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1

Get Started

This chapter outlines the Internet and the World Wide Web, it discusses the facilities you need to get on the Internet from your computer, and introduces Internet Explorer and the alternative browsers that give you safe and secure access to the Internet.

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- 11** Internet Services
- 12** Requirements
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Beware

There is no overseer, or manager, for the Internet, so Internet security is provided by software installed on your computer (see page 214).

The Internet

The Internet (Interconnected Network) is a global network connecting millions of computers, organized into thousands of commercial, academic, domestic and government networks located in over 100 countries. The Internet is sometimes called the Information Highway, because it provides the transportation and routing for the information exchanged between the connected computers.

The computers on the Internet are connected by a variety of methods, including the telephone system, wired networks, wireless (radio) networks, cable TV and even satellite.

**Hot tip**

The computers on the Internet are known as hosts or servers, and they create exchanges for news, views and data of all kinds.

Some sections are commercial, others are academic or government, but no single organization owns the Internet as a whole. It is simply made up of individual, independent networks and computers, whose owners and operators decide which Internet methods to use and which local services to offer to the global Internet community.

Internet Services

The services offered could include one or more of these:

- **Electronic mail (email)**

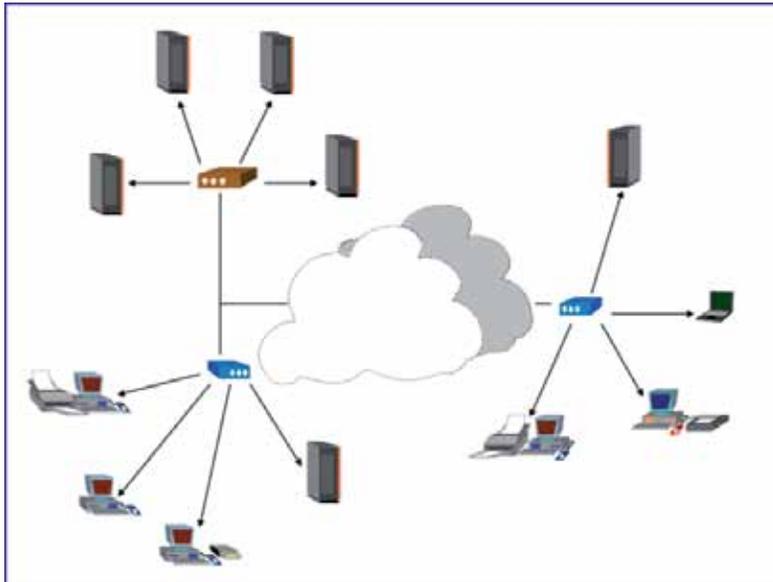
This allows you and other Internet users to send and receive messages.

- **FTP (File Transfer Protocol)**

This allows your computer to retrieve files from a remote computer and view or save them onto your computer.

- **Internet Service Providers (ISPs)**

These, as the name suggests, provide points of access to the Internet. You need an ISP account, plus the means of connecting your computer to one of their computers.



- **World Wide Web (WWW)**

Also known as the Web, this is made up of collections of files and documents that may include images, animation, video and hyperlinks to other documents. These can be on the same computer, or on different computers, anywhere on the Internet.

Don't forget



There are other ways to connect to the Internet that don't require a computer, such as by cellphone, or a PDA device.

Don't forget



A location on the Web is known as a website. It will have a home page, the document that you see when you enter the site. It might have additional documents (web pages) and files, usually related to the main theme or focus.

Hot tip



To visit a website, and follow the hyperlinks in the web pages, you will need an Internet browser (see page 17).

Hot tip

If you are planning to access the Internet from someone else's computer, it should already be set up for Internet access, though you will need the sign on code and password for your email account.

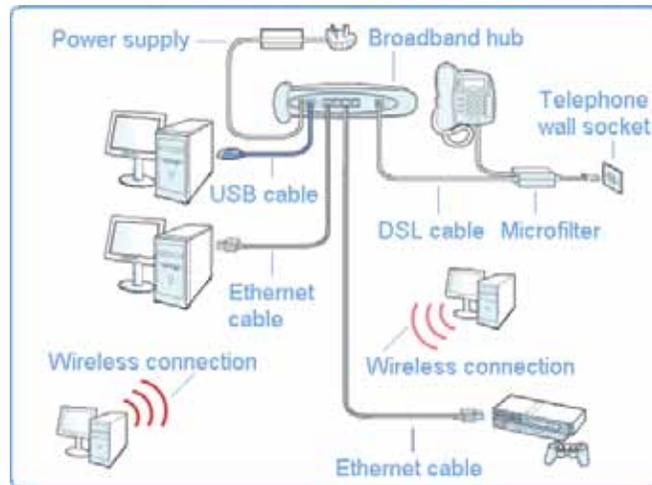
Beware

Don't assume that your supplier will have provided the best choice in every instance. Often, there will be 90 day trial versions of software, or lite (limited function) editions and you must pay extra for the full product. You may find cheaper alternatives, and even free options, if you search on the Internet.

