



QUICK START GUIDE

Need help? Contact our Helpdesk at (563) 263-2631

We're here for you...

We have designed this Quick Start guide so that you can begin enjoying your MachLink® Internet service as quickly as possible. If you are unable to connect to MachLink, call the MachLink® HelpDesk. You will be connected to a specialized technician at our central support desk who can diagnose the problem. You will be asked a series of standard questions that will help the technician pinpoint the problem. The MachLink® HelpDesk can address many of your problems over the telephone. You can also email any questions or issues to MachLink®.

Remember, we're here for you!

MachLink® HelpDesk

Phone: (563) 263-2631

Email: helpdesk@machlink.com

Using the Internet

Now that You're on the Internet...

Having access to the Internet gives you access to a mind-boggling amount of information. However, Internet access also exposes your computer to a new realm of electronic perils. By practicing “safe computing” you can virtually eliminate some of the negative things that may happen when you're on the Internet. Included in this guide is information about computer viruses and “spam”—and tips for avoiding both.

Viruses

By far, the largest danger your computer faces when online is viruses. Computer viruses are named after their biological counterparts. These small programs can infect your computer in two ways—they can be attached to an email you receive or they can be incorporated in a program you have downloaded. When you open an infected email message or run an infected program, initially, nothing noticeable may happen to your computer. However, once activated, the virus infection can spread to multiple files on your computer, and eventually may cripple your computer or files in some way. Once your computer has contracted a virus, you may also inadvertently spread this virus to other people via email. Today's viruses are smart. A virus can read your email address book, and automatically send copies of itself to the email addresses listed there.

Protect Yourself from the Beginning

The best thing to do to prevent a virus infection from ever happening in the first place is to purchase a virus-scanning program. There are several packages available for purchase from retail and business supply stores. These virus-scanning packages usually provide a two-tiered detection system: They scan e-mail while it is being downloaded, as well as detect viruses that may already be present on your computer. While a virus protection program can cost investment is well worth the expense when you consider that a virus could ultimately cost you a trip to the computer store for costly repairs.

Another thing to keep in mind is how a lot of viruses spread: through e-mail. If you receive an e-mail that has an attachment that looks strange or you can't figure out why a particular person would send you a message, delete the message without opening it. There's a good chance that the message was sent without the sender's knowledge. Virus authors try to be sneaky. They add wording such as, “Here's the file you requested,” or, “I send you this for your opinion.” This is designed to make you curious, and open the message. If you do, by the time you realized what happened, your computer may have already sent copies of the virus to all of the people in your address book.

The third thing in order to avoid viruses is to pay attention to where you download files from. If you're on a large commercial website like downloads.com or shareware.com, you're probably safe. If you find yourself trying to download from a site claiming to be “Joe's e133+ HaCkErz T00lz,” you may be in for a surprise when you run the program downloaded.

Remember, if something looks suspicious, it probably is.

Spam

Spam, Spam, Spam, eggs, beans, and Spam (not the Lunch Meat in the Can)

One of the worst plagues to ever hit the Internet is that of Unsolicited Commercial Email (UCE), or Spam. The term Spam has become synonymous with anything that's unwanted, excessive, and can't be stopped.

If you look at anyone's e-mail that's been on the Internet for any amount of time, you'll probably find several advertisements for “herbal Viagra,” new weight loss methods, how to re-finance your home, or a barrage of “adult” web sites.

