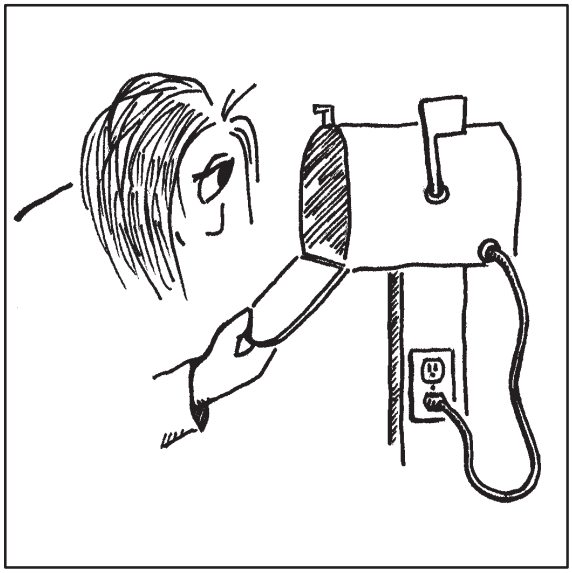
Science on the Web

Activity 1
Finding People in Cyberspace

Jane's parents have been married for almost 25 years. A friend asked her if she was going to do anything for them on their 25th anniversary. Jane thought it would be a great idea to have a big surprise party, but how could she pull it off? She needed the help of other family members. Richard said he would be willing to throw rice, as long as he didn't have to dress up. That didn't help much. Then she thought of her Uncle Josh who lived in San Francisco. He might have some ideas. The big problem would be to get hold of him without making long-distance calls from home.



Today in school she learned about the Internet and that lots of universities are on the Internet. Uncle Josh works at Stanford University in the physics department. She didn't know his Internet address, but one of the examples at school gave an address for someone at Stanford.

She asked her teacher, Mrs. Fine, about finding an address of someone on the Internet. Her teacher said that you had to know the address, and that calling or writing the person and asking is usually necessary. Jane felt very disappointed, because this would be tough; she didn't even know his phone number. Mrs. Fine was concerned that a potential Internet user was backing away, but didn't know what she could do to help. Just to ease the situation, she asked Jane who she would like to contact. Jane said her uncle, Josh Salem...he works at Stanford in the physics department...she didn't know much more.

Mrs. Fine smiled and said that with a little guessing and a little "browsing," she could probably find the address. It would take them some time to poke around the Internet, so she told Jane said OK, but wasn't confident that this would work.

Soon after they sat down, Mrs. Fine and Jane found Uncle Josh's address: **jsalem@stanford.edu**. Jane first e-mailed her uncle, then browsed university sites and looked up friends all across the country.

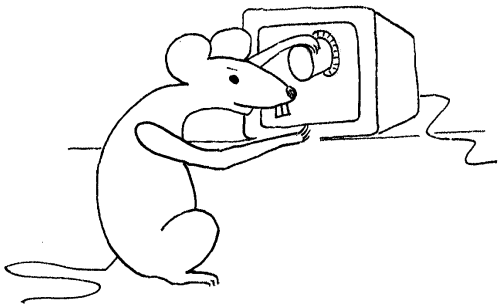
Starting the Browser

Login and start the browser

You will have to log in to get to the Internet, either when you get on your computer or when you try to connect to the Web. Your teacher should be able to help you do that.

login: ***your_login_name***
password: ***your_password***

Double click on **Netscape Communicator**
(You are welcome to use another browser, but the instructions will be a little different.)



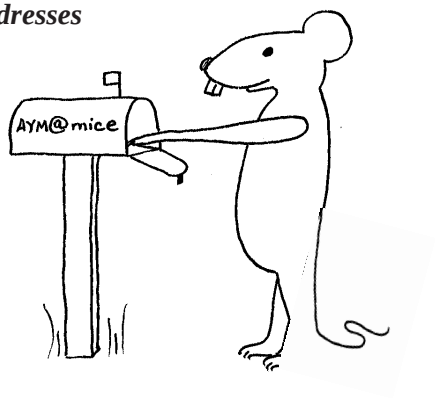
Who needs a secure password, anyway?
Remember that you are connecting to other computers, and they can be damaged in your name if your password is used by someone in an irresponsible way.
A safe password:

is not a word in the dictionary
has a number or punctuation in it
is 7 or 8 characters long

The mail feature

In the menu at the top select **Communicator—Messenger Mailbox**.
The Screen that comes up is your "inbox."
The top half of the screen shows the headers of messages you've received. One is usually highlighted.
The bottom half of the screen shows the contents of the message that is highlighted above.
Both windows scroll.

Addresses



Internet addresses are constructed in a very systematic way, and the system allows the Internet routers to find new addresses easily.

Let's look at ***test_email@sec.noaa.gov****: The address reads from the specific to the general, like a postal address; that is, if we start at the right:*

.gov	**government**
.noaa	**the organization or agency**
sec	**the computer or group name**
@	**separator**
test_email	**person's name (sometimes a function name, as this is)**

Some common domain extensions:

gov	*government*
org	*non-profit organization*
com	*commercial*
edu	*education (university/college)*

Sending a message

Click on the **New Msg** in the icon bar near the top of the window. A new window comes up.

In the **To**: line, type the address **test_email@sec.noaa.gov.**

You may enter text on the **Subject line**: but it is not required (it's part of the "header").

In the box below the Subject line, type your message ("message body"). You are sending a message to the authors of this guide. Any message will get you a form-letter response from us, but we will be able to read your message at a later date. So tell us about yourself.

Click the **Send** button in the icon bar near the top.

Send another message to yourself, filling in the **Subject** line with TEST1 and some words in the message body.

