

# Lost in space... cyberspace

## A guide to Netscape for novices

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**T**he Internet, the World Wide Web, Cyberspace ... No matter how you choose to identify it, it's an easy place to get lost.

Some of you may ask, "How can you get lost in a place that does not even exist beyond its plethora of electronics pulses?"

Those of you who have had the experience know the answer: "By simply clicking the 'Internet' icon."

There are three simple levels at which one may be lost:

■ You've hardly looked at a keyboard, much less a Netscape window. (This is the worst kind of lost.)

■ You can never seem to find what you're looking for. (Much more easily remedied.)

■ You've gone online, found what you're looking for, but the more in-depth you get, the more confused you get.

For the first type of lost soul, you are about to be enlightened with a crash course in Netscape. In order to "surf the net," you must have the proper software. Currently, the most popular software is called Netscape. It is also what you will probably use in the many computer labs on campus.

Netscape has several "buttons" across

the top of its window. Buttons are small squares or rectangles that, when clicked on with the mouse, will display a specific function. Some of the Netscape buttons include functions such as "stop," "reload," "images," or one of the most popular, "help."

Oddly enough, "Stop" will stop the computer from completing its current task. "Reload" will reload the current page. The "images" button will load the images on the current page when that function is active, but is not available in USC labs.

And, finally, the much-adored "Help" button can be very useful. When you have exhausted all other means of trying to figure out what is going on inside that humming chunk of circuits, you press this button.

There are many other buttons available, but those mentioned above are the most frequently used. For the most part, though, looking through the web will not require such difficult tasks. The easiest way to use this modern resource is to find the page and read it. It's really not that hard!

That brings us to the next type of perplexed user—those who can never quite find what they want. If you are using



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the computers in the Thomas Cooper Library computer lab, the root of your problem is easily explained. You know exactly where you want to go, but there's no place to put the Uniform Resource Locator (URL). The URL is the address of a web page, usually beginning with http://.

Usually, there will be a long rectangle just below the row of buttons where you can type in this address. But, on the computers in this particular lab, the only way to find what you want is with a whole other button that says "Net Search."

This will take you to one of many search engines. A search engine is a web-based program where you type in the subject of what you're looking for, and it gives you a list of probable matches.

Think of a search engine as an internet card catalog. The good thing is, you can choose a different search engine once you get there, such as Yahoo!

Yahoo gives the best, most understandable results. It also has a handy choice called "Random" that is at the top of the page.

"What's Cool?" and "What's New?" (two other Netscape buttons) are also helpful, because by selecting any of these, you will get a variety of choices of web

pages; a place to go when you don't exactly know where you want to be.

And, finally, a bit of translation for the near-veterans of the web who are still working on the fine nuances of this alternate universe. Once you have spent a certain number of hours entranced by your screen, you will have the urge to own a page yourself.

There are several places to consult if you would like a home page. In addition, (here come the words that are magical to the ears of a college student) these are ABSOLUTELY FREE!

The first is <http://www.angelfire.com>, and is better for those with absolutely no idea what they want to put on their page or how to do it.

For those more interested in a specific topic, <http://www.geocities.com> offers a lot of assistance. The pages are separated into thematic "neighborhoods." After getting the basics under way, you will have to learn a programming language called HTML to create a spectacular page. It is very easy and is fully explained through the NCSA HTML site, [http://\\*\\*\\*](http://***).

If none of this information has eased your tension, you have one more option. This is the most important: do not be afraid to ask for help!

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