BASIC INTERNET: NAVIGATION

What is the Internet?

A long, boring explanation about how the technical details of how the Internet works really wouldn’t provide more practical information than if we lied and said that the Internet is magic that happens on computers. We’re going to skip the boring explanation and the lies and just say this: the Internet is a network of computer networks. Enough said!

OBJECTIVE 1: Become aware of the different kinds of Internet connections.

New technologies have created many ways of connecting to the Internet, each with differing rates of speed, varying costs, and different provider companies or agencies. Also, the speed of any Internet connection will vary depending on the number of people sharing the same connection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METHOD</th>
<th>SPEED</th>
<th>TYPICAL PROVIDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analog (dial-up)</td>
<td>very slow</td>
<td>AOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Once extremely common, dial-up connections are too slow to transmit the complicated pages, audio, and video files that are common on the Internet now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSL</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>telephone company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband Cable</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>cable company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For home customers, these two methods of broadband connection have largely replaced dial-up. Cost varies from plan to plan, as does speed, which is based on the number of customers serviced by the provider, the amount of traffic those customers generate, and the size of the provider’s network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1, T3, or OC3</td>
<td>medium-fast</td>
<td>business or public agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>At work or an institution like a library, you’ll most likely use one of these dedicated licensed connections (although the office or institution purchases access from a provider, just like you would at home). Speed varies depending on number of users, size of connection, and level of usage at different hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite or Wireless</td>
<td>medium-fast</td>
<td>cell phone or satellite company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rapidly gaining in popularity, this is the kind of connection used by portable devices that can access the Internet. Instead of over wires, the connection is sent over particular radio or satellite frequencies. To use this kind of service, you have to be within the coverage area and have appropriate hardware and access settings to find the network. Speeds may fluctuate more with this kind of connection, and wireless networks are more difficult to secure than wired networks.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What does all this mean when it comes to performance? It’s hard to speak definitively about Internet access and speeds. Performance will vary based not only on the level of access you get from your provider, the number of customers they service, and what those customers are accessing, but also the ability of your computer to process the kinds of files you are downloading, the way your browser software interacts with different web pages, and how well the computer that initiates whatever website you are visiting (called a “server” is working on a given day.) We’ll give basic troubleshooting advice at the end of the course.
OBJECTIVE 2: Learn what browser software programs do and recognize the names of common options.

A browser is a program used to access the internet. A browser can read some kinds of content by itself, but may need help from additional programs (called “add-ons” or “plug-ins”) to access other kinds. Browsers can read “html” files and common graphic formats such as “jpg,” “gif,” and “png” without help. You may have to install add-on programs like Acrobat Reader to read “pdf” files, Flash to read various animation formats like Shockwave, or a media player like Windows Media Player or RealPlayer to watch movies or listen to music. In most cases, the first time you encounter content that your browser cannot read, there will be a link to download and install the needed add-on. Some add-ons are free, while others have a charge. After installing these programs, restarting the browser program or the computer may be required. There are many brands of browser software, but the most common, listed here with their logos, are:

- Microsoft Internet Explorer or “IE”
- Mozilla Firefox
- Google Chrome
- Apple Safari

Some providers such as AOL or devices such as a Kindle Fire use their own specialized browser software.

This class uses Internet Explorer, because it is still the most likely browser to come installed on a personal computer. All browsers have the same basic functionality, although the location of certain buttons or commands may be located in slightly different places or use different names in each. If you know you will usually use a different browser, ask your instructor after class to show you the basic differences between that browser and Internet Explorer.

Let’s open the browser!

- Find the blue “e” icon shown above on the desktop and double click.
- Alternatively, the same icon will be located on the taskbar at the bottom of the screen on many computers, and from there, a single click will launch Internet Explorer.
- Finally, you can also click the “Start” button on the taskbar and launch Internet Explorer from the programs that pop up.

