

Internet skills

Introduction to the Internet

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN FROM THIS SESSION

This session introduces the basics of the Internet:

- What is the Internet?
- Connecting to the Internet
- What can the Internet be used for?

The session also introduces the main features of the Web Browser, Internet Explorer:

- Menus and toolbars
- Favourites
- Browsing offline
- Saving Web pages
- Saving Web graphics
- History
- Printing Web pages



WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The Internet is a global network of computers that allows anyone with access to a computer to share and exchange information by viewing pages stored on tens of thousands of computers around the world.

The Internet provides access to an enormous amount of up-to-the-minute information, views and opinions – and you can take part yourself, sharing *your* views and enthusiasms with millions others in this global community.

Once you are connected to the Internet, you get access to computers holding millions of pages of documents and data. Libraries, museums, schools, colleges, universities, newspapers, commercial companies, campaign groups and enthusiastic individuals make information available through Web pages.

CONNECTING TO THE INTERNET

There are two ways that you may connect to the Internet:

- Via a computer on a **network** that is connected to the Internet (in a library, university or at work, for example); or,
- Via a **dial-up connection**: using a **modem** that uses a phone line to dial your **ISP** (Internet Service Provider). Internet service providers use powerful computers (servers) to make your connection to the Internet, provide your email 'mailbox' and various other services. BT Internet, Freeserve and Demon are examples of Internet service providers.

WHAT CAN THE INTERNET BE USED FOR?

Basically, there are many different things happening on the Internet: some people are communicating via email, others participating in discussion groups, or accessing a wide variety of information stored on the World Wide Web.

Email

Once connected, you can send messages to anyone else with an Internet account. The messages can be simply text, or you can attach documents, pictures or spreadsheet data. Email is a fast and economical way to communicate globally. To send and receive email you will need an email program such as Microsoft Outlook or Eudora. Your ISP transmits your email messages and stores your mail in your mailbox on their server.

Webmail accounts are useful if you don't have an ISP account, or want to access your email when you're away from your own computer. Example: www.hotmail.com

Newsgroups

There are thousands of discussion groups (or **newsgroups**) - public discussion forums on every topic under the sun, from serious politics and social issues to the X-files. You can make your own contribution or respond to points others have made. Newsgroups can be useful if you are interested in a topical issue. It's a bit like reading the letters page of a newspaper: you get a wide range of opinions on just about any issue. You can access newsgroups with your email software.

Many newsgroups have a **FAQ** (a document with Frequently Asked Questions about the topic - often a valuable concise summary of the issues).

Internet Relay Chat

IRC means Internet Relay Chat - a facility for holding live 'conversations' with other Internet users around the world. The conversations are typed on keyboards and appear as

words on each computer's screen. Thousands of conversations are going on at any time, each of which may have anywhere from a couple of contributors to more than thirty - there's no practical limit. Conversations take place in 'channels', which have a name that may, or may not, have anything to do with the subjects being talked about.

For the most part IRC is pure entertainment. It's popular with younger users, and the tone of the conversations tends to follow suit. It's not a good way to use the Internet to ask questions or get serious work done.

World Wide Web

The most popular, and fastest-growing part of the Internet is the World Wide Web (WWW). The Web is a universe of linked pages (at least 600 million at the last count!). A typical Web page contains words and pictures and may also contain **multimedia** elements – pictures, animations, video or sounds. Built into each page are **links** to other pages.

For many, the Web is a giant library where you can search for information provided by educational organisations, museums, art galleries, campaign groups, companies and government organisations. For others, it's business: buying and selling everything from books and CDs to sausages. The Web is also an opportunity to publish personal information, enthusiasms and views your own website.

THE WEB BROWSER: INTERNET EXPLORER

To navigate the Web, you use a piece of software called a browser. A Web browser is a program that enables your computer to communicate with Web sites. Netscape Navigator is one leading browser; another is Opera.

In this session we'll be using Microsoft Internet Explorer. Click on the Explorer icon on the screen to open the browser and connect to the Internet.



