Learn Netscape

Netscape Handbook: Table of Contents

1. Seeing the Internet
2. Understanding pages
3. Knowing that every page has a unique URL
4. Finding, starting and stopping links
5. Linking via buttons and menu items
6. Using history and bookmark lists
7. Choosing the screen look
8. Changing styles, fonts, and colors
9. Selecting a home page
10. Viewing inline images
11. Viewing external images
12. Filling in forms
13. Identifying security
14. Understanding public key technology
15. Accessing servers for news and e-mail
16. Reading Usenet news
17. Mastering Usenet news
18. Sending e-mail
19. Saving pages
20. Printing and Finding

Seeing the Internet

You’re going to bring pages of the Internet to your computer screen. The Internet is a collection of information stored in computers physically located throughout the world. Much of the information on the Internet is organized onto pages. You’ll bring one page to your computer screen, discover its contents, and have the option of bringing more pages of information.

Some pages on the Internet are cool. I mean really cool. They can be richly formatted and colorfully illustrated, capable of bringing you sounds and movies and interactivity. Other pages can be as ugly and disagreeable as what you’d find under a rock. Your goal: to bring yourself gratifying pages of information, and no others.

Content is everything. But to get to the content you seek, you’ll need connections to those pages. Well-crafted pages provide built-in connections to other pages. That is, clicking your mouse button on a highlighted word or picture brings another page of information--a linked page--to your screen. The entire network of pages can be potentially interlinked, one pointing to another. As a result, you can bring information in the meaningful context of "Here is some information on a page in front of me, and highlighted on this page is a connection to related information I might wish to explore next."

Netscape’s popularity stems from the opulence of its pages and the ease of bringing them to your screen.

Pages designed with expressive lettering, art, color, photos, sound, animation, forms, and interactivity can be linked to an untold number of similar pages distributed on networked computers worldwide. Netscape explores World Wide Web pages, a part of the Internet rich in multimedia features, as well as other parts of the Internet that are often text-based. The Internet's Usenet newsgroups, electronic mail, and alternative transport protocols offer impressive diversity of content and communicative prowess. To take advantage of this wealth, Netscape software contains features to explore the Internet in numerous domains.

Foremost, Netscape software presents pages of the Internet with elegance and efficiency. Netscape software is a browser--an interface--to pages throughout the world. Netscape software allows you to immerse yourself in content unencumbered by the complexity of distributed networks.

Understanding pages

Now, you're probably comfortable with the idea that information on the Internet is presented on pages you see on the screen. Even the navigational concepts are pretty easy:

- You start with a home page.
- You click on highlighted words (colored and/or underlined) in a page to bring another page of related information to your screen.
- You click on arrow buttons to go back (or forward) to a page you have previously seen.

Plus, you can go directly to pages that interest you by choosing menu items:

- History items in the **Go** menu bring pages you have viewed before.
- Bookmarks items in the **Bookmarks** menu bring pages you have designated as worthy of easy access.
- Directory items in the **Directory** menu bring pages that help you use Netscape and Internet features

Ideally, the act of finding pages becomes secondary to what you really care about: the page's content.

Like pages of a magazine, you'll want to flip from one screen page to another, sometimes to continue with the same article and other times to begin a new article. But you can't hold screen pages in your hands like you can a magazine. Screen pages are rarely uniform in length and, displayed one page at a time, don't provide intuitive feedback on where the information begins and ends.

So even though Internet pages bring information to you rather gloriously, there is something distinctly uncomfortable about content which may continue over numerous links to pages of varying lengths. Anyone who has witnessed a slide show of a neighbor's family vacation can identify with the queasy sensation of boundlessness.

Readers of electronic pages need tools to keep track of pages. The Netscape text fields, toolbar buttons, and menu items seek to provide you with the ability to manage pages of information that might otherwise leave you feeling overwhelmed and unfocused.

Knowing that every page has a unique URL

To understand how a single page is kept distinct in a world of electronic pages, you ought to recognize its URL, short for Uniform Resource Locator. Every page has a unique URL just like every person has a unique palm print. (Arguments persist as to which is more cryptic.)

A URL is text used for identifying and addressing an item in a computer network. In short, a URL provides location information and Netscape displays a URL in the location field. Most often you don't need to know a page's URL because the location information is built into a highlighted link; Netscape already has the URL available when you click on highlighted text, press an arrow button, or select a menu item. But sometimes you won't have an automatic link and instead have only the text of the URL (perhaps from a friend or a newspaper article).

