[Morse code beeps]
[Whoosh]
[Helicopter rotor]
Hi, my name is Annika Thomas
and I'm a Fellow
with the AeroAstro Communication
Lab at MIT, and today we'll be talking
about designing personal websites
and portfolios.
The goals of this lesson
include that you should be able
to identify the purpose and intended
audience of a personal website
and tailor that content accordingly.
You should be able to design
a clear, organized structure
for a personal or professional website,
and you'll begin drafting a website
that effectively communicates
your work skills
and potentially interests.
Some criteria
for success for a personal website
include that it should be purpose
driven having a clear goal.
It should be audience focused.
So the content and tone are designed
for the intended reader.
It should be well organized.
Information
is logically structured and scannable.
It should be informative.
So the projects and experience included
effectively communicate what you did,
why it mattered,
and what skills or tools were involved.
And your website should be maintainable.
The site is a living document
that can evolve over time.
There are quite a few different types
of personal websites.
Some of them include a resume website,
which is a single page overview.
It's a fast, scannable
snapshot of your experience
that complements a traditional resume.
You could have a portfolio site.
With portfolio sites, we usually use them
when your work is best communicated
through projects, visuals, or artifacts,

as opposed to bullet points.
You could have a project
or paper landing page.
So this is a focused page
that explains a specific project,
publication, or piece of research.
You could have a demo or a technical site.
These demonstrate technical skills
through interactive
tools, code, or live examples.
Or you could have a personal home page
or a blog.
This is a space to share ideas,
writing, or interests
alongside your professional work.
So we're going to start with
an activity
to identify your web site type.
So go ahead and take about five minutes
and follow the instructions
outlined in the activity
to identify your web site type.
Write down your primary website goal
and which type best supports
that goal right now.
[Alien spaceship beeps]
So your website should really be tailored
to a specific intended audience.
Some common audiences
include potential employers or recruiters,
professional collaborators, advisors
or peers,
a broader public or online community.
Some different audiences
will scan the content differently.
They'll care about different details
on your website
and spend different amounts of time
on your site.
So design primarily for one
audience in mind,
not for everyone equally.
You want your website
to have a specific purpose,
and a big piece of
that is your intended audience.
So what content belongs on your website?
Well, some common sections include
having an about or bio section,
including projects

or research, publications or writing,
teaching or service, media press
or outreach, code repositories or demos,
and including a blog or recent news.
So we're going to take
a little bit of time to do an activity
where you outline
the content of your website.
Take about 20 minutes on this activity
and use a text editor on your computer
to outline the content that you'd like
to include on your website.
Focus during this activity
on the information itself,
as opposed to the format or website style.
[Alien spaceship beeps]
Now that you've completed
an outline of the information
that you want to include on your website,
we'll take a little bit of time
to look at potential organizations
or structures of website.
A couple of common examples include
an engineering portfolio site map example,
which can have a tree structure
like we see on the left here.
And another is a project page
layout example, which we see on the right.
There's a balance
between the descriptions
and the visuals that we want to include
in order to communicate
what was done during that project.
So we'll
take a little bit of time
to look at some examples
of different personal websites
that I've completed over the years.
The first of which I did
using Google sites.
And you can see
I start off with an About Me section,
include recent news,
some select projects, talks, press.
And I designed this website to be a bit
more like a portfolio
with a list of all of the projects
that I had completed at this time.
Now, this was the first website
that I put together, and I decided later

that I wanted some more customization, so
this is the website that I use currently.
It's hosted using a GitHub repository,
so I've written all of this in HTML.
So there's a bit more of an involved
process in creating this,
but I have more ability
to customize the different material.
So you can see
I have an about section
with some of my research interests,
some recent news and select publications,
as well as ways
to contact me on the website.
And across the top I have different
sections that correspond to the parts
that I want to include on my website,
my publications, a couple projects.
I have a section with my CV
and some press and talks that I've given.
And a good thing about a format
like this is we can include links to
different videos or different publications
in your personal website.
Now we'll spend a little bit of time
talking about website accessibility,
which is something you should be thinking
about while building your websites.
Some good practices
include having alt text
for your images, linking descriptive text.
So hyperlink text, avoiding
using long URLs
or saying click here
and linking the here.
You want to include high contrast text
and avoid distracting backgrounds.
When designing your website,
you don't want to rely on color
to communicate information or messages.
So make sure you're using
a colorblind checker
to ensure that everything's
still readable.
You want to be consistent
with your heading levels.
Use headers in the order
that they're designed.
This is the way in which screen readers
navigate websites

so that people are able to
skip different sections
and go to different parts, so
make sure those headings are consistent.
And for some more information
on accessibility,
check out the Aero
Astro com Lab Accessibility Guide.
Now we'll
talk a little bit about domain names.
If you're creating a website
using something like Squarespace,
or Wix or, Google sites, then
usually that domain name
is going to be included in the website.
But if you want your website name to be,
for example,
your first and last name.com,
then you want to create a domain name.
And a domain name
is basically your website's human
readable address on the internet.
You have a domain name server, which is
effectively the internet's phone book.
This maps
your domain name into a server IP address.
That's what
the browser uses to connect to.
And so when you're looking at websites,
you have a domain name
that's typed into a browser, DNS lookup,
it finds the server IP,
and then the website loads.
Now, if you wanted to
get your own domain name,
these are leased annually.
Some standard ones like .com .net
or .org cost about 10 to $20 a year.
But new or specialty domain names
like .AI or .tech
are going to be a bit more expensive.
Some popular providers for domain names
include Wix, GoDaddy, and Namecheap.
Now, by the end of this website,
you should be able to identify
the purpose and intended audience
of a personal website.
You should be able to design a clear,
organized structure for a website,
and you began drafting a website

that effectively communicates your work.
[Alien spaceship beeps]