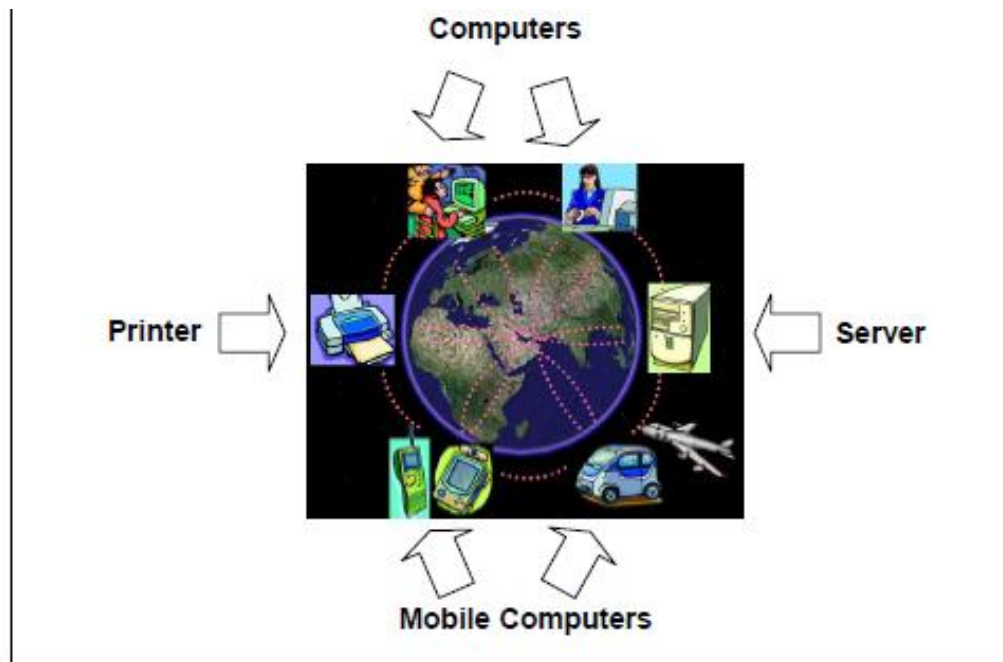# Unit 1
Using a Web Browser

Summary

In this unit you will learn how to view content on the Internet using a computer program called Internet Explorer. You'll also learn a bit about the Internet itself and some of the terms associated with it.

Web Browsing

Internet Explorer is one of several such programs called web browsers. **A web browser** receives its name because it is used to browse or view the Web. The **Web** is a short name for the **World Wide Web**, which is a system of interlinked documents stored on computers around the world. We access those documents using the Internet. As shown below, the **Internet** is a collection of millions of computers all over the world that can communicate with each other.

One way that Internet users share information is to create a **web page** that others can view. Web pages are electronic documents that are stored on an Internet server. An Internet **server** is a special kind of computer that is powerful enough to allow thousands, or even millions, of people to view its web pages at the same time.

Multiple web pages are grouped together to form a **website**. To maintain that grouping, websites are given a unique address (for example, www.yahoo.com or www.walmart.com). Most web pages contain special elements called **hyperlinks** (or links, for short) that point to information on other web pages. When a **link** is clicked with a mouse, the web page referenced by that link is **loaded** or displayed in your web browser.

The best way to explain how to browse the Internet is to do it! Let's start with the following exercise:

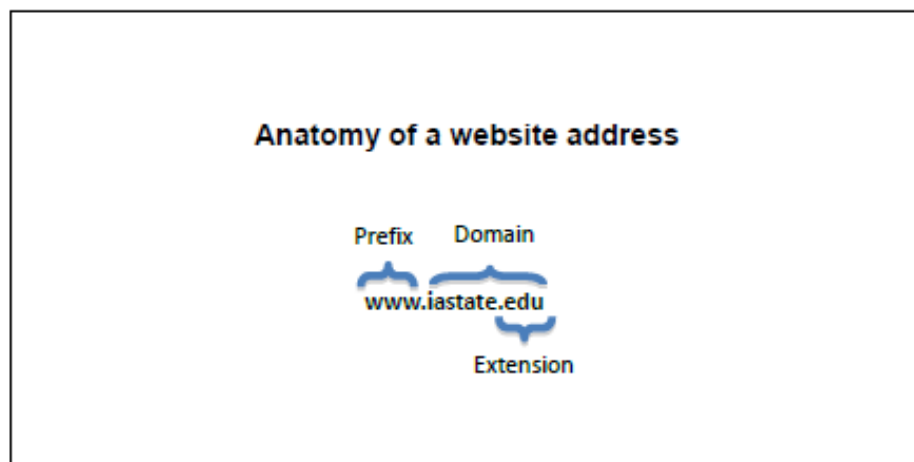 **Exercise #1: View the ISU website**

Let's start our tour of the Internet by visiting the homepage of Iowa State University. A **homepage** is the first web page that is displayed when you visit a website.