Netscape gives you the opportunity to type in a URL directly into the location text field (or the URL dialog box produced by the **File/Open Location** menu item. Using the URL, Netscape will bring you the specified page just as if you had clicked on an automatic link. Notice that the label on the location field says **Netsite** for pages from a Netsite server, **Location** for pages from a non-Netsite server, or **Go to** as soon as you edit the field.

Here's a sample URL: **http://home.netscape.com/home/welcome.html**

Netscape uses the URL text to find a particular item, such as a page, among all the computers connected to the Internet. Within the URL text are components that specify the protocol, server, and pathname of an item. Notice that the protocol is followed by a colon (**http:**), the server is preceded by two slashes (**//home.netscape.com**), and each segment of the pathname is preceded by a single slash (**/home/welcome.html**).

The first component, the protocol, identifies a manner for interpreting computer information. Many Internet pages use **HTTP** (short for HyperText Transfer Protocol). Other common protocols you might come across include **file** (also known as ftp, short for File Transfer Protocol), **news** (the protocol used by Usenet news groups), and **gopher** (an alternative transfer protocol).

The second component, the server, identifies the computer system that stores the information you seek. Each server on the Internet has a unique address name whose text refers to the organization maintaining the server.

The last component, the pathname, identifies the location of an item on the server. For example, a pathname might identify a page by specifying the name of the file comprising the page (such as **/welcome.html**) as well as the name of one or more folders that store a file (**/home**).

Finding, starting and stopping links

A link is a connection from one page to another. You find a link by looking for one or more words highlighted with color, underlining, or both in the content area of a page. Images and icons with colored borders also serve as links. When the mouse cursor points over a link, the URL location of the link appears in the status field.

You can bring a linked page to your screen by clicking once on the highlighted text, image, or icon. Clicking on a link transfers page content from a server location to your location. After you click on a link, the Netscape status indicator animates to show you that the transfer of the page to your computer is in progress. You can stop a transfer in progress by pressing the **Stop** button or choosing the **Go/Stop Loading** menu item.

An unfollowed link is a connection to a page that you have not yet viewed; a followed link is one you have. Unfollowed and followed links are highlighted in different colors. If you have a black and white monitor, unfollowed and followed links are highlighted only with underlining and thus not differentiated. When your cursor points over a link, the status message text field displays the URL of the page that one click will bring to screen.

After you click on an unfollowed link, the link becomes a followed link. If you go back to a page where you have clicked on a link, you'll see that the link has changed from the unfollowed color to the followed color. By default, unfollowed links are blue and followed links are purple. (On a Macintosh, you can change the colors used to denote unfollowed and followed links from the **Options/Preferences/Colors** menu item.)

You'll find the ability to stop a transfer in progress is useful if the transfer is taking too long for your liking. This might happen if the content of the page is large or if the server computer is sluggish. Sometimes the page specified by a link just isn't available. You'll usually get a message if a connection was not made or a page not found. Examine the status field and progress bar to receive feedback about the progress of a transfer.

When you bring a page to your screen, you'll see the whole page or, if the content is extensive, only a portion. (Scroll bars let you see the rest.) Often the portion you see is the beginning of the page, but sometimes a link brings you content from the page's middle or end. Nor does a link always bring a new page to screen; rather, a link can bring a different portion of the same page (in effect, automatically scrolling for you). For example, the beginning of a page may include a table of contents that links each chapter title to the chapter subheading deeper into the page.

Yet another kind of link doesn't bring a page at all. A **mailto** link whose URL begins with **mailto:**, produces the **Send Mail/Post News** dialog box for sending e-mail (with the recipient's address automatically filled in).

Linking via buttons and menu items

In addition to links in the content area, you can also access links using Netscape buttons and menu items. Many of the links controlled by buttons and menu items bring pages you have viewed at least once before. Button links are particularly useful for going back and forth among recently viewed pages. Menu item links directly access a wide range of pages such as a history list of pages you have viewed or a bookmark list of pages you (or others) have personally selected as noteworthy.

Once you have brought a page to screen, you can view (and store, if you wish) its URL. Every page is distinguished by its URL. Linking to a page via highlighted content, toolbar buttons, or menu items is a shortcut that enables you to bring the page without having to explicitly request the page's URL. When no built-in link is available, you can bring a page by entering the URL in the location field, then pressing the return key. (The label of the location field changes to **Go to** when you edit the field.) Alternatively, you can choose the **File/Open Location** menu item, enter the URL in the dialog box, then press the **Open** button.

The toolbar offers the following button links:

- **Back** brings the previous page in the history list. The history list is a reference to pages you have viewed.
- **Forward** brings the next page in the history list. (Available only after using the **Back** command or a history menu item.)
- **Home** brings the home page designated in your preferences.
- **Open** produces a dialog box that allows you to bring any page whose URL you can supply.

