

The web doesn't have to be confusing. Here are a few terms to help you understand the basics of what you need to know for dealing with the internet.

Bit

Binary Digit—a single digit number in base-2, i.e. either a 1 or a zero. The smallest unit of computerized *Bandwidth* is usually measured in bits-per-second.

Bps

Bits-Per-Second— measurement of how fast data is moved from one place to another. A 28.8 *modem* can move 28,800 bits per second.

Browser

Software that is used to look at various kinds of Internet resources. The most common are Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape's Navigator. It's what is surrounding the web page you are now viewing.

Byte

Think of this as the smallest unit of measurement for electronic data. Technically, it is a set of Bits that represent a single character. Usually there are 8 Bits in a Byte, sometimes more, depending on how the measurement is being made.

Certificate Authority

An issuer of *Security Certificates* used in *SSL* connections.

CGI

Common Gateway Interface—A set of rules that describe how a *Web Server* communicates with another piece of software on the same machine, and how the other piece of software (the 'CGI program') talks to the web server

cgi-bin

The most common name of a directory on a web server in which *CGI* programs are stored.

Client

A software program that is used to contact and obtain data from a server software program on another computer.

Cookie

Information sent by a site you visit that is stored on your computer which sends information back to the site the next time you visit it. This is how some sites keep track of your preferences. In some cases, you may not like cookies. In some cases, a site will not function properly unless cookies are enabled on your computer.

Cyberspace

This refers to the universe of electronic connections.

Design

Web design. This refers to the theme: the overall look of the website. A web design should be consistent so that visitors know that they are on the same site. It should also be interesting without having too many fancy, moving effects which become boring quickly. A good web design makes the information easily obtained and doesn't focus too much on the effects.

DNS

Domain Naming System—Links domain names to an IP number.

Domain Name

The names you use to find a site: auroraartists.com: the unique name that identifies an Internet site. Domain Names always have 2 or more parts, separated by dots. The part on the left is the most specific, and the part on the right is the most general. A short while ago, the names were primarily .com, .net, .org., .gov, and .edu. The .edu extensions are reserved for educational institutions, .gov for government sites, .com originally was for commerce sites, .net for either business or other internet sites, and .org for organizations, often charitable ones. Now, however, .com is by far the most popular for any internet site, mostly because users often forget to put on the ending extension and have an easier time finding .com sites.

E-Commerce

Electronic Commerce—buying and selling by way of the Internet.

E-mail

Electronic Mail—mail sent over the internet electronically.

Ethernet

A common method of networking computers in a *LAN*.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions—usually a good place to find answers you have about a site.

Fire Wall

A protection against computer invasion through a combination of hardware and software.

Flash

Software developed by Macromedia which makes a kind of movie on the site. This can make the site look very high tech. The problem is that although site owners love the effects, most visitors hate them, and most Flash is done so poorly, that it looks as though it were developed by a third grader. Done well, flash adds to the site, but also adds complication and expense.

Frames Page

Frames pages make a neat design. If this were a frames page, the text would appear to slide under the border on top. The trouble with frames is that (1) not all browsers can display them, so some visitors can't see them, and (2) search engines [with the possible exception of one] don't index them. This means that unless you have an established clientele and don't want additional internet traffic, a frames page set up will not work for you.

Gigabyte

1024 Megabytes

hit

A single request from a web *browser* for a single item from a web *server*. In order for a web browser to display a page that contains 4 graphics, 5 'hits' would occur at the server: 1 for the *HTML* page, and one for each of the 4 graphics.

Home Page (or Homepage)

Usually this refers to the index page, the first, or main page of a website. It also refers to the page to which one's computer opens the browser upon starting.

Host

Any computer on a *network* that is a repository for services available to other computers on the *network*.

Hosting

Typically this refers to a service provided by a company that uses servers to store and make websites available. Usually there is a regular fee for this.

HTML

HyperText Markup Language—The coding language used to create *Hypertext* documents for use on the *World Wide Web*.

HTTP

Hyper Text Transport Protocol—The protocol for moving *hypertext* files across the *Internet*.

Hypertext

Text that contains links to other documents or words or phrases in the document that can be chosen by a reader and which cause another document to be retrieved and displayed.

ICANN

The organization responsible for over-seeing and regulating domain name registration.

Internet

The world-wide collection of inter-connected networks that all use the TCP/IP protocols and that evolved from the *ARPANET* of the late 60's and early 70's

internet

Two or more *networks* connected together

Intranet

A private *network* inside a company or organization that connect their internal computers together in a fashion similar to the Internet.

IP Number

Internet Protocol Number—A unique number consisting of 4 parts separated by dots, e.g.198.125.64.32 [Also called a dotted quad].

ISP

Internet Service Provider—An institution that provides access to the Internet in some form, usually for money.

Java

A network-oriented programming language invented by Sun Microsystems. Using small Java programs (called "*Applets*"), Web pages can include functions such as animations, etc.

jpg or jpeg file

These are picture, or image, files. Picture files can be stored in various files such as .tif, .gif, .mic, .bmp, and so on. Most picture files for the internet or for e-mail should be .jpg files since these files are compressed enough in terms of the kilobyte size that they can be sent. .gif files are also useful for the internet and are used for pictures with motion or in which one doesn't want the background to show.

