

Introduction to the Internet

1. What is the Internet? : The Internet vs. The World Wide Web

- **Internet:** A global data communications system
 - The Internet is a network of computers all over the world connected to each other by telephone and cable wires, satellites, and “wireless” hookups.
 - A hardware and software infrastructure that provides connectivity between computers.
- **World Wide Web:** A publicly accessible service of the Internet
 - Also referred to as WWW or simply, “The Web”
 - A way to present text and graphics in a readable format
 - A collection of interconnected documents and other resources

2. Why Connect to the World Wide Web? Just a few examples:

- news and information
- research
- communication
 - email
 - chatting
- social networking
- games
- online shopping and banking
- job hunting
- housing



Image 1

3. What You Will Need to Access the World Wide Web

- A computer with an **Internet connection** via an **ISP** (or, Internet Service Provider). An ISP is a company that provides access to the Internet. Before you can connect to the Internet, you must first establish an account with one of these companies.
 - Broadband/cable, DSL, dial-up
- Installed **Web browser software**, such as Internet Explorer:
 - Web browser software runs on your computer and enables you to access the Web.
 - Web browser software converts information from other computers into a readable form and displays it on the monitor.
 - In most cases, if you purchase a computer with a Windows operating system, Internet Explorer will be a part of the software package already installed.
 - Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox are two of the most common Web browsers. Here at APL, we use Internet Explorer.

Introduction to the Internet

4. The Browser: What You'll See

When you open your web browser, it will open to the page designated as “home.” Here at APL, our home page is set as the library’s web site. At home, you can set the home page to anything you choose by clicking on Tools button in your Menu Bar and choosing “Internet Options.” Enter the web address of your choosing, click “Use Current,” and the next time you open your browser, that page will be the first page you’ll see.

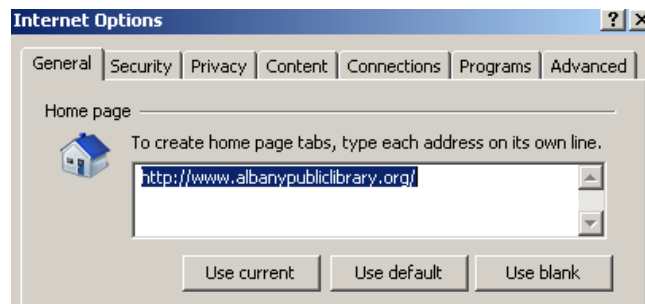


Image 2

Navigating around your web browser requires a basic understanding of a few elements: **The Address Bar, Domains, Buttons and Menu Bar, Cursors.**

a. Address Bar and URLs:

Every website has its own address, or “**URL.**” The URL, or Uniform Resource Locator, represents the location of the content on the Internet. In most cases today, the “www.” is not required. Example: google.com will get you to Google’s website.

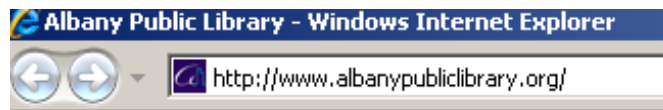


Image 3

Note: Type in the address you want to visit in the address bar and the browser will bring you to that site. The URL must be typed *exactly*, without spaces—*any* typo will result in not accessing the site.

b. Domains:

The Domain is the part of the Web address that appears after the www. The domain suffix is most often an indicator of the kind of website it is, but not always.

US Domain Suffix Examples:

- .com = commercial
- .gov = government
- .edu = college or university
- .org = organization

If a website’s server is hosted in a country other than the US, a location is attached to its domain suffix:

- .uk = United Kingdom
- .au = Australia
- .it = Italy

Introduction to the Internet

c. Menu Bar and Buttons

The menu bar is at the top of your screen, and it stores menus for different functions. When you left click on “File,” “Edit,” “View,” etc., a “drop down menu” appears with options. One of the most commonly used functions under “File” is “Print.” One of the most commonly used functions under “Edit” is “Find on this Page” (where you can search the page for a specific word or phrase). One of the most common functions under “Tools” is “Internet Options” (where you can delete your browsing history).

