

The Internet (1/30/23)

The Internet - a global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols.

Websites are Internet Pages that have a reference address called a URL - Uniform Resource Locator. The URLs are underlined in the verbiage below. The letters after the last dot refers to the type of site often called a domain. A few examples are:

- .com is commercial (most common in United States)
- .org is non-profit
- .gov is government
- .mil is military
- .edu educational
- .net is network
- .uk or .au are examples of country codes - United Kingdom and Australia respectively

Websites are accessed using a Web Browser (examples are Edge, Chrome, Firefox and Brave). A Browser is a software application used to locate and display websites. Pick a browser you like, because they all do essentially the same thing, and stick with it. Internet Explorer is out of date and may not work with some websites. Try to avoid it... you'll be better for it. Browsers can be fine-tuned to operate efficiently. We will discuss that separately.

Fun, Interesting and Useful Websites (In no particular order) 1/30/23

I have visited the following websites recently. The list has some additions and deletions (because they no longer work) from last year's list, but the core list is the same. Many sites are free to start with, but if you want to delve, further it may ask for payment. Be careful.

www.google.com - Probably the best and most widely used "search engine". The word "Google" has actually been declared a verb. Another popular one is www.bing.com. It appears on MSN's home page. It is written and maintained by Microsoft and has good features such as Bing maps. You should choose a search engine and get to "know" it. Try "Googling" a friend or relative. Other search engines are Yahoo, AltaVista, Dogpile (honest), Northern Lights, Overture, StartPage and DuckDuckGo. Most search engines have a choice to look for images & videos as well as the whole web. Google accounts for over 90% of searches according to a Wall Street Journal article of 11/16/19.

One search engine in the news lately is called www.DuckDuckGo.com. With all the attention today given to privacy, this search device states that it doesn't track you or keep records of your search entries. A worthy claim. Another one that claims to NOT track you is www.StartPage.com.

There are also foreign language search engines – www.Baidu.com is Chinese and www.Yandex.com is Russian. It's obvious that the whole world uses the Internet and English is not the only language.

With all the political news lately, it is important that you scrutinize the results of any search engine to see if it appears to returning "fair" findings. Be aware that a search result marked "Ad" has paid the searcher to show high on the list.

www.orbitz.com, www.travelocity.com and www.expedia.com - Traveler's websites that will help you search for the cheapest airfare and hotel. For motels try www.bestwestern.com. Use www.tripadvisor.com for hotel and restaurant ratings from "real people". Each airline has their own site too, e.g. www.delta.com or www.aa.com. Many hotel chains also have their own site, e.g. www.holidayinn.com, www.sheraton.com. Just FYI not all airlines participate in sites like Orbitz - Example Southwest Airlines does not show up. Therefore, you must go directly to www.southwest.com. Tabbed browsing (opening several web pages in different tabs) can be helpful as you can compare Southwest to the findings of Expedia.

www.amazon.com - Started out selling books, CD's and DVD's but has branched out to sell watches, radios and lots of stuff at a discount. Now it seems to sell almost everything. Amazon Prime is an optional pay membership that offers many benefits including free shipping and certain video streaming options. In addition, Amazon is a great source of book and product reviews that show buyer's opinions on all products. This is a must-have for your favorites list, even if

you only use it for comparison-shopping. If Amazon doesn't sell it, their website with link you to another website that does sell an item. Use and Amazon printout to show at stores like Staples. Staples will price match for the same item.

www.streamfare.com – A website that lets you stream live TV for free, e.g. Fox News, MSNBC, etc. There may be other sites that let you stream live TV – some free some not. Some will connect to your TV provider, e.g. Cox. Do some online searching to find them. Two excellent sites for streaming have been shut down – www.ustvgo.tv and www.ustv247.tv. Other live TV streaming sites may be targeted too.

www.youtube.com – a seemingly endless source of videos that include homemade clips (ala America's Funniest Videos) as well as professional performances of singers, orchestras and comedians. You can also find full-length oldie episodes from television (e.g. Twilight Zone, Perry Mason and Star Trek), including classic commercials and variety shows. Your computer can be connected to your TV using S-video, HDMI or VGA cable. ChromeCast, using a \$30 wireless device, allows you to stream from your computer to your TV without a wire. YouTube also has many "how to" videos that show the layman how to repair things. This is a do-it-yourself (DIY) person's gold mine. YouTube can be hours of fun. www.tiktok.com is another source of shorter videos. It's based in China.

