



# Introduction to the Internet

## The Internet and the Web

### What is the Internet?

- The Internet is a vast **network** of computers all communicating with each other.
- Some of these computers are physically linked via cables and wires, while others can communicate without wires, using electronic signals.
- Computers connected to the Internet interact in various ways, such as through electronic mail (email), file transfers (ftp) or instant messaging (IM).



### What is the Web?

The **World Wide Web**, or “**The Web**,” is a part of the Internet. It allows you, through a software program called a browser, to “see” the information on the Internet as separate web pages, and to navigate from one page to the next using **hyperlinks**.

- A **web browser** is a piece of software that lets you view items on the Web, including text, photographs and drawings, links to other pages, sounds and videos, and more complex items like games.



To access the Internet we will use **Internet Explorer** (often referred to as **IE**). Like all browsers, it acts as a window or portal to help you view information from the Web.

Many other browsers exist, such as Netscape, Firefox, and Opera, but while they may differ in style and features, they all perform the same basic functions. Internet Explorer is a Microsoft program.



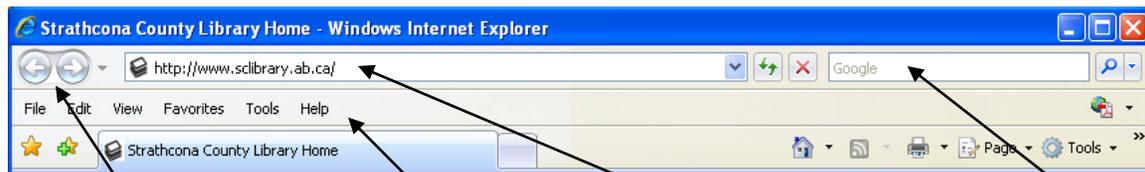
### TRY IT

To access your browser, click on the **Start** menu. Find **Internet Explorer** in the list and click on that.



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## The Browser: Internet Explorer



The **Back** button takes you back to the page you just came from. **Forward** advances you to the next in your list of viewed sites.

The **Menu Bar** lists all the commands available to you in your browser.

The **Address bar** – if you know the address of the site you want, you can type it here.

Some browsers include a **Search Toolbar** to help you access search engines faster.



**Stop** halts all browser activity – useful if you change your mind.



**Refresh** reloads the page you are currently viewing. Use it if your screen freezes or is taking a long time to load.



**Home** takes you to the webpage set as the browser's default. In the library, we have this set to our library website.



**Favorites** opens a list of shortcuts to websites you would like to visit again. We will talk about how to personalize this list later.

**NOTE:** The Web browser available on the library's public computers does not have all these features. The library uses a more basic browser for better security.

## Web Addresses (URLs)

- A site's web address is also known as its **url**, which stands for **uniform resource locator** (pronounce it like the individual letters – “u”, “r”, “l”).
- The most direct way to access a website is by typing it's url into your browser's address bar.
- A url looks like this: **http://www.site.com**, and consists of four basic parts:

**http://**  
prepares your computer for hyperlink documents. (Most browsers “assume” this part, so you don't need to type it in)

**www.**  
means the address is on the World Wide Web

**site**  
is the individual address of the website, often the name of a company or organization

**.com**  
is the suffix, and can give clues about the content of the site



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- Like with books and their covers, you can't always tell a site by its suffix. You will see a mix of sites and suffixes, but the most common still include:

<b>.com</b>	commercial	<b>.gov</b>	government (American)
<b>.edu</b>	education (American)	<b>.net</b>	network
<b>.ca</b>	Canadian	<b>.org</b>	organization

- You will also see **.ab.ca** for Alberta sites, and **.gc.ca** for federal government sites. Countries also have unique suffixes (e.g. **.jp**=Japan, **.au**=Australia).
- Urls can be long, with several sections after the suffix, separated by forward slashes **/**. These tell the computer where, within the site, to look for the specific document you have requested.
- A url like **www.site.com/staff/contacts.htm** tells the computer to find a page called "contacts.htm" in the folder "staff" at the site **www.site.com**.
- You must type in a url **EXACTLY** in order to find it, just like with your street address – one wrong number, and you end up at your neighbour's house!