Getting new messages

The two message you just sent will result in two new messages. Wait a minute or two and see if your browser indicates that you have received new messages (watch the screen carefully).
When you want to get new messages (or just see if something new is in), *click* on the **Get Msg** icon.

Reading mail

You should have two new messages. To read them, *click* on the header listing of the one you want to read. The text appears below. You may have to scroll the window to see the whole message.

Reply to a message

With the message to yourself displayed, reply by *clicking* on **Reply** in the icon bar. Note that the original message is copied into the new message window.

Forward a message

If someone sends you a fun e-mail, (there is lots of humor out there in Cyberspace), you can share it with friends with a **forward**. Forward a message to someone (even yourself) by *clicking* on **Forward** in the icon bar. The message is copied to the message box, just like a reply. You can add your own message to this message before you send it.

Heads Up!

A message that is sent to a friend can very easily be forwarded to another friend and eventually may end up being read by all sorts of people. If you have written anything you would not want someone else (a teacher or another student) to read, don't send it via e-mail.

Forwarded or not, e-mail is notoriously not *secure or confidential.*

Include a file in a mail message

If you have a file that you want to send (a graphic image or a word-processed document), you can **attach** it. *Click* on **Attach** (the paper clip is the icon). The menu system that comes up lets you find the file you want to attach.

After you have selected the file (**Open**), it will appear in your message, either as an icon or listed in the header section of your message. Some mail systems will not let you send a large file on e-mail. In any case, you should be sensitive to the burden you place on the e-mail system sending large files (there are better ways to do that, as you will learn later).

Send to a friend

Do you have a friend who is also learning how to use the Internet? Send mail to her (or him) now. If she has the same domain name as yours, you may only have to type her e-mail name.

friend@email_address
or
friend [if her *email_address* is the same as yours]

Try other commands

There are several other useful features in the mail program:

Spell check a message you are sending.
Save a message you received in a folder.
Delete a message.

If you have a printer installed, try to print a message.

Exit mailer

Select from the menu bar **File—Quit** to close Netscape, or **Communicator—Navigator** to switch to the Web browser. You can also click on the close boxes for your window or use the minimizers.

Questions

1–1. What organization responded to your test e-mail message?

1–2. Where is the computer that returned your message (city and state)?

1–3. Send another message and this time make an intentional error when you type the e-mail address. What happens?

1–4. What is different about communicating with e-mail rather than person-to-person?

1–5. Is it easy for someone to forward your mail to someone else? What implications does this have?

Browse for Addresses

There isn't a Master Phone Book for the Internet, and it is best to have someone tell you her or his e-mail address. But you can often find someone's address, especially if you know where he or she is in school or work.

Intelligent guessing to find a domain

- All universities domains have .edu at the end. Ususally, the name of the university is easy to guess:
  stanford.edu harvard.edu ucla.edu umn.edu (University of Minnesota)

- All government domains have .gov at the end (except the military, which uses .mil). If you can guess the organization, you can navigate to where you need to be:
  noaa.gov nasa.gov senate.gov whitehouse.gov

- Most public schools are given a domain that follows a pattern like this: *school_district*.k12.*state*.us
  Jane Lopez's school would be (assuming it was Los Angeles Public Schools) **laps.k12.ca.us**.

Browsing the Web site for locators

Type a URL into the Location or URL box at the top. The form of these addresses is http://www.*site.extension.* Try some of the *site.extension* names above; for example **http://www.whitehouse.gov**.

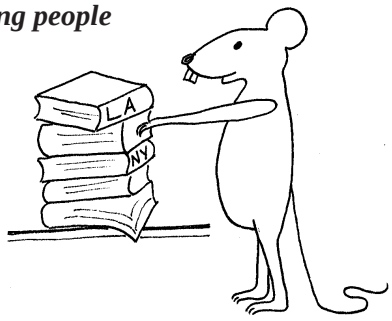
Lots of Web sites have personnel locators, and you can use these for people who work there. If there is no personnel locator, you can usually find someone listed at the organization. You can use that style address to try sending an e-mail to someone there.

Go to the NOAA Website

http://www.noaa.gov

NOAA People Locator
Type the last name of Poppe and *click* on **Find**. Note the style of the address—everyone at NOAA can be reached using the same style: **First.Last@noaa.gov**

Finding people



Finding domain names can be easy if the domain has a Web site that you can find. But people's e-mail names can be anything, including a number!
In recent years, a lot of standardization has occurred. Try these variations if you have a domain name *but don't know the form of the person's* e-mail name*:*

Lopez	jlopez
lopezj	Jane–Lopez
Jane.Lopez	Jane_Lopez

Search engines

Search engines are software that look through Web pages to match a word (or words) that you type in. Some engines will look at every word on every page; some look at indexed words only. You'll be amazed at what some search engines find!

Some of the search engines have specific searches for people. Try to find a friend or a relative.

Click on the **Search** icon in your browser (or type the URLs listed below).

Whatever search engine comes up, see if it has a People locator. At least try these:

AltaVista	**http://www.altavista.digital.com/**
Excite	**http://www.excite.com/**
Infoseek	**http://www.infoseek.com/**
Lycos	**http://www.lycos.com/**
Netscape Netcenter	**http://www.netscape.com/ (choose among search engines)**
WebCrawler	**http://webcrawler.com/**
Yahoo!	**http://www.yahoo.com/**

Look for your e-mail address, your relatives' addresses and phone numbers, your friends' school e-mail addresses.

You might want to view an online guide for Web searching. Try one of these:

The Spider's Apprentice — **http://www.monash.com/spidap.html**

Power Searching for Anyone — **http://searchenginewatch.internet.com/facts/powersearch.html**

Questions

1–6. How do you think the address and phone numbers are found (where did they come from) ?

1–7. What limitations did you observe in finding e-mail addresses?