1. Open Internet Explorer
2. Type the address "www.iastate.edu" into the address field (highlighted below) and press the "Enter" key. You will see a webpage similar to the one shown.

Internet Explorer – Web Browser

Web page address

Web page

Website Addresses

As shown in the following figure, the website address you just entered contains several parts, and all must be entered with no spaces in between.   Every website has a unique address.
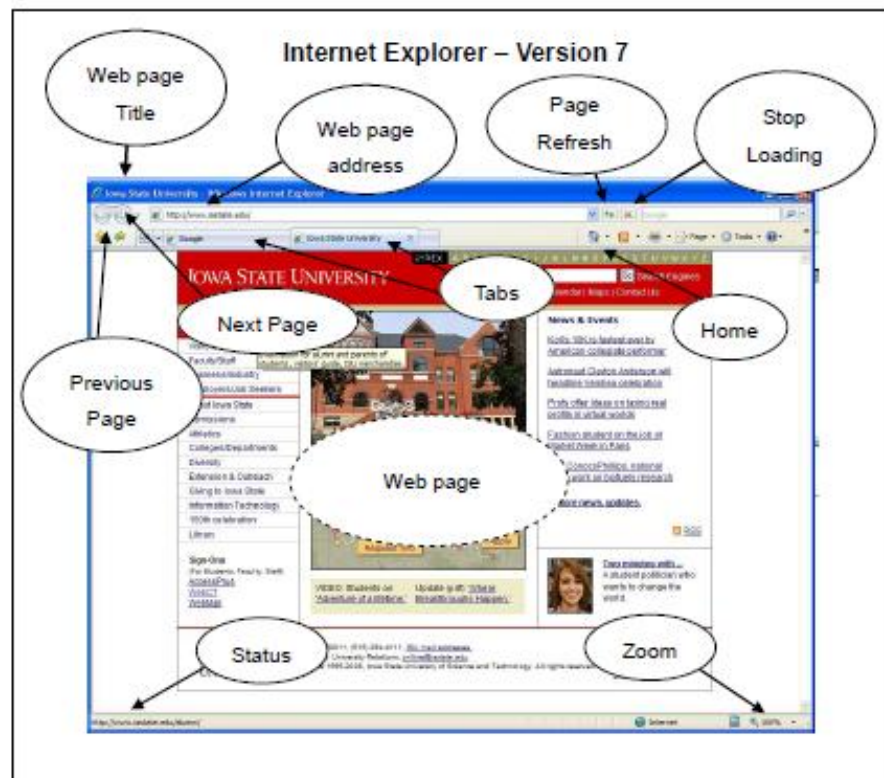
Anatomy of a website address

Prefix   Domain

www.iastate.edu

Extension

The last part of that address, the extension, indicates in general the source of that information as shown in the following table.

Common Address Extensions

Extension	Meaning	Example
.com	Commercial or company	www.walmart.com
.gov	U.S. Government	www.irs.gov
.edu	Educational Institution	www.iastate.edu
.org	Non-profit organization	www.redcross.org
.uk	Site in the United Kingdom	www.bbc.co.uk
.za	Site in New Zealand	www.parliament.govt.nz
.us	Site in the United States	www.kids.us

Elements of an Internet Browser

The Internet browser we are using, Internet Explorer version 7, contains many elements that help us to navigate more easily to web pages of our choice.   The figure below shows the most common features that we will use in this class.

▶Fun Fact

Software programs like Internet Explorer are called browsers.   Why?   Because in the same way you might browse books in a library, you also browse the Internet for information, so you use a browser.

Learning to Navigate the Web

Viewing a single page of website is just the beginning of learning to navigate throughout its many pages.   In this section we'll use a browser's many tools to find information within a website.

