

Communications and the Internet

The Internet

The Internet / the net is a network connecting millions of computer users worldwide. The World Wide Web / the Web is a huge portion of the Internet containing linked documents, called pages.

If you have a broadband connection then your access to the Internet should be fast. Many cafés and other public places now offer people a wi-fi ^{wi-fi} ^{wireless} connection to the Internet – this means that you can access the Internet through a wireless network, i.e. without needing a cable of any kind.



When you browse, you look for information on the Internet. The software that helps you do this can be called a browser (e.g. Internet Explorer® or Firefox®). You use a search engine to help you locate what you want. Google® is one of the best known search engines and people now talk about googling someone or something. You can easily spend a lot of time surfing the net / the Web. [navigating around the Internet, sometimes aimlessly]

A website is a document on the Web giving information about a particular subject, person or institution. The introductory page is called the home page. From this there are links to other pages. Good websites are easy to navigate or find your way around. One option on many websites is an FAQ page. This stands for 'frequently asked questions', a list of common questions and helpful answers. You can bookmark websites that you log on¹ to frequently. If a website gets a lot of hits, that means that it has been visited by a lot of people.

Sometimes you need to subscribe to a site, which means you become a member of it. This may involve having a special username and choosing a password. You will only be able to log in² to the site if you enter this information correctly.

¹ opp = log off ² opp = log out

Online communication

You can communicate with others by email. With an email you can include an attachment. You can attach a photo, for example. You can also send someone an e-card. A server is a powerful central computer from which other computers get information. If your (ISP) Internet service provider's server is down (not functioning), you may not be able to send emails.

You can use your computer to Skype friends and family – the software allows you to make phone calls using your computer and the Internet, and you can see which people on your contact list are online at the same time. If you each have a webcam, you can see each other as you talk.

Many modern online programs can be called interactive, i.e. they allow users to become involved in the exchange of information. For example, social networking sites like Facebook are a popular way for people to keep in touch with their friends.

A wiki is a website which allows users to add, delete and edit its contents. Wikipedia is perhaps the world's largest wiki. Blogs are also interactive as they are a kind of online diary that readers can add comments to. Many people are involved in online gaming, playing with people who they have never met. Often these games make use of virtual reality, [a set of images and sounds produced by a computer, which represent a place or a situation that the gamer can take part in]

Exercises

34.1

Which word from the box matches each definition?

attachment	bookmark	browser	contact list	navigate	internet service provider
password	search engine	server			

- 1 email addresses, phone numbers, etc. for the people you know contact list
- 2 something that you send with an email attachment
- 3 an individual combination of letters and digits that you use to log in to a website password
- 4 a way of accessing a favourite website quickly bookmark
- 5 software that allows you to surf the web browser
- 6 a company that enables you to use the web internet service provider
- 7 software that helps you to locate the websites that you need search engine
- 8 a large computer that holds information that can be accessed by smaller computers server
- 9 to find your way around a website or between websites navigate

34.2

Choose a word from the opposite page to complete each sentence.

- 1 WWW stands for World Wide Web every day – he's always got something interesting to
- 2 I read that journalist's the Internet last night. The server must have been
- 3 I couldn't my cousins who live in Australia – I love seeing them as well as talking to them.
- 4 It's wonderful being able to to my favourite newspaper's website. It doesn't cost much and I've decided to it has lots of interesting stuff there.
- 5 I like this website because it has lots of very useful to all sorts of other sites that interest me.
- 6 My brother loves online gaming, particularly reality games.
- 7 An website is one which allows users to add comments to it or edit its content in some way.

34.3

Are these statements true or false? If they are not true, correct them.

- 1 Google® is the name of a browser. **False – Google is the name of a search engine.**
- 2 FAQ stands for Fast Answers to Questions.
- 3 If a café says that it has wi-fi access, you can get online with your laptop there.
- 4 A wiki is a kind of computer device.
- 5 When you want to use some websites you may be asked to enter a password.
- 6 If you send someone an e-card they will receive it in the post.
- 7 When you want to stop using the net, you log on.
- 8 A website's home page is the one where you will find key information about the site and links to its other pages.

34.4

Over to you

Answer these questions about yourself.

- 1 What do you mainly use the Internet for?
- 2 What is your search engine of choice?
- 3 Which websites have you bookmarked?
- 4 How often do you use social networking sites?
- 5 Do you write a blog or read anyone else's blog?
- 6 Do you enjoy online gaming?