Kilobyte

A thousand bytes [More specifically, usually 1024 (2¹⁰) bytes].

LAN

Local Area Network—A computer network limited to the immediate area, usually the same building or floor of a building.

Listserv

The most common kind of *maillist*.

Login

The account name used to gain access to a computer system or the act of entering such a system.

Maillist

or Mailing List A system that allows people to send *e-mail* to one address, whereupon their message is copied and sent to all of the other subscribers to the maillist. This allows many people to participate in discussions.

Megabyte

A million *bytes*. A thousand *kilobytes*.

MIME

Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions—The standard for attaching non-text files to standard Internet mail messages. Non-text files include graphics, spreadsheets, formatted word-processor documents, sound files, etc.

An email program is said to be MIME Compliant if it can both send and receive files using the MIME standard.

Mirror

An exact copy—typically refers to sites that have two names, but identical material.

Modem

MOdulator, DEModulator—A device that connects a computer to a phone line, that allows the computer to talk to other computers through the phone system.

Modify (Domain Name)

Modifying the records associated with the domain name.

Mouseover

Refers to text or pictures automatically changing when a user's cursor glides over it.

Navigation

The buttons and hyperlinks used in a website to get around the site. Good websites have clear and prevalent [even redundant] navigation making it easy for visitors to find the information in the site.

Name Servers

A computer that performs the mapping of easily remembered domain names to IP addresses. Sometimes referred to as a host server.

Network

Any time two or more computers are connected so that they can share resources, it is a computer network. Two or more networks connected are an *internet*.

NIC

Networked Information Center—Generally, any office that handles information for a network. Another definition: NIC also refers to Network Interface Card which plugs into a computer and adapts the network interface to the appropriate standard.

NNTP

Network News Transport Protocol—The protocol used by *client* and *server* software to carry *USENET* postings back and forth over a *TCP/IP network*

Parking (Domain Name)

A domain name which has been registered, but is not being used for a website is referred to as "parked." Some companies put up pages for such parked names that say "for sale," or "under construction." Without that, a name that is registered but not being used will result in a "page cannot be displayed" page.

Password

A code used to gain access to a locked system. Good passwords contain letters and non-letters and are not simple combinations such as *clue7*. A good password would be: sTrong-9

Plug-in

A piece of software that adds features to a larger piece of software.

POP

Point of Presence, also Post Office Protocol—Two commonly used meanings: Point of Presence and Post Office Protocol. A Point of Presence usually means a city or location where a network can be connected to, often with dial up phone lines. So if an Internet company says they will soon have a POP in Belgrade, it means that they will soon have a local phone number in Belgrade and/or a place where leased lines can connect to their network. A second meaning, Post Office Protocol refers to the way e-mail software such as Eudora gets mail from a mail server. When you obtain a SLIP, PPP, or shell account you almost always get a POP account with it, and it is this POP account that you tell your e-mail software to use to get your mail.

Port

First and generally, a place where information goes into and/or out of a computer, e.g. a serial port or usb port on a personal computer.

On the Internet port often refers to a number that is part of a *URL*, appearing after a colon (:) right after the *domain name*. Every service on an Internet *server* listens on a particular port number on that server. Most services have standard port numbers, e.g. Web servers normally listen on port 80. Services can also listen on non-standard ports, in which case the port number must be specified in a URL when accessing the server.

Finally, port also refers to translating a piece of software to bring it from one type of computer system to another, e.g. to translate a Windows program so that it will run on a Macintosh.

Posting

As a noun—single message entered into a network communications system such as a message posted to a message board.

As a verb—putting a message on the web.

PPP

Point to Point Protocol—Most well known as a protocol that allows a computer to use a regular telephone line and a *modem* to make *TCP/IP* connections and thus be on the *Internet*.

Propagation

The process whereby the nameservers throughout the world have updated their records for a specific domain. For example, if you move your domain from one host to another, it will take around 24 hours or so for the new address to broadcast everywhere. During that 24 hour period, the traffic is decreasing at the old location and increasing at the new location.

PSTN

Public Switched Telephone Network—The regular telephone system.

Real Audio / Real Video

Real Audio/Real Video enables users of personal computers and other consumer electronic devices to send and receive audio, video and other multimedia services using the Web.

Register (Domain Name)

This is the process of buying a domain name that reserves the name for that individual or organization for a specified length of time. Once a name is registered, it can't be used by anyone else.

Registrant (Domain Name)

The person or organization who has register the name.

Registrar (Domain Name)

The company registering the domain name for the person or individual buying it.

Registry (Domain Name)

An organization responsible for assigning domain names.

Renewal (Domain Name)

Most domain names need to be renewed at some scheduled yearly interval. Names that expire, are not renewed, become available to someone else.

Resolution (domain Name)

The conversion of an internet address or domain name into the corresponding physical location.

Router

A special-purpose computer (or software package) that handles the connection between two or more *networks*.