Requirements

To connect to the Internet, there are a number of things that you'll require:

- 1 A computer equipped for use on the Internet. In this book we assume that you are using a Windows-based PC (see page 13)
- 2 A means of connecting your PC (or PCs) to the computers at your ISP, including the hardware components, the communications software and the cabling, or phone links



- 3 An ISP account that will provide access to the Internet. You may also need email services, which would normally use the same account
- 4 Appropriate software on your computer, to exchange information with other computers on the Internet, and to send and receive emails



We'll look at each of these in turn, so you will know all the tasks that are involved in setting up your computer, and can identify what remains to be done.

Internet Enabled Computer

If you purchased your computer within the last three or four years, it will almost certainly be adequate for most activities on the Internet. If you have an older computer, review these hardware and software specifications to see if it will meet your needs for Internet access.

Processor

If your computer has a Pentium 1GHz processor, or anything faster than this, you won't be restricted by the power of your computer.



Operating System

While any version of Windows will allow you to access the Internet, for the best security you should upgrade to Windows 7 or later. The Home Premium and Ultimate editions are recommended for home users, and Professional or Enterprise for businesses.

Memory

Although it is possible to run your computer with less memory, your use of the Internet will be smoother and more effective if you have memory of 2GB or more installed.

Hard Disk Drive

Check the free space on your hard drive. If there is 20GB or more available, you'll have no problems with disk space. Any less, and you might wish to consider replacing the drive, or simply adding a second drive.

Display Monitor and Adapter

To take full advantage of the Internet, you should preferably have a 17" monitor or larger, capable of displaying Hicolor (16bit), Trucolor (24bit) or better, at a resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels. For high definition videos, a wide screen with up to 1920 x 1080 pixels would be recommended.

Don't forget



Other requirements include a soundcard, speakers and DVD drive, if you want to play videos on your computer. You may also want a printer, and perhaps a scanner, but these are not essential for accessing the Internet.

Hot tip



To check the computer specifications, open Control Panel, click System and Maintenance and then System, to see the operating system level, the processor type and the memory installed.

Don't forget



Open the Computer folder and select the individual drive to check the size and the space available on that drive, displayed in the Details panel at the foot of the window.

Hot tip

You may pay as you go, for the call or connection time, or pay a fixed fee for a specified maximum number of hours, depending on which works out most economical for your average amount of usage.

Beware

You may have a Wireless connection with ADSL Broadband. This still uses the normal telephone cables to connect to the ISP, but allows you to access the router from anywhere in your home. However, this is not full wireless connection.

Connection Types

The type of connection you need depends on how much use you will be making of Internet access. There are four main options, though not all are available in every region.

Dial-up

This is a low speed, low cost method for limited usage (less than say, five hours per week). It uses a Modem in your computer, which connects to a standard telephone socket. Your normal phone line is unavailable for incoming or outgoing calls while you are using the Internet.

ADSL Broadband

This offers higher speed and supports a higher level of usage. It uses an ADSL modem attached to your computer or, alternatively, a separate device known as a router. It makes use of your telephone connection, but transfers data in a digital format that allows the line to remain available for normal incoming or outgoing calls. You can, if you wish, leave your computer connected all the time.

Cable TV

If your area has Cable TV services, these may offer a broadband connection. This operates in a similar fashion to ADSL Broadband, but is independent of your telephone line.

Satellite

If there are no ADSL or cable services available in your area, satellite services can provide you with a permanent two-way connection to the Internet that uses no telephone line. All you need is an interface box, and a small satellite dish connected to your computer. There are services designed for home use, a local community or businesses.

Wireless

This is the type of connection you use with a laptop computer (or a handheld unit) when you are away from home, at an airport, hotel or Internet cafe. Your computer will have a wireless modem, and the organization that you are visiting will provide the wireless access point which, in turn, connects to the Internet.