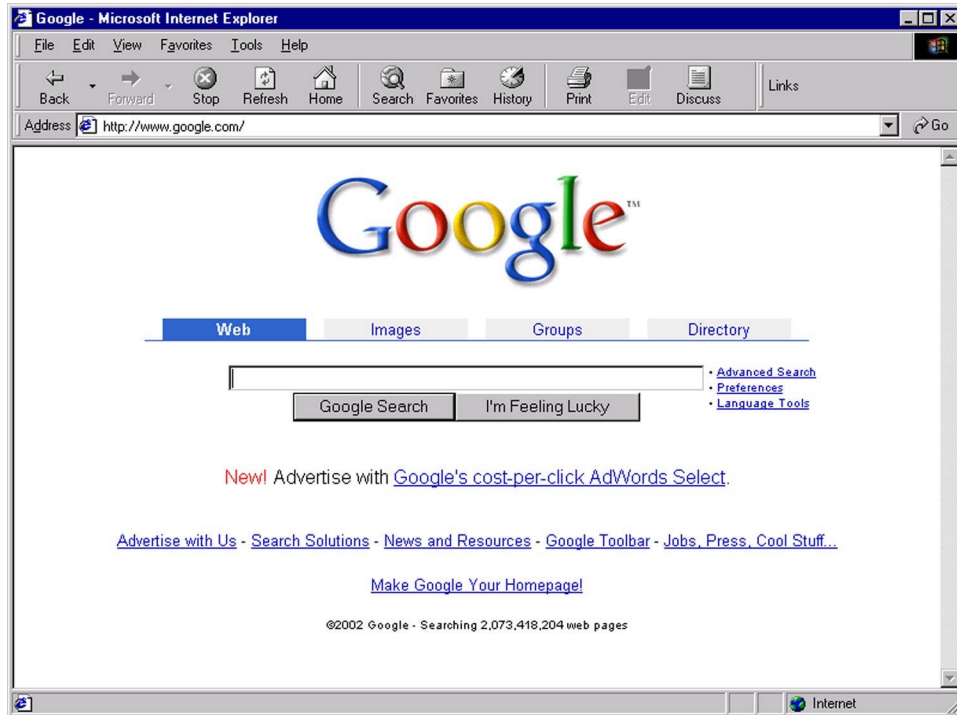
Most of this type of mail is unwanted in the fact that no one signed up to be on these mailing lists. It just “appears.” Some people like to think that the Internet Service Providers sell their customers' e-mail addresses to advertisers, but this is *very* untrue. Spam e-mail takes up an enormous amount of bandwidth when you consider one Spammer might send out a mailing of 250,000 e-mails or more in one session. The ISP has to pay for this bandwidth, so selling customers' e-mail information would be a financial burden ultimately.

If the customer's information hasn't been sold, how did someone get added to a Spammer's mailing list? There are a variety of methods for gathering e-mail information from the Internet. There are also ways of making sure you don't fall prey to Spammers. If you follow the rules outlined below, you can greatly reduce the chances you will be Spammed:

- NEVER reply to Spam. Most of the time, a Spammer starts off with a huge list of e-mail addresses that may or may not be real addresses. By replying to one single message, you just verified you're a real person with a real address, and you just got your name added to a pricey "verified working" e-mail list. Spammers make money through shifty means to begin with, and they have no qualms about selling your address to another Spammer.
- Don't EVER post your e-mail address on a website. Whether it is on a "guest-book" on someone else's web page, or on your own personal home page, having your address online will make it available for automated "harvesters" to log your address and add your e-mail account to a huge list that is then sold.
- Use an alternate or false e-mail address when posting to Usenet newsgroups. Thousands of people post to these giant real-time "news" servers each day. Each day, thousands of e-mail addresses are "harvested" and sold as mailing lists. Add characters to your address (joesmith@compuDELETEmEworld.com) or use a phony address (noone@ishere.com) to throw Spammers off your track.
- Keep your e-mail address private. If you sign up for anything over the Internet, you will most likely be asked to supply an e-mail address. Look for privacy statements on the sign-up form to ensure the company you're dealing with will not sell any information to third parties. Also be sure to turn off any options stating "send my more information" unless you really want to receive a ton of unwanted e-mails.
- Never, EVER, buy anything advertised in Spam e-mail. This simply validates the method as an effective advertising tool, and ultimately adds to the problem.

Even if you follow the above steps to the letter, you may still receive Spam. However, if you find yourself in a situation where you're receiving hundreds of Spam messages a day, you will probably find yourself partaking in the above activities, and have left a gap in your Spam defenses.