www.list25.com - a very interesting website that gives lists of many common things. Things like "25 Facts That Will Scar You for The Rest Of Your Life" or "25 Biggest Hoaxes of All Time". As with anything on the Internet, if there is a statement or fact that you don't believe, check a second source. There is can be a number of conflicting opinions found online.

www.maps.google.com - a free feature from Google that lets you view aerial photos of anywhere on earth. Also, try www.bingmaps.com to get spectacular aerial shots of your house. Both offer a source of driving directions. Faster than and just as good as AAA. Remember the Triptik? You don't need that anymore. Similar to www.mapquest.com

www.restaurant.com, www.urbanspoon.com, www.opentable.com - Information about restaurants all over the world. Open table lets you make reservations at participating restaurants for no charge. Enter a restaurant name and look at the menu. Also, many restaurants have their own website and/or an app for your smartphone that allows you to join their waiting list. This is especially useful at Texas Roadhouse and BJ's Brewery.

www.whosaliveandwhosdead.com - A site that will tell you about your favorite celebrities. You may want to use www.findagrave.com to do some genealogy work. www.ancestry.com is good but it is not free. Another is www.genealogybank.com. Some of these sites offer a free trial period.

www.truthorfiction.com - Confirm or refute old stories or rumors. A good place to check out some of the garbage that circulates via email. www.snopes.com - Another website that goes a long way to debunking urban legends or old wives tales. Always check several sources when in doubt. Even these can be wrong. Also, try www.mentalfloss.com to get answers to obscure questions and learn the origin of things. Gives fun facts too.

www.ebay.com and www.half.com - Two good shopping sites. Can be used to give you guidelines on how much stuff is really worth. Ebay is an auction site. Half is a fixed price site that is run by Ebay. Also, try www.mysimon.com (it looks like a search engine) for comparison-shopping. Use www.kbb.com for Kelly Blue Book to determine a used car's value. Use Amazon to get an idea of "retail price".

www.filehippo.com - The reliable source page for all kinds of software – both free and not free. If you get it from this site you can be sure it is legitimate and tested. This is where I go to get Malwarebytes Anti Malware, SuperAntiSpyware, Avast, AVG Free Anti Virus, CCleaner and other programs that are needed to keep your computer running well. Also available from this site are things like Skype, Adobe Reader and the Firefox and Chrome Browsers. This is also a source of a number of video players that may not have been supplied with your computer. Read the download instructions carefully, as even on this site you can be led astray.

www.imdb.com - Probably the best movie database I've found ("imdb" stands for Internet Movie Data Base) complete with plot summaries, cast of characters, ratings and viewer reviews. Also a source of trivia and mistakes found in movies. Hours of fun. See also www.rottentomatoes.com for movie reviews. Visits here before going to the show can save you money.

www.webmd.com - A great source of medical information. Input your symptoms and see what it says. Careful about too much self-diagnosis. This site can also cause paranoia. Side effects from drugs can be found here (great?).

www.weather.com and www.windy.com - Worldwide weather, with maps, current conditions and forecasts.
www.9news.com – The website for channel nine in Denver. Has a wonderful interactive weather feature including maps showing Doppler radar and storm tracks for anywhere in the country. Also, try www.clickondetroit.com. Try weather in your hometown. Windy.com is a favorite of pilots because it give more details – e.g. wind conditions.

www.hotmail.com - A place to get yourself a free email address (will end in @hotmail.com). The advantage of doing this is that you can keep it regardless of what Internet Service Provider (ISP) you use. Other free email addresses can be had at www.google.com for Gmail and www.yahoo.com for a Yahoo address. Gmail is probably the best of these.

www.pandora.com - A free source of streaming music with limited commercials (pay \$4 per month and get no commercials). Design and save your own "radio station" with the type of music you like. Start your station by naming a music genre or favorite artist. Then fine-tune it (no pun intended) as you listen.