Menu items offer each of the links available through toolbar buttons plus many more. The Netscape application keeps track of pages you have seen, lets you create easy-access lists of favorite pages, and points you to pages with current information about Netscape and the Internet. Choosing a menu item that's the title of a page brings the page to screen.

- History items from the **Go** menu bring previously viewed pages. The Netscape application automatically appends the title of a page you have viewed as the topmost menu item in the history list. The **View History** menu item produces a dialog box that shows you how the history lineage is maintained.
- Bookmark items from the **Bookmarks** menu bring pages of your choice. You can add a bookmark menu item for the page you are viewing by choosing **Bookmarks/Add Bookmark**. The **View Bookmarks** menu item produces a dialog box that lets you establish lists of bookmarks for yourself and to share with others.
- Items from the **Directory** and **Help** menus bring pages with up-to-date information on Netscape software and Internet exploration.

  A pop-up menu offers utility features and a shortcut for certain links. On Windows and UNIX, you can click on the rightmost mouse button to produce the pop-up menu (on Macintosh, press and hold down the mouse button). When the mouse button is pressed over a link or image, pop-up menu items let you go to pages, view individual images, save files onto your disk, copy locations to the clipboard, and perform other tasks.

Using history and bookmark lists

The links offered by history and bookmark menu items merit special attention because your actions create the links. History items, automatically inserted in the **Go** menu, give you access to recently viewed pages. Bookmark items, inserted in the **Bookmarks** menu by selections you make, give you access to any page at any time.

History and bookmark items are maintained in lists of page titles. To bring a page, pull down the menu and choose the title of the page. If the title of the page does not adequately describe the page, finding the page you want may be more challenging than you expected.

Only a single lineage of history items are displayed. For example, if you choose consecutive links to bring pages whose titles are North America, United States, Pennsylvania, and Philadelphia, you'll see all four items appear in the history with Philadelphia topmost in the list. However, if you next choose a link to the United States page, you'll see only the two items North American and United States appear in the history. Only the single most recent lineage from the home page is maintained. Since Pennsylvania and Philadelphia were pages extending from an earlier lineage, they have been automatically removed from the history list.

Bookmarks items offer a more permanent means of page retrieval. Once you add a bookmark to your list, the title stays until you remove it or change lists. The permanence and accessibility of bookmarks make this tool invaluable for personalizing your Internet access.

Because bookmarks play such an important role, the Netscape application offers many options for creating bookmark lists. Basic options let you add a title as a menu item. More advanced options let you create hierarchical menus, partial menu displays, multiple bookmark files for import and export, list descriptions, and list searches.

The **Bookmark List** dialog box produced by choosing the **View Bookmarks** menu item provides buttons and fields for managing bookmark lists. For example, to create a hierarchical menu, you click in the bookmark list to position the item you'll create, add a header title with the **New Header** button, name the header in the **Name** field, add a bookmark with the **New Bookmark** button, name the new bookmark in the **Name** field, provide the URL in the location field, and adjust the indention with the **Up** button.

Don't let the complexity of advanced features dissuade you from the basic functionality of bookmarks. At its simplest, you can choose the **Bookmarks/Add Bookmarks** menu item to add the current page to your bookmark list, giving you easy and direct access to your favorite pages.

Choosing the screen look

You can tailor the look of the Netscape application by choosing to show or hide certain graphical elements on the screen. You'll find the basic alternatives listed as items in the **Options** menu.

The default settings show the toolbar, location field, and directory buttons. These graphical elements provide you with simplified access to links, commands, and page location information. By hiding any or all of these graphical elements, you increase the amount of screen real estate available for page content.

- Checking the **Show Toolbar** item displays a row of easily accessible buttons that substitute for widely used menu items.
- Checking the **Show Location** item displays URL information that's useful for tracking a page's whereabouts or requesting a new page.
- Checking the **Show Directory Buttons** item displays a row of handy buttons that substitute for some **Directory** and **Help** menu items.

Other items in the **Options** menu, **Show FTP File Information** and **Auto Load Images** do not display a standard graphical element, nor increase the size of the content area. These items properly align information received in FTP format and automatically include inline graphics, respectively.

Choosing the **Preferences** item produces a dialog box containing a submenu (also known as a pop-up menu or drop-down list). Each submenu item produces a dialog box containing one or more of the following panels: **Window Styles**, **Link Styles**, **Fonts**, **Colors**, **Mail**, **News**, **Cache**, **Network**, **Applications**, **Directories**, **Images**, **Security**, **Proxies**, and **Helper Applications**.