You may run into an occasional web page that runs well on one browser, and not on another, but such problems are usually corrected soon, and the browser that works varies enough that we won’t recommend one kind over another. If you want an extra browser on your computer, you can download and install any of the software listed above for free from the appropriate company website. Just make sure you get the version that goes with your computer’s operating system. Don’t overdo it; these are large programs that will take up space on your computer’s hard drive. Any browser software will download updates on a regular basis. Let your computer install these, as updates often include measures to resolve the latest security problems.
OBJECTIVE 3: Understand what a “URL” or “web address” is and recognize the
different kinds of domain designations in URLs.

Every page on every site on the internet has a unique address, also known as a URL (for uniform resource
locator). This address is displayed in the white box on the address bar immediately beneath the blue line at
the top of your browser. The web address begins with “http://” for most sites or “https://” for secure sites
such as those used for online banking or where private information must be submitted.

Next in the URL come the server and domain names. For instance, in the URL http://www.wrl.org (the
Williamsburg Regional Library home page), “www” is the name of the server and “wrl.org” is the domain.
For organizations and individuals alike, an annual fee is charged to register a unique domain name.

The last part of the domain name loosely indicates the kind of organization involved. Most common are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.com</td>
<td>for-profit business (although used by many individuals and non-profit enterprises as well)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.org</td>
<td>a non-profit organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.edu</td>
<td>an educational institution, usually a university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.gov</td>
<td>a US government site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Domains can also be registered by country code. In the US, this is primarily used by state governments and
secondary school sites and the domain “.us” is preceded by the domain for the state.

Sites originating outside of the US use country codes more often. Some common ones include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Code</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.ca</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.uk</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.tv</td>
<td>owned by Tuvalu, but they license it to television related websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.de</td>
<td>Germany (Deutschland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.au</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.ru</td>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many other domain types are in use, but less frequently, so we won’t name them all.

After the server and domain name, pages are differentiated by using more slashes (/), words and letters.
For instance, http://www.wrl.org/books-and-reading is the top page on the library site about books in our
collection. Going another layer deep on the site, http://www.wrl.org/books-and-reading/adults/find-a-
good-book is a subpage of the books page where adults can get help in finding good books.

OBJECTIVE 4: Know the location of the address bar and how to enter a URL.

The address bar is the white box on the left that is highest up in your Internet Explorer window:
Don’t confuse it with the other box immediately to the right in most versions of the software, which is a search box.

Click once on the address shown in this box to highlight the current URL in blue. Hit the backspace “←” key to delete this address or start typing and the address will be replaced. Hit the “Enter” key when finished to load the page.

When typing a URL, you do not have to type “http://” but everything else in the address must be typed exactly, including any dashes, underscores, slashes, or capital letters. Every address does not start with “www” and you can usually leave off the “www.” if it is at the start of the address. For instance, typing “wrl.org” in the address bar and hitting “Enter” will be enough to load the WRL website.

Let’s practice!

Try going to these websites:
The College of William and Mary  http://www.wm.edu
The Virginia Gazette  http://www.vagazette.com
U.S. Department of State  http://www.state.gov
Fantastic Fiction  http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk
Yahoo Games  http://games.yahoo.com

Notice as you change pages that the title of the new page appears in two places, on the blue title bar at the top of the window and on the tab for the page, just above the page itself.

If the URL in the address bar changes after you hit “Enter” and the page loads, don’t panic. Many websites forward from a short default address to another page. For instance, if you type http://www.virginia.gov, you’ll be forwarded to http://portal.virginia.gov, the home page used by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

If you mistype the address by a letter, add extra spaces (there are none in URLs, unless marked by a dash or underscore), or capitalize a letter that shouldn’t be, you’ll get a different website, an error message (usually something like “404 File Not Found,” or be forwarded to a default site such as Open DNS Guide that will suggest links to sites close to those you were typing. Be careful! Unscrupulous companies buy domains that are near misspellings of major websites to steal business or fool unwitting consumers into providing personal information that can lead to identity theft.

If you make a mistake when typing a URL, retype the whole address or click twice in the address bar, then use the arrow keys, backspace key, and selective retyping to fix the address, then hit “Enter” again. If you can’t find the right address, try an internet search to locate the URL (we learn this skill later in the class). It’s possible that the server for the site might be down, in which case you’ll have to try again later.