www.flightaware.com - Flight-tracking site that give you real-time (up to the minute) information. Can track private planes if you know the tail number.

www.nytimes.com - The website for the New York Times. www.wsj.com is the one for the Wall Street Journal. WSJ requires a payment to visit over a long period. Try looking for your hometown newspaper's website to get local news. Most newspapers have websites. Read the hometown flavor on your favorite sports team. Obituaries are always available too. Other news - www.foxnews.com, www.msn.com, www.usatoday.com and www.breitbart.com.

www.finance.yahoo.com - Financial information including stock quotes and charts. www.scottrade.com gives you real-time (not delayed) stock quotes. Scottrader requires registering but is free. Yahoo Finance gives good stock market information too.

www.espn.com - Sports stuff including schedules, scores, stories and some video highlights. Has a pay section for subscribers called ESPN+.

www.followmee.com (yes, that's a double "e" at the end) - Register this app on your smart phone and turn it on and people who know your password can follow where you are. Great for following family members on a trip.

www.meetways.com - Enter two addresses and this will tell you where to meet halfway in between.

www.wikipedia.org – an online free encyclopedia. When you do an Internet search, one of the first hits you often get is the Wikipedia entry for the item you are search for. This is sometimes a good place to start to learn the basics of your search. Available in many languages. May ask for a donation, but it is free.

www.kbaq.org (Phoenix Public Radio) and www.cpr.org (Colorado Public Radio) - The websites for the classical music radio stations in Phoenix and Denver. Gives play lists for the station and allows you to listen (live) no matter where you are. Listening live requires a program like Real Player and works best with high-speed Internet. Also www.npr.org (National Public Radio). Many radio stations around the world have a website through which you can listen live. Practice listening to a foreign language by finding a station that uses that language. Enter www.radio.net/country and choose a country. Also try www.iheart.com for US and Mexican stations.

www.coolnsmart.com - a funny website with humorous and 'wise' sayings, organized by subject.
www.lightbulbjokes.com – self-explanatory. Visit these just for fun. Try www.brainyquotes.com for quotations that fit any occasion.

www.1000lifehacks.com, www.lifehack.org or simply type "life hacks" into Google and get a multitude of sites that are loaded with often unusual but very practical advice. This is really fun to read.

www.thepeoplehistory.com – Curious about what the world was like the year you were born? Or maybe you'd like to show your grandchildren some facts they would think are unbelievable. Try this website and enter a year. It gives cost of living, cost of houses and gas. Also popular toys of that year, births and deaths. Very addictive website.

More Websites to Explore (1/30/23)

Contained here are more websites that you may find interesting and worth a look. Some will find them fascinating and others will, no doubt, be disappointed. Although many of these are repeats from previous handouts, I have added some new ones. Try typing into Google, "useful websites" and study what you get. There are so many good ones, that you should tailor the list to your own interests.

www.tripadvisor.com - A must site to check out before you travel anywhere! Written by people who have been there, you get the honest facts from folks speaking first hand. I have written twenty reviews that have been published. Takes about a day and then they appear. You get rewards after a certain number of contributions.

www.spydialer.com - This is a reverse phone number lookup. Enter a phone number and it will tell you the name associated with that number. Doesn't always work with cell phones. You can block your number from being shown. This is a free site with minimal features. You can pay for more complete information.

www.zillow.com - Type in an address, city and state and it will give you an estimated value of the house you designate. It will also give you square footage and number of rooms. Subscribe to Zillow and it will update you when a property you are interested in changes in value. Remember it's only an estimate. Check out your childhood home or neighborhoods in which you lived. Recent sale price of a home will show - sometimes pictures.

www.oneacross.com - Crossword puzzle help. Type in the clue and the number of letters and it will give you possible answers - rated as to which is most likely. Can take some of the frustration out of finishing that difficult puzzle.

www.legalzoom.com - a website where you can accomplish some legal tasks, such as creating an LLC, at a very reasonable cost. Use this site to create a basic Power of Attorney or Living Will. Maybe a quitclaim deed.