The panels contain settings that determine how the Netscape application operates. Many settings affect the look of graphical elements and content. After you are finished changing any values, click the **OK** button to accept the new panel settings or click the **Cancel** button to close the dialog box without accepting changes.

Changing styles, fonts, and colors

To see options affecting styles, fonts, and colors, choose the **Options/Preferences** menu item to produce the **Preferences** dialog box. The dialog box contains a pull-down menu whose items let you select which panel settings to view. Below you'll find a sampling of style, font, and color settings.

In the **Window Styles** panel, a set of small, round radio buttons lets you display the toolbar with **Pictures**, **Text**, or **Pictures and Text**.

In the **Link Styles** panel, a check box lets you specify if colored links should also be underlined. With a black and white display, you must check this box to underline links in order for links to be visible.

Another set of radio buttons in the **Link Styles** panel lets you designate the number of days before the color of a followed link reverts back to the color of a unfollowed link. For example, if you specify 7 days, a link that you use to view a page is colored by the followed link color for 7 days, then changes back to the unfollowed color. That is, the color indicator for followed a link expires after 7 days. If you choose the **Never** radio button, followed links do not revert to the unfollowed color regardless of time.

Pressing the **Now** button causes all followed links to revert to the color of unfollowed links immediately. The default value specifies that followed links expire after 30 days.

On Macintosh, a check box in the **Colors** panel lets you select colors for unfollowed and followed links. Click in each of the colored boxes to produce a color wheel for selecting the colors of your choice for unfollowed and followed links. If the check box is unchecked, the default color blue represents unfollowed links and the color purple represents followed links.

On Windows, the **Colors** panel offers an option for choosing how to display an image's colors to most closely match the computer's available colors.

In the **Fonts** panel, a set of pull-down menus lets you choose the font and font size for each of the two types of fonts that pages use to display text: **Proportional** and **Fixed**. A proportional font is used for most text. A fixed font is used for text in editable fields and certain paragraphs preformatted by the author of a page. For example, you can choose that all proportional font text be displayed in 12 point Times and all fixed font text be displayed in 10 point Courier.

Selecting a home page

You can designate your own home page (the page the Netscape application first brings to the screen each time you open a new window) by supplying a URL as a preferences panel item. The home page designated initially with Netscape software (the default) has the URL:
http://home.netscape.com/home/welcome.html

You can change your home page (and change back to the default, if you wish) by choosing the **Options/Preferences/Window Styles** menu item, clicking the radio button **Home Page Location**, then typing in the URL of the page you wish to be your home page. (Alternatively, you can check the radio button **Blank Page** if you want the home page to be empty of content.)

Each time you ask the Netscape application to open a new window, the designated home page is brought to screen. The URL can designate a page from a remote computer or one on your hard disk.

To get the URL of a page on your hard disk, choose **File/Open File**. Then select the page (file) on your hard disk. After the page opens, you'll see its URL in the location field. You can select and copy the URL, then paste it into the **Home Page Location** text field in your preferences.

At first, you probably won't have any pages stored on your hard disk. But later, you might want quick and sure access to certain pages such as one with valuable links or one you've created for yourself.

Viewing inline images

Ideally, pages on the screen should present images (or other multimedia effects) as simply and efficiently as text. However, images (and sounds and movies) are relatively larger in byte size than text and can take considerable time to transport from remote computers (servers) to your computer. The length of time needed to bring a page with images depends on several factors, most prominently the speed of the modem or direct link connecting you with a remote server. To compensate for the potential lethargy of transmitting images, Netscape software offers features that let you manipulate how images are handled.

The Netscape application loads images into pages automatically. If the author of a page has designed the page with images among the text (that is, inline), the images are displayed when you bring the page to your screen. You have the option, however, of turning off the automatic loading of images. You can do this by unchecking the **Options/Auto Load Images** menu item. When this menu item is unchecked, the images in pages do not automatically load. Instead, small icons are placed in the position on the page where an image would otherwise be. You can then decide to view these images at a later time. To manually load all images that are represented by icons, you can press the **Images** button in the toolbar or select the **View/Load Images** menu item.

The advantage of unchecking **Auto Load Images** is that pages are brought to screen faster. The disadvantage is that you can't view the images until you specify that you want the images loaded.

The **Auto Load Images** item affects subsequent links and not the current contents of a page. However, if you choose the **View/Reload** menu item or press the **Reload** button on the toolbar, you bring the current page back again, this time with the **Auto Load Image** option active.

You also have the option of displaying an image incrementally as the image is transmitted or in a single burst after the transmission. Typically, the **While Loading** option provides more satisfying feedback. However, on a fast network, the **After Loading** option may complete the load slightly faster.

