

Chapter 8: The World Wide Web (WWW)

The Internet has much to offer in terms of information on almost any subject matter imaginable and interaction with people and organisations from all over the world. Much of this access and interaction make use of the environment which is popularly known as the World Wide Web (WWW) or web. The WWW is an interlinked network of systems, called web servers, offering multimedia services and information. A user can access these using what is known as a web browser software.

THE MOZILLA WEB BROWSER (NAVIGATOR)

Mozilla is a full-featured integrated web browser, email client, news reader and web page composer program. Using Mozilla a user can be exposed to the richness and diversity of multimedia content and services available on the WWW.

To start Mozilla, click on the Mozilla icon on the panel or launch the application from the menu system:

Main Menu --> Internet --> Mozilla Web Browser



Fig. The Mozilla Web Browser

By default the web browser component of Mozilla (Navigator) will be executed and displayed. The Navigator window has the following main parts.

- the navigation toolbar
- the menu bar
- the side bar
- the display panel

(Mozilla Navigator has many features and only a a brief description of its main functionalities and features can be given here. The user should refer to the Help button on the menu bar for more details.)

The Navigation Toolbar



Fig. The Navigation Toolbar

The navigation toolbar allows you to access a website by entering its Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or more informally known as its web address, e.g. <http://www.mozilla.org> in the address box provided. Actually you need to enter only the name of the host i.e. "www.mozilla.org" and Mozilla is smart enough to figure out that you want to access the web server on that host.

Clicking on the arrow at the right edge of the address box will open a pull-down menu showing a history of websites visited previously. You can click on an entry in the list to select that website to access.

Also present on the navigation toolbar are the Back, Forward, Reload and Stop buttons.

The Back button enables you to go back to the previous web page displayed.

The Forward button enables you to go forward to the next web page that you have already accessed.

The Reload button forces Mozilla to re-access the website and load the current web page.

The Stop button halts the loading of a web page that is currently proceeding.

Next to the address box in the navigation toolbar is the Search button. This button enables you to perform searches for relevant web pages on the Internet by making use of a search engine. To search for some particular information, you can enter the keywords for the search into the address box and then double-click on the Search button. The results of the search will be displayed in the display panel. You can configure the search engine to use by this search button in the Mozilla Navigator configuration setup (see Configuring Mozilla below).

The Menu Bar



Fig The Menu Bar

The menu bar has several menu buttons. Clicking on one will open up a drop-down menu selection where selected operations can be performed.

The File button caters to the performance of file level operations like the printing and saving of web pages, the opening of web pages, files etc.

The Edit button allows you to find strings of text on the displayed page as well as to edit the Mozilla configuration to your personal preferences.

The View button allows you to control the viewing of the various toolbars as well as the zooming of text and full page display of the display panel. The HTML source code of the currently displayed page can also be viewed using the selection "Page Source" under this button.

The Go button performs similar navigational functions as the navigation toolbar described earlier. A history of previously visited sites can also be accessed by this button. The pull-down menu shows a list of previously visited websites and you can click on one of these to open up the selected web page. Under the Go button, if you select the History item,



Fig. The History Pop-up Window

a pop-up window will be displayed showing in detail the browsing history (i.e. the list of sites visited) over the last few days (by default this period is 9 days; this number is configurable, see below).

The Bookmarks button enables you to manage your bookmarks and personal folder. You can add frequently visited sites to the bookmark and/or personal folder. To manage and organise your bookmarks you can select the "Mange Bookmarks" item in the drop-down menu.



Fig. The Bookmark Manager Pop-up Window

The bookmarks can be organised into folders by dragging and dropping them into the desired folder. New folders can be created by clicking on the New Folder button at the top. Folders can have a name and description. To separate and group together related folders, a separator line can be drawn by selecting the "New Separator" button.

The Window button enables you to navigate and move among the windows opened in Mozilla. You can also use this button to move from one open Mozilla application to another, e.g. to move from the Navigator application to the Mail (email) application.

The Help button contains the Mozilla help files arranged in user-friendly web page style and format.

The Side Bar

By default a side bar is displayed on the left of the main display panel. This side bar contains some of the functions which we have discussed above from the main menu bar at the top. These include the Search, Bookmarks and History functions. The side bar also contains the "What's Related" function, which when selected will display in the side bar a list of links to webpages which contain similar topics to the page currently being displayed in the main browsing display area.

The side bar can be turned on/off by selecting from the main menu at the top,

View --> Show/Hide --> Sidebar

The Main Display Panel

This is the area where the contents of a web page are rendered and displayed. This display area can be made full screen by either selecting the View --> Full Screen selection from the top menu bar or pressing the F11 key. To disable full screen display either press F11 again or click on the unmaximise window button on the top right corner of the menu bar.

Navigation Tab Bar

Mozilla Navigator allows you to browse multiple websites within one browser window using navigational tabs. This overcomes the inconvenience of opening several windows under Mozilla to view multiple sites. To do this either choose under the menu bar:

File --> New --> Navigator Tab

or enter CONTROL-T.