OBJECTIVE 5: Understand the concept of a home page and how to set a new one.

Every browser is set to open a particular website each time it starts. This is called the “home page.” On the computers for this class and public computers in the library, the home page is set for Williamsburg Regional Library’s http://www.wrl.org, but your home computer probably has a different home page.

To return to your home page, find the button with the picture of a house and click it. On Internet Explorer on most computers, it is located toward the right side of the screen, just above the website on the screen.
To change the home page on your computer (please watch while your instructor demonstrates), navigate to the page you want to set as your home page, then click the down arrow to the right of the home button once. Click “Add or Change Home Page…” and in the box that pops up, click the bubble next to “Use this web page as your only home page” then click the “Yes” button.

The term “home page” is also used for the starting page on any given web site, so the “home page” of your browser or computer is not the same as the “home page” of any given web site.

**OBJECTIVE 6:** Recognize when a browser in the process of downloading a web page and when it is finished.

On a good internet connection, pages often load so quickly that you won’t need to worry if loading is done, but on a slower computer or connection, a complicated page, or one that comes from a server on another continent, download can be slower. New internet users often make the problem worse by clicking all over the web page, issuing commands that the browser software either ignores or executes confusingly after the page finishes loading. The bottom line is that it is usually best to wait until the page finishes loading.

There are two places to look in your browser to see if the page is still loading. First, as a page loads, the tab with the name of the page (located on the line just above the web page itself) shows a rotating blue circle. When the page is loaded, the tab shows the name and often the logo of the web site.

Second, the two circled areas in the graphic on the left, located on the status bar, also show the progress of each download. The circled area on the left will show each element of the page as its downloaded. When the page is all finished, the text here changes to “Done.”

The circled area on the right is a progress bar, that shows how much of the page has downloaded. This progress bar disappears when the load is finished.

**OBJECTIVE 7:** Learn the location and function of Back, Forward, Refresh and Stop buttons.

On either side of the address bar where the URL is located, there are buttons that are important to basic navigation in Internet Explorer.

On the left are the Back and Forward buttons. Click the Back button once to go back to the web page you were previously viewing. If you continue clicking it, you should eventually go all the way back to the home page that came up when the browser first started.
Until you go back, the Forward button will be grayed out as in the graphic, but once you back up, it becomes active, allowing you to move forward through any pages you backed up from.

To the right of the Forward button is a small drop-down arrow. Click this to see a list of up to 10 sites visited in the current browsing session. Move the mouse over any of these and click to go to that page.

To the right of the address bar is another set of buttons. The button on the left with the two arrows pointing up and down is the Refresh button. Try clicking it if a web page loads incorrectly, gets stuck during loading, or if you have reason to believe that the content of the page might have changed while you were viewing it. A Refresh command tells the browser to revisit the server that delivers the page and get a fresh copy.

The Stop button, which has a red X, is most useful if the page is partially loaded and you can see the content you want, but the rest of the page is slow to finish loading. Although “Stop” doesn’t work on every web page, on some it will cut the load short and let you navigate through the part of the page that has already loaded. If you later decide you needed to see the entire page, no problem, just click Refresh.

On certain older pages, Explorer will show one more button by Refresh and Stop, the Compatibility View button. Click this (when available) if a page seems to be displaying out of alignment. It might remedy the problem. Take a minute here to play with these buttons and get used to their function.

**OBJECTIVE 8:** Be able to use scroll bars, mouse scrolling, or arrow keys to move up or down a web page.

After navigating to a web page, you’ll still probably need to scroll down the page to view all of the content. This can be done several ways. A scroll bar is located on the right side of the page. Click the arrows at top or bottom to move up or down, or grab the slide on the scroll bar by clicking and holding down, then dragging up or down to the desired location before letting go of the button. There is no scroll bar if the entire web page fits on your monitor.

On most mice, a scroll wheel is located between the two buttons, pull the wheel toward you to scroll down the page. You may have to click once somewhere on the page (somewhere that is not a link!) to let Explorer know that you want to scroll within the page. Push the wheel away from you to scroll back up the page.