www.about.com – deleted – no longer active

www.howstuffworks.com - Did you ever wonder how a sewing machine works or a cotton gin (OK, maybe you haven't) but this website gives some pretty straightforward explanations. Use this website's search field for directions to inventions they discuss. This site is fascinating and a good partner to www.about.com. If you Google "how does a sewing machine work" it will likely take you here. Personally, I wanted to know how a car's differential operated (engineer, you know). Also try www.ehow.com.

www.craigslist.com - offers regional lists (city and state) of things for sale by private individuals. Go here to shop or put stuff up for sale. This is a very popular online "classified ad" site. If nothing else you can go here and get a feel for how much things are selling for. Try www.stubhub.com to buy and sell tickets.

www.eeggs.com - An Easter Egg is a gem that is hidden in a movie or piece of software. An example of an Easter Egg in a movie might be the cameo appearance of Alfred Hitchcock in many of his films. This site explains it and provides hours of fun...well, maybe an hour or two. It can also explain why a certain TV program is used in a movie scene or the significance of a license plate number. Did you know Ron Howard's mother was in Apollo 13?

www.classic-tv.com and www.tvland.com - Watch old TV shows -. Play their theme songs. Learn about casts and trivia. Some aspects of this require a paid subscription (Like Netflix) but much is free. Question: What make of car was mentioned in the theme song of "All in the Family"? - find answer here.

www.funtrivia.com and www.triviacafe.com - Trivia is a good exercise for the brain. Try these two sites. They have a multitude of subjects for hours of fun. Use this to prepare for pub-night trivia or a cruise with trivia contests. Also, try www.infoplease.com and its many subheadings. Infoplease can be frustrating with its countdown clock.

www.englishgrammarsecrets.com and www.grammarly.com - we have all spoken English for decades but many are still occasionally confused with "affect vs. effect" or "who vs. whom" or "lay vs. lie". These sites give you some easily remembered tips and some very down-to-earth explanations. I still have a hard time with understanding "passive voice"... ha. Try this English quiz https://www.women.com/angie/quiz-only-1-in-50-people-can-identify-these-16-grammar-mistakes-can-you?utm_source=wdc_fb#/question-e067dbe9.

www.wordart.com - a website where you give it a list of words or names and it creates a collage or mosaic of those names. Can be used to make interesting scrap book entries or even pictures suitable for framing. Also create one of

these to personalize a birthday card. Lots of fun. Do an Internet search for other “Word Art” programs. They are plentiful.

www.security.org/how-secure-is-my-password/ - type a password in the field at the top and it will give you an estimate on how long it would take a "password breaking" program to figure it out. Obviously avoid passwords that can be broken in seconds.

www.timeanddate.com - find out the exact time in any city in the world. A helpful website if you are travelling far away or maybe wanting to contact someone on a different continent. Maybe you want to know what time it really is where you are. (As the song says, "Does anybody really know what time it is??")

www.cliffsnotes.com - Takes you back to high school and gives you quick facts about a lot of things, not only books.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VB1RvyfISM – takes you to a 5 hour video that plays the 50 most “popular” pieces of classical music.

www.asoftmurmur.com - kind of like a sound machine that lets you mix sounds. Rain, thunder and crickets. Or how about the background sound of a coffee shop. Makes a good distraction or perhaps give you some white noise to lull you to sleep.

www.pinterest.com - Called a "catalog of ideas". Good for hobbyists.

<https://translate.google.com/> - Enter a phrase in any language and tell it what language you want it translated to. If you are not sure about the language, it can also be used to detect the language. Guesses wrong sometimes.

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/explore/foreign-words-and-phrases> - deleted, no longer active

<http://dictionary.law.com/> - Did you ever hear a legal term while watching Law and Order and wonder what it meant? Try this website. In TV's The Big Bang Theory, in court, Sheldon once said "Quod est necessarium est licitum". He explained what it meant, but looking it up gives a detailed explanation.

www.dictionary.com and www.thesaurus.com - The dictionary site, besides giving definitions, can play an oral pronunciation. This is easier than trying to figure out the phonetic description. Thesaurus is part of the dictionary website. Did you ever wonder if there was a synonym for the word thesaurus? Probably not.

www.scamicide.com – explanation of many computer scams. Lists the top ten that are being tried on people.

www.mondly.com/blog/cool-latin-phrases/ - 50 Latin phrases commonly used in English (to impress or disgust your friends). This is the sine qua non of sophisticated writing – ha.

