Internet Basics

The **Internet** is the largest computer network in the world, connecting millions of computers and devices. The **World Wide Web** is a virtual network of websites connected by hyperlinks (or "links").

Web Browsers

A **web browser** is the tool you use to access the World Wide Web.
Google Chrome and **Mozilla Firefox** are the most commonly used browsers currently. This is because they are typically the most reliable and easiest to navigate. You can also use **Internet Explorer** or **Safari** (for Macs).
Each browser has its own look and feel. Which you choose is based on your personal preference.

Getting to a Website

To get to a webpage, you must type in the **URL (Uniform Resource Locator)** into the browser's URL bar. The URL is also known as a **web address**. (Ex. www.facebook.com, www.google.com, www.yahoo.com)

You can also get to a webpage through a **search engine**, which is a strategy that many people use. Simply type the name of or a keyword relating to the website or business into a search engine.
*TIP: You can type a search term into your browser's URL bar and it will automatically search with your default search engine!

Links

 You will get around the internet most of the time by clicking **links**. A link can be text or an image and it is normally formatted in a way that you will know to click it.
In most cases, the pointer will change to a hand symbol to indicate that there is a clickable link.

Navigation Buttons

The navigation buttons are located in the upper left of your web browser. They may look different depending on the browser you are using.
- **Back Arrow**: Sometimes after you click on a link, you might want to go back to the previous page. You can do this using your browser's back arrow.
- **Forward Arrow**: Once you've pressed the Back button, you can press the forward arrow to follow the link again. This option will only be available once you have clicked the back arrow.
- **Refresh**: You can use the refresh button (sometimes called reload) to tell the browser to load the page again. This is helpful if a webpage appears to be frozen, but be careful not click it multiple times! This can make it worse!
- **Home**: This button will take you to your homepage (the default webpage that opens when you open a browser). Your homepage can be changed to any website.

Search Engines

When looking to find something on the World Wide Web, how can you find exactly what you're looking for? By using a **search engine**. Search engines are specialized websites that help you find what you're looking for on the Web. All you have to do is type in one or more keywords, and the search engine will look for matching websites from all over the Web.
There are numerous search engines out there, but the most popular ones are **Google**, **Yahoo!,** and **Bing**. Each one has its own unique features, but the process of performing a search is similar on each.
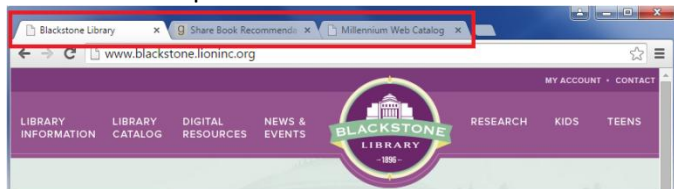
Bookmarks

A **bookmark** (or **favorite**) makes it easier to find a page later on. This feature will save a page to a toolbar or a menu on your web browser.

Tabbed Browsing

Browsers allow you to open a new **tab** to save where you are on a webpage and look at another. This is simpler than opening another browser. Tabs are easily visible on the top of the browser.

To add a new tab, simply click the button to the right of your current tab. In different browsers, this button is located in the same place and sometimes has a plus ("+") symbol.

You can close any tab without closing the browser by closing the "x" directly on the tab.

Downloading Files

If you would like to access a file (such as a picture) outside of the internet, it is possible to download the file you're your personal computer.

When downloading files, it IS possible to download unwanted, harmful viruses onto the hard drive of the computer. Be aware of where you are downloading content from

To save an image:

1. Right-click on the image
2. Select "Save picture as…"
3. Name the image something specific and look to see what folder you are saving it to (so it is easy to locate later)

Voila! Now it is accessible to attach to emails, post on Facebook, or just keep for yourself!

The process for saving documents is very similar. However, you will usually have a "Download" option to left-click instead of right-clicking an image.

Search Techniques

- To perform a search, just type what you're looking for (known as the **search terms**) in the search bar, and then press Enter. Your browser will take you to a page of search results, which is a list of all of the websites that contain your search terms.
- After you complete a search, glance over the first page of search results. Did it return what you are looking for? If your results don't include what you're looking for, you may need to try different search terms. Remember, the search engine can't read your mind; it just looks for matching words. For example, if you just search for the word polish, the search

engine doesn't know whether you're looking for shoe polish or the Polish language! You can improve your search results by searching for shoe polish. However, this still may return a variety of websites, including: stores that sell shoe polish, guides on how to polish shoes, or the history of shoe polish. To get the best results, ask yourself "What exactly am I looking for?" Specific terms usually return better results.

Suggested Results

When you input a search in a search engine such as Google or Yahoo, it will automatically fill in the space with suggested searches based on what your input so far. If you see a result that looks like it might be what you're looking for, you can click on that result with your mouse OR you can use your up/down arrow keys to scroll to that result.
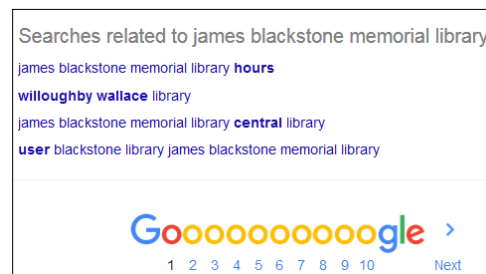
Related Searches and Page Numbers

When you perform a search, toward the bottom of the page will be a list of searches related to your search – there to give you more ideas. Numbers at the bottom of the page indicate

how many pages of results there are.

Still need help?

- Ask at the Reference desk for a quick answer
- Make a Tech Thursday appointment to work through a more difficult problem
- Come to JBML's next Internet Basics class. Call the Reference desk or visit www.blackstonelibrary.org to see a schedule of our classes.