On well designed web pages, scrolling left and right isn’t necessary, but you will run into some sites that are not correctly designed. In these cases, a scroll bar will also appear at the bottom of the web page which you can use to move left and right to see all of the content. The scroll wheel will only do up and down, so it won’t help if left and right movement are necessary.

You can also just click on a part of the page that is not a link and drag up, down, left or right to scroll.

If you prefer to keep your hands on the keys, you can also use the arrow keys to the right of the alphabet section of your keyboard to move up, down, left or right within a web page. Again, you may have to click once somewhere on the page before this option becomes activated.

**OBJECTIVE 9:** Know how to recognize and follow links.
Hypertext, more commonly known as links, make reading and viewing internet content different than looking at books. Instead of moving through information in a single, preset order, internet users “surf” through content in a variety of directions, changing the experience based on what they find interesting.

This is done by following links. While most people recognize underlined colored text as a link, anything on a web page—a word, a phrase, a picture, an advertisement, or even a spot that looks like a blank space can be a link. Clicking it will take you to another page, change the content of the page you are viewing, or possibly jump you to a different spot on the same page. So be careful about where you click on web pages, or you may find yourself disoriented or even lost on pages where you didn’t intend to go.

To tell if something is a link, keep an eye on your mouse pointer. When it’s an arrow, you are NOT over the top of a link. You can click on this part of the page without following a link or affecting the content. When the arrow turns into a pointing finger, you’re hovering over a link. Click here, and you’ll follow that link. Just click once, a double click isn’t necessary, and on some fast-loading pages, you may even follow a second link to a third page before you ever see the second.

After you follow the link and read what you want on the resulting new page, you can click another link to move on to a new page or use the Back button to return to where you came from.

Not sure if you want to follow a link? Hover over it and look at the status bar on the bottom of the browser window. This shows the URL to which the link connects. Compare the link to the address of the web page you’re currently on. If the server and domain name are different, you’ll know the link is taking you to a new site. Watch out for links that will take you to commercial sites or sites with words like “ad” in the server name. Websites often have to pay the bills by including ads, some for questionable products and sites, but you don’t have to visit them.

While we’re on the subject, your mouse pointer can turn into something other than an arrow or pointing finger. If it turns into an hourglass, the computer is trying to execute some action—download a complicated page or run some action in the background that maxes out the computer’s processor. Just wait until it returns to arrow or pointer, or if you get tired of waiting for a page to load, click the Back or Stop buttons.

Finally, the mouse pointer can also turn into a cursor or insertion point. This means that you’re over the top of a spot on the web page where some kind of alpha-numeric entry is required. Click once to activate the cursor, then type in what is required.

Take a minute to practice following links. Let’s go to a complex website like http://www.amazon.com, a commercial site that is perhaps best known for selling books, but which also sells and reviews all kinds of other goods. Move your mouse around the page and notice what spots are links, what are not. Follow some links of interest, then see if you can navigate back to the Amazon home page.

OBJECTIVE 10: Recognize when your browser has opened a new window or tab and know how to launch or close a second window or tab.

Most often, when you click a link, the browser will go to that link in the same window, but that’s not necessarily the case. Depending on how the link is set up by the page designer, you may find that the link opens in a new window or tab. When this happens it can be confusing.
Keep an eye on the taskbar at the bottom of your computer. It displays a button for each open window. If the number of buttons for Internet Explorer windows increases, you’ve been sent to a page in a new window. Click the “x” in the upper right corner of the new window to close it and return to your old window, or just click the button for the old window on the taskbar. For instance, take a look at http://www.earlyword.com, a blog for librarians about book news. Links here open in a new window.

Tabbed browsing is even trickier. On the left side of your browser window, just above the content of the web page itself, is a tab which shows the logo and title of the page you’re currently visiting. Notice that to the right of this is another smaller, blank tab. Depending on how your browser is set, instead of following certain links to a new window, it may open such links in a new tab instead. In that case, the second tab will also show a page title or name. Click the “x” on any tab to close it, or just click on the tab to which you’d like to return.

OBJECTIVE 11: Recognize a search box or learn the address for Google. Be able to execute a simple search and follow the results to a web site.

