

(Approx. 1111 words)

BACK TO BASICS

Using the Internet

By Jim Cerny, 2nd Vice President, Sarasota TUG, FL

December 2014 issue, Sarasota Technology Monitor

www.spcug.org

[jimcerny123 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:jimcerny123@gmail.com)

The Internet is an almost unlimited source of information, news, entertainment, help, and, well everything. Most people, including you, probably have no problem using the Internet, but sometimes it is good to review some Internet-related terms and some basics. It helps us use the internet even better. Here are some Internet terms --

The INTERNET – a whole lot of computers sharing information. There is only one Internet, it does not come in parts. It is also called the World Wide Web. Anyone can put anything on the internet, it is not “policed” by anyone. Be careful what you see or read may not be true. You can connect to the internet using a wire to your computer or, more common today, without a wire, called a “wireless” connection or “Wi-Fi”. All laptop computers and iPads and “smart phones” have the ability to connect to a wireless network IF one is available in the range of your computer. Hotels, restaurants, libraries, and some towns may provide free wireless connections for you. Desktop computers usually connect with a wire but you can purchase a device to make your desktop connect without a wire.

Internet PROVIDER – a company to whom you pay money to allow you access to the Internet. Companies like Verizon, Comcast, Brighthouse, or a satellite “dish” company are examples.

Internet BROWSER – a program on your computer which allows you to view internet web pages. These programs, such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, are all free. The Internet Explorer program comes free with Windows but you can download others from the Internet if you wish. All these programs work the same way but may look a little different.

INTERNET ADDRESS – every web page on the internet has a unique address.

ADDRESS BAR – located at or near the very top of your Internet Browser program window, this “box” contains the address of the web page you are currently viewing in the window. You can go to another web page address by left-clicking your mouse on the current address (which will highlight the address) and entering, using your keyboard, any new valid web page address. (If you enter words or text in this box instead of an address, your web browser will search the Internet using a search engine. That’s ok, but it may not be the search engine you want to use).

WEB PAGE – a “document” on the internet which has a unique address. You may also think of a web page as a specific “location” on the Internet. A web page can be any length or size. Look for scrollbars at the side of the window or the bottom to use to see the entire page.

HOT LINK – Almost all web pages contain “hot links” to click on with your mouse. These links will take you to another web page.

SEARCH ENGINE – a web page that you can use to search the Internet. The most popular is Google (www.google.com) but there are many others such as Ask.com, Bing, and Yahoo. They are free to use, just go to their webpage.

Now that we have reviewed some terms, we will look at the two ways to use the internet. The first way, if you know the exact web address of the web page you want to see, just enter that address in the address bar or box and hit the “Enter” key on your keyboard. Your Internet browser will go to that web page and the new address will be displayed in the address bar.

The second way to use the Internet is when you do not know an address and just want to search the internet for something. So, you use a search engine like Google. At the Google web page you will see your insertion point waiting for you to enter your search words in the search box. Use regular English words separated by spaces. You can even ask a question. Google will search the whole internet in a fraction of a second and give you thousands of results, usually ten or fifteen on a page. On the results, you can click on any web page title to go to that web page.

Here are some very helpful things to consider when using the internet. You can find out more about them by using Google.

FAVORITES – If you like visiting certain web pages often, keep it in your “favorites” list. The next time you want to visit that web page again, just click on “favorites” and click on the one you want in the list. You can organize your favorites into **FOLDERS** too. So you could have a folder of your favorite medical web pages or games or whatever.

The **Left and Right ARROWS** at the top of the window of your web browser program can be clicked (with your left mouse button) to go back to a previous web page or to go forward to see a web page you have already seen. When you use your web browser you are building a chain of web pages that you have visited and these arrows allow you to move up or down that chain.

OPTIONS – Your web browser program will come with many options some of which you may want to understand and use. For example, do you want to keep in memory your history of web pages visited? You should use the “help” option on your browser program (mine is a small blue circle with a white “?” in it) to learn what you can do. You will not want to try everything, but you will find some things you will want to try.

TABS – Most browsers are able to use “tabs” which are, simply, a web page that is kept active. Years ago you could only view one web page at a time. But by using tabs, you can set up your browser to have several web pages available to you at once (without opening another web browser program window). I don’t use tabs very much, but sometimes when you click on a hotlink it may open the next web page in a new tab.

GOOGLE HELP – Remember, you can ask Google any question you want. If you want to know something about your browser program, you could enter in Google something like: “How do I save favorite web pages in Internet Explorer?” Be as specific as you can with your question.

Hopefully this has been a good review for you and maybe will inspire you to try something new with your browser program.