

# Wonders and Words

## Questions & Answers

**Q:** Who first used the phrase “Surfing the Internet”?

**A:** Many people credit Jean Armour Polly, an American author and former librarian, with first using the term in a June 1992 library bulletin. Still, even Armour Polly admits that, while she came up with the term on her own, she may not have been the first to use it. The term was also used in official e-mails by computer scientists and industry professionals around the same time. Most early users of the term generally relate their use to the fact that looking at web pages is like TV “channel surfing”—moving through various channels, flowing past one to another.



**Q:** Are the Internet and World Wide Web the same thing?

**A:** They are related, but different. The Internet is a massive network of computer networks that connects millions of computers around the world for communication purposes. The web is a way of accessing information over the Internet—it is basically a tool used on the Internet. The web requires use of browsers to access linked web pages with graphics, sounds, text, and video. E-mail, among other things, is part of the Internet.

**Q:** Who named the World Wide Web?

**A:** Tim Berners-Lee struggled with a name for the network of computers that could be used by the public to exchange information. He considered Infomesh—information meshed, or mixed, together. Then there was The Information Mine. But Berners-Lee knew the name’s acronym would be

part of the system, and using the letters TIM would make it appear that he named it after himself.

Finally, the World Wide Web was suggested. Berners-Lee discussed it with his wife, Nancy, and business associates, some of whom noted that it was a bit “stupid” because “www” takes longer to say than “World Wide Web.” Still, Berners-Lee was satisfied with it, and the name stuck.

**Q:** What is the “@” symbol used for in e-mail addresses?

**A:** That symbol, used to separate the local part of an e-mail address from the ISP or server name, is commonly called the “at sign” or a “commercial at,” but it also can be called a whorl, snail, or strudel. It is actually a very old symbol, and appears to have first been used in a Roman commercial document signed in 1536, during the Italian Renaissance. There, it stood for the Latin preposition “ad,” which meant “at.”

**Q:** How do the forward and backward arrows on a computer screen know what sites have been viewed?

**A:** The arrows are getting that information from the browser. A web browser remembers the last addresses that were typed into the address line, so the next time the user opens the browser, he or she will not have to enter the entire address again. Instead, the user can select it by clicking the arrow behind the address line. Also, the browser keeps track of all the pages visited in one session, so the user can jump back and forth between pages. The pages visited can be stored as history as an option.

# Glossary

**Browser:** Software used to navigate the web, retrieve documents and other files, and display them on a computer user’s screen. The most popular browsers are Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer.

**Domain Name:** An addressing system for websites that includes an organization or server name and a domain suffix (.com, .edu, etc.) The name for NASA’s website is “nasa.gov.”

**File Transfer Protocol (FTP):** A protocol, or language, used to send and retrieve files across the Internet.

**Hypertext:** A formatting process used on the web to link documents by making particular words or phrases “clickable”—thus providing a link to other documents.

**HyperText Markup Language (HTML):** Shorthand computer language that uses tags, or codes with symbols, as instructions for a browser on how a website should look.

**HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP):** A protocol, or language, used to send and retrieve files across the Internet.

**Internet:** The massive, international network of linked computer networks.

**Packet:** Pieces of coded information that can be sent over a computer network by routers.

**Protocol:** A common format that all computers understand in order to exchange files.

**Router:** A systematic tool used to quickly and efficiently direct packets of information between different computer networks.

**Server:** Any computer connected to a network, but usually used to describe those from which information (such as a web page) is taken. Also called “host.”

**Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP):** This protocol system, which made the Internet possible, works to analyze information and create packets of information to send them to computers around the world.

**Uniform Resource Locator (URL):** The address of a document that includes the specific protocol, server domain name, and the file location. For example, “http://www.nasa.gov/ntv/” specifies using the HTTP protocol (others include FTP or GOPHER), on the server, and the directory “ntv.”

**World Wide Web (WWW):** A protocol, or tool, used to access information on the Internet.

## Answers (page 43)

<b>.at</b>	Austria	<b>.do</b>	Dominican Republic	<b>.it</b>	Italy	<b>.tv</b>	Tuvalu
<b>.au</b>	Australia	<b>.es</b>	Spain	<b>.jp</b>	Japan	<b>.uk</b>	United Kingdom
<b>.br</b>	Brazil	<b>.ie</b>	Ireland	<b>.mx</b>	Mexico	<b>.us</b>	United States
<b>.ca</b>	Canada	<b>.il</b>	Israel	<b>.nz</b>	New Zealand	<b>.ws</b>	Western Samoa
<b>.de</b>	Germany	<b>.in</b>	India	<b>.pl</b>	Poland	<b>.za</b>	South Africa
		<b>.is</b>	Iceland	<b>.th</b>	Thailand		