While typing in an address is an important skill, much of the time when using the Internet, you’re not going to know the URL of the site that you want. To find these sites, you need some basic search skills.

Most versions of Internet Explorer have a search box set up in the upper right corner of the window, to the right of the address bar. This search can be set to access many different search tools, but on most computers, as in our class, it’s set to use Google for searches. This is a good choice. The size, speed, and accuracy of the Google search tool, its remarkably simple interface, and the utility of other Google tools that are close at hand have made this search engine the industry standard for over a decade now. While there are competitors, such as Microsoft’s Bing, most internet searchers start with Google.

If you encounter a version of Internet Explorer without the search box, getting to Google isn’t hard. The address for the website is http://www.google.com. Let’s go there now.

To search for Internet content, just type some keywords into the box and hit “Enter” or click the “Google Search” button. There are nuances to Google searching which you can explore more in other WRL classes but for this class, we’ll keep it real basic. Try a search on your name, your favorite hobby, your favorite vacation spot, or some other simple concept.

Google uses a complex algorithm of relevance ranking to provide a list of links to web pages that are likely to have the content for which you’re searching. Glance quickly through the top ten results. If these look useful, start exploring. If they don’t seem quite right, go back to the search box and try different keywords.

The first few results (also called “hits”) at the top of a results page are often paid ads. Generally, you’ll want to skip past these. They’re set against a pale yellow background. (There are also ads listed under an “Ads” heading down the right side of the list.) Each hit begins with a link in blue to the suggested site. Beneath
that is the actual URL of the site that you’ll visit if you follow the link. Next is a short descriptive text about the site, and finally more blue links to subpages on the site.

This pattern is repeated for ten to twelve sites, after which Google suggests related searches that might give slightly more exact results. Finally, at the bottom of the list under the longer “Google” logo is a series of numbers and the word “Next.” Click any of these to jump further down the lists of search results.

Exploring search results is simply a matter of clicking into sites, then backing up if you don’t find what you want. Google has an advanced search screen, special search terms that can be incorporated into the search box, and specialty searches for images, maps, videos, news, shopping, scholarly articles, book content, and many other databases. Come back for the Intermediate Internet or Advanced Google classes to learn more.

**OBJECTIVE 12:** Be able to recognize and navigate through drop-down menus, form boxes, tabs, mouse-over content, pop-ups, overlay ads, and search boxes in web pages.

In the early days of the internet, we could have finished a basic internet class here, but modern web design has become much more complex, and web pages are full of bewildering elements that can confuse beginning users. Let’s look at a few of the most common.

**Drop-down Menus**
For an example of drop-down menus, please go to [http://www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com), the Internet Movie Database, one of the web’s best starting points for film fans. Look at the tabs that read “Movies,” “TV,” “News,” and so on to the right of the IMDb logo on the yellow theater ticket.

To the right of each of those terms is a small downward pointing arrow. We’ve already encountered something similar in the controls for Internet Explorer itself. There’s a similar example next to the IMDb search box itself, but without the little arrow, a box with the word “All.”

Some drop-down boxes work by hovering over them with your mouse pointer, such as those for “Movies,” “TV,” and “News.” Move over one of them, and a list of options will drop down. Slide the pointer down over the list options and click one to select it. In this case, the result is to follow a link.
Other drop-downs require a click. Back up to the IMDb home page and click on the word “All” in the search box. In this case, a list of other options drops down. Click one of these options (“Titles,” “TV Episodes,” “Names,” etc.) and the drop-down list closes and the option is selected, in this case which part of the IMDb database is to be searched. If you ever open a drop-down and don’t want to select any of the items, just click somewhere else on the page to close the drop-down.

Form Boxes
Many online services require the user to sign up before getting full access. Any online form is full of boxes that need to be filled. Whether on a job application, a request to start online banking, or the search parameters for airline tickets, if you use the internet you had better get used to forms.

Let’s look at an example. Imagine that you want to get a free email address at http://mail.yahoo.com. You’d go to the site and click the button to “Create New Account.” The resulting form includes a variety of boxes, drop-down arrows, and buttons that must be used to fill out the request for an address.