If you open different web pages using this navigation tab feature, they will all be displayed under the same window. You can then use the tab bar to select between each tab screen.

CONFIGURING MOZILLA NAVIGATOR

Mozilla is highly configurable. To configure Mozilla, select from the main menu selection,

Edit --> Preferences

The categories available for configuration are listed on the left panel of the main configuration window. Clicking on the + button on the left of each category will open up further available sub-categories for configuration.

The Appearance category allows you to configure the default fonts and colours used. Here you will also be able to set the theme and select the language to be used.

The Navigator category allows you to configure the Mozilla Navigator web browser itself.

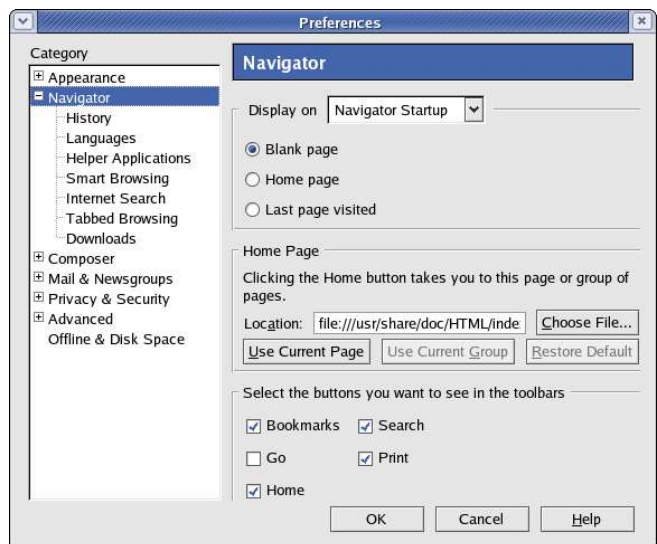


Fig. Navigator Configuration

The main Navigator configuration allows you to select the page to display when the browser is launched. If you select "Home page", the website that is designated as the home page will be displayed. This home page location is set in the Home Page location box below. If you do not want the browser to display anything on startup select "Blank"..

The History sub-category allows you to set the number of days to keep the history list for the history windows and for the location bar history.

The Languages sub-category allows you to select the language to display web pages in (where available) and also the default character coding. To add another language for web page display, click on the "Add" button and select the desired language. The listed language to use for display is in order of preference, so you will need to move your preferred language to use to the top.

The Internet Search sub-category allows you to choose which search engine you want to use for your search function.

EXERCISES

1. Start up the Mozilla browser and visit the websites listed below. Use the navigation tab bar feature so that you open up the websites all in the same window but under different tab pages.
 - www.mozilla.org
 - www.yahoo.com

- www.iosn.net
2. Bookmark the sites visited above.
 3. Configure the Navigator so that it starts with a blank page.

FINDING INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET

The Internet is a treasure house of information. Virtually information on any topic under the sun (and more!) can be found on the Internet. However, while information is easily available it may not be so easy to find the information you want. This is because the information may be available from very many sites, often in varying details and varying aspects of the same piece of information. To assist us in finding information more effectively a search engine or Internet portal may be used.

Note:

Information obtained from the Internet should be scrutinised carefully and not taken as "correct" in all cases. This is because due to its free flowing nature and easy means of access and creation, anyone can publish information on the Internet. As such, unless one is certain that the information is from an authoritative and reliable source, it should be verified by another source or means as far as possible.

USING A PORTAL

The term portal is used to denote a website that acts as a gateway for providing information about a subject area or group of subjects. From this portal site, information as well as links to other sites providing information about the topics in question may be found. Portals are useful starting places for new web users who do not know where and how to go and look for information about a specific topic or subject.

Many major ISPs provide portal-like information services for their subscribers so that if the latter make this their home page for their web browser, on launching their browser the ISP's portal page is opened. The subject areas covered by these ISP portals are typically subjects of general interest like shopping, local and foreign news, entertainment etc.

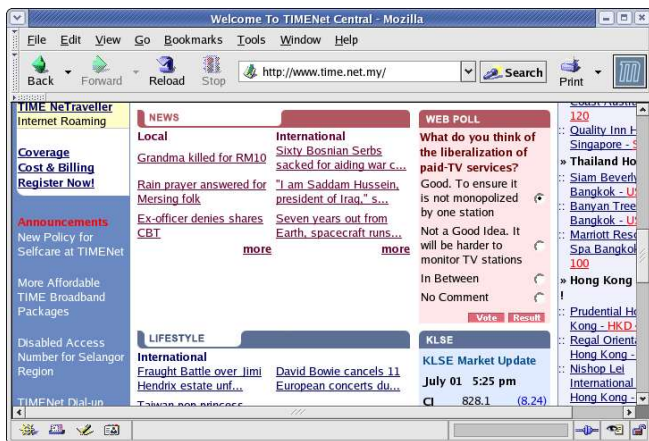


Fig. Home Page for an ISP

Other portals offering general information as well as links to other more subject-specific portals and websites include:

- Yahoo (www.yahoo.com)
- Netscape Network (www.netscape.com)
- Microsoft Network (www.msn.com)
- Angelfire (www.angelfire.lycos.com)

USING AN INTERNET SEARCH ENGINE

While portals provide a guided and categorised means to access information, sometimes we want to be more specific about the topic we want to find and portals generally are not

able to provide this in a timely and efficient manner. An alternative is to utilise a search engine.