Exercise #2: Website Navigation

1. Starting from the ISU homepage, www.iastate.edu.
2. Allow your mouse to **hover** on top of various menu items.

Note how the mouse pointer turns into a **finger** when you hover over a hyperlink.   A **hyperlink** (or **link** for short) is an element of a web page that, if clicked, will navigate you to a new web page and then display it in your browser.   Links can be text, graphics, or photos.   Sometimes text **balloons** will pop-up when you **rollover** a link.

Exercise #3: Let's Surf!

Fun Fact

People sometimes refer to viewing web pages as "surfing" the web. It's usually when you are exploring with no specific purpose. You just go out there and see what happens (like waiting for the perfect wave!).

Follow along...

1. From the ISU Homepage – Click on the **Alumni/Parents** menu – notice how the web page title has changed.
2. Click on the **Alumni Association** menu or link (there are two of them!).
3. Click on the **College for Seniors** menu – notice how the menu bar has changed.
4. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on the **Blog** link.
5. Scroll through the blog and see what's going on at the Alumni Association

Fun Fact

A **blog** is slang term for a "Web-log" which is a website that allows people to easily share text and photos. Think of it as a personal website or an Internet journal. Visitors to a blog can easily "post" comments of their own, and view those made by others. **Blogs** are part of a popular development called Web 2.0 where sharing information and collaborating with others via text, photos, videos, music, links, etc. is made easy.
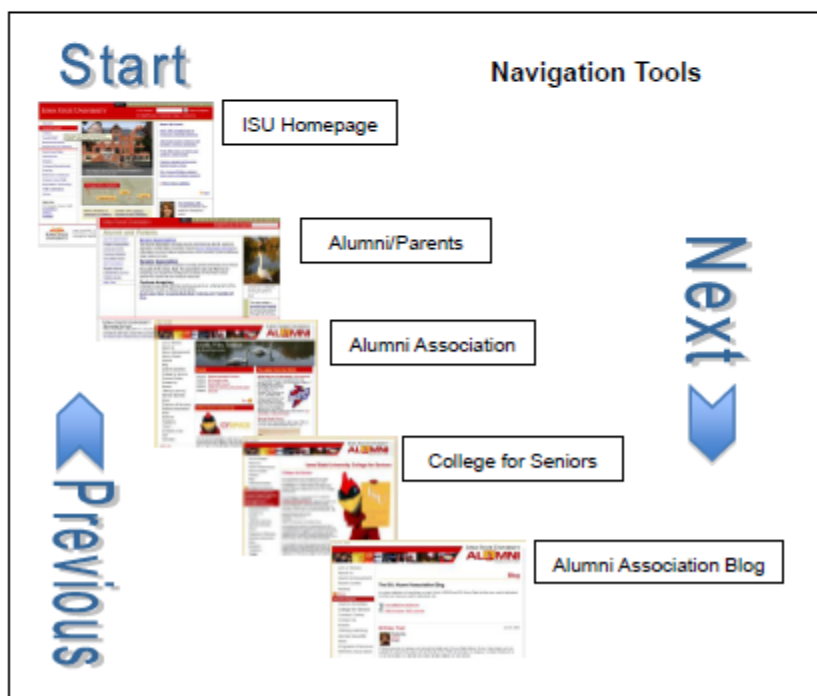
Exercise #4: Back to the Beginning

To return to the ISU homepage, you could re-type the web address, "www.iastate.edu."
But wait, there's an easier way!

1. Click once on the Back arrow at the top of the browser window to return to the "College for Seniors" page
2. Click several more times until you return to the first page.

Notice how the Back arrow loses its color – it's dimmed.   This means you cannot go "back" any further.

> **Quick Quiz:** How many times total did you click on the Back arrow to return to the ISU homepage?   Review your path using the graphic below...back often!

Exercise #5: Let's go "Back to the Future"...

It's just as easy to return to the Blog page by using the **Next** arrow.

1. Click on the **Next** arrow 4 times to re-visit the Blog page.

This time notice how the **Next** arrow is dimmed after you've reached the end of the line.

> **Quick Quiz:** During this short excursion, did we ever leave the ISU website? How do you know?
> **Answer:** Watch the website address bar. If the "domain name" changes, you have moved to a new website (www.iastate.edu vs. www.isualum.org).

✏️*Fun Fact*

You can also return to a previous web page by pressing the **backspace** button on your keyboard (Shhh....don't tell!).

Exercise #6: Let's accelerate!