The Browser Window

When Internet Explorer is opened, the browser screen is displayed, with the following features:

- **Title Bar:** at the very top of the window indicates the title of the page you are viewing.
- **Menu Bar:** contains menus that control all options and commands for Internet Explorer.
- **Toolbar:** contains all of the most frequently used commands and all of the browsing functions.

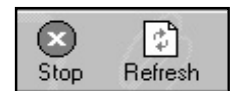
The features of the Internet Explorer window are shown on page 5.

- **Address Bar:** shows the address of the page you are currently viewing. You can also type a Web address directly into this bar and then press enter to go to that site.
- **Browser Window:** displays the Web page you are currently located at. Any text, images, movies, animation, links, or any other application files will be shown in this window. The scroll bars located on the right side and on the bottom of this window allow you to continue viewing the page even when the page is too large to fit in your screen.
- **Status Bar:** indicates progress in downloading the page and its component files (images, animations, etc) and other useful information.

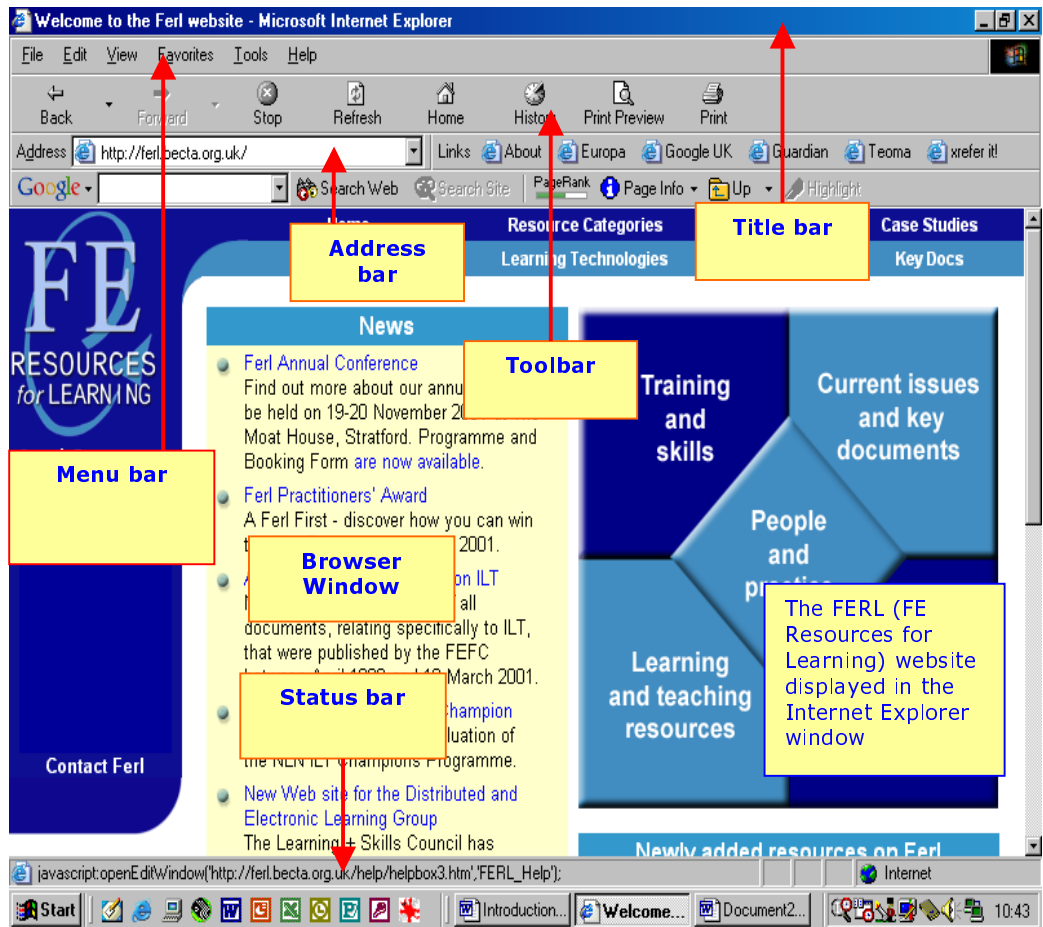
The Internet Explorer Toolbar

The toolbar is composed of eleven different buttons, each with an important function:

- **Back:** will take you back to the web page you were previously viewing. Pressing it repeatedly will continue to take you back one page at a time.
- **Forward:** will take you forward to the next page if you have previously browsed pages and then returned to the page you are currently viewing.
- **Stop:** stops any current operations by Internet Explorer. It will stop the current page from loading. If you press it before a page has finished loading, the page will display everything it had finished loading before the stop button was pressed.
- **Refresh:** This button will reload the current page that you are viewing. If you are loading a page and the transfer was interrupted, you can reload the full page again by clicking here. If the Web is busy and a page is taking a long time to load, try clicking **Stop** then **Refresh**. A new connection is made which might load faster.
- **Home:** will return you to the page you have selected as the default start-up page for Internet Explorer (*your* home page).
- **Search:** will take you to the page you have selected as the default Web search page for Internet Explorer. If you have not selected a page it will take you to Microsoft's default search page.
- **Favourites:** opens up the Favourites menu. This is a list of your favourite websites that you have 'book marked' to save you the trouble of remembering or typing their web address again. From this menu you can go to a favourite with one click, add a favourite or organize your favourites.
- **Print:** print the contents of the page you are viewing. (Versions 5.5 and 6.0 of Internet Explorer also include a useful **Print Preview** button. You can see how many



pages of A4 a particular Web page will comprise – and select particular pages to print, rather than the whole lot.



ACCESS A KNOWN WEB SITE BY TYPING IN A WEB ADDRESS

If you know the Web address of a site, click in the Address Bar. Type in the Web address of the site you want to go to, and then press enter.

Another term for a Web address is URL or uniform resource locator.



In this example, the address of the BBC Webwise site (an excellent beginner's introduction to the Web) has been entered:

It is very important that you type the Web address accurately. The slashes are always forward slashes (/) and most (though not all) addresses are entirely in lower case (so, it's **bbc** **not** BBC). The dots and their exact position are also crucial.

What you are typing is a *path* to the Web resource. Let's explain this using the BBC example:

All web addresses begin with `http://` but you do not need to type this bit if it is followed by `www`.

1. First you enter the protocol (or programming language) that the browser should use to get to the resource. The one used here (and for most Net users the only one we come across) is *http*, the **Hypertext Transfer Protocol** that tells the browser how to transfer the page you have called for across the Net to your computer.

`http://`

2. The next bit gives the name of the host computer (or *Web server*) on which the resource is stored.

`www.bbc`

3. The last section gives an indication of the nature and geographical location of the organisation or individual publishing the resource. **co** or **com** indicate a commercial organisation (such as the BBC). **ac** or **edu** mean an educational organisation (e.g. `www.ucas.ac.uk`). **gov** means a national, regional or local government organisation (e.g. `www.dfes.gov.uk`). And **org** indicates a non-profit or campaign organisation (e.g. `www.greenpeace.org.uk`).

`co.uk`

If you come across the tilde (~) in a URL, this indicates that a private individual has posted the web page – evaluate information and views expressed accordingly.

NAVIGATING A WEB SITE

Each Web **page** that you access will be part of Web **site**. All the pages in a Web site are connected by **links**. These enable you to jump from one page to another with one click of the mouse. Links may be **hypertext** that looks like this, or be in the form of **buttons** or **active graphics** (you can recognise these because the cursor changes to a pointing finger as you move the mouse over them).

BOOKMARK FAVOURITE WEB SITES

Internet Explorer contains a system for book marking frequently visited Web sites. These are known as **Favourites**. When you find a Web page you like and want to return to, just click **Favourites** on the menu bar while the page is loaded in the browser and then click **Add to Favourites**.

It won't be long before you have bookmarked a large number of Web pages. At this stage you can **organise** your favourites into folders.

PRACTICE

Access and bookmark known Web sites

Take a look at some web sites and add them to your Favourites.

