

All About The Internet



Presented by:

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**"I heard on TV that everyone is getting rich
on the Internet. Is this little slot
where the money comes out?"**

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The Internet

To help define the word "Internet" we can look at the word more closely. "Inter," meaning between two or more, and "net," meaning network, i.e. a system of lines or channels that cross or interconnect. We can then simply deduce that Internet is defined as something which links networks in some manner. To be more specific, the Internet is a collection of computers and networks that combine to move information around. The Internet allows you, the user, to access this large network of computers so that you may move information to and from your own personal computer.

The Internet is sometimes referred to as the Information Superhighway. This high-speed network had made information services, training, education, medical services and government data available to everyone, including individuals, as well as businesses and larger organizations. Most people automatically equate the Internet with the World Wide Web (www). The World Wide Web is in fact a part of the Internet. We can, however, use other elements of the Internet. They are listed and defined below.

- World Wide Web - This is the fastest growing and most often used service of the Internet. The web, unlike other Internet elements, is graphical in nature. In addition to text, it can combine images, audio, and video. The web is actually a system of linked servers that distribute such pages to users all over the world.
- Electronic Mail (email) - This is the most commonly used Internet resource. It allows the user to send messages to anyone on the Internet. Email is sent and received virtually instantaneously.

Understand a Network

A network is created anytime two or more computers are linked together to share information. A network can be created by connecting a few computers, or by linking thousands of computers. It is a way of connecting computers so they can communicate with each other and share resources like printers, storage space, and data. The Internet is often described as a "network of networks." The Internet is not a single network, but a super network of thousands and thousands of smaller sub-networks. Your computer becomes part of this global network of computers when you connect to the Internet through the use of an Internet Service Provider.

Internet Service Provider (ISP)

An Internet Service Provider is often thought of as an organization that provides the user with a connection to the Internet. Your computer will connect to a computer owned by the ISP, known as the host computer. The ISP host computer will then connect you to the Internet. Examples of Internet service providers are America Online and Optimum Online.

Connectivity

In order to have access to the Internet through your chosen ISP, your computer must be connected in some manner to the network of computers and servers that comprise the Internet. The type of connectivity we elect to use is primarily a consideration of price, speed and availability.

Modem

A modem is a device that is generally located internally in your computer, although there are external modems available. The purpose of a modem is to change the digital data from your computer, so that it can be passed along telephone lines or cables to another computer. This computer's modem will then change the signal back. This back and forth communications process is known as modulating and demodulating.

Optimum Online

In December 1996, Cablevision began offering its cable modem Internet. The service uses a state-of-the-art fiber optic/coaxial network to provide online speed of up to 100x faster than dial-up services.

Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) and FiOS

DSL is a technology that provides high-bandwidth connectivity to homes and small businesses over copper telephone lines. This service is usually offered by the phone company. One of the interesting things about this service is that one line allows you to use your telephone or fax machine simultaneously while your computer is on the Internet. One of the other positive features is that you are always connected, so there is no need to dial out. Prices vary depending on many factors so call to get current pricing.

FiOS (Fiber Optic Service) is another home communication service provided by the telephone company. This is not available in all neighborhoods.

Browser

A browser is a software program that provides the user with a friendly interface for navigating the Internet. The two most commonly used browsers are Netscape Communicator (formerly known as Netscape Navigator), and Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Browsers provide the user with buttons and menus that allow them to execute various commands. While there are subtle differences between the different browsers, they share many common functions and buttons. The most commonly used buttons and their functions are listed below:

- **Back** - allows the user to go back to the previously viewed page
- **Forward** - allows the user to return forward to the page viewed before the back button was executed
- **Stop** - stops the load of a page
- **Refresh/Reload** - reloads the page in the event that it did not load correctly or in its entirety
- **Home** - returns the user to the home page, which is the page the user has designated the browser to open to upon log on
- **Search** - opens a pre-selected or default search engine
- **Favorites/Bookmarks** - expands a pull down menu or opens a sub-window that keeps track of favorite sites that the user returns to often
- **History** - keeps a history of all sites visited within a predetermined period of time

Every web browser provides a web address box. This is where the user supplies the specific Internet address that they wish to view.

Uniform Resource Locator (URL)

The URL is the address that is used to locate a site on the Internet.

<http://www.host.com/html/index.html>

URLs have six parts:

1. Protocol (http) the protocol is also called an access method or resource type. It defines the rules for transmitting the information across the Internet. The protocol http stands for Hypertext Transfer Protocol. The http protocol is used for transmitting hypermedia documents. Because all web documents are hypertext, all URLs accessing the Web will begin with http.
2. Separator (://) the separator (colon with two forward slashes) divides the protocol from the rest of the URL.
3. Host Name (www.host.com) this is the Internet address of the Web site's computer. This is also referred to as the domain name.
4. Path (/html) the path indicates where on the computer's hard drive, the Web document is located. The path is also often omitted.
5. Document Name (index.html) the document name is the actual name of the Web document. Hypertext documents are written

in a special format known as Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). Actually, it's just a text document that has several embedded codes in it.

