

BLM ICT.9#1: Internet FAQs for Students

The following are frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the Internet.

Q: What is a website?

A: A website is a collection of web pages that have a common purpose. Examples of websites are those with information about schools, mammals, historical events, rock groups, countries, and so on. The collection of web pages are all linked together with hyperlinks.

Q: What is a web page?

A: Each page of a website is a web page. Web pages contain text and illustrations. Many also have hyperlinks to other relevant web pages.

Q: What is a home page?

A: The first page or main page of a website is called the home page. From that page, all the other pages of the website can be accessed through hyperlinked buttons or text.

Q: What might you see on a home page?

A: Some or all of the following may be found on a home page:

- A **navigation bar**, which allows users to go to various pages or sections of the website, may appear in a horizontal format at the top of the page or in a vertical format on the left.
- The **name of the website** can appear at the top of the page, at the bottom, or sometimes in the background.
- A **logo** representing the owner of the website may be featured. It may consist of the mascot for a school or a well-recognized symbol for a company or an organization.
- The home page will be **organized** in some way. It might have many separate parts, or the information might be found in box-like areas, each of which will probably have different functions and work independently from one another. If there is a text area, it will likely have a **scroll bar** on the right to allow users to keep reading text that extends beyond the monitor.
- A reliable home page will identify the **name of the author**, and possibly the credentials of the author.
- A reliable home page will have an **email address** to write to for more information or to ask permission to use materials listed on the page.
- Some **illustrations, designs, or photographs** are usually found on a home page. These should be considered copyrighted, even if no mention of this is made. Unless there is a statement explicitly stating that all illustrations, designs, and photographs can be used, and for what purpose, assume that they are copyright protected.
- The name of the **sponsor** of the page may be included, sometimes with information about the sponsor. Such a sponsor can be a commercial enterprise using the website to advertise its products.

Q: What is the best way to search for information on the Internet?

A: There are two main ways to find information online:

- **Do a keyword search** using a basic search engine (e.g., Google) or a metasearch engine (e.g., MetaCrawler). This is the fastest way to find information when looking for a specific topic. When doing a keyword search, the spelling has to be exact.
- **Use a subject guide**, also called a directory or gateway. It lets you click through categories of information that become more and more specific, and finally gives a small number of hits that may be accurate. This search can take longer than a keyword search and will not be rewarding if you do not know in what category something could be found, if you do not know what the names of the categories mean, or if you select the wrong category.

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Q: Are there other ways to find information on the Internet?

A: Some search engines (e.g., Ask Jeeves) allow users to ask questions. These types of engines recognize keywords in a question and use those keywords to find information and return a list of websites that may be suitable.

Q: What is a hit?

A: When an engine searches through its huge databases for websites matching the search terms requested, it provides search results, listing all the websites found. The matches are called “hits,” and they are usually listed in groups of 10 on a web page. There is usually a short paragraph describing a website, which may help you decide if it meets your needs. **Hits are not necessarily listed in order of importance or relevance.** Scan the first list of 10 hits before deciding which ones seem most promising.

Q: I found a hit with a perfect description for what I wanted, and when I went to it, it said “Error.” What does this mean?

A: Unfortunately, some promising websites can disappear. This problem is called “link rot,” which means that the website can no longer be accessed because the web pages have moved to a new location or have been removed from the Internet. Sometimes a website leaves a forwarding address (the new URL) that can be clicked on to access the page in its new location.

Q: How do you know when a web page is finished loading?

A: Several clues can help you determine when a web page is finished loading:

- The icon for the web browser is flashing, oscillating, or moving.
- A text bar at the bottom of the screen is displaying messages indicating some action.
- The right scroll bar has not yet appeared.
- You can hear the computer working.

Q: What can you do when a web page is slow at downloading or appears to have stopped loading?

A: You can use the **Stop** button on the browser navigation bar. When you have limited time to use the Internet, make the best use of it by stopping slow sites and going to others. Use the **Back** button on the navigation bar to return to the search results page, and try the website later if you have time. If you must access the page, click the **Refresh** button on the navigation bar.

Q: Why are there advertisements on web pages?

A: Businesses or enterprises often sponsor a website. They pay the fees incurred in setting up the website, in paying salaries for the people who run the website, in maintaining the website, or in providing access to the website. In exchange for this financial support, websites will display their sponsors’ advertisements. Some websites are set up for the sole purpose of providing a place for posting personal websites. Such commercial providers also display advertisements.

Q: What should you do about advertisements that appear on screen when you access some web pages?

A: Some advertisements come up as a new smaller window on a screen. You should close that window. Others entice you by using animation such as flashing icons, invitations to “Click here!” or “Vote here,” or offers of free materials. Ignore these windows and close them when possible. Moving on to another part of the website can also remove those advertisements.

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Q: How can I find the same web page next time I use the Internet?

A: Make a Bookmark or Favourite by going to the main menu of the web browser, selecting that option, and scrolling down to “add.” Next time you use the browser, instead of typing that URL, return to the Bookmark or Favourite option and scroll down to the name of the website you are looking for. The browser will find it for you.

Note: Before you add a Bookmark or Favourite, ask the teacher if it is suitable to do so.

Q: I found a really helpful picture on a website that I would like to use in my project. How do I do that?

A: Right click (in Windows) or click and hold (in Macintosh) on the picture or illustration to bring down a menu that allows you to save the picture or copy and paste it directly into your electronic project. However, **remember that copyright issues relate to pictures, as well as to text.** (See TBLM ICT.9#2: Acceptable Use of Copyrighted Electronic Resources.)

Q: There is a helpful paragraph on a web page, but I don't need the whole page. Can I copy it?

A: You can copy text by clicking in front of the portion you want, and then holding and dragging across to select all the text you want. The selected portion should be highlighted. Copy it and paste it into the word processor. The text may not be formatted well and you may have to format it yourself. However, **remember that copying text to put in a report is plagiarism, and that copyright issues relate to text, as well as to pictures.** (See TBLM ICT.9#2: Acceptable Use of Copyrighted Electronic Resources.)

Q: What are some common terms I should be familiar with?

A: There are many technical terms used for the Internet. Some of the common ones are:

- **Boolean:** terms (AND, OR, NOT) or symbols (+ - “ ” []) that are sometimes needed by search engines to refine a search and make it more specific.
- **browser:** software that lets a user access the World Wide Web. The most common ones are Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer.
- **HTML:** Hypertext Markup Language. This is the common programming language used in making web pages.
- **http:** hypertext transfer protocol. These letters are always at the beginning of a web address or URL.
- **hyperlink:** an underlined word, phrase, or symbol that, when clicked on, takes the user to another location within a website or to another website.
- **search engine:** a tool that searches huge databases of websites to find sites matching the search terms a user enters in the search box.
- **URL:** Uniform Resource Locator. This refers to a website address. It starts with <http:// >.
- **World Wide Web:** known as WWW, a network of Internet servers that can communicate with one another, using a language called “http protocol.” Although the terms WWW and Internet are often used interchangeably, they are technically not the same. Because not all Internet servers are connected to the WWW, this term should not be confused with the Internet, which is bigger and contains other ways of finding information and communicating, such as email.