Click once in a box to put your cursor there, then type the desired content. Use lower-case or upper-case letters as you’d like someone at the other end to see your reply. You can then click in the next box and type your next reply, or even easier, press the “Tab” key to the left of the letter “q” on the keyboard to move the cursor forward one box. Hold down the “Shift” key while you press “Tab” to pull the cursor back one box.

While we’re here, notice the graphic of distorted letters in the box at the bottom of the page. This is called a CAPTCHA. It’s used to protect online forms from computer-automated nuisance submission. When you encounter a CAPTCHA, type the letters, numbers, or words from the graphic in the corresponding box. Type letters in the same case as they appear in the CAPTCHA graphic.

Tabs
We’ve seen these before but let’s review. Take a look at the latest version of the IRS website at http://www.irs.gov. This is an example of tabs—not tabbed browsing as we discussed in Objective 10, but a web page with tabs. Notice the gray line of options near the top of the IRS page: “Filing,” “Payments,” “Refunds,” etc. Click on the different tabs and notice that the options on the rest of the page change. For instance, click on “Forms and Pubs,” and the page changes to give you tools to view and download all of the IRS’s various documents.

On some sites, clicking a tab works more like a drop-down menu. Instead of changing the page, each tab will drop a list of possible options on the web site.

Mouse-Over Content
We’ve seen mouse-over content on the Williamsburg Regional Library page and others, but let’s look at another example. Go to All Music, http://www.allmusic.com. It’s a site where you can look up information about all of your favorite musicians and groups. After the page finishes loading, don’t click, but just move your mouse pointer over any of the album covers on the page. Notice how more information about the album appears: the number of stars given to it by reviewers, the artist’s name, the album’s release date, and some of the best songs on the album. Many pages are beginning to use this kind of added content.

A less happy use of mouse-over content is in advertising. Some pages are designed so that if you roll over a certain ad with your mouse, a larger advertisement or add will appear. If it doesn’t go away when you
move your mouse, just click somewhere else on the page that isn’t a link, and that should make the page go back to normal.

**Pop-Ups**
One of the least popular kinds of content on web pages are pop-ups. Most browsers, including Internet Explorer, have security tools set by default to block pop-ups. Wily page designers still find ways to circumvent this sometimes. Consider for instance, the following page:

See how small windows with ads have popped up on the page, obscuring the content? Notice that a new button for each of the pop-ups appears on the taskbar at the bottom of the monitor. To close the ads, click the “x” in the upper right corner of each, taking care not to click on the “x” for the page you want or on the ads themselves. If this doesn’t close them, right-click the button for the pop-up on the taskbar and choose “Close.”

If you’re getting lots of pop-ups, look at the “Tools” menu and go to “Pop-Up Blocker” to make sure pop-ups are blocked on your computer.

You may encounter pages where pop-ups are not used as ads, but as part of site navigation. If that is the case, you can tell Internet Explorer to make an exception and allow pop-ups for that page. When a pop-up is blocked Explorer shows a yellow message at the top of the page as in the graphic on the right. Click on that message, and choose “Temporarily Allow Pop-ups” or “Always Allow Pop-ups from This Site…”, then Refresh the page to see the pop-up.

**Overlay Ads**
An overlay ad is related to a pop-up, but not quite the same, as pop-up blocking generally won’t stop overlays and the overlay doesn’t create a new window, so there’s no button for it on the taskbar. Visit [http://www.booklistonline.com](http://www.booklistonline.com) for an example. Booklist provides an overlay that explains how to use the site, but you can’t visit the actual site until you remove the overlay. An overlay will have an “x” or “Close” button on it somewhere to remove it, although this may be difficult to see or may not appear until a short
ad finishes running. Most overlay ads will even move as you scroll down the page, so you can’t navigate around them. You have to close the overlay before you can view the web page.

Search Boxes
In addition to searching through Google or using the Google search box built into Internet Explorer, many of the larger web sites that you visit have search boxes built into them. We’ve seen this already on Amazon, the IRS site, Allmusic, IMDb, and others. Let’s go back to the Williamsburg Regional Library page at http://www.wrl.org for one more look at a search tool.