What can you do if Spam overwhelms you? You can contact Muscatine Power and Water to change your e-mail address. This will start you off with a clean slate. If you must keep the same e-mail address, you can try one of the good shareware Spam-filtering programs available. Go to www.downloads.com, www.cnet.com, or www.tucows.com and search for "Spam Filter" to find a listing of these programs.



Browsing the Web

The following is a list of terms that correspond to the buttons on your Internet Explorer toolbar.

- **Back** - When you are doing a search, click here to take you back one page in your search pattern.
- **Forward** - When you are doing a search, click here to take you forward one page in your search pattern.
- **Stop** - Click here to stop a search when it is locked or taking too long executing. It will return you to your last origin.
- **Refresh** - Click here to update the current windows.
- **Home** - Click here to go back to the home page from the net.
- **Search** - Click here to begin a search. Click on a category link or enter a word or phrase in the box to search for listings under that heading.
- **Favorites** - Click here to save or list your most often used search sites.
- **History** - Opens a detailed history listing organized by time periods
- **Mail** - Click here to access your email.
- **Print** - Click here to print the content of the web page you are on.
- **Edit** - Opens the source viewer to edit the html for the current page.
- **Offline** - Toggles you between offline and online mode.

Using a Search Engine

If you are looking for information and you do not have a specific web page address, you can use the search function in Internet Explorer to help you search for your information on the Internet.

Begin a search by clicking on the search icon located in the task bar of the Internet Explorer browser. Your viewing window will split and on the left you will see a search engine appear. A search engine is a program that helps you search for information. Most search engines provide you categories to narrow down your search and a search box to type a specific search string to try to limit the content it returns.

The more specific you can be the better when entering a search string in the search box. For instance, if you have a favorite sports figure or celebrity, it is better to type their name in the search field than the words “sports figures” or “celebrities”. If you have a hobby such as model airplanes, it is better to enter the specific company name or model type rather than “model airplanes”. Otherwise you will be spending a great deal of time sorting through information looking for what you want. There are most likely hundreds of thousands of web pages about specific topics. You will limit the search by being as specific as possible.

Once you have entered a search string, there should be a button next to the search dialog box to click on. The search engine will look for web pages that include the words you have entered. When it returns the list, you can click on the links it provides to go to that web page and see if it contains the content you are looking for. Generally, the first page listed is most often the most specific to your search. When you click on the link provided, that web page would display in the browser window. If the page is no longer valid or is not available, you will get a message to that affect. The search list will display until you close that viewing pane by clicking the “x” in the search pane. Continue to click on the web page links until you find the page that has the content you are looking for.

If you don't find the information in the search engine you are in, you can go to a different search engine. Click on “Search Sites” on the MachLink® home page index to see a list of some of the more popular search engines. Each search engine is configured differently to provide you with many ways to search for information.

We have also provided categorized links to specific websites that may be a helpful starting point for you to begin researching the type of content that is available on the Internet. Click on “Links” on the MachLink® home page index. Click on each category in the list to see the web pages pertaining to that topic. This is updated periodically, so keep checking from time to time.

Once you have found a web page that has the content you were searching for, you can save this page in your Favorites. This will allow you to go directly to the page instead of going through the search process each time you want to access that page. While viewing the web page you want to save, click on “Favorites” in the menu bar of the Internet Explorer window. Choose “Add to Favorites”. You will be given a choice to add your web page to the general list or to save it in a specific folder. Click on the “Create In” button and make a new folder or choose a folder to store that web page in. This helps to organize your favorites, especially if more than one family member is saving their favorite web pages or if you are saving several different types of web pages.

The search engine is the most powerful tool the Internet provides. The more you use the different search engines available, the more familiar you will become with the information that is available to you on the Internet. Each search engine is somewhat different in how it looks for information. If you do not find the information you are looking for on a particular search engine, try searching for that same information on another search engine and it is possible you will find what you are looking for.