To set this option, choose the **Options/Preferences/Images** menu item, then select one of the two radio buttons: **While Loading** or **After Loading**.

Like highlighted text, an inline image may be linked to another page, another position on the same page, or any type of external file such as an external image. As with all links, pointing the mouse button over a link puts in the URL location of the prospective link in the status field.

Viewing external images

External images (unlike inline images) are displayed in their own windows. You can view an external image by clicking on a link to the image. The Netscape application can open external images stored in **gif**, **jpeg**, and **xbm** file formats. Other file formats require that you have a suitable helper application available on your hard disk (and referenced in the **Preferences** dialog box of the **Options** menu).

Links to external images work like links to pages. An external image file has a unique URL just like an ordinary page. External images are not automatically loaded in their full representation even if the **Auto Load Images** item is checked.

You can click on highlighted text, an image icon, or an inline image to bring an external image into a separate window on the screen. Netscape or the external application opens and presents the image in a separate window. You must click back into the Netscape window to continue working with the Netscape application.

Pages that wish to present large or detailed images often have inline snapshot images (also called thumbnail images) inserted into pages that serve as links to external images. Unlike the icon replacements, these snapshots provide an approximate view of the actual image, yet are still much smaller and faster to transport than the full image. You can expand the snapshot into the full image by clicking once on the snapshot.

Filling in forms

You can do more than read Netscape pages; you can write on them. Pages can contain forms for you to enter and send information. For example, a page might have a form with fields for you to enter a name and address next to a button that sends the information to the page's author. Forms may offer editable fields with or without default text, check boxes, radio buttons, pull-down menus, selection lists, and buttons to send or clear the information you enter. The content you enter into a form doesn't permanently alter the page (that is, you're not modifying the source page at its location), yet the form gives you the ability to conveniently transmit a response.

To send ordinary e-mail, you fill in fields to supply the content of your message, the subject summary, and the e-mail address of the intended recipient. Pages with forms let you reply to information you read in the page. To send a form, you fill in one or more fields embedded within a page, usually labeled with instructions and configured with a button that sends the form's contents to the recipient without requiring you to provide any e-mail address.

The author of a page determines the layout of a form. A page may contain multiple forms, each form capable of sending fields independently of another form on the page. Fields in a form may restrict the kind or range of text you enter (such as numbers only) to help you fill in the form as desired.

Typically, forms are used to give you a fast and easy way to make a request or send back a response regarding the page you are reading. Forms can supply an interface to databases with fields that let you query for information and perform Internet searches. The Usenet news pages, designed for people to communicate with each other on special interests, contain forms for you to enter articles and subscribe to newsgroups. The Netscape software has built-in links to pages with forms for you to comment about the Netscape application, and request product information.

Identifying security

Netscape software allows computers to transfer information in a secure way that prevents the forms you send or the pages you receive from being misappropriated. The graphical elements and dialog boxes that reflect Netscape's security interface are described in the reference section on **graphical elements**.

Security issues arise because information travelling on the Internet usually take a circuitous route through several intermediary computers to reach any destination computer. The actual route your information takes to reach its destination is not under your control.

As your information travels on Internet computers, any intermediary computer has the potential to eavesdrop and make copies. An intermediary computer could even deceive you and exchange information with you by misrepresenting itself as your intended destination. These possibilities make the transfer of confidential information such as passwords or credit card numbers susceptible to abuse.

The Netscape application and Netsite server use patented RSA public key cryptographic technology and custom software to allow you to send and receive information securely. (The security protocols are open and are expected to be implemented by other client and server vendors.) Only your computer and the server can encrypt and decrypt your information. In transit, the information is an unreadable jumble. An intermediary can continue to route the data, and even make copies of it, but the information cannot be decrypted and remains private and safely communicated.

As part of the cryptographic technology, the Netscape application and Netsite server are able to authenticate Internet servers. This prevents an intermediary computer from posing as your destination.

Not all exchanges of information are secure. Netscape uses graphical elements and dialog boxes to inform you when you are interacting with secure and insecure server sites.

- A URL that begins with **https://** (instead of**http://**) indicates that a document comes from a secure server.
- To the left of the status message, a doorkey icon on a blue background indicates a secure document (a document is a slightly broader term for a page and its contents); a document with a broken doorkey icon on a gray background indicates an insecure document.
- Above the content area, a blue colorbar indicates a secure document; a gray colorbar indicates an insecure document.
- Several dialog boxes, whose appearance can be set as a preference item, alert you to changes in security status among the documents you bring to screen.

You can examine the security qualifications of a document in more detail by choosing the **File/Document Information** menu item. The resulting dialog box tells you about encryption grade and server certification.