Tips for Searching

I firmly believe you can find anything on the Internet. But not everything is free. Using your favorite search mechanism (engine), type in a keyword or two and see what it finds. Best results are usually shown first. Be alert to “sponsored results” as they pay to be shown on top. Refine your search by adding more words. For locations of things try the zip code or use the words “near me”. If you want to do a phrase search, surround the phrase with quotation marks in your search. If you type in three key words the first results will contain all three words. Lesser results will contain only two, etc. Use the minus sign “-” to indicate a word should NOT be in the results. Use the “+” to make sure a word is in the result. See this website www.lifehack.org/articles/technology/20-tips-use-google-search-efficiently.html for more hints.

Certain words are ignored in searching but it doesn't hurt to use them... examples are “to”, “and”, “the”, “a”, “is”, because they add little to the search request.

Have a search engine do a math problem – symbols for add, subtract, multiply and divide are +, -, * and / respectively. Raise a number to a power by using the “^” (Shift-6). Three squared would be 3^2. You can even use a fractional power – useful in some scientific applications.

In most search engines, there are several verbs that work in the search field. Three of them are “convert”, “status” and “define”. The first converts units, like acres to sq. miles or feet to meters. The second gives you flight status, e.g. “status Delta 123” would return the status. Define, followed by a word will obviously give you the definition. If you are not sure about something, try it. Type "day of week June 6, 1944" and watch what happens. Not all search engines work the same, therefore the results of any inquiry may be displayed differently.

Summary

Interesting Facts - Source: www.firstsiteguide.com/internet-stats/

- As of 2021 there are roughly **2.0** billion websites
- As of October 2022, there were almost **5.47** billion internet users globally.
- In 2020 more than half of the world’s population uses the internet. (**59%**)
- China has almost **1.0** billion users (ranks first); India has approximately **560** million users (second)
- The US represents only **7%** of the world’s online population (ranks third) with **333** million users
- Google processes **92.7%** of all searches – and they do remember what you search for.
- Almost **66%** of Internet users prefer the Chrome Browser; Apple’s Safari is second with **17%**

If you want to discover your own websites for fun, ask a search engine (Google) to find something that interests you - jokes, trivia, music, literature, movies, science, pictures, poetry, news, computers, etc. Do keep in mind that what you type into Google is tracked by Google. There is an option in the dropdown menu in the upper right corner of the Google page on the Chrome Browser that sets you into “Incognito Browsing”. This minimizes the use of tracking cookies that are put on your machine, but Google still keeps track of the searches.

Some of the websites in this handout may ask you to register with your email address - usually for free. Remember, this can generate cookies and unwanted emails. Registering can be necessary if they are going to send you something. Decide for yourself if it's worth it. Sometimes it is good to have a separate, special email just for use on websites like this – for example, you could jokingly establish Gmail address noboyknowsthisaddress@gmail.com

The websites listed here are meant to be a starting point or to pique your curiosity. Some of them are related and a few clicks will lead you to a different or even better website. Happy Surfing!

Afterword - If you are fascinated by Siri (The iPhone voice person) you might want to access the website www.google.com through the Chrome browser and you will have the ability to use voice to make searches. Just click on the microphone and try it. And don't forget some of the new toys out there such as Amazon Echo, Echo Dot (Alexa) and Google Home. As Spock would say, they are all “Fascinating”.

Starting with Windows 10 Microsoft offers Cortana, which is their answer to Siri. Windows 10 also has the ability to activate Cortana with the voice command "Hey Cortana" found under Cortana in the Settings Area. This is another voice recognition service. Ask it a question with your voice and it will respond orally, if appropriate. BTW if you get an unsatisfactory answer to an oral inquiry, try rephrasing the question. For example "Who were Henry VIII's wives?" many not get a good answer, but "Who were the spouses of Henry VIII?" may work.

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