A search engine as the name implies, allows you to query it about some specific subject and it will try to retrieve links to web pages and resources which contain information about the subject matter being queried.

The popular search engines available are:

- Google (www.google.com)
- Altavista (www.altavista.com)
- Lycos (www.lycos.com)
- Yahoo (www.yahoo.com)

There are also sites which allow you to search using more than one search engines e.g.

- Search.com (www.search.com)
- Easysearcher (www.easysearcher.com)

Search Basics

While each search engine will have its own technology, its utilisation to perform a simple and basic search is essentially the same irrespective of which search engine is used.

To use a search engine for basic searches, you just type in a few descriptive words about the item/subject you are searching for. It will return to you a list of links to web pages and resources which contain all the words in the query string. Note that common words like "the", "a", "how" etc. are usually ignored by the search engine unless specifically told not to. Words are also not case sensitive unless enclosed by quotation marks. To refine and narrow down your search, you will need to add more words to the search terms you have already entered. Your new query will return a smaller subset of the pages found.



Fig. A Search Engine

The basics of using current search engines is essentially keyword matching and so it is important to be able to identify appropriate keywords so that your search is more efficient and false hits are minimised. The keywords entered should be as specific as possible in order to get better results.

More details on how to use each particular search engine are available on their respective websites and they should be consulted so that you can make efficient use of them.

EXAMPLE

In this section we shall show an example of how to use a search engine.

In this example, assume that we have heard from a friend that she has been diagnosed with a foot condition in which her forefoot is in pain and there is numbness as a result of poor blood circulation in one of the toes. We also remembered her telling us that the doctor named the

condition as Freiberg disease or some name which sounds like that since the telephone line was not too clear.

Initially we try entering the following keywords, *foot pain*, in the search engine.

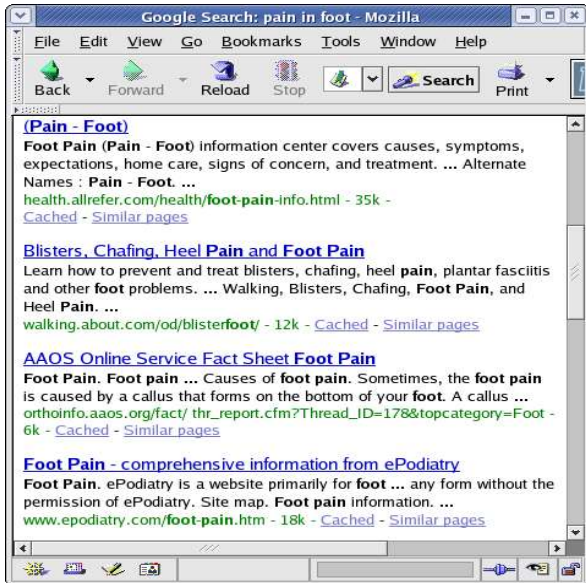


Fig. Search using Common Keywords

As can be seen from the results of the search what we got back was very general and we need to go through each of these links to check if it contains relevant information or links to relevant information. We can narrow down the search if we are more specific about where in the foot the pain is, e.g. *forefoot pain*. This will give us better results but the list of hits is still long.



Fig. Search using Relevant Keywords

If we remember that the friend mentioned that the doctor gave the name of the condition as something sounding like Freiberg disease, we can try searching for this specific term. The search results improve immediately as can be seen below and in this particular example we have found several links which are directly related to the information we want.

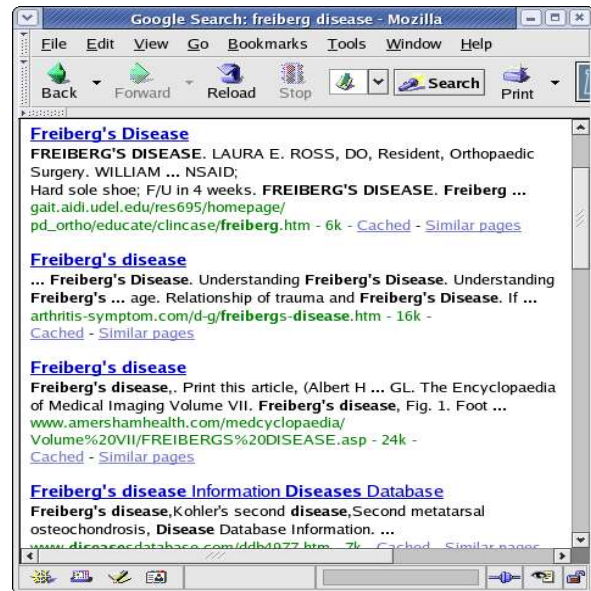


Fig. Refined Search using Specific Keywords