ISP Account

Having decided on the type of connection that meets your needs, you need an Internet Service Provider to complete the connection. There are several ways to identify ISPs:

- Ask friends and family which ISP they use
- Check for pre-installed links on your computer for setting up a well-known ISP, such as AOL or MSN
- Look for CDs for ISPs, in the information supplied with your computer, to get onscreen instructions
- Check at your local bookstore, supermarket or computer store, for ISP CDs and special offers

If you have access to the Internet on another system, visit a website that can help you choose a suitable service. For example, to choose a broadband service:

- 1 Go to www.theispguide.com/ for details of North American providers



- 2 Search in your location by specifying the Area Code, or City and State



Don't forget



Check that your selected ISP will provide a modem, router or other hardware components that are needed to set up your broadband account.

Don't forget



There are similar ISP lists available for other regions and countries.

Hot tip



ISPs for the UK and Australia can also be listed with this guide.

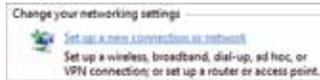
Don't forget

There's usually a setup CD, available from your ISP, that will take you, step by step, through the connection process, with explanations at each stage. This will avoid setting up your connection manually.

Set Up Internet Connection

In most cases, the instructions you require to set up and configure your Internet connection will be made available by the Internet Service Provider you have selected. However, Windows does provide guidance for creating the connection. This may be useful when you are setting up, for example, a simple dial-up connection, perhaps using the ISP account from your previous computer. To run this wizard:

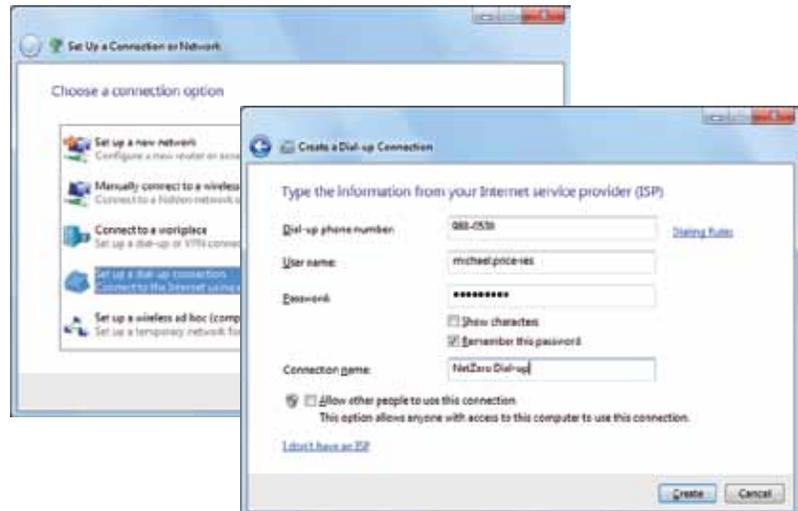
- 1 Select Start, type network, and select Network and Sharing Center
- 2 Select to Set up a new connection or network



- 3 Choose your required connection option, for example Dial-up, then click the Next button and enter the phone number, username and account password

Hot tip

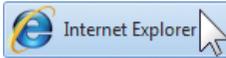
In this example, a dial-up network connection for NetZero is being set up. This provides a dial-up service that is free apart from the telephone line charges. This could be useful as a backup, or for lower levels of usage.



- 4 Click Connect to complete the connection setup

Start your Browser

The first step in browsing the Internet is to start your Internet browser software. By default, this will be Internet Explorer, though you can choose an alternative (see page 19). There are two methods that you might use:

- 1 Click Start, All Programs, and then select your browser from the Start menu 
- 2 If the browser has been pinned to the taskbar, select its icon 

In either case, the browser will be opened. If it is not already active, your connection to the Internet will be established. When the connection completes, the default web page, in this case [Google.com](http://www.google.com), will be displayed.



This is known as your Home page, and it appears whenever you start your browser, or press the Home button on the toolbar. The page address is specified when your software is installed or re-configured, and is usually a news page chosen by your ISP. However, you can select the web page (or web pages) that you'd prefer (see page 34).



Hot tip



To add your browser to the taskbar, right-click its entry in the Start menu and select Pin to Taskbar.