Understanding public key technology

The public key technology working within the Netscape application and Netsite server is often described with unfamiliar security terminology. You might find the explanation of how public keys works an interesting supplement to your knowledge of Internet security.

Keys are files. You don’t open a key (file) like you open a document or a word processor application. Keys are more like magnetic badges with powerful encryption and decryption capabilities.

There are two kinds of keys and you need both kinds. One is a private key. It sits on your computer and you never give it out. The other is a public key. You can make as many copies of it as you wish and give it out to everybody.

You need both kinds of keys (private and public) because they are fundamentally linked. (Like a pair of pants, you always buy both legs.) You can pass your public key around to whomever you wish, but in order for any key to perform its decryption duty, it must be matched back to its linked key-file partner.

Both public and private keys have the ability encrypt and (as a set) decrypt information. Keys work in two primary ways:

1. Others can encrypt information with your public key (the key you’ve distributed freely) and send the information securely to you. Only you, with your private key, can decrypt their message. The sender can be sure that the message is read only by you (encrypted for privacy) and has not been altered.
2. You can encrypt information with your private key and send the information securely over the network. Anyone on the network who has your public key (the key you’ve distributed freely) can decrypt your message. The recipient can be sure that the message came only from you (authenticated with your digital signature) and has not be altered.

In summary, your public and private key (files) are linked by a powerful cryptographic algorithm that would require major computer resources to crack. No one else’s keys can decipher messages to you encrypted with your public key. And no one else’s keys can be used to pose as you by sending messages encrypted with your private key.

Accessing servers for news and e-mail

Do you know the name of your news server and e-mail server? If not, you will have to find out from your service provider, systems administrator, or resident know-it-all. By specifying the names of these servers as preference items, Netscape software can provide you with newsreader features and the ability to send e-mail.

World Wide Web pages provide one means of obtaining information on the Internet. Two other popular Internet information services are Usenet newsgroups and electronic mail (e-mail). The Netscape application lets you fully interact with Usenet newsgroups. You can also send e-mail with the text of a page included. Upcoming pages describe these services in more detail.

Before you can access any newsgroup news or send any e-mail, you need to tell the Netscape application how to make the appropriate connection to the server computer handling each task. Whereas World Wide Web pages are distributed by servers familiar with World Wide Web protocols, Usenet newsgroups and e-mail use their own protocols.

Newsgroup news is distributed by a news server. To specify the name of your news server, choose the **Options/Preferences/News** menu item, then type in the name of the news server in the **News (NNTP) Server** field. You should specify a local news server, if available.

E-mail is distributed by a SMTP (Simple Mail Transport Protocol) server. To specify the name of your SMTP server, choose the **Options/Preferences/Mail** menu item, then type in the name of the SMTP server in the **Mail (SMTP) Server** field. You should specify a local mail server, if available.

Reading Usenet news

Netscape software lets you receive and send newsgroup postings. A posting is a article of writing (news, for short) made available for others on the Internet to read. As you view a posting, Netscape provides a row of buttons in the content area to allow you to track, reply to, or initiate postings.

People post articles (send their news) to newsgroups. Newsgroups are organized by subject; each newsgroup has a name intended to reflect the topic of discussion for its postings. The Usenet is the collection of all newsgroups; it is the Internet's multifaceted bulletin board especially designed for people to communicate news with one another on special interest topics.

You can access a Usenet newsgroup posting in much the same way as you access an ordinary page. Clicking on a link to a Usenet newsgroup brings you the newsgroup list, a directory that lists the titles of postings. Postings are highlighted like other Netscape links. Clicking on a link to an individual posting, either in a newsgroup list page or an ordinary page, brings you the posting. Netscape also gives you the opportunity to bring a newsgroup list and any of its postings to your screen by choosing the **File/Open Location** menu item and entering the URL of the newsgroup or newsgroup posting.

The locations of Usenet news are formatted similarly, but not identically, to other pages. For example, the URL **news:alt.tv.northern-exp** specifies the server protocol **news:** and the newsgroup **alt.tv.northern-exp**. Unlike other Internet connections, the URL does not specify a server name and pathname with preceding slashes.

Each newsgroup has a unique name, described with words separated by periods. Some words (like **alt**, short for alternative) specify categories rather than a particular newsgroup. You can use the asterisk character (*) as a wildcard to find out the names of individual newsgroups among the many types of newsgroups. For example, the URL **news:alt.*** brings you a list of all the newsgroups in the category **alt**. The URL **news:alt.tv*** brings you a narrower list of newsgroups in the category of **alt.tv**. Other examples of URLs that list categories of newsgroups include **news:comp.*** (computers), **news:rec.*** (recreation), **news:sci.*** (science), and **news:talk.*** (analysis). Note that not all news servers provide access to all newsgroups. There are thousands of newsgroups.

