

Chapter 9 Internet Addresses, Domain Names and URL's

To receive e-mail, you must have an account on a mail server. This is similar to having an address where you receive letters. One advantage over regular mail is that you can retrieve your e-mail from anywhere location. Once you connect to your mail server, you download your messages to your computer providing you do not have an ISP that limits you to webmail only. . . like AOL and MSN.

To send e-mail, you need a connection to the Internet and access to a mail server that forwards or sends your mail. The standard protocol used for sending Internet e-mail is called **SMTP**, short for **Simple Mail Transfer Protocol**. It works in conjunction with **POP** servers. POP stands for **Post Office Protocol**. When you send an e-mail message, your computer routes it to an SMTP server. The server looks at the e-mail address (similar to the address on an envelope), then forwards it to the recipient's mail server, where it is stored until the addressee retrieves it. You can send e-mail anywhere in the world to anyone who has an e-mail address. Remember, almost all Internet service providers and all major online services offer at least one e-mail address with every Internet access account. We will cover this more in detail when we learn how to set up accounts.

Just like when sending a letter, you need the correct address. If you use the wrong address or mistype it, your message will bounce back to you--the old Return to Sender, Address Unknown routine. When you receive an e-mail, the header tells you where it came from, how it was sent, and when. It's like an electronic postmark. Another reason to build and maintain your address book. It starts with just one name. We will cover this in detail in another chapter on the address book.

Message formats will vary slightly with the different e-mail programs especially when you are using the program provided by your ISP that limits your use while online at their web site called webmail. . . All e-mail addressing is uniform and never changes

Internet e-mail addresses typically have two main parts:

First there is the **user name** that refers to the recipient's mailbox. Then there's an **at sign** (@). Next comes the **host name**, also called the **domain name**. This refers to the **mail server**, the computer where the recipient has an electronic mailbox. It's usually the name of a company or organization.

The end of the **domain name** consists of a dot (".") followed by three or more letters (such as **.com** and **.gov**) that indicate the **top-level domain** (TLD) (See list below). This part of the domain name indicates the type of organization or the country where the host server is located. It may be your or anybody's website or the name of the ISP that is hosting your mail server such as aol.com or bell-south.net. New domain name extensions are being added as the Internet grows.

- .biz**--Reserved for businesses
- .com**--For businesses, commercial enterprises, or online services like America Online. Most companies use this extension.
- .edu**--For educational institutions and universities
- .gov**--Reserved for United States government agencies
- .info**--For all uses
- .int**--For organizations established by international treaties
- .mil**--For the United States military
- .name**--For use by individuals
- .net**--For networks; usually reserved for organizations such as Internet service providers
- .org**--For non-commercial organizations



e-mail address:

johnprete@bellsouth.net

recipient's e-mail name

Internet domain where recipient has mailbox

World Wide Web address:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

Area of Internet to access a web page

Internet domain name of web site

Understanding Internet Addresses

Every Internet web site has a specific address derived from a registered domain name. When you or anyone decides on a web site they must choose a domain name and apply for and pay an annual fee to the international domain registrar. It must be a unique address. An example is “*aol.com*” or “*waltdisney.net*” There are many millions of addresses called URLs. (Universal Resource Locator). Each one is absolutely unique over the entire world. All characters are not case sensitive. Capital or lower case letters are both usable as the system does not differentiate between the two. Once you register a name it is yours exclusively but you must renew its registration or it becomes available to anyone after it expires. You can register it for one or up to ten years.

A registered domain name is accessible within a channel of the Internet that is designated by the protocol letters: *http://www*. All domain names are accessed with an address like: *http://www.domainname/*

E-mail addresses are *username@domain name*. File transfer (uploads and downloads) addresses are all: *ftp://domainname*. Different or specific pages within a domain named website are designated: *http://www.disneyworld.com/mickymouse/pictures*. The slash (/) mark accesses additional pages within the domain name address. We will get into more detail on this when we learn how to create web pages.

What is important at this point is that you understand that all addresses or URLs must be exact. . . there is no such thing as being close. Because Internet address or specific web pages can be very long and easy to make mistakes a system of keeping a website addressbook has been devised called “Favorites.” This is not the same as the addressbook used for your e-mail addresses. This is why it is called “Favorites” so as not to confuse it with your e-mail program Outlook Express. We will discuss this in detail in another chapter called Favorites.

The cost of operating on the Internet is very inexpensive, if you know your way around. I pay \$4.95 per month to my telephone company for dial-up service including accelerated speed and call waiting. It costs me \$7.95 per year for my domain name registration and \$3.95 per month to host my website. How much cheaper can it get to operate a small business. If you are truly an entrepreneur you can operate like a flea market on the Internet at a very small cost. . . It's called “e-bay.”