

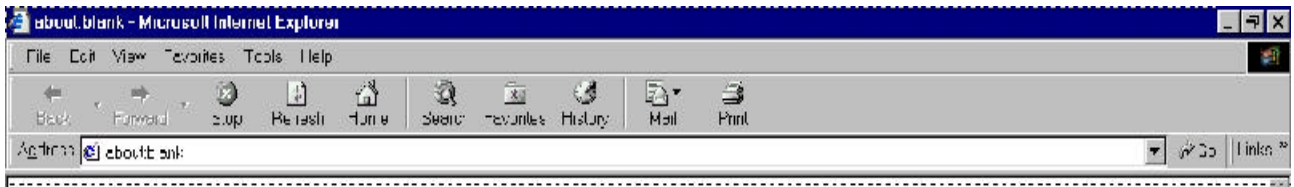
INTERNET EXPLORER



Internet Explorer is a Web Browser. A browser enables you to move through the Internet looking at material (pages) that others have placed there. It is estimated that nearly two thirds of all "surfers" use are some form of Internet Explorer. This dominant position is all the more surprising when you consider that only four years ago, nine out of ten browsers were using Netscape Navigator, for which they had to pay. The reason that IE dominates is not just because it is bundled with Windows. So does Outlook Express, but this holds a much less exalted position in the e-mail client stakes. The difference is that IE is a competent product. You will not be subjected to any anti-Microsoft rants in this section!

Most web browsers can do a lot more than just display pages, and IE is no exception. Therefore, I'm going to divide the demonstration into two parts - configuring and understanding the browser, and its use in practice.

CONFIGURING AND UNDERSTANDING INTERNET EXPLORER.



Different versions of Internet Explorer have slightly different menus. The graphic above is captured from the screen of Internet Explorer 5.0

Let's take the menus one by one. If a particular option is of no interest, I will ignore it.

The FILE menu.

The first option under File is **New**, which has the option "Window". This is very useful, as it enables us to have more than one browser window open at a time. The new window opens displaying the same content as the other one, but from then on, the two (or more) may be used independently, showing totally unrelated content. This is particularly useful if you have a page that you want to keep coming back to whilst browsing others.

Open is used when browsing off-line, to view HTML documents that you may have on your own hard disk, probably that you have saved earlier.

Save and **Save As** save the web page you are viewing onto your own hard disk. However, the save may not be complete. In particular, items, such as graphics, that are linked from another page, will not be saved. However, it's a very useful way to keep text content of a page locally.

Page setup defines how pages print on your printer, and Print means print! However, again, pages do not necessarily print how you expect them to. Web pages are set up for viewing, not printing. One reason why these notes are less than perfect both on the screen and on paper is that I've had to compromise to make them acceptable in both formats.

A little bit of trial and error is needed.

Send makes the sending of a page or link by e-mail easier. You can also put a link on your desktop.

Properties will give you information about the page you are viewing

Work offline enables you to view stored material without being nagged to connect to the Internet.

Close closes the current window - the opposite of Open.

Edit

This is where you can **copy** bits from a website into another application, such as a document or e-mail. You can only normally **cut** or **paste** when working off line, just copy. **Select all** is a quick way of copying a whole page.

Find is a useful tool for finding a specific piece of text in a long page.

View

Toolbars enables you to choose which toolbars are visible on your browser. The Status bar is the small bar at the bottom of the screen, which you can hide if you wish. The Explorer bar is a column which appears on the left hand side of the screen displaying whatever you selected.

Go to lets you move back and forth amongst the pages you have already visited, or to your home page.

Stop stops the download of the current page. **Refresh** reloads it from the remote server; useful if, for example, it contains information which rapidly changes.

Source is an extremely useful option, especially for budding web designers, as it enables you to view the raw HTML code that produces the display you see on the screen.

Full screen removes most of the toolbars, leaving you with a wider viewing area (press F11 to get them back).

Favorites (note the US spelling) is where all the web pages you visit regularly are stored. We will discuss them in the second part of the session.

Tools

Tools is where you configure IE to your personal requirements.

We can forget everything except **Internet Options**, but opening this brings up a whole Aladdin's cave of choices.

The first tab is **General**.

Home Page is where you define the page to be loaded when you first start IE (or a blank page if you prefer)

Temporary Internet Files handles your cache. When a page is loaded, it is stored in a special location on the hard disk, so that if you need it again soon after it can be recalled from that location rather than be redownloaded. Occasionally, if things seem slow or stuck with your browsing, it can be a good idea to delete these files and force them to be reloaded. With settings, you can modify the behaviour of the cache and, in particular, how it is used. You can also browse the content of your cache folder, or even move it if you wish.