## Hyperlinks

- The first page of a website is called the **Home Page**. Like the front lobby of a business, this is just the entrance to the site, and may lead to many other levels, and many other pages, that are "hidden" behind.
- You don't have to know the specific address for all of the hidden pages in order to navigate through a site, however, because documents on the Web make use of **hyperlinks** (or links) to connect to each other.
- A hyperlink can be text (words), like [today's forecast](#), or an image (photo or drawing) that has been set up to contain a link command. The command runs when you click it with your mouse.
- A link can be made to anything connected to the Internet (other documents, sounds, movies). It may take you to another page, another website, or it may activate a program on your computer to download and play a song or movie.
- So if a hyperlink can be anything – how do you know it's a link? The best way is to watch your cursor as you move it over the page.



Your cursor usually looks like an arrow, or a blinking line "I".



But when you move over a hyperlink, it changes into a hand.

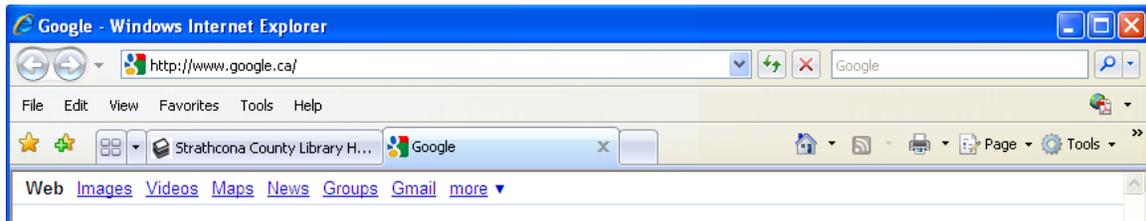


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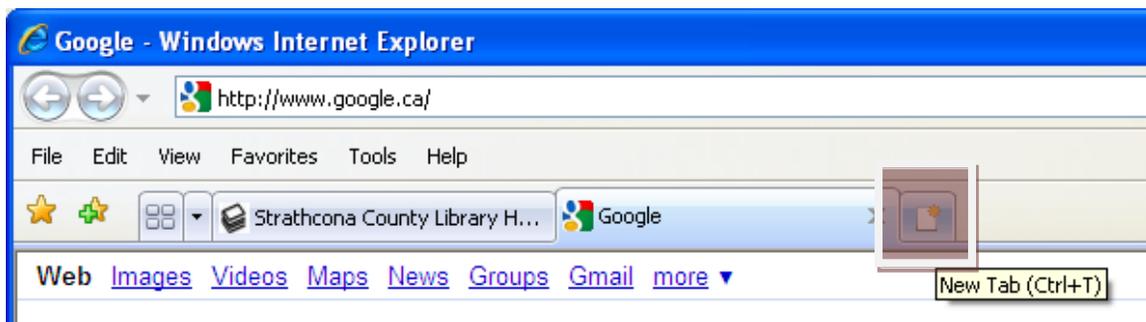
## Using Tabs

The newest version of Internet Explorer has a new feature which may be unfamiliar to you if you are used to another browser. This feature is called **Tabbed Browsing**.

Internet Explorer has always allowed you to have multiple windows open with different pages loaded in them. In the newest version of Internet Explorer, you can also load different pages in different **Tabs**. Think of these tabs as file folders, each containing a different item.



In the example above, the Library's homepage is loaded in one tab; the search engine Google is loaded in another. It is easy to switch back and forth between these two pages when they are in adjacent tabs.



To start a new tab, click on the small new tab button that appears next to your existing tabs. When the new tab opens, you can type in the URL you want to visit or select a site from your **Favorites**.