Reading Usenet news can be as easy as reading any other Internet page: Click on a link and bring a Usenet news article to your screen. But newsgroup pages offer advantages (notably the ability to easily publish your own writing to other newsgroup readers) and disadvantages (no images, weak formatting, and limited links). Newsgroup pages are presented with two rows of buttons (one row at the top of each page and an identical set at the bottom of each page) to give you access to the special features of newsgroups.

Mastering Usenet news

Each newsgroup presents its articles along threads. A thread bundles an article with a response to the article. The grouping of a new topic with one or more responses to the topic (taking the form of an indented outline) gives the reader a context to share with the articles' authors. A strictly chronological organization of every newsgroup contribution would create a discombobulated trail of articles less pleasant than reading Joyce in his later years.

The outline form of a newsgroup listing page shows how a new topic has each response indented one level in from the original posting. A response to a response is indented another level deep, and so on. The row of buttons on each newsgroup page give you controls for reading and writing along newsgroup threads. A button selection also allows you to subscribe to and unsubscribe from newsgroup postings. When you subscribe to a newsgroup, the name of the newsgroup is added to a list (the News RC file) maintained by the Netscape software. Choosing the **Directory/Go To Newsgroups** menu item or pressing the **Go To Newsgroups** button from any newsgroup page displays the current list of subscribed newsgroups as links on a page.

The buttons on a newsgroup page vary depending on whether you are viewing a page of newsgroup listings or a newsgroup article.

- A page that lists articles has buttons to post a new article, mark all articles as read, show all articles or only new articles, subscribe to the newsgroup, and go to the list of subscribed newsgroups.
- A page that contains an article has buttons to navigate within or among threads, mark a thread as read, go to the list of articles, go to the list of subscribed newsgroups, post a response to an article, and post a response while also replying via e-mail to an article's author. To replay via e-mail to an article's author without posting, click on the author's name (the name is a link to the **Send Mail/Post News** dialog).

Sending e-mail

The Netscape application lets you create and send outgoing e-mail. (Currently, Netscape has no facility for receiving incoming e-mail so you'll need a dedicated mail application to read e-mail sent to you.) With the press of a button, you can insert the text of the current page in the e-mail message you create. You can also send an attachment (a file containing the text of a page, the HTML source code of a page, or a separate file of your choosing).

To send e-mail, choose the **File/Mail Document** menu item. This produces the **Send Mail/Post News** dialog box. You may discover pages with a link or button that also produce the **Send Mail/Post News** dialog box. Likewise, newsgroup pages with a button for posting articles use this same facility. The dialog box has several text fields:

- The **From** field contains your e-mail address (supplied in the **Mail** panel).
- The **Mail To** field takes the e-mail address of the intended mail recipient.
- The **Post Newsgroup** field takes the name of the newsgroup you wish to post to, preset with the name of the current newsgroup (if any).
- The **Subject** field offers a place to include a short description of the e-mail, usually preset with the name of the current page.
- The **Attachment** field contains the name of any file you have attached.
- The large message field offers a place to type a message and include the text of the current page, preset for mail with the current page's URL.

You need to know the Internet mail address of where you want your e-mail to go. Internet addresses typically contain a user name followed by the @ symbol (pronounced "at"), followed by mail server location name. For example, to send e-mail to this company, enter: **info@netscape.com**

Pressing the **Quote Document** button inserts the text of the current page inside the message field. Each line of included text appears in the message field preceded by the greater than symbol (**>**). The Netscape application automatically inserts the **>** symbol to differentiate the page's text from your message.

Pressing the Attach button produces a dialog box that lets you send e-mail with a file attachment. An attachment is a separate document sent along with the e-mail message. The dialog box offers the choice of **Document Text**, **Document Source**, or **File** radio buttons (with a **Browse** button to select a file).

If you want to send the current page as an attachment (this may be helpful if your recipient is going to reuse the document), choosing the **Document Text** item sends the text of the message intact (no > symbols are appended to each line) while choosing the **Document Source** item sends the text of the message embedded with all the HTML instructions that format Internet pages. The **File** item lets you select a local file.

Pressing the **Send** button transmits the message and any attachments to the recipient. If you've specified a text file containing your signature in the **Mail** panel, your signature is appended to the message field in all of your mailings.

Saving pages

Netscape software gives you the opportunity to save a page as a file on your computer. You can do this after or instead of bringing the page to your screen.