Don't worry about **Security** or **Contents** - these are irrelevant in the real world.

Connections is a link back to your dial-up networking folder. You can modify your connection settings from here.

Programs defines what other clients IE should load for functions it doesn't perform itself, to send e-mails etc.

Many of the **advanced** settings are beyond our scope. However, some are easy to understand, and useful; in particular the **multimedia** settings where you can turn off the automatic loading of such things as sounds and videos.

Help

Takes you to what is really a comprehensive help facility, which it is worth investigating if you want to get the most out of IE

The Standard Buttons

There is nothing that can be done with the standard buttons that cannot be done another way, but they control the commonest functions and thus make life easier. They can be customised if you wish, but the standard ones are:

Back - takes you back to the previously loaded page

Forward - takes you to next previously loaded page (assuming you've used Back!)

Stop - stops loading of the current page

Refresh - refreshes the current page (previously discussed)

Home - takes you to the home page defined in Internet Options

Search - opens an explorer bar linking to a search engine (there are better ways of doing this)

Favorites - opens an explorer bar linking to your favourites. In the explorer bar, you can not only click on and thus open them, but organise them into logical folders, delete the ones you no longer require, and customise them to your heart's content. Favorites get added while you're browsing - we'll show you how to do that later.

History - opens an explorer bar listing all the sites you've recently visited, in chronological order. This is very useful if you find you want to revisit somewhere that you haven't added to your Favorites.

Mail links to Outlook Express, or your preferred mail client

Print prints the current page.

BROWSING WITH INTERNET EXPLORER.

The Basics

In the address bar of Internet Explorer, the URL (address) of the page you are viewing or loading will be displayed. It will normally start <http://> or <https://>. Note that the Internet works to Unix standards, and thus the separators are forward slashes (/), not backward (\). You don't often have to type a URL in here, but when you do, you have to get it right. After you have typed it in, click on the "Go" button (or just press return) to start the load. If you have a "Links" tab after "Go", I suggest right clicking and deleting it as it isn't much use!

After a page is loaded, as you move the mouse pointer across it, it will normally show an arrow. If you pass it over normal text, it will show a text bar (I), inviting you to make a selection for copying. If the pointer changes to an arrow, you are on a HYPERLINK, the basis upon which the whole World Wide Web works. A hyperlink is a block of text (or an image) that contains a link directing you to something else, such as another web page, a picture, a file to download or even a drop down menu. Double (left) click a hyperlink, and the link will be executed. Another form of hyperlink is the table, where you will be invited to select an option from a selection offered to you by clicking on a downward arrow.

Useful pages for novices to practice on are:

<http://www.microsoft.com> (for hyperlinks) and

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/search.asp> for hyperlink tables

Right Clicking

A surprising amount of quite clever work can be done simply by right clicking your mouse in the right place.

Right clicking when a pointer or text bar is displayed will bring up the following options, some of which will be greyed out as not being applicable, and many of which we have already covered

Back

Forward

Save Background As - an option to pinch a pretty background for your own computer!

Set as wallpaper - make the website background your own computer wallpaper

Copy background - so you can paste it into your own designs

Set as desktop item - make the displayed page your desktop (if you have active desktop enabled)

Select all

Paste

Create shortcut - create a link to the current page in your start menu or on your desktop

Add to favourites. This is where you add the current page to your list of favourites so that you won't have to remember it's URL again. If you have more than one favorites folder, you will be invited to "Create in" as well as change the name to something you'll recognise. "Make available offline" is only worth checking if you have saved the page first.

View source - will open up Notepad with the HTML source of the page loaded for you to inspect, save, or hack.

Encoding

Print

Refresh

Properties

Right clicking on a hyperlink brings up a different set of options.

Open - open the link; the same as left clicking the link

Open in new window - just as it says, opens the link in a separate window

Save target as - saves the object the link refers to on your hard disk. Particularly useful when the link points to a software download. You will be asked to specify where on your hard disk you want to save the object.

Print target - does what it says, but you might like to examine it first!

Cut, Copy and Paste all as before.

Copy shortcut - copies the hyperlink onto your start menu or desktop

Add to favorites (the target, that is)

Properties (of the target - useful if you don't know what it is)