

INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERNET

Internet Express 1: The Basics

I. What is the Internet?

The Internet is a network of computers around the world that can share information with each other.

The World Wide Web, or “Web,” is the name for the universe of information accessible via computers that are hooked up to the Internet. People use sites on the World Wide Web, called “web sites” or “web pages” for communication, education, entertainment, and commerce.

Most people use the terms “Internet” and “World Wide Web” interchangeably.

II. Web Browsers

There are a variety of web browsers or programs that help you access sites on the Web. Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Google Chrome are the ones in most widespread use. In class we will use the Internet Explorer browser. To start a web browser program, double click (two gentle, quick clicks) with your left mouse button on the icon, or picture, for the program you wish to use. The Firefox icon has an orange fox wrapped around the globe. Google Chrome’s icon is three colored discs circling a blue ball. The Internet Explorer icon looks like a small “e.”

III. Clicking on Links

A “home page” is the first web page that appears in the browser when you visit a web site. All other web pages in the web site are accessible either from the home page or from links deeper within the site.

The first web page that will appear when you start Internet Explorer will be the library’s home page within the library. It is accessible only in the library building. The main focus of this class, though, will be the library’s public home page: www.gailborden.info. This web page is accessible from any computer with an Internet connection.

To reach the public home page you may either type in the address in the address line or click on its link. A link is usually blue and underlined, like this: [Home Page](#). Sometimes a picture can be a link. If you move your mouse over a picture or group of underlined words and the mouse arrow changes from an arrow to a fist with the thumb and index finger extended, you have found a link.

When trying to click on a link, you must hold the mouse very still as you press down lightly with the left mouse button . Moving the mouse as you click will move the pointer off the link and you will not succeed in going to the desired web page. Please click on the [Home Page](#).

IV. Moving Around in a Web Page

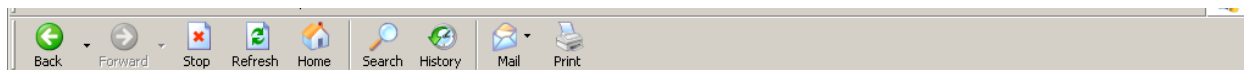
There are three ways to navigate up and down a web page. The first way is to use the scroll bar located at the far right side of the screen. The bar has arrows on the top and bottom and you may move the page in the direction indicated by the arrows if you place the mouse pointer directly on the arrow and click. Each click moves the page up or down one line. You may also place the pointer on the slide bar button found between the two arrows, hold down with the left mouse button, and slide the mouse in the direction you wish the page to move. If a web page is too wide to fit on the screen, a side-to-side scroll bar will also appear at the bottom of the page.

The second way to move the page up and down is to click within the page in an area that does not contain a link. Use the arrow keys found to the right of the “Shift” key on the right side of the keyboard to navigate the page.

The third way is to click on the page in an area that does not contain a link and then roll the scroll wheel which is located between the left and right buttons on the mouse to move the page up and down.

The library’s home page offers access to a wealth of information by clicking on its many links. Move your mouse along the different subjects found on the gray bar just below the picture of the library to see all the information available. In the far left of the green bar just above the gray bar is a link to your personal library account. But there is still more! To view the entirety of the library’s home page, use the scroll bar, the scroll wheel on the mouse, or the direction arrows on your keyboard to move down the screen. Note that some links on the home page are pictures.

V. Browser Buttons



The buttons at the top of the screen are called browser buttons. The most important are:

Back: moves you back one page. You may continually hit “Back” and move back page by page.

Forward: moves you forward one page. Again, you may hit “Forward” until you reach the last site you visited.

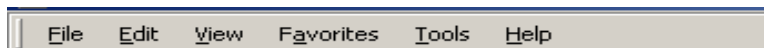
Stop: halts the loading of a web page. This is useful when a page is taking too long to load. Often, clicking the “Stop” button and then the “Reload” or “Refresh” button will bring up the page in a shorter amount of time.

Refresh/Reload: re-requests the current web page and displays it on the screen. This is useful for updating sports scores, news headlines, and stock market information.

Home: moves your browser to the web page designated as the home page on that computer.

Depending upon the browser you are using and the version of that browser, these icons may look different and some may not even be located on the browser line.

VI. Printing a Web Page



Another important part of a web page is the menu toolbar. This is the gray menu of commands at the top of the screen. By moving the mouse to one of the headings and clicking once, you may see the options offered under that topic. For printing use the “File” menu. Follow these steps to print a web page or part of a web page:

1. Click on the “File” menu with the left mouse button.
2. Scroll down with your mouse arrow and click on “Print Preview.”
3. Use the arrow keys that appear at the top of the screen to look at how each page will appear when you print.
4. Note which pages you would like to print, then click on “Print” at the top left.
5. Click to specify if you want to print “All,” the “Current Page,” or specify which page or range of pages.

When a web page includes the print option within its site, use that option instead of printing from “File.”

VII. Web Addresses



The address line is where you type an address when you know a site’s actual address or URL (Uniform Resource Locator). A web address contains no spaces and does not end in a

period. Capitalization usually does not matter, but the computer is unforgiving of spelling errors.

Consider the parts of the library's web address: "<http://www.gailborden.info/>." The first part is "http://," which stands for HyperText Transport Protocol. This refers to the standard format for transmitting web pages on the Internet. Generally, it is not necessary to type this part of the address and the browser will add it for you. Most web addresses also include "www," which stands for "World Wide Web." If a site was registered using the "www" as part of its address, you must also include it when typing the address.

The middle part of a web address identifies the company or other entity responsible for the web page. The computer hosting the Gail Borden Public Library's web site is called "gailborden."

The end of a web address signifies the kind of organization responsible for the site, or in which country it was registered. The most common web address endings are:

.com : companies

.org : non-profit organizations

.gov : government agencies in the United States

.info : information technology

.net : Internet service providers

.biz : business sites

.mil : United States military sites

.uk : sites registered in Great Britain

.au : sites registered in Australia

Most web pages end with a forward slash, or "/" . Again, you do not need to type this into the address block and the browser will automatically add it to the address. So, all that is usually necessary to type is what comes after the "http://www" and before the final "/" .

To go to a web page, click once with your left mouse button in the address bar. The address currently appearing there should turn blue and you can begin typing without erasing what is already there. If only part of the current address turns blue, you may backspace to eliminate the address or highlight the whole address and press delete. After typing in the address of the desired site, press "Enter."

VIII. Sites to Explore

www.aarp.org : national association for people over 50

www.amazon.com : online bookstore

www.cnn.com : the CNN news site

www.ebay.com : online auction site

finance.yahoo.com : financial web site

www.illinois.gov : State of Illinois home page

www.irs.gov : U.S. federal tax site

www.mapquest.com : site for finding maps and driving directions

www.medlineplus.gov : medical site sponsored by the National Library of Medicine and National Institutes of Health

www.socialsecurity.gov : U.S. Social Security home page

IX. Exiting the Internet

To close out of the web browser, either click on the “File” menu and then on “Close” with your left mouse button or click on the small “X” in the very top right corner of your screen with your left mouse button.

If you would like to visit the web page created for this class after the class is over, it is available from the library’s public web page (www.gailborden.info). Click on “Services” found in the gray bar at the top of the page. Under that menu is “For Computer Users,” and then “Introduction to the Internet.” All three classes offered by Adult Services are located there.

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