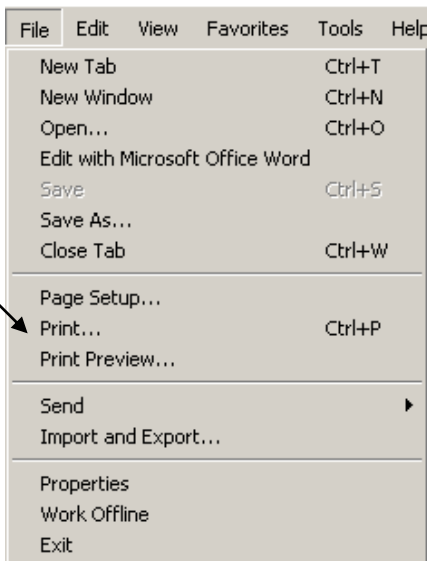
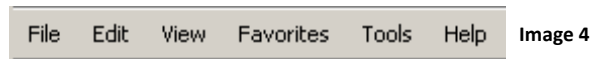


Image 5

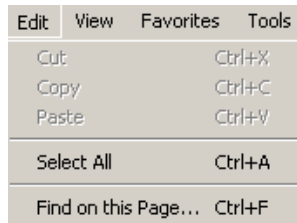


Image 6

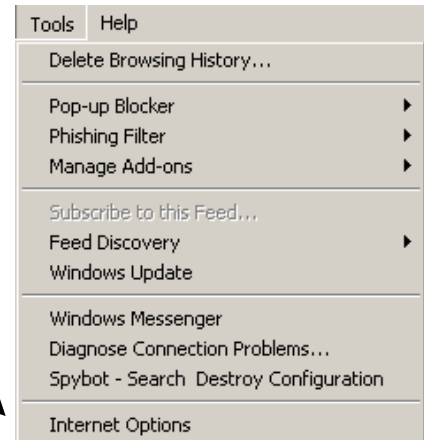


Image 7

Another way Internet Explorer sets up menus is with a button called a “Drop Down Arrow.” Left clicking the upside down triangle will pull down a menu of options, like so:

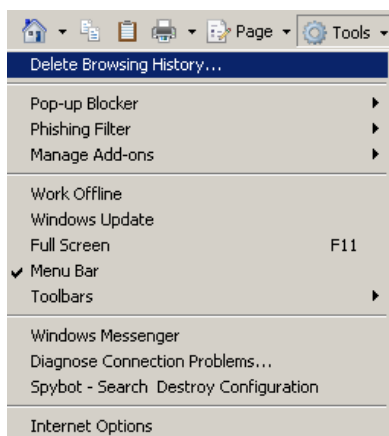


Image 8



Image 9

Drop Down Arrow:
Use one **left click** to display **menu** of options.

Introduction to the Internet

Buttons provide a way to use your browser and navigate the Web. Your home computer’s menu bar and buttons may vary, but below is a fairly typical example of what you’ll see at the top of your screen:

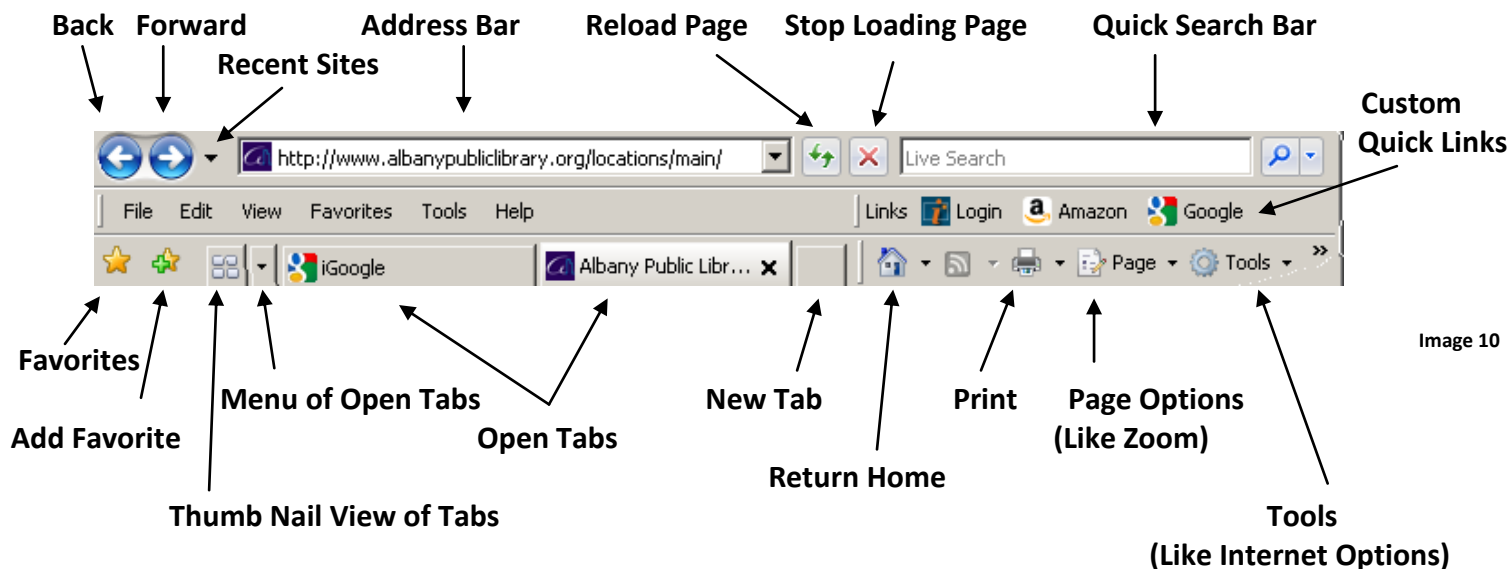










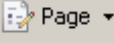
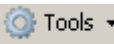


Image 10

Table 1: Buttons

	Forward and Back: Navigate to where you’ve been during a single Web session
	Recent Sites Arrow: List of your recently visited websites
	Reload Page: A “refresh” button that will reload the page you’re viewing
	Stop Load: Will stop the page from load (if, for example, it’s taking too long).
	Favorites: You can bookmark your frequently visited websites
	Add Favorite: Add a website to your list of favorites
	Thumbnail View of Tabs: Will display small screen shots of your open tabs
	New Tab: Use this to open a new tab
	Home: Use this to go back to your browser’s home page
	Print: In most cases, you can print what you see on the screen
	Page Options: A drop-down menu of options for viewing
	Tools: A drop-down menu of options your browser’s tools—also where you’ll find “Internet Options” so you can delete your browsing history and temporary files

Introduction to the Internet

Below is an example of a web page. When you open Internet Explorer at the Albany Public Library, This is what you will see:

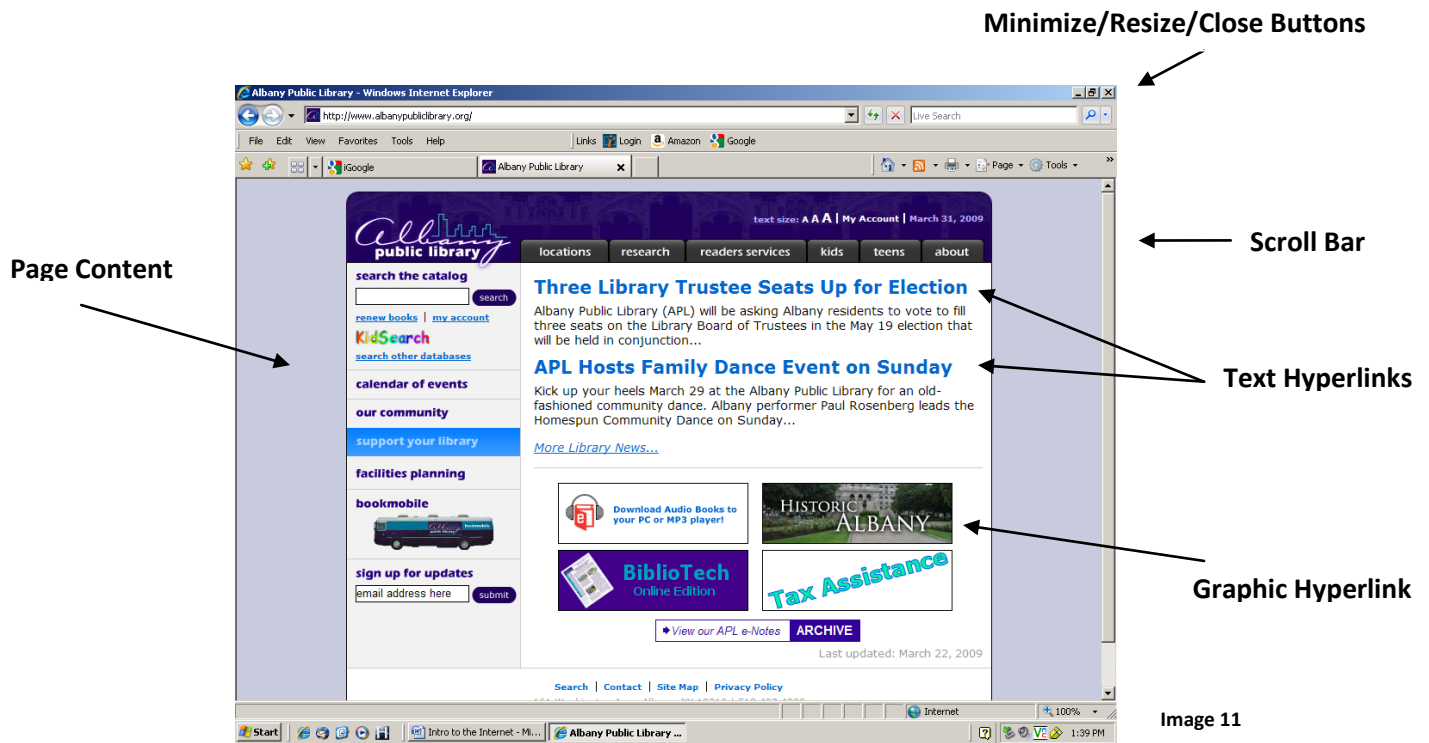


Image 11

A **hyperlink** will take you to another Web page or a different area of the same Web page. Your cursor will change from an arrow to a hand with a pointing index finger when you move it over a link (See Table 2, Page 6). Both text and images can be hyperlinks. A text hyperlink is usually in a different color (often blue) and underlined.

The three buttons found at the top right of the window, from left to right, are the **minimize**, **resize**, and **close** buttons:



Image 12





- The **minimize** button allows you to “minimize” an open browsing window, so it remains open or active, but allows you to see the Windows Desktop. The minimized window will appear as a tab on the taskbar at the bottom of the screen.
- The **resize** button (also called the **maximize** or **restore** button) allows you to change the size of the window on the screen.
- The **close** button closes the window and program. You would need to restart the program if you click on the close button.

Introduction to the Internet

d. Mouse Cursors

You will notice when you move the mouse, the pointer will change depending upon where you are on the screen:

Table 2: Mouse Cursors

	Arrow: Points to areas on a web page or that you cannot select by clicking.
	I-beam: vertical line with dashes on top and bottom—used to show where the text cursor appears when the mouse is clicked. The I-beam will appear in a field where you can input text.
	Pointing Finger: indicates a hyperlink—by left-clicking on a hyperlink, you are telling the software that you wish to view what the link is connected to.
	Hourglass: indicates that program is working on something and you need to wait

5. Tabbed Browsing

One of the features of Internet Explorer is “Tabbed Browsing.” This means that you can open multiple web pages (sometimes called “sub-windows”) within a single open browsing window, and each page will have a tab on your menu bar so you can toggle back and forth (See Figure 10, page 4, “Open Tabs”).