Zone - the zone (part of the domain name) indicates what type of organization is using the address. Following is a list of the seven organizational domains that you will find on the net.

com	Commercial Company	mil	Military
edu	Educational Institution	net	Network Gateway
gov	Government	org	Nonprofit Organization
int	International Organization		

Some computer use geographical domains, which indicates their location. au for Australia, ca for Canada, it for Italy, mx for Mexico and us for United States.

Important: The slightest error in the address will cause a failure to connect to the site. If you receive an error message simply examine the address that you typed in so that you may locate the error. Correct it and press the enter key on the keyboard to resubmit.

Web Site

Each web site has a series of colorful computer screens that may contain text, graphics, animation, audio, video - or all of that! Each specific screen is called a Web page. A Web site may consist of many Web pages. Web sites have a special beginning, or starting page for anyone who connects to that site. This special page, which serves as an entry point, is called the Home Page.

Web pages frequently have links on them. These links are also referred to as hyperlinks. Links can be embedded in text or in graphics. In order to locate a hyperlink, one needs to position their mouse pointer over the link. Generally in the body of the page, your mouse pointer will appear as an arrow. If your mouse pointer changes to a "pointing hand," then you have located a hyperlink. A hyperlink will connect the user to another location on the Web site. By pointing and clicking on the hyperlink, you will navigate to that new location. It may be further down on the same web page, it may connect you to another web page that may be a part of the initial web site, or it may connect you to an entirely different web site. If you click on a hyperlink and then determine, after viewing the new page, that it is not taking you in the direction you had hoped for, you may simply click on the "back" browser button to return to the previous page.

If a page is not viewable on the monitor in its entirety, which is usually the case, scroll bars will be provided. Scroll bars appear when they are necessary. A scroll bar becomes necessary when the window is not large enough to show all its contents. Scroll bars are used to scroll up or down, or from side to side, to reveal the remaining contents of the window.

Downloading a File

Anytime you view an image or sound on your computer you are downloading it from the host computer to your own computer. Conversely, when you send information from your computer to another computer, you are uploading the information.

It is possible to download files and save them to your computer's hard drive so that it may be viewed at a later time, without being connected to the host computer. If someone sends you a file attached to an email, you will need to download it before you can view it.

The time in which it takes to download a file depends on many factors. The size of the file is the biggest consideration, although Internet connection speed and the overall processor speed of your computer will also be factors. Sometimes files are compressed or "zipped" so that the file transfer will take less time. There are free trial basis software applications on the web that will allow you to zip and unzip files. The most well know programs are Pkzip and Winzip. These programs are used to compress, or zip, a file to make it smaller, or to extract, or unzip, a file to return it to its original size.

Downloading a file is not as difficult as one might think. If you are downloading an application, you may need to provide information at the download site. Generally, the site will require information about your computer type, i.e: Mac or Windows machine.

The most common difficulty that users have when downloading a file is the inability to find the file once it has been downloaded. One of the first dialog boxes on a download will ask you to provide a download location. If you don't change it, it will download to the location that came up in the dialog as the default location. You may change this location in the same way in which you change a "save in" location when saving a file. The second thing that you must pay attention to is what the download is called. It may or may not have any sensible correlation to what you would expect. Once the download is complete, you will know where the file is and what it is called.

Accessing Web Sites

Much of the time spent on the Internet is in the pursuit of information. A good place to begin is to see if you can determine the URL, or Internet address, of the place or company you wish to investigate. Most companies will maintain a domain name that is logical. For example, if you were looking up a Toyota, their web address would probably be <http://www.toyota.com>. Type in www.toyota.com (it is usually not necessary to type in <http://>, the web browser will automatically furnish this), in the Internet address box. Then press the enter key on the keyboard. Within a matter of seconds you would be viewing the Toyota site.

Remember that there are never any spaces in a URL; if the name is several words long, simply write the words in one continuous string. If you are unsuccessful in locating the information you need in this manner, it will be necessary to use a search engine.

Search Engines

A **web search engine** is designed to search for information on the World Wide Web. Some popular search engines are Google and Yahoo. The search results are generally presented in a list of results and are often called *hits*. A search engine begins when the user enters a query. A query is a keyword or list of keywords that the user identifies to the search engine as the criteria for the search. Every search engine provides a blank entry box that is used to type in the query. The user will then click on the search or find button or simply press the enter key on the keyboard.

Those items that are returned based on the user query are generally referred to as "hits." Every search engine has subtle differences, but most will provide approximately ten hits per page, with a button on the bottom of the page that will allow the user to view the next twenty hits. Each hit provides a link to the actual website. In addition to the links, there will generally be a brief excerpt from the page so that the user can determine if this is a site they wish to investigate. If it is not, the user continues to scroll to other choices. If it appears that the site may be useful, one must simply click on the link to go directly to the site. Once at the site, the user may view it, take notes, send it to the printer, or access other hyperlinks within the site. When the user is done with the site, they may then click on the **back** browser button to investigate the other hits.

Using a search engine can provide excellent results however; it is also time-consuming and frustrating. The user soon learns that they are wading through a large pool of often useless material. After some time, you may find that you prefer some search engines over others. One of the most important lessons one can learn about using a search engine is how to refine your query to narrow down the results to those most appropriate. It is often helpful to supply more than one key word in your query.