

Orientation to the Web using Netscape

Description

This unit provides an introduction to the Web browser known as Netscape Communicator. You will learn how to find information on the World Wide Web.

Objectives

In this unit, you will learn to:

- Identify and use the controls in the Netscape Communicator application.
- Utilize the basic features of the Web browser.
- Search for information on a Web page.
- Utilize a search engine to look for Web sites.
- Print a Web Page

Topics

- What is Netscape?
- Terminology
- Starting Netscape
- The Netscape Environment
- Navigating through a Web Site
- Accessing a Site when you know the Address
- Finding Information on the Current Page
- Using the Other Toolbar Buttons
- Finding Information on the Web
- Previewing and Printing

What is Netscape?

What is Netscape? **Netscape Communicator**, simply known as "Netscape," is a Web browser that displays Web pages and provides point-and-click access to other Web sites and information. To understand Netscape, let's review the terminology associated with the Web.

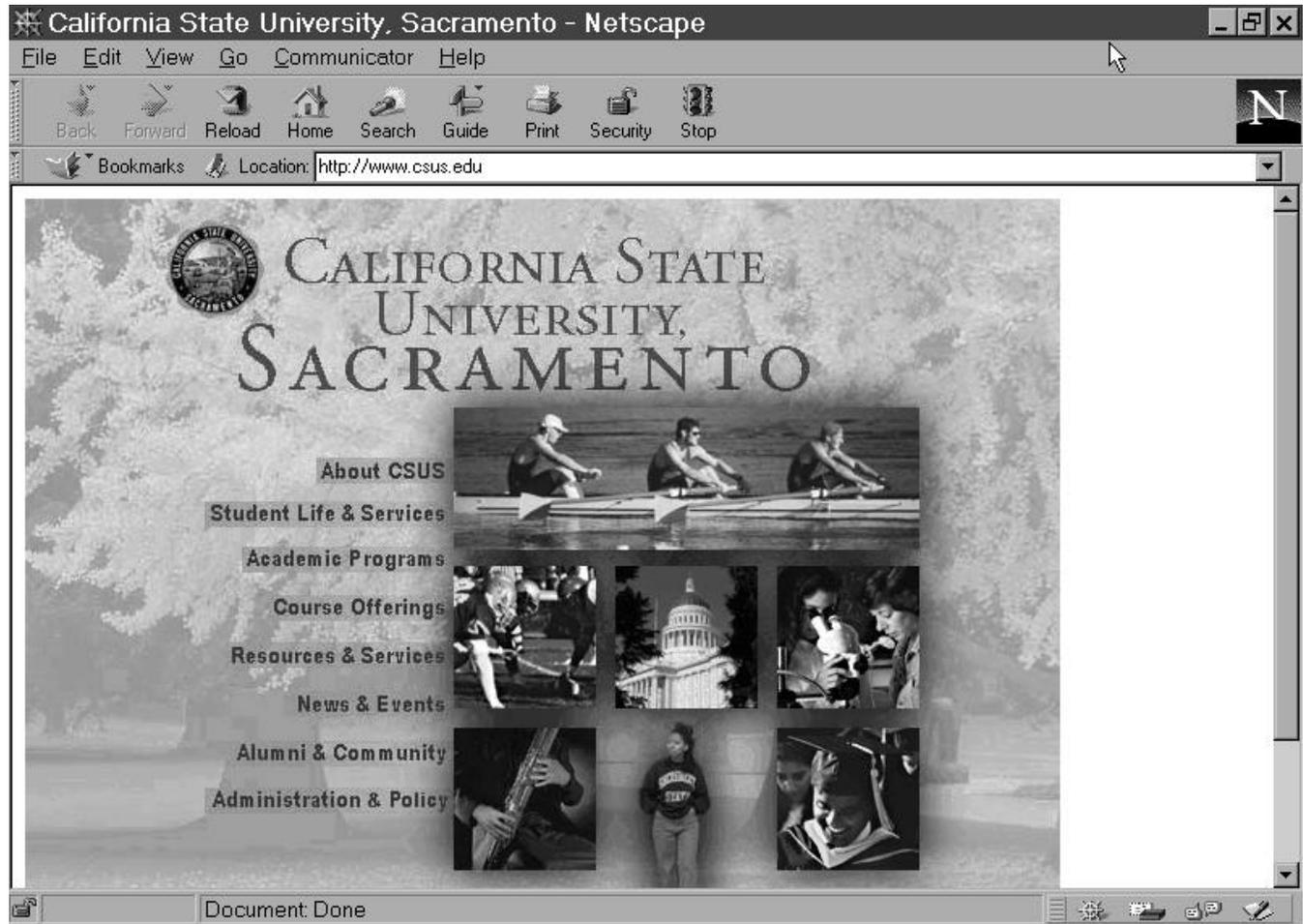
Terminology

- **Internet**—A global network of computers that link information and people. By connecting to the Internet, you can do lots of things, such as exchange electronic mail (e-mail) messages, play games, read news, and share ideas and information with anyone connected to the Internet.
- **World Wide Web (WWW)**—The most popular component of the Internet. It is an interconnected collection of data on the Internet. The information that makes up the Web is stored on many computers scattered all over the world. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Web is the ability to jump from one document to another via hyperlinks.
- **Web browser**—Software that allows you to access the World Wide Web. Browsers allow users to download pages at different sites either by clicking links or by entering a Web page's address (URL). Two examples of Web browsers are Netscape Navigator/Communicator and Microsoft Internet Explorer.
- **URL**—Just as you have an address, so too, does every place on the Web. The Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of the California State University, Sacramento campus for example, is *http://www.csus.edu*. You'll see the URL in the **Location** box, which is located immediately beneath the navigation toolbar (the bar that contains a row of buttons with pictures on them).
- **HTML**—An abbreviation for Hypertext Markup Language. HTML is not a computer programming language, but a language for describing the structure of a Web document, such as title, headings, paragraphs, and lists. The elements of a document are "marked up" or labeled with certain commands or tags. These commands or tags tell the Web browser how to display the document. Most of the documents on the Web contain HTML.
- **Links**—Actually, link is short for hypertext link or hyperlink. You'll recognize a link when you visit a Web page because it's usually a phrase or image that stands out from the rest of the text and graphics on the page. For example, a link might be an underlined word or an icon that is set apart from the rest of the information on the page. Links connect you to other pages. Simply move your pointer over any underlined word, phrase, or image that you think is a link. If the word, phrase, or image is a link, the on-screen pointer (which usually looks like an arrow) will change to a pointing finger. Another way to tell if you've found a hyperlink is to look at the gray message bar (status bar) at the bottom of the Navigator window. When your pointer is over a link, you'll see the corresponding page's URL.
