



EAZY'S Guide To ...

Finding stuff on the Web

Introduction

The World Wide Web is a vast global library of information. Using a program called a *browser*, this information can be sent over the *Internet* to your computer. Its great - all that information is available to you at click of a few mouse buttons. Wow.

BUT ... you have a project due tomorrow and don't have time to mess around, so just how do you find what your looking for?

Stop & Think

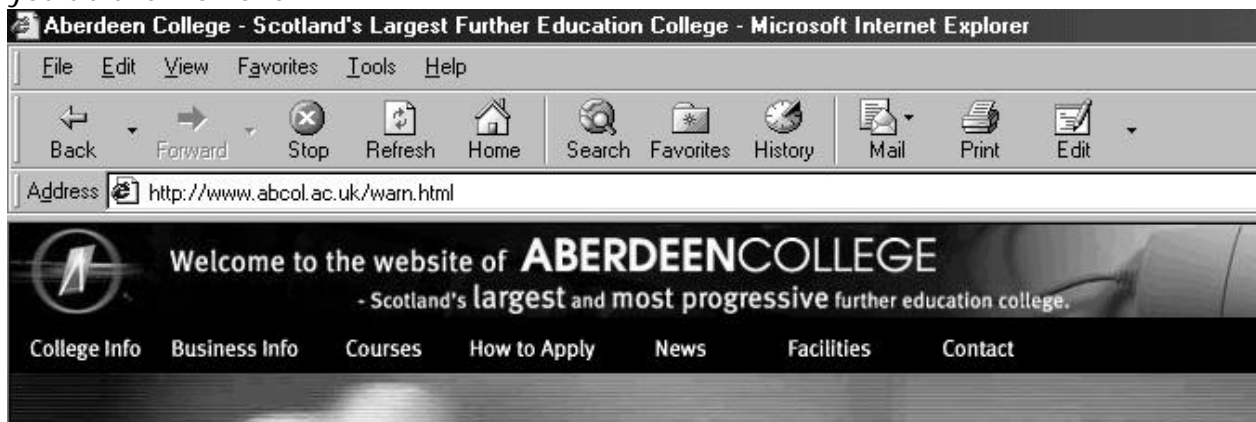
1. The first thing to do is write down a list of what you need to find. then stick to this list.
2. Try and think about the organisations who might have the information you require.
3. Do you want to access information from around the world, or just one country?
4. Would you be better looking in the College or public library?

Browser Basics

1. Double-click on the Internet Explorer icon.



2. The Internet Explorer browser is your window on the World Wide Web. In the same way that a word processor handles text, a browser handles Web pages. By default, the browser starts at Aberdeen College's *warning page*. Some buttons on the *toolbar* are not coloured ('greyed out') - this means that they aren't available to you at the moment.



<i>The Main Buttons</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Back	Moves you back to the last page.
Forward	Moves you forward to the next page (only after you've gone back).
Home	Returns you to the Aberdeen College home page.
Print	Wait until the page has finished loading before printing it. The URL appears on the page.
Stop	Stops any further information downloading.

Web 101

Before you go any further, you've got to understand a bit about how the Web works. Each page of information has a unique address - its URL. For the College's home page this is www.abcol.ac.uk. You'll notice that in the browser's *location box* above. The <http://> bit of the address is required by the Internet, but you don't need to type it as it is added automatically by the browser. To jump to a page whose address you know, delete the current address from the location box (click the cursor on the box, and use the *backspace* or *delete* keys); then type in the new address and hit *return*.

A simpler way is to use a feature called *hyperlinks* - these are underlined phrases and some pictures that have been set to take you to another related page. Simply click on the hyperlink and the next page will be downloaded. This is similar to the coloured buttons in Teletext, instead of typing in the page number, you can just press the coloured key on the handset. In the same way, hyperlinks save you from having to remember and type in the addresses.

