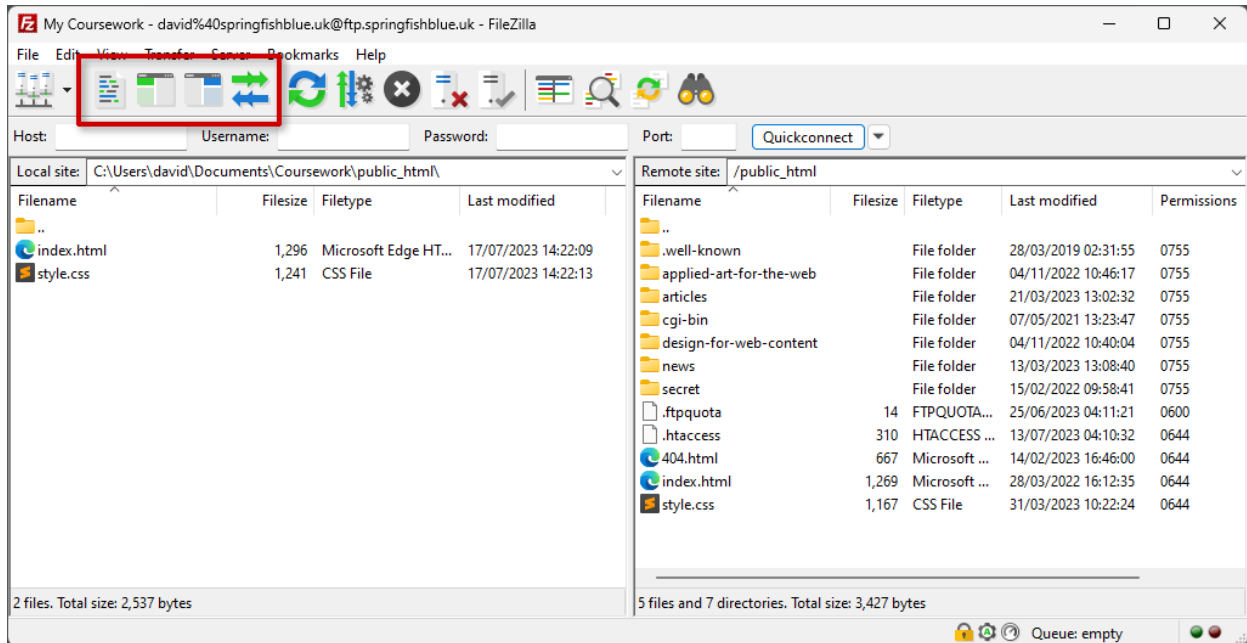
The FileZilla interface

FileZilla wins no prizes for interface design, but it's worth knowing what the various parts are.

1. **The message log**. This will give you feedback on the status of your connection and will display ant error messages should the connection fail.
2. **The local directory tree**. It shows the folders on your local computer. You can use this pane to navigate your local folders.
3. **The local file listing**. This displays the files and sub-folders in the folder selected in the local directory tree.
4. **The remote directory tree**. This displays the default remote directory (usually *public_html* - the web root) on your web server. All files and folders inside *public_html* are publicly accessible via a browser (hence the name, ***public***_html).
5. **The remote file listing**. This displays the files and folders inside the folder selected in the remote directory listing. By default, when you first connect you will see the contents of *public_html*.
6. **The transfer queue**. This will display the progress of file uploads and downloads.

maweb.design

Configuring the interface

You can control the visibility of most of the above areas using the options on the toolbar. For example, if you prefer a minimal interface, you can configure the FileZilla interface to show only the essential local and remote file listing panes:

Once connected to your web server, you can upload files simply by dragging and dropping them from the Local site pane on the left to the Remote site pane on the right. You can also drag-and-drop from your desktop or from file listings in File Explorer (Windows) or Finder (Mac OS).

The next step in preparing your work environment is to ensure that you are able to view all file name extensions on your laptop so that you can easily compare your local file view (using File Explorer or Finder) with the remote file view as seen in FileZilla. See Show file extensions for details on how to do this.

July 2023

maweb.design