- **Home Page or Main Page**—A starting point, similar to the table of contents in a book. Every site on the Web has a home page that tells you what you'll find at the rest of the site. If you see a place you want to go, simply click the links and you're there.

Starting Netscape

- 1 Click the **Start** button to display the **Start** menu.
- 2 Point to **Programs**.
- 3 Point to **Internet Applications**.
- 4 Choose **Netscape Communicator**.

Netscape opens and the CSUS Web page appears in the content area.



- 5 If necessary, click the **Maximize** button to maximize the window.

The Netscape Environment

Netscape Navigator is simple to use if you know a little about the environment. If you're familiar with Windows, you'll recognize the following components:

Title bar. The title bar is located at the top of the window and it identifies the application. On your screen you should see California State University, Sacramento Netscape.



Menu Bar. The menu bar is a horizontal list of menus. Each menu contains a list of commands that will help you use Netscape Navigator.



Navigation Toolbar. This toolbar is the row of buttons that have pictures on them. From left to right, there are buttons for navigating between pages on the World Wide Web (BACK, FORWARD, HOME), buttons for getting around on a specific Web page (RELOAD, IMAGES, OPEN, PRINT, FIND), and a button to cancel an action you've started (STOP).



Location Toolbar. The **Location** toolbar is located below the Navigation Toolbar buttons. It displays the URL (Web address) of the page you're viewing and takes you to any other site when you type in a URL. You should see the URL (*http://www.csus.edu/uccs/labs/*) of the University Computing Labs Web page in the **Location** box.



Content area. The Content area is located below the **Location** toolbar, is the area where the Web page will appear.

Status bar. The Status bar is at the very bottom of the Netscape window and it tells you the status of certain functions. When you click a link or go to a URL, the status bar keeps you informed of the progress by giving you a series of indicators; e.g., it's connecting to the host, then waiting for a reply, then transferring the document.



Navigating through a Web Site

When you run Netscape on one of the computers in the University Computing Labs, the CSUS Web page opens as the starting page.

► To navigate through a Web site

1 Examine the contents of the page. Notice that there are several buttons words on the page.

2 Move your mouse pointer over the **About CSUS** link. **DO NOT CLICK THE MOUSE BUTTON!**

The mouse pointer changes to a hand. This is an indication that the button is *a hyperlink* or link that connects you to other pages.

3 With the mouse pointer still over the About CSUS button, observe the status bar at the bottom of the window.

On the status bar is the Web address (*http://www.csus.edu/about.htm*) of the page that you will be connected to if you click the button. **DO NOT CLICK THE MOUSE BUTTON!**

4 Examine the **Back** and **Forward** buttons. Notice that they are inactive (or grayed out). That's because you haven't gone anywhere.

5 Click the **Resources and Services** button and the Resources and Services page appears.

6 Notice that the **Back** button is now active.

7 Click the **Back** button and you are brought *back* to the CSUS Web page.

8 Notice that the **Forward** button is now active.

9 Click the **Forward** button and you are brought *forward* to the Resources and Services page again.

10 Notice that there are several underlined words on the page.

11 Move your mouse pointer over the **Computing Labs** link and the mouse pointer changes to a hand indicating that the underlined text is a hyperlink.