6. Search Engines and Databases

- In very simple and basic terms, a **search engine** is a computer program used to search the billions of pages of information available on the web. A search engine collects Web sites into its own database and provides the user with the means of searching that database for free. One of the most popular search engines today is Google, found at google.com. Google will search for your search terms and pull up any web pages it locates containing your terms, and you can then look at the results. It will also display image and video results, and it has excellent mapping and directions functions.
- A **database** is a collection of digitized information which can be easily accessed and managed. A database is like an electronic filing system. A popular database is Wikipedia.com. Wikipedia is a public encyclopedia to which any registered user can contribute and edit content. While some databases function this way, many more databases are not “wiki” sites, and therefore are not able to be publically edited.
- While Google, Wikipedia, and other sites like them are great for some kinds of general searches, sometimes you know you want very specific information from a reliable source. Like evaluating any information you read in a print source, it’s important to use good judgment and common sense when gathering information on the Web.

Introduction to the Internet

- Albany Public Library subscribes to several databases which are not generally accessible via the Web but that you can access with your library card, like *Heritage Quest* for genealogy research, or *Reference USA* for information on businesses or individual addresses and phone numbers. The New York State Library and New York City Public library are both available resources to any New York State resident, and they both also subscribe to numerous databases for all kinds of research.
- There are also many databases which are free and you don't need a library card to access them. For example, medlineplus.gov is public service of the National Library of Medicine and has excellent, up-to-date information on most any health topic you can think of. Again, it's important to use good judgment and common sense: It is not recommended, for example, that you Google medical symptoms you may be experiencing or use Medline Plus and try to self-diagnose! Use sites like these to gather information, and but always consult your physician or other professionals if you want to verify information you find on the World Wide Web!

7. A few words about Security

In most instances, surfing the web and online shopping and banking is safe and secure. There are exceptions, however:

- a. Virus:** A program that replicates itself on computer systems by incorporating itself into other programs shared on a system. "Malicious" viruses are best known for spreading from one computer to millions of others and "infecting" them, causing them to "crash." Today, virus protection software will often scan an attachment for potential threats, but it's still a good rule of thumb to only open email attachments from a trusted source.
- b. Spyware:** Spyware is computer software that is unknowingly installed on a personal computer to collect information about the computer or browsing habits from that computer. The results can range from slowed computer functioning to identity theft.
- c. Pop-ups:** Simply put, a pop-up is an ad that displays in a new browser window. Most browsers today are installed with pop-up blockers so the user can decide if he or she wants to view the content of a pop-up. Be aware that pop-ups can download spyware onto your computer.
- d. https:** A secure connection. When shopping or banking online, look at the URL of the page asking for your personal information. It should read "https." Never input personal information like your credit card number or your social security number onto any screen that you did not request and with a URL which does not begin with https.

Introduction to the Internet

8. Some Other Useful Web Sites:

Employment:

CapitalAreaHelpWanted.com
 Times Union:
 timesunion.com/jobs/index.asp
 NYS Civil Service:
 cs.state.ny.us

Info on Buying a Car:

Autobrag.com
 Edmunds.com
 Cars.com

Weather:

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:
 Noaa.gov
 The Weather Channel:
 Weather.com

Libraries:

AlbanyPublicLibrary.com
 New York State Library:
 Nysl.nysed.gov
 New York (City) Public Library:
 Nypl.org

Free Email:

Mail.yahoo.com
 Gmail.com
 hotmail.com

Seniors:

aarp.org
 elderhostel.org
 Upper Hudson Library System Senior Connect:
 uhls.org/seniorsconnect
 senior.net.org

Travel:

expedia.com
 kayak.com
 lonelyplanet.com
 frommers.com

News:

TimesUnion.com
 NYTimes.com
 NPR.org
 CNN.com
 news.bbc.co.uk

9. Class Exercises: Typing a URL and Conducting a Search

1. URL: To test out what we've discussed today, try typing the following URLs in the address bar to see what different results you get for each:

albany.com	alloveralbany.com
albany.org	albany.edu
albanyny.org	

2. Conducting a search: Go to google.com. See how your search results differ when you try different ways to search:

Dogs	Baseball	Health Food
Golden retriever	New York Yankees	Flaxseed Oil
Guide dogs	Baseball history	Tofu Stir Fry

The more specific or "refined" your search is, the more likely you are to get the search results you're seeking.