See the box under the teal blue line on the web page with tabs for “Catalog,” “Website,” and “Everything?” This is a tabbed search tool that allows you to explore the collection at the library.

If the “Catalog” tab is activated, you can search for books, films, music, and other materials in the WRL system. Activate “Website” to search for keywords anywhere within the WRL website. “Everything” allows you to search the collection, the website, and several large databases of articles to which WRL has rights.

As with this example, the search boxes on most web pages allow you to search the content of that website alone instead of searching the full Internet as you do with Google.

OBJECTIVE 13: Learn some very basic security measures to help protect your identity and your equipment when on the Internet.

It’s beyond the scope of this beginning class to provide a full lesson on internet security, but we can give you a few basic suggestions.

First, don’t use the internet on a computer without virus protection software. Most computers come with this, although you may have to pay an annual subscription fee to keep the software updated. Without virus protection, even the most careful internet users may soon find their computers riddled with virus, worms, and other nuisances that may compromise your private information or eventually crash your hard drive. Take an internet security class at the library if you need to learn more.

Stick to content served by reputable institutions, companies, and other entities that you know. Look at the domain name of the URL, and if you don’t recognize who is providing the information, raise your
skepticism and be more careful about going further into the site or clicking more exotic content. Avoid clicking into random sites.

Never provide personal information, particularly phone numbers, email addresses, social security numbers or credit card numbers to websites unless you navigated intentionally to the site and know what it is that you are trying to get. When you provide this kind of data to any website, particularly anything which costs money, make sure that the page is secure.

Here’s how to check: The page on the left is secure, and it shows that in two ways. First, the URL starts with “https://” instead of “http://”. Second, on the right side of the status bar in Internet Explorer, a small lock appears on the page. It’s not necessary for every page you visit to be secure, but if it’s asking for important personal information, don’t provide it if the site isn’t secure.

Use common sense. Don’t believe things that you wouldn’t believe in other contexts. Ask yourself if the provider of the information has something to gain by making false or exaggerated claims. Think twice about clicking on any ad that promises something too good to be true. Don’t click links in email messages that come from sources you did not know. Don’t believe requests from strangers, or even requests from friends or companies that you use that don’t sound like they really came from those sources, especially if they ask you to provide any personal information or to follow links to strange addresses. Be especially skeptical of information about health, medicine, finance, and other critical matters unless they come from known and reputable sources. Stay away from sites involved in activities that are not legal in other contexts. Watch for spelling mistakes or other errors, as these are common on fake or bogus sites. With a little caution, most users enjoy the internet without many problems.

OBJECTIVE 14: Understand how to preview and print all or part of a website.

Printing from the internet can be tricky. Your computer doesn’t know if you want to print what’s on the monitor, the whole web page, or just part of the page unless you specify. To print a full web page, follow these steps:

1) First, look on the page itself for a link that says “Print” or a button with a small picture of a printer. If this is available, then click it to start the printing process. This may produce a pop-up version of the page, that’s more appropriate for printing or it may go straight to the print dialog box.
2) If there isn’t a “Print” option on the web page itself, then click somewhere on the page that’s not a link. This is important, as it tells your computer that this is the content you want to print, not just what’s currently on the monitor. Then either click the button that looks like a printer near the home button or go to the “File” menu and choose “Print…”
3) If you’re unsure of what you will be printing, click somewhere on the page, then go to the “File” menu and select “Print Preview…” This will show how many pages you will be printing and what they will look like. If you don’t like what you see, close the print preview window and look...
at the directions below about how to print part of a page. If it looks good, then click the little printer button in the left corner of the print preview window.

4) After completing either step 1), 2), or 3) a print dialog box will pop up on the screen. Select the printer you want to send to, the number of copies you want to make, and any other adjustments, then click “Print.” The print job will go to your printer. Some Internet print jobs will take some time to process, particularly if you are looking at a page in “.pdf” instead of “.html” format.

