Internet Basics

www.rclreads.org

Maplewood Library
3025 Southlawn Drive
Maplewood, MN 55109
651-704-6003

Mounds View Library
2576 County Road 10
Mounds View, MN 55112
651-724-6004

New Brighton Library
400 10th Street NW
New Brighton, MN 55112
651-724-6002

North St. Paul Library
2300 North St. Paul Drive
North St. Paul, MN 55109
651-724-6005

Roseville Library
2180 N. Hamline Avenue
Roseville, MN 55113
651-724-6001

Shoreview Library
4570 N. Victoria Street
Shoreview, MN 55126
651-724-6006

White Bear Lake Library
4698 Clark Avenue
White Bear Lake, MN
55110
651-724-6007
Internet Basics

What is the Internet?

The word “Internet” stands for Interconnected Network of computers. The Internet is a worldwide interconnection of many different computers and networks. The Internet allows users to efficiently share information, programs and equipment and to communicate with each other. The Internet was originally developed by the Department of Defense and the National Science Foundation.

The World Wide Web (www or “the Web”) is a component of the Internet. It was developed in 1989 at CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) by Tim Berners-Lee, a software engineer attempting to make it easier for scientists around the world to exchange data and results. Now it is a word-and-pictures information service available on the Internet. It provides access to a full range of Internet resources from various locations in an easy to use format. World Wide Web documents contain links that, when selected, lead to other documents. The Web allows users to browse the Internet by pointing and clicking on words or graphics.

Sometimes people use the terms Internet and Web interchangeably. You may hear people say, “I’m surfing the ‘net,” or “I’m on the Web.”

Web Addresses, Web Pages, and Web sites

A Website (usually one word) is a collection of linked documents and content associated with a single organization, person, group, or topic and usually sharing a domain name.

A Web Page (usually two words) is a single page of content on a website and is comparable to a page in a book.

Web addresses never have any spaces in them. Web addresses are also called URLs (Universal Resource Locators) and have several parts. Let’s explore the library’s address or URL http://www.rclreads.org.

- http:// identifies the document as a Web page
- www tells us that the document is on the World Wide Web. Not all web sites have this as part of their address.
- .rclreads is part of the domain name and identifies the host.
- .org means “organization” and is part of the domain name which is like a category. Some additional domain names you might encounter include .net (network), .com (commercial), .mil (military), .gov
(government), .edu (education). Newer domain names include .tv (television) and .biz (business).

You might also encounter domain names that indicate the country or state of origin. For example, the Ramsey County Library website can also be found at www.ramsey.lib.mn.us. .mn and .us are examples of state and country domains.

Navigating within a Website

The Cursor

As you move your cursor in circles over the library’s web page it will change shapes. The cursor is usually in the shape of an arrow. But when the arrow crosses over a link it changes to a hand. Click once to follow the link.

Sometimes when the computer is loading a new web page the cursor will change to an hour glass.

When the cursor changes to an I beam, you are in an area that does or may contain text. When filling out an online form, move your cursor over the blank square. When the cursor changes from the arrow to the I beam, click once on the left mouse button. The cursor will change to a blinking black line. You can now start typing in that location. On the library’s home page the cursor changes to an I beam as it crosses over “Last updated” at the bottom of the page.

Using Toolbar Buttons

Toolbars are specific to browsers. Ramsey County Library computers all contain two browsers: Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox. Toolbars are generally found at the top of the screen and contain the following buttons: back and forward, refresh, home, favorites, and tools.

Clicking on the back and forward buttons moves you backward and forward among the Web sites you have already visited.
Clicking on the **refresh** button reloads the current web page. This is useful especially on slower home Internet connections where graphics may not appear completely the first time you try to load a web page.

Clicking on **home** returns you to the library’s web site when you are using our computers. On your home computer, clicking on **home** will return you to whatever site you have chosen as your home site.

**Favorites** are sites that you have chosen to keep a list of on your computer. These are usually sites you visit frequently or sites whose addresses you need to keep on file.