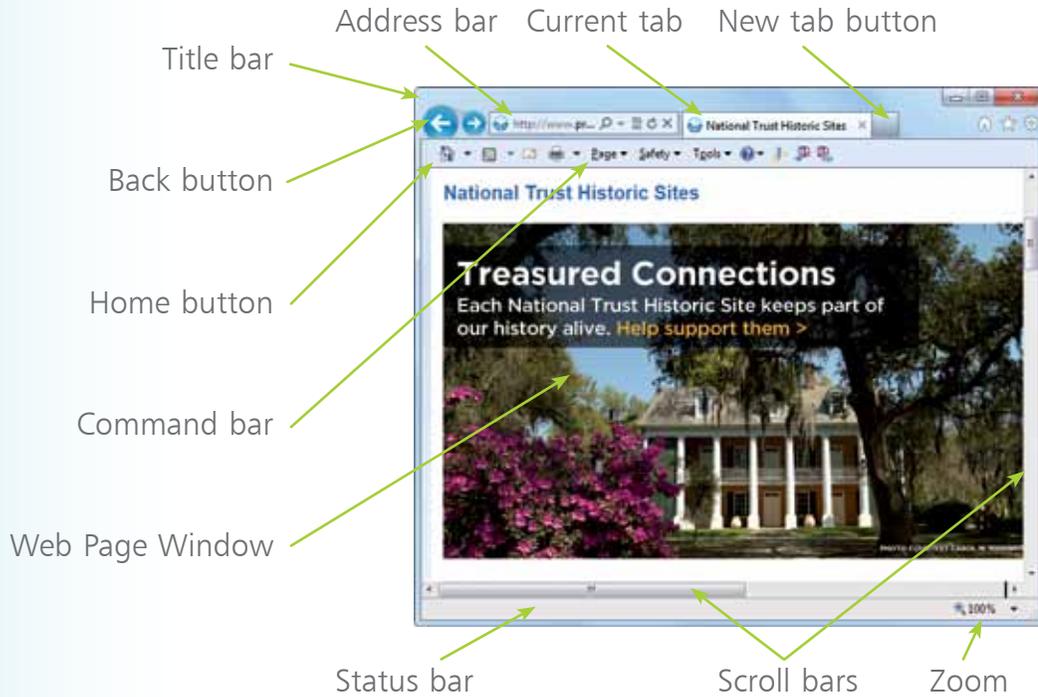
Hot tip



Default means a particular value or setting (in this case a web page) that is assigned automatically, and remains in effect until you cancel or change it.

Internet Explorer Window

Your browser is the key component in any Internet activity, so you should become familiar with all of its features.



To add extra buttons, or to remove buttons, from the toolbar:

Hot tip

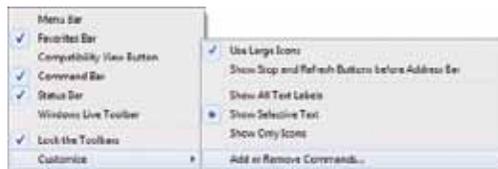


Press the Alt key to display the Menu bar temporarily, or right click the toolbar and select Menu Bar to display it continually.

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

1

Right-click the toolbar, select Customize, and then Add or Remove Commands



2

Select a toolbar button and click Add or Remove, as appropriate



Other Browser Software

The browser supplied with Windows is Internet Explorer; the version depends on which release of Windows you have. However, there are alternative browsers. To view the main browsers for Windows versions, type www.browserchoice.eu into the address bar and press Enter.



1 Select the Download link for one of the browsers for your operating system, e.g. Mozilla Firefox and follow the prompts to install the selected browser

2 When you start the new browser, you'll be asked if you want to make it the new default for web pages



3 Click No to keep Internet Explorer as the default. You are able to install a number of browsers on your system, but one of them will be specified as the default web browser

Don't forget



Within Europe, Microsoft offers a Browser choice via Windows Update, to give a choice of browsers that could replace the supplied Internet Explorer.

Hot tip



The Update will put a shortcut to the Browser Choice on your desktop, or, in Windows 8, add a tile. You do not have to choose immediately. Internet Explorer will still be available on your system, but the Internet Explorer icon will disappear from the Taskbar and will need to be re-pinned. See page 17.

Don't forget



With an alternative browser, there are differences in icons, images and terms, but the functions are similar, and you'll still be able to take advantage of the suggestions and examples in this book.

Alternative Browsers

- 1 This shows the Opera browser, with the same set of web pages shown for Internet Explorer (see page 18)



- 2 This shows the Mozilla Firefox browser, again with the same set of web pages displayed



Hot tip



These browsers use the term Bookmarks, rather than Favorites, and have Google, rather than Bing, as the default search engine.

Hot tip



Over the last few years, the Google Chrome browser has been growing substantially in popularity – it's renowned for faster browsing.