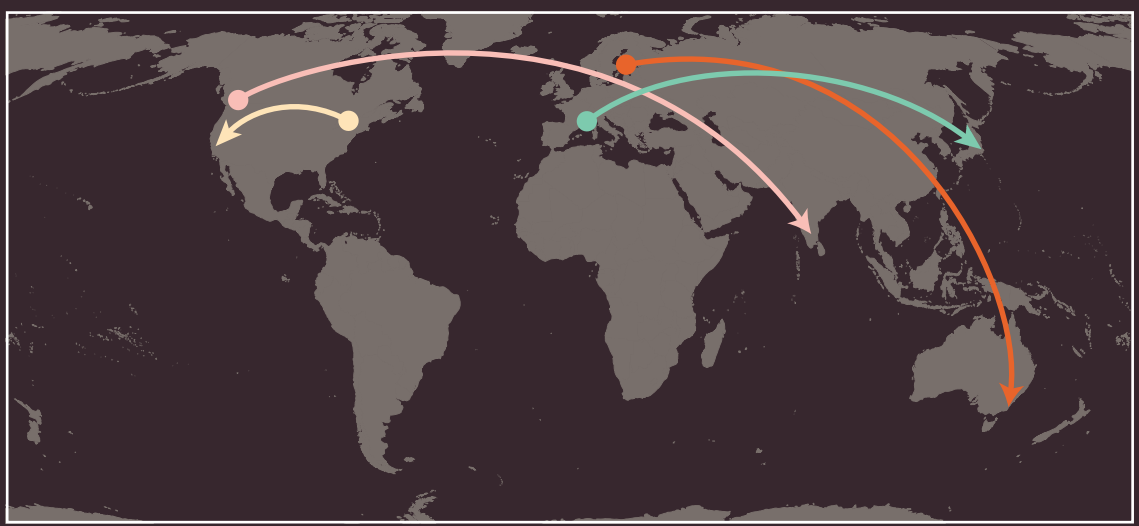
HOW THE WEB WORKS

When you visit a website, the web server hosting that site could be anywhere in the world. In order for you to find the location of the web server, your browser will first connect to a Domain Name System (DNS) server.



On this page you can see examples that demonstrate how the web server that hosts the website you are visiting can be anywhere in the world. It is the DNS servers that tell your browser how to find the website.

- A user in Barcelona visits `sony.jp` in Tokyo
- A user in New York visits `google.com` in San Francisco
- A user in Stockholm visits `qantas.com.au` in Sydney
- A user in Vancouver visits `airindia.in` in Bangalore

On the right you can see what happens when a web user in England wants to view the website of the Louvre art gallery in France which is located at `www.louvre.fr`. Firstly, the browser in Cambridge contacts a DNS server in London. The DNS server then tells the browser the location of the web server hosting the site in Paris.

1

When you connect to the web, you do so via an Internet Service Provider (ISP). You type a domain name or web address into your browser to visit a site; for example: `google.com`, `bbc.co.uk`, `microsoft.com`.

2

Your computer contacts a network of servers called Domain Name System (DNS) servers. These act like phone books; they tell your computer the IP address associated with the requested domain name. An IP address is a number of up to 12 digits separated by periods / full stops. Every device connected to the web has a unique IP address; it is like the phone number for that computer.

3

The unique number that the DNS server returns to your computer allows your browser to contact the web server that hosts the website you requested. A web server is a computer that is constantly connected to the web, and is set up especially to send web pages to users.

4

The web server then sends the page you requested back to your web browser.