Clicking on **tools** will open a menu with various options, including **print** and **print preview**. **Print** will send a copy of the current web page to the printer. Clicking on **print preview** before sending anything to the printer is a good idea. This lets you see how the web site you are printing will look once it is printed.

The web browser contains toolbars that have buttons that will help you navigate the internet.

Every webpage has a unique web address. If you have an address you would like to visit, type the address in the address field. There are no spaces in a web address.
Finding Information on the Internet

There are two ways of searching for information on the internet: by web address or by keywords using search engines.

Searching for Information Using Web Addresses

One way to search for information on the Internet is by typing a web address (also known as a URL) in the address field of your browser. Every website has a unique address. If you know the address of a website you’d like to visit, move your cursor to the address line and click; the address already on the address line will turn blue. You do not have to erase. Practice typing in web addresses to visit different web sites. **Note: web addresses do not have any spaces.**

As you practice searching, spend some time following links on the web pages you find. Some suggestions for addresses to type in are:

www.kare11.com  www.umn.edu  
www.wikipedia.org  www.youtube.com  
www.weather.com  www.iseek.org  
www.allrecipes.com  www.gardenweb.com  
www.target.com  www.ebay.com  
Secure Sites

When conducting business online or filling out online forms that contain personal information, it is important to know that you are using a secure site. If the site you are visiting has an address that begins **https://** you are at a secure site. In addition, a locked padlock is located within your browser.

If the site you are visiting has an address that begins with **https://** you are at a secure site.

Watch for a locked padlock in your web browser. If the lock is closed you are at a secure site.
Searching for Information Using Search Engines

Another way to search for information on the Internet is by using a search engine. If you don’t have an exact web address (or URL), you can use a search engine to help you find web sites relating to your topic.

Search Engines

A search engine is a piece of web software that allows you to search the Internet using a topic’s main words (also known as keywords). Search engines search for information about a topic when you do not know the exact address for a web site. Examples of search engines are Google, Yahoo!, and Bing, among many others.

While search engines differ in appearance and in the way they work, they do have similarities. They all contain a prominent textbox through which you may enter a search. Simply type a word or phrase into the textbox and then click on the search button (or press “Enter”). The search engine will then display a set of results: links to the web sites that match your search.

Google

The most talked about search engine today is Google. Google is a play on the word googol. It refers to the number represented by the numeral 1 followed by 100 zeros. Google’s mission is to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful. Google is supported by businesses that pay to advertise on Google.

At www.google.com, you can find information in many different languages; check stock quotes, maps, and news headlines; look up phonebook listings for every city in the United States, and more.

To use the Google search engine, click anywhere on the address line on the Internet Explorer tool bar. The address that is already in the box will turn blue. You do not need to erase.

This is Google’s home page. By default, it searches the internet for websites, but you can also use Google to search for images, videos, maps, products, and many other things, all of which can be accessed through the “App” button in the upper right hand corner of the page.

Note that Google ignores capitalization but does not ignore all forms of punctuation.

When searching for information by subject or topic, type the word(s) you would like Google to find into the search box just below the logo. Then click on “Google search.”

Google Instant

As you enter your keywords in the search box, Google predicts your search and displays results as you type that can save time and help select useful search terms.

Interpreting Your Results
Google lists the links to websites from what it believes are the most relevant to the least relevant. Results pages may include sponsored links (advertising) in a column on the right side of the screen and at the top of your results list. Google also gives spelling suggestions, links to news stories, and as well as other things that may help you focus your search.

Components of your results page include the following:

- Page title – the first line is a Web page title that is hyperlinked to the actual page. Sometimes this is simply an URL.

- Text from the site – with your search terms highlighted. This can give you an idea of whether or not you want to click through to the Web site or not.