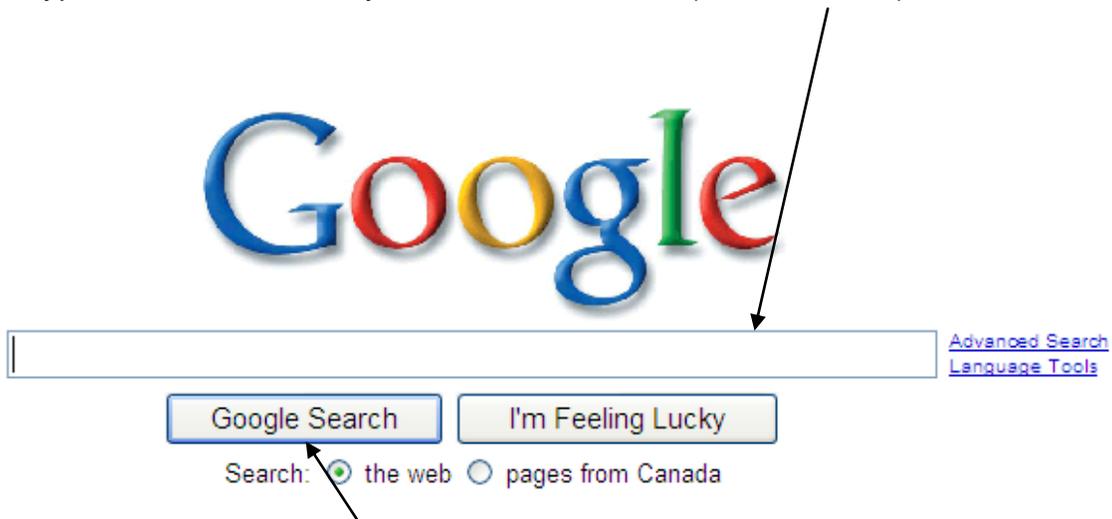
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## Search Engines



Search engines are valuable tools. They allow you to find information on the Web when you don't know the addresses for specific websites.

- Use search engines to find things on the Web just like you would use a phone book to find things in your community.
- To look for a business, type its name into the search box, and get a list of descriptions and links to a variety of websites in response. Type in a subject (victoria hotels) or a product (lawnmowers), and you get a different list.
- Search engines let you type in whatever term you wish, but most also provide a **directory** with a list of subjects, so you can browse through the categories for ideas.
  - [Arts](#)  
[Movies](#), [Music](#), [Television](#),...
  - [Business](#)  
[Industries](#), [Finance](#), [Jobs](#),...
- **Google** is currently the most popular search engine, and its clean and simple design has become a model for many others.
- To search using Google, first type in the address **www.google.ca** in the address bar.
- Type the word or words you want to search for (**search terms**) into the box



- Then click on the **Google Search** button, or use your **Enter** key to start the search.
- Your results list will contain many sites, from businesses advertising hotels and travel, to government tourism, to sites that may seem irrelevant, but probably contain the word "Hawaii" somewhere in their hidden pages.
  - [Hawaii Vacations - Hawaii Travel](#)  
Guide to **Hawaii** accommodations, activities  
[www.hawaii.com/](http://www.hawaii.com/) - [Similar pages](#)
  - [Hawaii's Official Tourism Site -- The Official Hawaii Web Site](#)



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- To work your way through, **click** underlined titles to go to the sites, and use your **back** button to return to the list.
- Result lists can be long, with many pages, and millions of “hits”. Scroll down to see the full page, and if there are more, buttons will appear to help you move forward.
- Sites are **ranked** (using different formulas) so those most relevant appear closest to the top. Google also hosts “sponsored links” from companies who pay to have their sites included – these may or may not be of use to you.
- To help focus your search, try adding some more detailed terms. “Hawaii national parks” or “Hawaii family hostels” will bring you better results than “Hawaii” alone. (Tip: you do not need to use capital letters, commas or dashes – Google ignores all of these).  
For more help with Google searches, see [www.google.ca/help/basics.html](http://www.google.ca/help/basics.html).  
See what else Google can do for you, at <http://www.google.ca/intl/en/options/>



There are many other general search engines, such as Bing, Altavista, Dogpile, and Yahoo. There are also specialty engines, good for searching images, sound files, and so on.

## TRY IT

Browse through the list of search engines on the library website’s **Search** page at [www.sclibrary.ab.ca/search.html](http://www.sclibrary.ab.ca/search.html). Try searching for a topic that interests you on another search engine.

## WEB SEARCH

Find Websites	
<a href="#">Google</a>	<a href="#">Kartoo</a>
<a href="#">Yahoo</a>	<a href="#">Itools</a>
<a href="#">Alta_Vista</a>	<a href="#">Dogpile</a>

Specialty Searches	
<b>Blogs &amp; Feeds</b>	<a href="#">Bloggz</a>   <a href="#">Bloglines</a>   <a href="#">Google Blog Search</a>   <a href="#">Technorati</a>
<b>Images</b>	<a href="#">Google Images</a>   <a href="#">Ditto Image Search</a>   <a href="#">Pixsy Visual Search</a>   <a href="#">Flickr</a>
<b>Invisible Web</b>	<a href="#">Internet Public Library (IPL)</a>   <a href="#">Librarian's Index to the Internet (LII)</a>
<b>Audiovisual</b>	<a href="#">SingingFish AV Search</a>   <a href="#">Altavista MP3/Audio</a>   <a href="#">Alltheweb Audio</a>
<b>About Search Engines</b>	<a href="#">Choose a Search Engine</a>   <a href="#">Search Engine Watch</a>

- While each search engine offers unique features, the underlying principles are the same – so go for it! And when in doubt, look for a “**help**” button!