1. In the Address Bar, enter the URL of the Guardian website: www.guardian.co.uk
2. Bookmark the site: go to the menu bar and select **Favourites**, then **Add Favourites**. Click OK.
3. Have a look around the site, following some links. This is actually a network of sites – Newsunlimited, Filmunlimited, Educationunlimited, etc. Use the **Back** button to return to the **Home Page** of the Guardian site. Use the **Forward** button to retrace your steps.
4. Go to the BBC Education website: www.bbc.co.uk/education
5. Bookmark the site: go to the menu bar and select **Favourites**, then **Add Favourites**.
6. Have a look around the site, following some links.
7. Go to the Google website and bookmark it: www.google.co.uk
8. Go to the UCAS website and bookmark it: www.ucas.ac.uk
9. Go to the Department for Education and Skills website and bookmark it: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk>
10. Go to the Telegraph website and bookmark it: www.telegraph.co.uk
11. Go to the Greenpeace website and bookmark it: www.greenpeace.org.uk
12. Go to the Friends of the Earth website and bookmark it: www.foe.co.uk
13. Go to the BBC News website and bookmark it: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>
14. Go to the FERL website and bookmark it: <http://ferl.becta.org.uk/>

You may prefer to edit or change the name that is automatically given to the favourite. With the name highlighted, type in your preferred name. Call this *Guardian*

Note: every Web site has its own home page, which is like the contents page of a book. There will be links to all the main sections of the Web site.


When you click the **Home** button, however, you return to the Home page you have set the browser to start at on your computer.

PRACTICE

Create new Favourites folders

Now that you have assembled a fair collection of bookmarks, you need to organise them. We are going to create four new folders to organise the bookmarks you have collected so far.

1. On the main menu bar of Internet Explorer, select **Favourites**.
2. Now select **Organize Favourites** from this menu. The Organize Favourites dialog box will appear. From this box you can add and remove folders and sort your favourites. The **Move** button allows you to move selected favourites to another directory. The **Rename** button will let you change the name of the



Add To Favorites...
Organize Favorites...

favourite you selected. The **Delete** button will delete the favourite you have selected.

3. To create a new folder, in the Organize Favourites dialog box select **Organize Favourites**.
4. In this box, a button is located in the upper-right that will allow you to create a new folder (This button has been circled in red in the figure on the next page). Click this button and a new folder will appear. The default name of this folder is New Folder. Change the name by clicking on the folder one time. Then click the right mouse button and select **Rename**. Type *Search Engines* when the New Folder text is highlighted.
5. Repeat this process to create new folders called *Education*, *Environment* and *News Media*.

Organise favourites

Now sort the favourites you have saved into their appropriate folders.

1. Click once on a favourite – for example, UCAS, and drag it to the appropriate folder – *Education* for this one. Add the FERL and DFES sites to this folder.
2. Do the same for *News Media* (Guardian, Telegraph and BBC News), *Environment* (Greenpeace and FoE) and *Search Engines* (Google).

Now you can add new folders to reflect your own preferences.

If you need to **delete** a favourite (because you don't need it any more or the page is no longer available) follow these steps:

1. From the **Organize Favourites** dialog box, select the favourite that you wish to delete by clicking once on it.
2. Click the **Delete** button and you will be asked to confirm whether or not you really want to delete it.
3. Click **Yes** if you want to delete the favourite you've selected.

BROWSING OFFLINE

Browsing the Web for long periods of time can run up large phone bills. But with Internet Explorer you can browse Web pages you have loaded while you are offline.

Making pages available for offline viewing

When you make a Web page available offline, you can read its content when your computer is not connected to the Internet. For example, you can view Web pages on your laptop computer when you don't have a network or Internet connection. Or you might want to read Web pages at home but do not want to tie up a phone line.

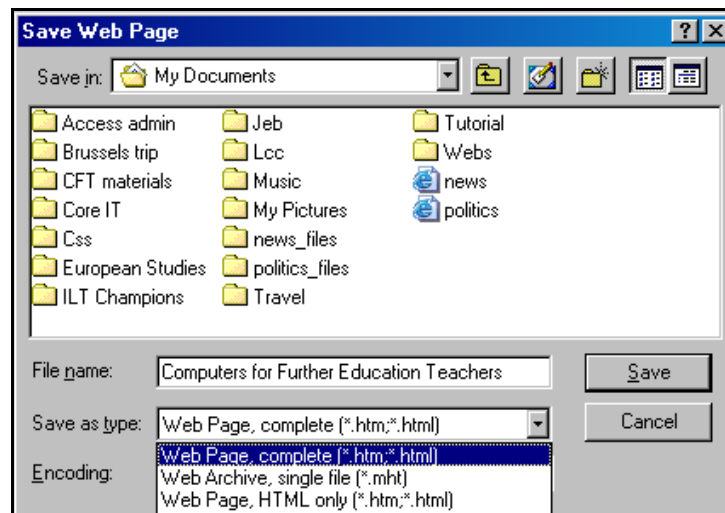
If you want to view a Web page offline, you can **save** the page on your computer. There are several ways you can save the Web page, from just saving the text, to saving all of the images and text needed to display that page as it appears on the Web.

