

Understanding URLs



During this unit, you will be finding out about some of the following things:

- What a URL means
- How to search for information effectively on the Internet
- How to make sure that the information you find is accurate
- How to choose appropriate information to help you develop a presentation about a given topic.

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The Internet



In 2007, it was estimated that there were more than 108 million websites on the Internet *.

Each of these websites contain a number of pages, some just a few, some perhaps hundreds.

And every single day, hundreds of thousands of new web pages are added to the Internet.

* Netcraft web server survey

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Uniform Resource Locators



For you to stand any chance of finding what you want on the Internet, there has to be an easy way to locate a particular web page.

Luckily every single one of those billions of web pages has its own unique address – a bit like you have your own unique address at home.

These web page addresses have a name – they are called 'Uniform Resource Locators or URL for short.

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Uniform Resource Locators (URLs)



These are some examples of the URLs that you may have come across:

<http://www.google.com>
<http://www.yahoo.co.uk>
<http://www.amazon.com>

If you type these URLs into your browser, you will go to the exact site you wanted without having to use a search engine.

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Uniform Resource Locators (URLs)



A URL can often tell you a lot about a website before you even visit it.

`http://www.amazon.co.uk`
↑
http means the protocol used

Protocol is the way that two computers have agreed to 'talk' to each other. There are many different protocols available.

For web pages, the method used is called HyperText Transfer Protocol or HTTP.

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Uniform Resource Locators (URLs)



`http://www.amazon.co.uk`
↑

The www is short for World Wide Web.

The www in the URL does not really do anything, it simply grew out of popular use. You will now find many websites which do not have 'www' in their URL.

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Uniform Resource Locators (URLs)



`http://www.amazon.co.uk`
↑

Amazon.co.uk is called the **Domain name**.

It is part of the URL.

However, it also tells you which organisation owns the site.

In this case, a company called Amazon.

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Uniform Resource Locators (URLs)



`http://www.amazon.co.uk`
↑

Notice that part of the URL contains the word **.co**

This can tell you a lot about the type of website that you will be visiting. In this instance, it means that the website belongs to a company or business.

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Uniform Resource Locators (URLs)

Other URL endings that you may come across:

| | |
|------|--------------------------------|
| .gov | Government site |
| .com | International company |
| .co | Company |
| .org | Organisation (often a charity) |
| .ac | Academic – often a university |
| .sch | School |
| .ed | Education |
| .net | Network of websites |

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Uniform Resource Locators (URLs)

<http://www.amazon.co.uk>

Finally, notice that this URL ends with '.uk'

This means that the website is registered in the United Kingdom.

A website which ended with:

.fr would mean it was registered in France

.cn would be registered in China

.nz would be registered in New Zealand

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