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## Customizing Your Browser: Favorites and Home

### Favorites

On your home computer, your browser can be customized to keep track of the websites you like to visit often. The **Favorites** list is a good place to start.

TIP: **Favorites** are also sometimes called **Bookmarks**.



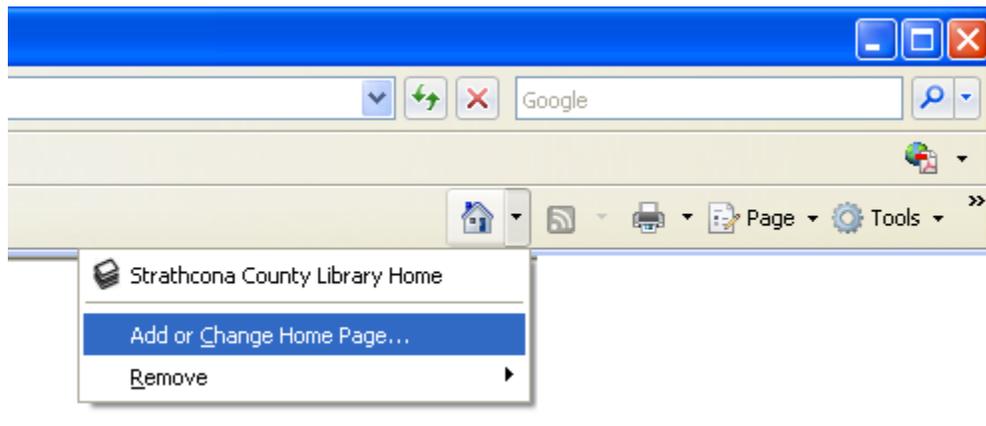
To add a website to your list, go to that website, and with the page in front of you, click on the **Add to Favorites** button (the star with a green plus sign). When a little menu appears, select “Add to Favorites.”

Next time you click the **Favorites** button (the yellow star) you will see that site on the list!

**TIP:** When you click on the **Add to Favorites** button, a small menu appears. The bottom option on this menu, **Organize Favorites**, will allow you to organize your favorites in folders, rename them, or delete Favorites you no longer want.

### Home

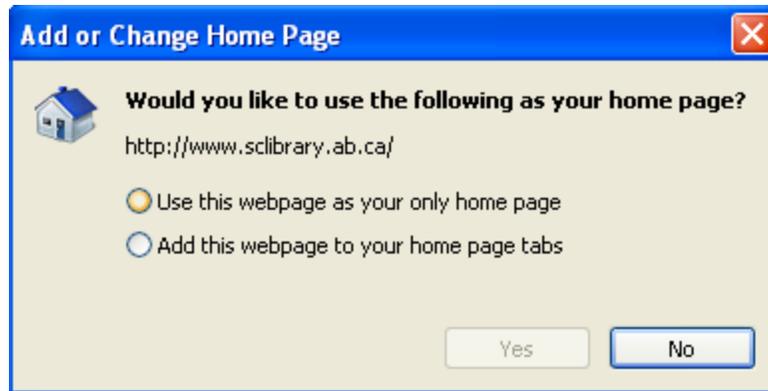
Another way to customize is to set your browser’s **Home** button to a specific website. The site you set will be the first to appear whenever you start your browser, and will appear whenever you click the **Home** button.



With the website you want as your new homepage open in front of you, click on the small black arrow next to the home icon. A menu will appear. Select **Add or Change Home Page...** from this menu.



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A dialog box will pop up. You can select whether you want to use the new page as your **only home page** (ie., replace the existing Home page) or **add it** (ie., have pages open in multiple tabs every time you open your browser). Or if you have changed your mind and do not want to change your home page, you can select **No**.