Note:
These instructions apply to the current version of Internet Explorer (version 5). In version 4, when a Web page is saved, the graphics are **not** saved.

PRACTICE

Save a Web page on your computer

1. Go to Google UK (www.google.co.uk) and type **computers for further education teachers** in the search box. Select **pages from the UK** and press ENTER.
2. From the results list select the Computers for Further Education Teachers link (www.cfet.ngfl.gov.uk).
3. When the page appears, on the menu bar go to **File/Save As**.
4. In the navigation dialogue box, move to the floppy A: drive.



Note The first two options are available only if you have Internet Explorer 5 or later installed.

5. In the **File name** box, type a name for the page (if a suitable one is not already provided).
6. In the **Save as type** box, select a file type:
 - To save all of the files needed to display this page, including graphics, click **Web Page, complete**. This option saves each file in its original format.
 - To save all of the information needed to display this page in a single file that you can attach to an email message, click **Web Archive**. With **Web Page, complete** and **Web Archive**, you can view all of the Web page offline.
 - If you select **Web Page, html only** this option saves the text on the page in the original layout, but it does not save the graphics.

- To save just the text from the current Web page, click **Text Only**. This option saves the information on the Web page in plain text format.

PRACTICE

Viewing saved web pages

To view web pages that you have saved, launch Internet Explorer:

1. Go to **File, Open**.
2. In the following dialogue box, click **Browse**.
3. Navigate to the location of the file you wish to open and select the file.
4. Click **OK**.

PRACTICE

Saving graphics

You may wish to save an image from a Web page as a file on your computer or floppy disk. This is how:

1. Move the mouse pointer over an image. Right-click and select **Save Picture As** from the pop-up menu.
2. In the following dialogue box, navigate to the A: drive and give the picture a suitable filename.
3. Click **OK**.

PRACTICE

Inserting graphics

You may want to insert a picture or graphic from the Web into a document you are word-processing. To do this in Word:

1. Open Word and the document in which you want to place the image.
2. Position the insertion point at the place in the document where you want the image to appear,
3. On the menu bar, select **Insert** then **Picture/From File**.
4. Navigate to the location where you saved the image file, select the file, then click OK. The image will be placed in your document.
5. You may need to resize the image: click on the image, then click and drag a corner handle.
6. Other features of the image, such as how the text wraps around it, can be adjusted. Right-click on the graphic, then select **Format Picture** from the context menu.

HISTORY

Another way to view pages you've recently visited is to use the **History** feature of Internet Explorer. This automatically stores visited Web pages on your hard drive – though not permanently. Pages are stored in a cache of a pre-determined size. As the cache runs out of storage space, pages are erased by new ones – but not in a coherent manner. So you should not necessarily expect the oldest files to be erased first.



PRACTICE

Find a page visited recently

1. On the toolbar, click the **History** button.
2. The **History** bar appears containing links for Web sites and pages visited in previous days and weeks.
3. In the History bar, click a week or day, click a Web site folder to display individual pages, and then click the page icon to display the Web page.
4. To sort or search the History bar, click the arrow next to the **View** button at the top of the History bar.

Tip
You can hide the History bar again by clicking the **History** button again.

PRACTICE

Print a Web page

1. Load a Web page in the browser.
2. Click the **Print** button.
3. If you have Internet Explorer version 5.5 or 6.0 you can use the **Print Preview** button to preview the Web page. Long Web pages may print over several A4 sides. With Print Preview you can select particular A4 sides to print.