Search Engine

Companies that list websites by keywords or search words so that people looking for information can find the sites with that information. With many millions of sites to list, it is difficult getting listed by search engines. The most popular ones, such as Yahoo and Google, have a reputation for being the most comprehensive for listing sites and for yielding the best results.

Security Certificate

A chunk of information (often stored as a text file) that is used by the *SSL* protocol to establish a secure connection. Security Certificates contain information about who it belongs to, who it was issued by, a unique serial number or other unique identification, valid dates, and an encrypted 'fingerprint' that can be used to verify the contents of the certificate.

Server

A computer, or a software package, that provides a specific kind of service to *client* software running on other computers. Typically, this refers to large computers that host numerous websites.

Shockwave

Shockwave, produced by Macromedia, allows you to view new forms of entertainment on the Web, such as games, music, rich-media chat, interactive product demos, and e-merchandising applications

SLIP

Serial Line Internet Protocol—A standard for using a regular telephone line (a serial line) and a *modem* to connect a computer as a real *Internet* site. SLIP is gradually being replaced by *PPP*.

SMTP

Simple Mail Transport Protocol—The main protocol used to send electronic mail on the Internet. SMTP consists of a set of rules for how a program sending mail and a program receiving mail should interact. Almost all Internet e-mail is sent and received by *clients* and *servers* using SMTP, thus if one wanted to set up an email server on the Internet one would look for email server software that supports SMTP.

Spam (or Spamming)

Repeated posting of a message. This is considered inappropriate use of the internet and is grounds for host companies to take away someone's website without reimbursement of fees. A site that tries to get listed by a search engine by submitting numerous times is considered to be spamming, and will not be listed at all. Sending out messages to lists of e-mail addresses of people who don't wish to receive the message and have not contacted the sender is considered spamming, and is grounds for losing one's e-mail.

SQL

Structured Query Language—A specialized programming language for sending queries to databases.

SSL

Secure Sockets Layer—A protocol designed by Netscape Communications to enable encrypted, authenticated communications across the Internet. SSL used mostly (but not exclusively) in communications between web *browsers* and web *servers*. *URL*'s that begin with 'https' indicate that an SSL connection will be used. SSL provides 3 important things: Privacy, Authentication, and Message Integrity.

In an SSL connection each side of the connection must have a *Security Certificate*, which each side's software sends to the other. Each side then encrypts what it sends using information from both its own and the other side's Certificate, ensuring that only the intended recipient can de-crypt it, and that the other side can be sure the data came from the place it claims to have come from, and that the message has not been tampered with.

TCP/IP

Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol—This is the suite of protocols that defines the *Internet*. Originally designed for the *UNIX* operating system, TCP/IP software is now available for every major kind of computer operating system.

Telnet

The command and program used to *login* from one *Internet* site to another. The telnet command/program gets you to the login: prompt of another *host*.

Template

A set design into which your site information is plugged. This allows only minor variation and makes your site look amateurish.

Terabyte

1024 *gigabytes*.

Terminal

A device that allows you to send commands to a computer somewhere else. At a minimum, this usually means a keyboard and a display screen and some simple circuitry.

Terminal Server

A special purpose computer that has places to plug in many *modems* on one side, and a connection to a *LAN* or *host* machine on the other side. Thus the terminal server does the work of answering the calls and passes the connections on to the appropriate *node*.

Top Level Domain: (TLD)

The Top Level Domain refers to the extension such as .com, .net, .org, .gov, .edu, and so on. The second level is the unique name before the .com.

Trademark

If a domain name which is a trademarked name, it is possible that the name can be taken away. Therefore, it's a good idea to check before registering a

name to be sure that it is not someone's trademark. The process for getting a name back is expensive, and trademark law differs from country to country.

UNIX

A computer operating system (the basic software running on a computer, underneath things like word processors and spreadsheets). UNIX is designed to be used by many people at the same time (it is multi-user) and has *TCP/IP* built-in. It is the most common operating system for *servers* on the *Internet*.

URL

Uniform Resource Locator—The standard way to give the address of any resource on the Internet that is part of the World Wide Web (WWW), such as <http://www.yahoo.com>.

USENET

A world-wide system of discussion groups, with comments passed among hundreds of thousands of machines. Not all USENET machines are on the *Internet*, maybe half. USENET is completely decentralized, with over 10,000 discussion areas, called *newsgroups*

WAN

Wide Area Network—Any *internet* or *network* that covers an area larger than a single building or campus.

Web

WWW or World Wide Web

Whois

Most registries maintain a database of domain names and their associated contact information. Users can query these databases through a program called Whois.

WWW

(World Wide Web)— First, loosely used: the whole constellation of resources that can be accessed using *Gopher*, *FTP*, *HTTP*, *telnet*, *USENET*, *WAIS* and some other tools. Second, the universe of hypertext servers (*HTTP servers*) which are the servers that allow text, graphics, sound files, etc. to be mixed together.

Zone file

The group of files that reside on the domain host or nameserver. The zone file designates a domain, its subdomains and mail server.