- URL – the Web address for that site. Sometimes the address is more revealing than the other information Google provides. Look especially at the domain name. Be sure the domain name fits your topic: .gov for government information, .com for commercial sites (shopping, news, etc.), .org for information from nonprofit organizations, etc.
Practice searching for other topics. As you practice, spend some time following links on the web pages you find. Choose your own subjects to search for; or, try searching for the following:

Knitting patterns
Minnesota Vikings
Senior living

Card games
Bridge
Board games

Weather
Vital records Minnesota
Genealogy

Internet travel
Florida chamber of commerce
Hawaii

Searching by subject is one of the easiest ways to find government offices. To practice, try searching for the following:

U.S. Department of State
IRS
Minnesota taxes (the Department of Revenue should be at the top of Google’s list)
Definitions

**Browser** is a software application used to locate and display web pages. The two most common browsers currently are Microsoft Internet Explorer™ and Mozilla Firefox. Safari is the browser used when searching on a Mac computer.

**Clicking** Pressing the mouse button. This usually refers to the left mouse button. **Double click** means to press the mouse button twice in quick succession. **Right click** means to press the right mouse button.

**Cursor** A symbol, usually an arrow, an I bar, or a blinking line that signifies where on the screen the next entry will occur.

**Delete** One or more keys on the computer keyboard marked “delete.” Pressing delete erases characters to the right of the cursor. It will also erase anything that has been highlighted.

**Download** To move or copy a document, program, or other data from the Internet or another computer to your computer.

**FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)** Compilation of the most commonly asked questions about a subject or product. This is a good place to start looking for information on a web site.

**Home Page** The main page of a web site. A home page is also referred to the first web page displayed when you open a web browser or when the browser’s “home” button is pressed.

**HTML (Hypertext Markup Language)** Computer language used to create graphic documents for publication on the web. Documents that are produced with HTML can have graphics, sound, and video in addition to text.

**HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)** The rules used by the World Wide Web that defines how messages are formatted and transmitted.

**Hypertext Link** A word or picture that you click on when on the web to take you to another web page or site. These links are usually underlined or in a different color. (See also Link)

**Internet Service Provider (ISP)** A company that lets you dial into their computers in order to connect to the Internet (usually for a fee).
**Link**  In hypertext systems, such as the World Wide Web, a link refers to another document. Such links are sometimes called *hot links* because they take you to another document when you *click* on them. (See also Hypertext Link)

**Operating System (OS)** The software on your computer that is responsible for the actual operation, management, and coordination of activities of the computer. Examples include Windows Vista, Windows XP, and Windows 7.

**Scroll Bars**  Located on the side and on the bottom of your screen, these enable you to move your window up and down or right and left.

**Title Bar**  Located at the top of the window, it tells you what program you are using.

**Tool Bars**  Located just below the title bar at the top of the window, these are specific to each program.

**Task Bar**  Located at the bottom of the window, this tells you what programs are open.

**Upload**  To move or copy a document, program or other data from your computer to the Internet or another computer.

**URL (Uniform Resource Locator)**  A web page address


**Web Site**  Several web pages that share a common focus and has a home page

**Window**  When you open a program it creates a new window. Multiple windows may be open at the same time. To find out if you have multiple windows open check your task bar.

**World Wide Web (www)**  A portion of the Internet that contains text, audio, graphics and video that are linked together and easily search with a browser.
One-to-One Computer Help

Do you need extra help on the computer, tablet or other piece of technology? Are you searching for a job or working on a resume? Let us answer your questions about surfing the Internet, setting up an email account, or working with documents. Registration not required.

Mondays 3-5  Wednesdays 5-7  Thursdays 1-3
RCL – Maplewood  RCL – Roseville  RCL – Roseville

One-to-One e-Reader Help

Have you purchased a new e-reader or tablet computer? Are you curious how to use your new device with the Library’s e-book services, Overdrive and 3M Cloud Library? Help is available for your questions. Bring your Nook, Kindle, iPad or other device for some hands-on instruction. Registration not required.

Tuesdays 2-4
RCL – Roseville