

Internet Basics

There are 2 important components that you need to surf the Internet. They are an **Internet Service Provider (ISP)** and a **Browser**.

Internet Service Provider

An **Internet Service Provider** is a company which provides computer users with a connection to the Internet. There are many to choose from, including AOL, MSN, SBC Yahoo, Road Runner, People PC, Earthlink, Juno, and many others.

Internet Service Providers have special computers (called servers) which are permanently connected to the Internet. By allowing users to connect their computers to one of their servers, the user becomes connected to every other computer on the Internet.

Browser

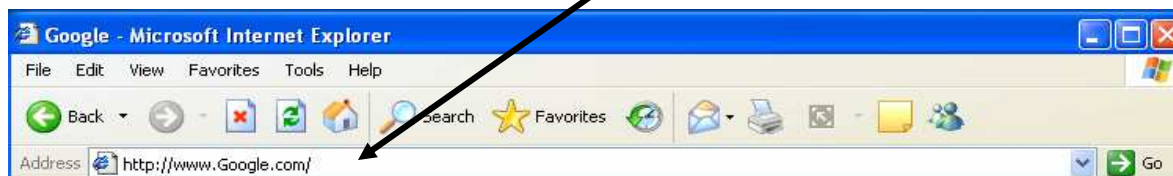
Just being connected to the Internet is not enough to view WEB sites. You also need a software program that will download the information to your computer, including what a WEB page looks like. These programs are called **Browsers**, and there are also several of these to choose from, including Internet Explorer, Netscape, and Mozilla FireFox. Some **ISP** programs, like AOL, have their own **Browser** program built in.

WEB Pages

Every **WEB Page** on the Internet has an "address". This makes it possible for your computer to "locate" a specific **WEB Site**. These addresses can usually be identified by the "**www.**" at the beginning, and the "**.com**" at the end. Besides "**.com**", it could end in "**.org**", "**.gov**", or "**.edu**")

When you first connect to the Internet, a **WEB Page** is downloaded to your computer so that you are able to view it. This page is called your "**homepage**" because it is the one that is designated to load first. Your **Browser** program has already been programmed with the address for this page, which is why it is selected to load first, but you can designate any page to be your **homepage**.

If you wish to view a different WEB page, you must provide your computer with the address for that page. There are several ways of doing this, but the most basic method is to just type it in to the "**Address Bar**".



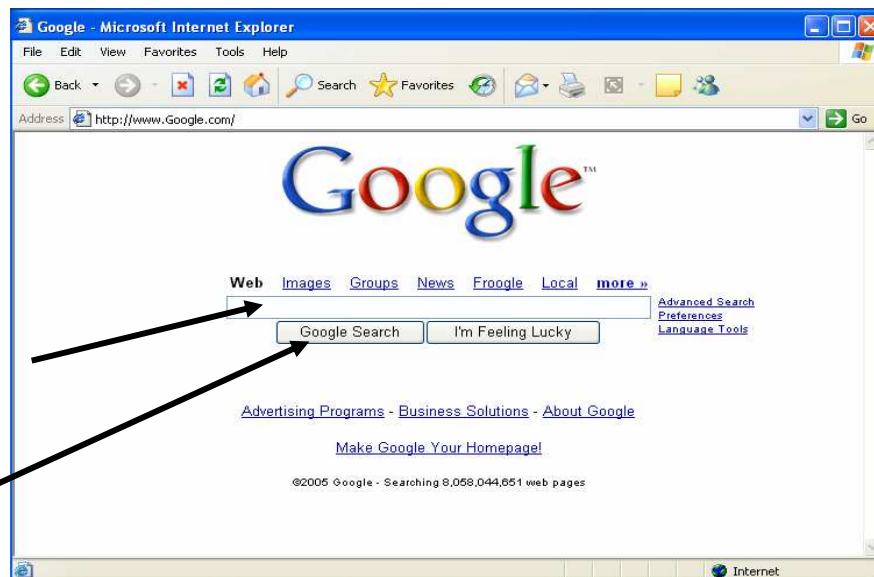
But what if you do not know the WEB address of the WEB site you desire to see? If you want to locate a specific WEB site, or a WEB site that provides specific information that you desire, you need a way of locating the addresses for these WEB pages. There are numerous WEB sites that can help do this by utilizing a **Search Engine**.