Search Engines

Okay, so that's the browser dealt with - let's get you the information you need. What you need is a search engine, a database that you can search to find the information you want. First you need to direct your browser to the search engine, type in the key words that you want to find, click on the search button, and a list of pages appears. You then click on the page that you want so that it appears in the browser. Simple.

Okay, so its not that simple - which search engine do you choose? How do you refine your search when it turns up with 15,651,666 pages? First, we'll focus on only three different search engines: Alta Vista, Yahoo! UK & Ireland, and Ask Jeeves. Choose one and type the address into the browser's *location box*, then hit return.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Alta Vista	www.altavista.com	A powerful search engine
Yahoo! UK	www.yahoo.co.uk	UK database with directory style
Ask Jeeves	www.ask.com	Searches different engines.

All search engines have a similar layout, that is, a box for you to type in your *search criteria*, and a button to click on to start the search. Basic search criteria are the key words that you want the pages to contain. Try and be as specific as possible, not

just football, but "Aberdeen Football Club". Include quotation marks around phrases, otherwise it'll search for occurrences of the individual words. And don't type everything in upper case, some search engines treat capital letters differently from small letters.

Alta Vista allows advanced techniques like specifying part of the address, eg, URL:uk will only look for pages which have UK in their address. You can also specify that you don't want to include a word or phrase, just add a minus before it, eg - "American football".

As an alternative to searching, Yahoo is organised like a telephone directory, you can click on the hyperlink to the section you are interested. Each section has a number of main web sites that come up when you enter it, and one of these may be what you are looking for. Otherwise you can then specify that you only want to search that section; or just use Yahoo like a regular search engine.

Ask is similar to Alta Vista, but doesn't allow such detailed searching. What it does do is to search a number of different databases and compile the 'best fit' result.

Hints & Tips

1. It's quicker to search USA Web sites in the morning (noon in the UK is only 7am in New York).
2. For the same reason, switch to European based search engines in the afternoon.
3. Take a careful note of the addresses of relevant pages, you may need them for your project.
4. If you click on *bookmarks* and then *add bookmarks*, the browser will save the address of the current page, and add it's name to the bottom of its list of bookmarks. You can then click on *bookmarks* and then click on the name on the list to have the browser view that page.
5. To save the text parts of the file, click on *file* then *save as*, and you can direct the browser to save the page on your floppy disk. Pictures are not saved with the text. To save an image, right click over one, and click on *save image as...* in the menu.
6. It is often easier to *copy* information from the browser and *paste* it into a word processor. Switch between the browser and the open word processor by clicking on the buttons on the taskbar.

The Next Time

Next time, try and find information on a subject that you're interested in. Learn what the Web has to offer, and what its limitations are. Have a look at the NETg packages, "Introduction to the Internet" and "Internet Explorer 4.0", or the "WebWise" course. Read the IT Centre's on-line "Guide to the Major Search Engines", <http://www.abcol.ac.uk/itcentre/websearch/engines.html>, and the help pages of the search engines. It's fun to surf the Web, but that's not the same as being able to quickly find the information you need.

Some Useful Addresses

Aberdeen College Virtual Library

<http://www.abcol.ac.uk/vlibrary>

Ability Net – advice about computers for people with disabilities

<http://www.abilitynet.co.uk>

Art.Com – online art gallery

<http://www.art.com>

BBC News - you can search the news archives

<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

The Brighton University Resource Kit for Students

<http://burks.bton.ac.uk/burks>

Encyclopaedia Britannica

<http://www.britannica.com>

Internet Movie Database

<http://www.imdb.com>

The Planets – photographs and data on the solar system

<http://pds.jpl.nasa.gov/planets>

Search Engine Watch – guide to using search engines

<http://www.searchenginewatch.com>

Student UK

<http://www.studentuk.com>

The Ultimate Band List - find facts about popular beat combos.

<http://www.ubl.com>

Photographs of Aberdeen

<http://www.aberdeenphotographs.co.uk>

The WWW Virtual Library

<http://www.mth.uea.ac.uk/VL>

The World Fact Book

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook>