

Browsing versus Surfing the Internet

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Introduction

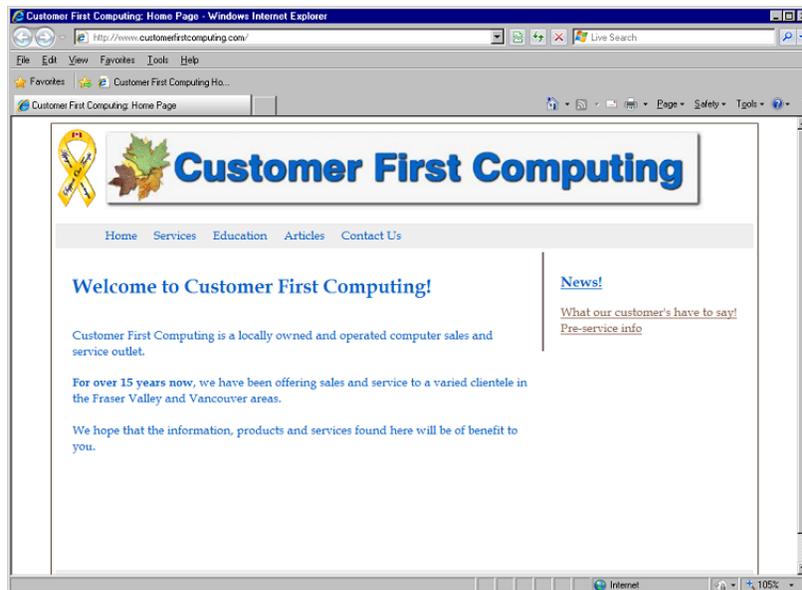
These two terms are used whenever someone is using the Internet with browse meaning "to read or look over something in a light way" and surf meaning to "to scan the offerings". I tend to prefer the word "browse" as the software component used to perform this function is commonly referred to as a "browser".

Internet Browsers

An Internet browser is simply the application that you use *to view* content on the Internet. Internet browsers come in many flavours with each purporting their particular features. The most common Internet browser is Microsoft's Internet Explorer. This would be followed by Mozilla's Firefox, Google's Chrome, Opera and MAC's Safari – which can also be used on a PC.

Using a Browser

To use a browser, you simply click on its associated icon and this will take you to what is commonly referred to *as your default home page* – more on this point in a moment. For this example, I have set my browser – which is Internet Explorer, to my own Web site.

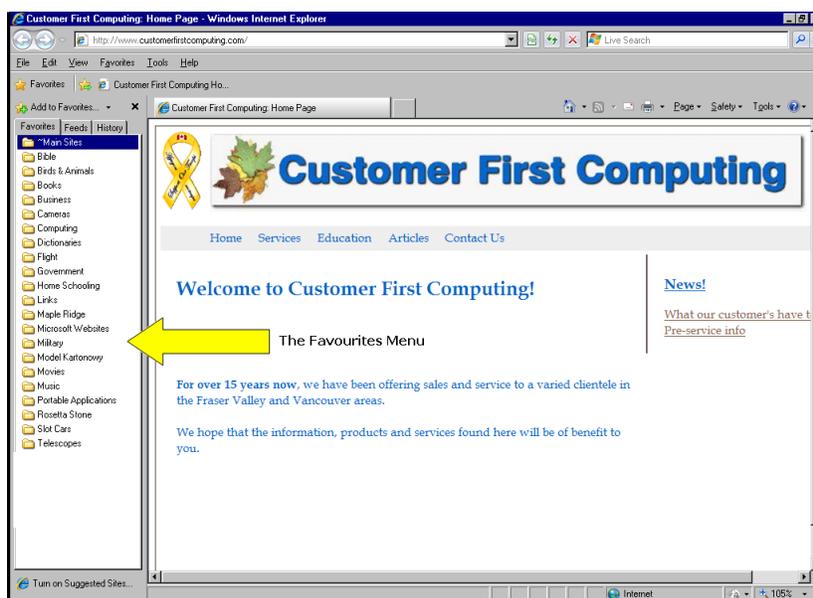


Components of a Browser Page

Microsoft Windows is, as the word states, a windows-driven environment – so there are three components of a window that you should be aware of, 1) the address bar, 2) the menu bar, and 3) the Favorites menu. These components are noted below:



1. The address bar: The location where you will type in a Web site address – more on this in a moment.
2. The menu bar: An integral component of the Microsoft Windows environment and is used to perform various functions. This menu bar can be disabled if you like.
3. The Favorites menu: The location where you can store your favourite Web sites.



A Web Address

To get anywhere on the Internet, you need an address, not unlike going to someone's house or going to the store – you need a physical location in order to get to somewhere. So it is with the Internet. A Web address – or URL, for uniform resource locator, is the information you can type in the address bar to get you somewhere. For example, if you want to go to Bing's Web site, you would type: www.bing.ca.

Components of a Web Address

Taking the www.bing.ca as an example, you have the following:

1. The www stands for World Wide Web which simply means that the page you are looking for is located somewhere on the Internet.
2. The "bing" part is the name of the web site. This name is separated by dots, which are used to separate the Web site address from other sections of a web address.
3. The .ca is what is referred to as the domain. This tells you where the web page is used to tell you what kind of web site it is that you are looking at. For instance, .com or .ca usually means that you are looking at a commercial site, or a site that someone has paid to use. Some other common

domain names are .edu , for educational institutions, .org, for organizations), and .gov, for federal governments – and there are many others as well.

HTTP

The http:// component of a web site, for example in: <http://www.customerfirstcomputing.com>, stands for *Hypertext Transfer Protocol* and helps your web browser to locate the web page or web site – as well as helping you to be able to actually display the page itself. Most browsers will automatically add this prefix – so you do not really have to worry about typing it every time. On some Web sites you might see https:// – this is used for "secure" Web sites such as banks, financial institution and Web sites that only allow subscribers to use.

Default Home Page

Many do not really understand what is meant by the term "default home page". This term is used to denote where you go when you click on the browser icon located on your desktop and is dependent on where or who setup your computer in the first place. For example if you are a Telus customer, you may find that your default home page is <http://home.mytelus.com>. For Shaw customers it may be <http://my.shaw.ca>. You may also find that your default home page is <http://ca.msn.com> – but it can be pretty much anything. For example, my personal default home page is <https://start.duckduckgo.com>.

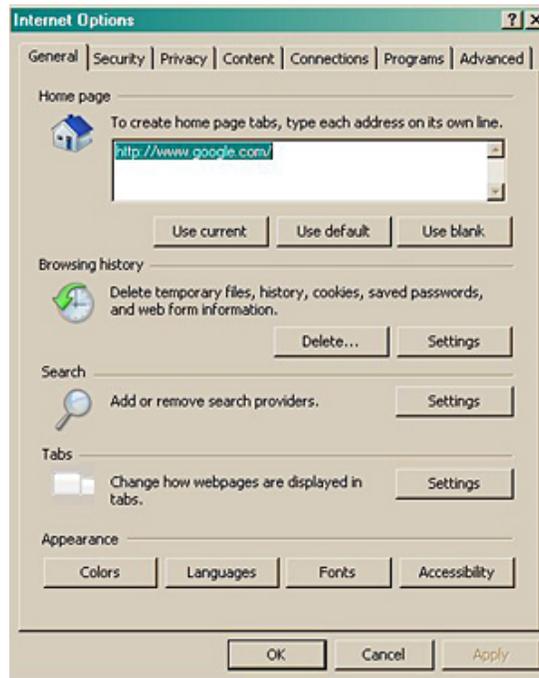
Changing your Default Home Page

If you just happen to care what your default home page is when you click on your browser icon – no problem, as you can change it. The following procedure is for Internet Explorer – for others you will have to consult your browser's documentation to see how this is done.

1. Go to the Control Panel.
2. Locate the Internet Options Applet



3. Launch Internet Options
 - Observation: What you will see next is what is referred to as *a multi-tabbed dialog box*:



4. In this example, in the Home Page section of this dialog, you will see the address <http://www.google.com>.
 - This is presently your default home page.
 - Simply erase this address and put in the address of your choice, for example, www.bing.ca.
5. Click Apply
6. Click OK
7. Done! You have just changed your default home page.

Now, click on the browser icon located on your desktop and you will be taken to the Web page you entered previously. Please keep in mind that there are other ways of changing your default home page – this one was chosen as it is the least problematic.

Hyper-Links

This term is another one of those that many find somewhat confusing. A hyperlink – or "link" for short, is a word, group of words, or an image that you can click on that will take you to a different location somewhere. Hyperlinks are the most essential ingredient of the World Wide Web, though they can be used in others places as well. We will be focusing on the use of hyper-links for Web pages here. Generally, a hyper-link is displayed by the word being underlined:

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← A hyper-link

As can be seen the above example, dell@customerfirstcomputing.com contains an underline. In this next example, you have a number of hyper-links being displayed. Of the choices shown, the one that will

be acted upon is the one that is shown by the hand symbol over the link. Left-clicking will activate this hyper-link and will take you to the location of the link. You must understand that the link can take you pretty much anywhere – from a location anywhere on the Internet, to a place within that Web site – as this example here shows, or to pretty much anywhere.

Education Section

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Note: The article Safe Surfing as listed here would be a good one to read after you have completed this article. It provides some pointers as to how to use the Internet correctly.