

Q: What is the Internet, anyways?

A: "The Federal Networking Council (FNC) agrees that the following language reflects our definition of the term "Internet". "Internet" refers to the global information system that --

1. is logically linked together by a globally unique address space based on the Internet Protocol (IP) or its subsequent extensions /follow-ons;
2. is able to support communications using the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) suite or its subsequent extensions/follow-ons, and/or other IP-compatible protocols; and
3. provides, uses or makes accessible, either publicly or privately, high level services layered on the communications and related infrastructure described herein."

The internet consists of many different aspects. The ones that you may be familiar with or will use most often are: Web Browsing, Sending E-Mail, Chat, and Participating in discussion Groups.

Q: What is the World Wide Web (WWW)?

A: One of the spaces in which Internet is subdivided (shortly defined WWW or Web). Its permits to establish hypertext connections among documents kept in memory on computers, also different, called Web servers. In this way during the consultation a user can pass from a document to the other without taking care of the place where the respective servers physically are. The protocol for this aim is HTTP.

The WWW documents are usually called pages; and can contain both text and graphics, the whole co-ordinate by a specific language, called HTML, codifying the different objects. The reading program is called browser;. A connection present on a Web page can also point, besides another document, at a file in any shape (images, audio, video, and so on); at the "click" of the mouse it will be automatically reproduced or by the browser or by external applications. The World Wide Web was born in 1991 of the European Committee for Nuclear Research (the Italian CERN) laboratory in Geneva, as a tool by which scientists could easily divide the results of their researches. The three main components of World Wide Web are hypertexts, Internet and multimedia contents of documents.

Q: What programs can I use to browse the WWW?

A: There are 2 main programs out there that may be used to browse the internet. The first is distributed by Microsoft and is called the Microsoft Internet Explorer. This program comes with most versions of Windows 95 but can be downloaded for either Windows 3.1x or Windows 95 from <http://www.microsoft.com> . The other option is Netscape Navigator. This program can be downloaded for many different operating systems including Windows 3.1x, Windows 95, UNIX, Linux, Solaris, and many others at <http://home.netscape.com>

Q: I keep hearing about a 'PPP' connection. What is it?

A: PPP (Point-to-Point Protocol) is a communications protocol used to transmit network data over telephone lines. It allows you to connect your computer to the Internet itself, rather than logging on through an Internet Service Provider's host computer and using UNIX commands through a shell. This type of connection lets you communicate directly with other computers on the network using TCP/IP connections. It is part of the TCP/IP suite of programs necessary to connect to and use the Internet.

With KansasNet, you are using either PPP or SLIP to make your connection to the Internet. PPP (Point-to-Point Protocol) is rapidly replacing SLIP (Serial Line Internet Protocol) as the more common standard. Where as SLIP is easy to install and to use, it does not provide error correction or certain negotiation features that are built into PPP.

Q: What is 'TCP/IP'?

A: Stands for Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol. This is the language governing communications between all computers on the Internet. TCP/IP is a set of instructions that dictates how packets of information are sent across multiple networks. Also included is a built-in error-checking capability to ensure that data packets arrive at their final destination in the proper order.

IP, or Internet Protocol, is the specification that determines where packets are routed to, based on their destination address. TCP, or Transmission Control Protocol, makes sure that the packets arrive correctly at their destination address. If TCP determines that a packet was not received, it will try to re-send the packet until it is received properly.

You must be running TCP/IP to have full Internet access. In Unix, TCP/IP is a part of the operating system. In the DOS and Windows world, the functionality of TCP/IP is handled by Winsock. This piece of software takes care of your TCP/IP configuration information. On a Mac, you would use Apple's TCP/IP.

Q: What is Email?

A: Email is a way for people to communicate between each other almost instantly over the internet. Email is similar to mailing a letter to someone, however the person can receive the letter almost instantly, therefore making the communication much faster and easier. With email, you can also attach files that may be pictures, text, or almost any other form of media.

Q: Do I have an email address?

A: Yes. All accounts on KansasNet come with an email address. Your email address would be your username@kansas.net. So, for example, if you picked the username 'johndoe' upon signing up an account, your email address would be 'johndoe@kansas.net'.

Q: What programs can I use to check email?

A: There are many programs out there that you can use. The software we provide for Windows 3.1x comes with its own Windows mail program. Modern versions of Windows already have a built-in email program called Outlook Express. You might also choose to use a different email program such as Netscape Mail, Lotus Notes, or Outlook 2002. You can download various email programs from the internet, however the email clients we mentioned above such as Microsoft Outlook and Outlook Express are trusted and tried programs. Please visit our [downloads section](#) for possible email client downloads.

You can also check your internet from anywhere in the world where you have internet access by visiting [KansasNet's Webmail](#) site.

Q: What is a URL?

A: URL is an acronym for Uniform Resource Locator. URL is the address for a resource or site (usually a directory or file) on the World Wide Web and the convention that web browsers use for locating files and other remote services.

Here are some examples of URL's:

- <http://www.yahoo.com>

This is a web page at a commercial site called Yahoo.

- <ftp://ftp.kansas.net>

This is an FTP site to download certain software.

The first part of a URL tells you the type of resource (or method of access) at that address.

- http - a hypertext document or directory
- gopher - a gopher document or menu
- ftp - a file available for downloading or a directory of such files
- news - a newsgroup
- telnet - a computer system that you can log into from across the Internet
- WAIS - a database or document on a WAIS (Wide Area Information Search) database
- file - a file located on a local drive (like your hard drive)

The second part of a URL is typically the address of the computer where the data or service is located. Additional parts may specify the names of files, the port to connect to, or the text to search for in a database. The second part of a URL is typically the address of the computer where the data or service is located. Additional parts may specify the names of files, the port to connect to, or the text to search for in a database.

Here are a couple of other important things to remember about URLs:

1. A URL has no spaces.
2. A URL always uses forward slashes (/).
3. If you enter a URL incorrectly, your browser will not be able to locate the site or resource you want.
4. You can find the URL behind any link by passing your mouse pointer over the link. The pointer will turn into a hand and the URL will appear in the browser's status bar.

Q: What does HTTP stand for?

A: HTTP stands for Hypertext Transfer Protocol -- the method by which hypertext files are transferred across the Internet. Let's examine these terms one at a time. "Hypertext" was coined by Ted Nelson in 1965 to mean "text which is not constrained to be linear." When used with the web, it is text that is linked to something else. When you click on a word and you are shown another page (or a sound file or a picture), you are using hypertext. Hypertext allows you to jump around between files, following your own interests and train of thought. World Wide Web pages written in HTML use hypertext to link to other documents.

Hypertext transfer is simply the transfer of hypertext files from computer to computer. When you are reading a hypertext document, say, at the Library of Congress site, you can click on a link that takes you to the NASA page. Of course, you haven't actually gone anywhere. A document simply has been transferred from NASA's computer to your computer, across the Internet.

Now what on earth is protocol? In computers, a protocol is a set of standards used by two computers to communicate and exchange information with each other. To put it all together, Hypertext Transfer Protocol is the set of standards used by computers to transfer hypertext files (web pages) over the Internet.

Q: I keep hearing about 'cookies'. What are they?

A: A cookie is a file sent to a web browser by a web server that is used to record one's activities on a website. For instance, when you buy items from a site and place them in a so-called virtual shopping cart, that information is stored in the cookie. When the browser requests additional files, the cookie information is sent back to the server. Cookies can remember other kinds of personal information --your password, so you don't have to re-enter it each time you visit the site; your preferences, so the next time you return to a site, you can be presented with customized information. Some people regard cookies as an invasion of privacy; others think they are a harmless way to make websites more personal.

Most cookies have an expiration date and either reside in your computer's memory until you close your browser or they are saved to your hard drive. By the way, cookies cannot read information stored in your computer.

You can use a text editor to view cookie files. For Windows users of Navigator, the file is called cookies.txt and is located in the the same folder as Netscape. Mac users can find it in the Netscape folder in the System/Preferences folder. Explorer creates separate files for each cookie and stores them in folders named "Cookies" or "Temporary Internet Files."

Q: What is 'cache'?

A: When you download a web page, the data is cached, meaning it is stored temporarily on your computer. The next time you want that page, instead of requesting the file from the web server, your web browser just accesses it from the cache. That way, the page loads quickly. But if the web page is updated frequently, as may be the case with news, sports scores or financial data, you won't get the most current information. By using the Reload button on your browser, this timely data is updated by downloading fresh data from the server.

Q: What is IRC?

A: An acronym for Internet Relay Chat, a program that allows you to carry on "live" conversations with people all over the world by typing messages back and forth across the Internet. You can talk in groups or in private with only one person. IRC consists of "channels," which usually are devoted to specific topics. Anyone can create a "channel" and any message typed in a given channel is seen by all others in the channel.

There is no limit to the number of people who can chat on a particular channel. Because of this unique feature, IRC channels have served as unofficial "news" sites during times of crisis, such as the Gulf War and the 1994 southern California earthquake. Mostly, though, you will find the same thing as on the Net - people talking about things they are interested in, from Aardvarks to Zombies.

IRC can be difficult to get the hang of at first, but once you get past the initial learning curve you may come to love it. How else can you talk to someone in Brazil for an hour without paying a dime in long-distance charges?

You may be able to find an IRC program available for download in our [downloads section](#) .

Q: What are newsgroups?

A: Electronic discussion groups consisting of collections of related postings (also called articles) on a particular topic that are posted to a news server which then distributes them to other participating servers. There are thousands of newsgroups covering a

wide range of subjects. You must subscribe to a newsgroup in order to participate in it or to track the discussion on an on-going basis. Unlike with a magazine or newspaper, subscribing to a newsgroup does not cost anything.

Newsgroups are found primarily on Usenet. Usenet is the collection of computers that participate in a global conferencing system that make newsgroups perhaps the largest distributed bulletin board system in the world. Newsgroups are one of the oldest and most widely used services on the Internet. There are more than 13,000 of them, with new ones coming online all the time. Not all newsgroups are carried by Usenet, and Usenet is carried by networks that are not on the Internet.

Newsgroup topics cover the entire range of human interests, from Autos to Zaire. Some newsgroups are "moderated," which means that a person decides which postings will become part of the conversation. Most are unmoderated, which means that any posting sent to the list is automatically added to the group.

Before you post to a newsgroup, do yourself a big favor and read other postings carefully for a few days. Newsgroups are famous for "flames" (viscous haranguing for an innocent mistake or a breach of netiquette). Read the FAQ about the newsgroup if there is one. It is considered a major breach of netiquette to ask a question that is clearly answered in the FAQ. It is also considered a poor use of bandwidth to post a reply to millions of users saying "me too!" Replies of this sort can and should be directed to the sender directly by e-mail.

Q: What programs can I use to read newsgroups?

A: There are a variety of programs available for reading newsgroups, however if you have a modern version of windows then you probably already have Outlook Express which you can use. You may be able to find other newsreader programs in our [downloads section](#).

Q: What is SPAM?

A: Spam is unsolicited bulk email or inappropriate material posted to one or more Usenet News groups. Spam or spamming is prohibited. Any person that sends SPAM email or spams a newsgroup from KansasNet will be terminated. Unfortunately this course of action is necessary because when a user spams, our system administrators have to answer many complaint emails about the incident.

If you are unsure that what you may be posting is Spam or not, do not post it. A good rule of thumb before posting to *any* newsgroup is to read the posts for 2 weeks to be sure that you know the nature of the newsgroup. It is also important to read the FAQ of the newsgroup if there is one available. These usually contain rules of posting to certain newsgroups. If you are still unsure, you may wish to mail your posting to someone in the newsgroup first, explaining to them that you are not sure if the nature of your post is welcome or not.

Also, the mailing of unsolicited commercial email (UCE) is forbidden under any circumstances. If you are caught posting any UCE to any newsgroups or sending it to any users, your account will be terminated without refund and without question.

Q: What is FTP?

A: An acronym for File Transfer Protocol -- a very common method of transferring one or more files from one computer to another. FTP is a specific way to connect to another Internet site to retrieve and send files. FTP was developed in the early days of the Internet to copy files from computer to computer. With the advent of the World Wide Web, and web browser software, you no longer need to know arcane FTP commands to copy to and from other computers. In your browser, you can use FTP by typing the URL into the location box at the top of your screen. For example: `ftp://name.of.site/directory/filename.zip` will transfer filename.zip to your computer's hard disk. You can also use `ftp://name.of.site/directory/` which will give you a listing of all the files available in that directory.

If you are using a web browser that doesn't have built-in FTP capability, or if you want to upload files to a remote computer, you will need to use an FTP client program to transfer files. To use FTP you need to know the name of the file, the computer where it resides, and the directory it's in. Most files are available via "anonymous FTP," which means you can log into the machine with the user name "anonymous" and use your e-mail address as your password. You may be able to download an FTP client program from our [downloads section](#).

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