The **File/Save As** menu item produces a dialog box that lets you save the current page as a source (HTML) file or a text file on your disk. A file saved in HTML source format retains the formatting of the original page. A file saved in text format is presented as plain text. You can save an image file, but not a page's inline images.

You can save a page as a disk file instead of bringing the page to screen by using a pop-up menu item. While pointing over a link, click on the rightmost mouse button (on Macintosh, hold down the mouse button) to pop up the menu. The **Save this Link as** item saves to disk (instead of bringing to screen) the page whose link you are clicking on. The **Save this Image as** item saves to disk (instead of bringing to screen) the image whose link you are clicking on.

Saving to disk is particularly useful for retrieving a nonformatted page (such as a data file) not intended for viewing. You can also produce the dialog box for saving a page to disk by clicking on a link with the shift key held down (option key on Macintosh). Other pop-up menu items let you copy page and image locations (URLs) to the clipboard.

Saving to disk is also offered as a pop-up menu item. While pointing over a link, click on the rightmost mouse button (on Macintosh, hold down the mouse button) to pop up the menu. The **Save this Link as** item saves to disk (instead of bringing to screen) the page whose link you are clicking on. The **Save this Image as** item saves to disk (instead of bringing to screen) the image whose link you are clicking on. Other pop-up menu items let you copy page and image locations (URLs) to the clipboard.

After a file is saved to disk, you can use the **File/Open File** menu item to display the local file as a Netscape page. (A file on your disk is a local file; a file out on the network is a remote file.) For **gif**, **jpeg**, or other nontext files to appear as available files in the **Open File** dialog, make sure to select "All Files" as the file type (on Macintosh, hold down the option key while selecting the **Open File** menu item).

The **View/Source** menu item lets you view the current page in its HTML format. On Windows, the text is displayed in a dialog box. On Macintosh, the text is stored in a temporary file and displayed using the Macintosh's generic text application capable of saving the file (if no text application is available, a dialog asks you to save or delete the text file). On UNIX, the text is displayed in a dialog box that offers a **Save** button.

The **File/Mail Document** menu item produces a dialog box that lets you send the current page as an e-mail attachment.

The **Bookmarks/View Bookmarks** menu item produces a dialog box that offers an **Export** button. This button does not save pages, but lets you save page links in a file.

Note: Netscape software works on several computer platforms and reserves the use of a few special characters to help interpret URLs. To avoid problems, you should not use the following characters as part of a file name:

- slash (/)
- colon (:)
- number symbol (#)

Printing and finding

Many of the **File** and **Edit** menu items in the Netscape application work as they do on other applications. You can copy from and print the content area of pages, though you might need to adjust the size of the Netscape window to have a page print in the way you wish.

To open a new Netscape window, choose the **File/New Window** menu item. The new window brings another copy of your home page to screen in a fully functional and independent Netscape window. You can have simultaneous network connections.

To print the contents of the current page, choose the **File/Print** menu item or press the **Print** button in the toolbar. A **Print** dialog box lets you select printing options and begin printing. On Windows, you can choose **File/Print Preview** to see a screen display of a printed page.

The Netscape application prints a page in the same width as the page appears on screen. The print command does not rearrange the content area (text is not word-wrapped and graphics are not repositioned) in order to accommodate paper size. If the material in the content area extends beyond the right-hand edge of a single page, another page prints containing the continuation. To make pages print without horizontal breaks (or simply to realign pages to your liking), you can narrow the Netscape window so that the width of the content area on the screen matches the width of your paper. You can press the Netscape window's zoom box to resize the screen to its default size.

To set up the page for printing on Windows, choose the **Print Setup** button from the **Print** dialog box. On the Macintosh, choose the **File/Page Setup** menu item. You can use this command to choose landscape printing (across the long side of paper) instead of the more common portrait orientation.

To cut, copy, and paste, choose the respective items from the **Edit** menu. Note that **Cut** and **Paste** items are only effective in certain editable fields. The content area is a read-only field that only enables you to select and copy text for use elsewhere.

To find a word or phrase within a page, choose the menu item or press the **Find** button in the toolbar. A **Find** dialog box lets you enter the string of characters that you wish to find. Check the **Match Case** radio button (**Case Sensitive** on the Macintosh and UNIX) to require capital letters to match. Check the **Up** or **Down** radio button (**Find Backwards** on Macintosh and UNIX) to direct the search from the insertion bar toward the beginning or end of the document. A search that reaches one end of the document produces a dialog box asking whether you wish to continue the search from the opposite end.

To find the same word or phrase again, choose **Edit/Find Again**.

Netscape Handbook: Table of Contents

info@netscape.com