Printing part of a web page is trickier, but it can be done:

1) Position your mouse at one end of the part of the page you would like to print. Click and hold down as you drag over the content you want to print. Don’t let go of the button until all of the content you want to print is highlighted in blue.

2) When the content you want is highlighted, go the “File” menu and select “Print.” In the print dialog box that appears, find the section on “Page Range” and click the bubble next to “Selection” then click the “Print” button. Your printer should print just the part of the page that you highlighted.

Take our Intermediate Microsoft Word class to learn more about how to copy text or pictures from the Internet into Word so that you can manipulate their size, layout or content before printing them.

OBJECTIVE 15: Learn a basic troubleshooting procedure for occasions when the internet isn’t working.

While we can hardly cover all of the technical problems one might encounter, we can make a few basic suggestions about what to do when the internet doesn’t work. Here’s a very basic list of troubleshooting steps:

1) Check the internet address and make sure it is correct.
2) If you are on a wireless network, make sure that your computer can see the network and that it is logged in.
3) Restart the browser software and try again.
4) Check to see if you can load other internet sites. If you can reach some sites but not others, you’ve either got the address wrong, the server for the site you are trying to reach is temporarily out of order, or your computer or browser software cannot read that particular site. Try again a few minutes or hours later, or see if you can reach the site on a different computer.
5) Restart your computer and try again.
6) If you can’t reach any internet site, you’re computer will usually give you some kind of message indicating that it cannot see a network or obtain an internet connection. The problem may be resolved at a distance if you exercise a little patience, but if it is not, contact whomever provides internet access and report your problems.
Further Exploration

That concludes the Basic Internet: Navigation class! WRL’s intermediate internet class is called “Web Sites You Can Use.” It covers the following objectives:

- Encounter browsers beyond that used in the Basic Navigation class: Firefox, Chrome, Safari.
- Know how to use Ctrl+F to search within a website.
- Learn how to set and use bookmarks and use the “Bookmarks” or “Favorites” Toolbar.
- Review and expand the use of search engines:
  - Learn to phrase a successful search, being specific without being overspecific, adjusting keywords to improve results, etc.
  - Learn the difference between putting search terms in quotes and not
  - Learn how to use image search
  - Receive a quick overview of some of Google’s other tools
- The remainder of the class is devoted to exploring other popular websites, with the content rotating in each class so that you can take it multiple times and continue learning. These are just a few of the Websites You Can Use that might be covered or that you could try exploring on your own:

Williamsburg Regional Library http://www.wrl.org
Wikipedia (an online encyclopedia) http://www.wikipedia.org
Facebook http://www.facebook.com
Amazon (shopping) http://www.amazon.com
eBay (used goods) http://www.ebay.com
Yahoo Mail (free email service) http://mail.yahoo.com
Medline Plus (medical information) http://medlineplus.gov
Google Maps (maps and directions) http://maps.google.com
Epicurious (cooking) http://www.epicurious.com
Television network sites or TV Guide http://www.tvguide.com
Newspaper websites such as Daily Press http://www.dailypress.com
US Census Service http://www.census.gov
Melissa Data Lookups http://www.melissadata.com/lookups
Job Search such as Indeed http://www.indeed.com
Good Reads (book information) http://www.goodreads.com
AllMusic http://www.allmusic.com
Trip Advisor (trip planning) http://www.tripadvisor.com
YouTube (videos) http://www.youtube.com
Rotten Tomatoes (movie reviews) http://www.rottentomatoes.com
Intellicast (weather reports) http://www.intellicast.com
Wordpress (blogging) http://www.wordpress.com
eNature (wildlife and plants) http://www.enature.com
Sports Illustrated http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com
FlickR (photo storage and sharing) http://www.flickr.com
Bankrate (financial tools) http://www.bankrate.com

Beyond “Web Sites You Can Use,” WRL also occasionally offers more advanced internet classes, such as Advanced Google or Internet Security, as well as computer classes on many other subjects. Check with us after class today to see the current schedule or around the 20th of each month when we release the schedule for the following month. If we don’t offer a class in the subject you need, ask us about computer volunteers or the “Book-a-Librarian” service for other options.