Google and other Search Engines

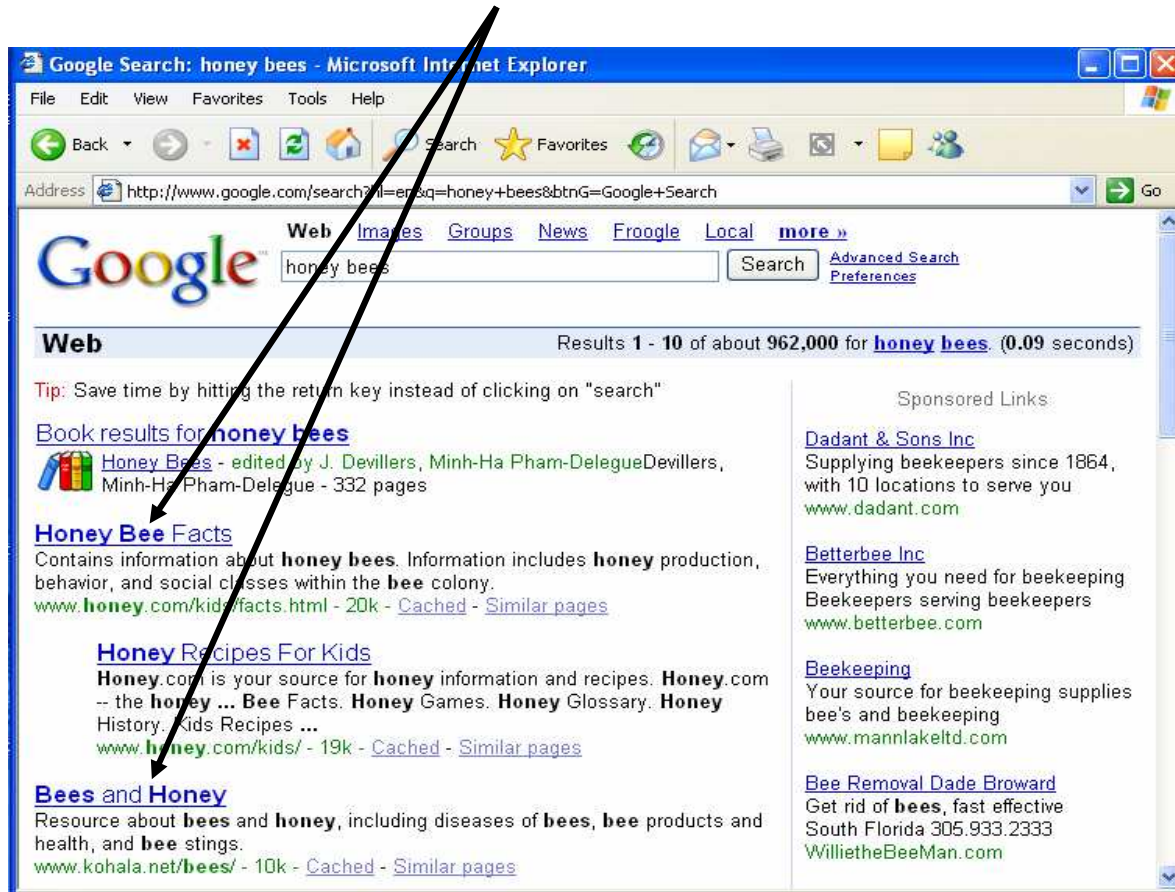
A **Search Engine** is a program that searches the entire Internet, locating any WEB page that has information about the topic. It then provides a list of those WEB pages, their address, and a brief description of the information on that page. The most popular Search Engine is "**Google**", but there are other good ones as well.

Enter the "topic" that you are looking for in the "**Search Window**"

Then click on the **Google Search** button



A **Google** search will return a list of **WEB** sites pertaining to your topic. Each paragraph on the list will represent a different **WEB** site. After reviewing the descriptions for each site, you can "go to" a specific site by clicking on the descriptive name for that site (it will be in bold blue with a line under it)



By clicking on the **WEB** site's name, the site's address will be automatically loaded into the **Address Bar**, and your computer will download that specific **WEB** page.