

## What is the Internet?

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### Internet Defined

The *Internet* has been described as a huge "network of networks." A *network* is a number of computers that are connected so that they may communicate with one another and share data. The Internet is made up of millions of local, regional, national and international computer networks, including home computers.



### Parts of the Internet

The *Internet* is made up of different types of resources. You can think of the *Internet* the way you might imagine a library. A library is filled with books, records, CDs, tapes, magazines, newspapers, and so forth. Some resources are old and some are new. The same is true of the Internet. The most popular space within the Internet is the World Wide Web (WWW) and it is expanding at an astronomical rate. Because of its popularity and tremendous growth, the terms *Internet* and *World Wide Web* are sometimes used synonymously.

Resource	Description	Example
<b>Web sites</b>	A Web site is a group of Web pages. They can provide information or access to other resources, such as search engines and e-mail. Web sites are maintained by companies, organizations or individuals.	<a href="http://www.mpl.org">www.mpl.org</a> The Milwaukee Public Library Web site
<b>search engines</b>	A search engine is web-based program that allows users to search and retrieve specific information online using keywords, phrases and Boolean logic.	<a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a> <a href="http://www.yahoo.com">www.yahoo.com</a>
<b>e-mail</b>	E-mail (Electronic Mail) provides a way to communicate with other individuals online. You can send, receive, reply, and forward messages to other email users.	webmaster@mpl.org (Email address for the MPL webmaster)
<b>telnet</b>	Telnet allows you to access a site remotely. For example, you can telnet into the MPL online catalog, <i>CountyCat</i> , to search for materials and place holds on items. There is also a web version of <i>CountyCat</i> .	telnet://countycat.mcfls.org (Telnet version of the MPL online catalog, <i>CountyCat</i> )
<b>news</b>	Newsgroups are subject-specific global bulletin boards. You can read posted messages, reply to messages, or post new messages of your own.	<a href="http://www.ibiblio.org/usenet-i/">http://www.ibiblio.org/usenet-i/</a> <a href="http://groups.google.com/">http://groups.google.com/</a> <a href="http://groups.yahoo.com/">http://groups.yahoo.com/</a>
<b>blogs</b>	Blogs (short for Web log) are frequently updated web-based journals.	<a href="http://wisblawg.blogspot.com/">http://wisblawg.blogspot.com/</a> (UW-Madison Law Library's blog)

The term "cyberspace" was first coined by William Gibson in his 1984 science fiction novel *Neuromancer*.