



## Are you unfamiliar with the internet?

You can use the internet to browse websites, communicate with people, download pictures and videos, listen to music or do lots of other amazing things.



## How does the internet work?

The internet has become part of everyday life for many people around the world. This global computer network is used at work, home and in schools on a regular basis.

But have you ever wondered how the internet works? This is a good place to start if you are new to using the internet and want to learn.

It is made up of millions of computers all over the world that are digitally connected to each other by **cable, fibre or wireless links**.

## So how does information move around the internet?

Let's imagine you are visiting a webpage with an image on it. How does the image get to your computer?

The image is hosted on a **web server**. Your computer **sends a request** to the web server for the image. The request is sent in a '**packet**'. A packet is like a virtual parcel which has lots of important information attached to it. The two most important bits of information are the IP address of the web server that the image is stored on and the IP address of your computer.

Special computers called **routers**, and devices called **switches**, direct the packet from your computer to the web server. The web server might be close by or on the other side of the world.

The packet can be sent across the world through **fibre optic cables** under the sea or even **by satellite**.

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**Receiving information** - Now that the packet has arrived, the web server opens it and reads your computer's request.

Images are often quite large so they need to be split up into lots of packets, often hundreds or thousands of them. All of these packets include information about how they should be put back together as well as where they are going and where they came from. The web server sends these packets back to your computer and once again **routers and switches direct them.**

Now that all the packets have been received the information attached to them tells your computer how to **put them back together** and the image will display on your screen.

This whole process of sending a request and receiving the packets usually takes **less than a second!**

- If you want to know how to search the Internet, then you have to find the right search engine, type in your search as accurately as possible, and browse through the results to find the one you want.
- Select a search engine. At the top of any page on your browser (the window that you open it to use the internet), type the phrase "search engines" into the Search Bar to gain access to several different internet sites that specifically aid in searching. Common search engines (click one of the links below to access the search engine named):
- Google, Ask, Bing, Yahoo

## Using a Search Engine.

- The World Wide Web is a big place. If you know the web address, or **URL**, of a site you can find it by typing it into the address bar along the top of your browser. But what if you don't know the URL?
- You can find pages by following links from other pages but usually it is easier to search for things using a **search engine.**
- These are programs that search an index of the World Wide Web for keywords and display the results in order.

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## Finding things online

- After typing in whatever you want to search, press the Enter key on the keyboard of your computer.
- Choose a few of the most specific or relevant keywords or phrases to describe your topic. Utilize synonyms.
- Type your choice of words into the Search Bar offered by your chosen search engine.
- Generally, capitals and punctuation are not needed.
- Search engines usually disregard minor words such as "the, and, to, etc."

It is useful to think about the words that you use in your search. Too few and you will get too many results, too many and you may get no results at all.

When you want to find the answer to a question, such as, 'What countries did the Vikings raid?' You need to think about the important **keywords**.

- Keywords allow you to get more specific results. If you simply typed in your question, you might get some results that are completely unrelated to what you are looking for.

You could just type the whole sentence into the search engine but it will probably ignore some words, like joining words and punctuation. Instead it might save time to search for keywords like 'countries', 'Vikings' and 'raid'.

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