You can quickly navigate to any page you've visited by first clicking on the **History** drop-down near the **Back/Next** arrows (see figure below). This list shows the name of each web page you've visited by referring to the name displayed in the Website Title. Simply click on the web page you want to visit and you'll arrive instantly.

Hint: This tool is similar to using the Rewind and Fast Forward buttons on a VCR, DVD or cassette player.

1. Use the History drop-down feature to return instantly to Alumni Association page (titled "Iowa State University Alumni Association").
2. Use the History drop-down once more to return to the ISU homepage (titled "Iowa State University").

Exercise #7: Blazing a new trail...

From the ISU homepage, let's visit a new web page.
1. Click on the **Athletics** menu item.
2. Click on the **History** arrow (your future are gone!).

Notice also that the Next arrow is grayed out.   By starting a new path, we've lost the previous trail.   Your only choice is to use the **Back** button to return to the ISU homepage and then start your journey again.

Quick Quiz: Have we left the ISU domain?   How do you know?

Answer: Yes! The website address bar now points to www.cyclones.com.   This is a "commercial" website, get out your wallet! ☺

Exercise #8: Visiting our Course Website

We have created a special website for this Internet course that you will use to easily navigate to many interesting websites in future classes.   Many websites have long addresses that are difficult to type.   We've added those links to your course website so you can visit those websites with a single click.   For now, you can access the course website by clicking on a special link we've added to your computer's desktop.

1. Minimize your web browser by clicking the Minimize button at the upper right of the window (don't close it!).   Click on the link on your desktop that says "Internet Course Website."
2. Go to the ISU Alumni Blog.
3. Return to the Course Website (use the "back" button on your keyboard if you like).
4. View the web page titled "www.freerice.org" and try a few words.
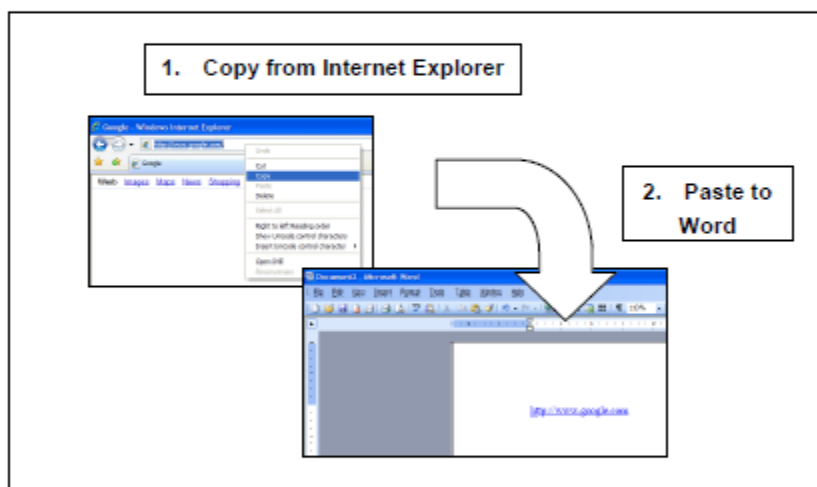5. Return to the Course Website by clicking on its Internet Explorer taskbar button.

Fun Fact

1 - The main part of a website name (for example: www.iastate.edu) can be typed in UPPER or lower case letters (CAPITAL or small letters).

2 - You never have to type "http://" when entering an address.

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Exercise #9: Copy/paste a web page address into Word

Instead of writing down a website address for use later, such as the lengthy Course Website featured above, you can copy and paste it into another document such as an e-mail message or Microsoft Word.

1. While viewing the Course Website and without clicking, position your mouse arrow on top of the address of this website.
2. Now right-click on the address text to simultaneously highlight it and bring up a menu, and then left-click the Copy option as shown in Step 1 below.

3. To be begin Step 2, go to the **Start Menu** and select the application **Microsoft Word**.
4. After Word has completely loaded (started), move your mouse arrow close to the insertion point (which is blinking), right-click, and choose the **Paste** option
5. Press the return key once and notice how the text is changed into a link (blue and underlined).
6. To test your work, allow the mouse to hover over this link, and as instructed by the Tool-Tip that appears, press your Ctrl key and click on the link.   In a few

seconds, it will open a new window of Internet Explorer displaying the Course Website once again.

Homework

1. Go to the course website and try each of the websites listed.
2. Bring back the address of one cool website to share with your classmates. Tell us how you found it (from a friend, an email, magazine, search engine, etc.).