12 Click the **Computing Labs** link and the Computing Labs page appears.

13 Click the **Back** button until you are brought back to the CSUS Web page.

14 Click the **Course Offerings** link and the Course Offerings page appears.

15 Click the **Fall 1998** link and the Fall 1998 Class Schedule page appears.

16 Click the **By Subject** link and a Subject index for Fall 1998 is displayed.

Note: This is an important place on the CSUS Web to view when adding courses to your schedule.

17 Scroll down the page and click on a subject you are interested in. (For example, Computer Science).

On the next page you will see a list of courses for that subject along with the course section, call number, phone registration indicator, number of seats available, class meeting times, location, instructor, and footnotes.

- 18 Take a few moments to explore a few more subjects.
- 19 When you are finished looking at the courses, click the **Home** button and you are brought to the starting page—the CSUS Web page.

Accessing a Site When You Know the Address

One of the most common ways to access a Web site is to type the Web address in the **Location** box and press the ENTER key.

About Web addresses

As you may recall from above, a **Uniform Resource Locator** (URL) is the name for the string of characters that make up an Internet or Web address.

If you read about an interesting Internet site in a magazine, or someone tells you to visit a specific place on the Web, you can jump directly to that site if you type in its address. That address has to be 100% correct or you won't make it to where you want to go. So type carefully.

Some URLs can look as simple as this one for California State University, Sacramento:

`http://www.csus.edu`

Other URLs can really get obnoxious, such as this one for Biology 1305 at Baylor University:

`http://diogenes.baylor.edu/WWWproviders/Rick_Duhrkoph/1305/1305CourseOutline.html`

Internet addresses can start with different protocols. (*A protocol is a set of communication rules that the computers must follow to communicate with each other.*) All Web addresses start with **http**, which stands for **Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP)**. HTTP is how computers exchange documents on the Web. There are other protocols (such as, ftp, gopher, mailto, news, and telnet), but if you are on the Web, the address will usually start with **http**. We'll use the address **http://www.csus.edu** to explain what the other parts of the address indicate.

://	After the http , there is always a :// (a colon with two forward slashes).
www	Indicates the name of the Web server .
.	A period follows the name of the Web server.
csus	The domain name is next and it specifies the entity that runs the site.
.	A period follows the domain name.
edu	The top-level domain indicates the type of entity. edu indicates that the entity is an educational institution. Other top-level domain names include .com (commercial), .gov (non-military government), .mil (military), .net (Internet network service provider or network resource), and .org (organizations that do not fit into the other categories).

Anything else you find tacked on to an address serves to further define and specify the location of the site. The *most important thing to remember* when it comes to a URL, is not so much what it means, but *how you type it*. You can't add or drop anything. To get to the right place, the address has to be exact.

Suppose you wanted to go *The Golf Channel's Web site*...

► **To access the site**

- 1 Click in the **Location** box and the current Web address is selected (highlighted).
- 2 Press the DELETE key delete the contents.
- 3 Type **http://www.thegolfchannel.com**
- 4 Press the ENTER key to go The Golf Channel's site.
- 5 Take a few moments to explore the site.
- 6 Now, let's go to *Runner's World*...Click in the Location box and delete the current contents.
- 7 Type **http://www.runnersworld.com**
- 8 Press the ENTER key to go Runner's World.

Finding Information on the Current Page

Some of the Web pages you view may be quite lengthy, so you may want to go directly to the information you are looking for. To do this you can use Netscape's Find feature to quickly move to the word(s) or phrase in which you are interested.

► **To find a specific word on a page**

- 1 Make sure you are still at the Runner's World site.
- 2 Click the **Daily News** link.
- 3 Click the **Find** button and the **Find** dialog box appears.
- 4 Type **run** and click the **Find Next** button to move to the first occurrence of the word "run." (*Note: You may have to move the Find dialog box so that you can see the highlighted word.*)

Notice that you will pick up any word that contains the letters "run."

- 5 Click on **Find Next** to move to the next occurrence of the word.
- 6 Keep clicking on **Find Next** to find all occurrences of the word until you get the message:**Search String Not Found!**
- 7 Click **OK** to close the message box.
- 8 Click **Home** to return to the University Computing Labs page.

Using the Other Toolbar Buttons

Two important buttons are the **Stop** and **Reload** buttons. Think of the **Stop** button as an escape button. Use it when you find yourself waiting and waiting for a page to appear on screen, or if you have clicked on a link by mistake. Clicking on the **Stop** button will not return you to the previous page. Often you'll receive a "Transfer Interrupted" message. To return to the previous page you must click the **Back** button.

The **Reload** button can be used when you want to redisplay the current page, reflecting any changes made since the original loading. For example, if you were getting up to date stock market info, you might use the **Reload** button. To reload, Netscape checks the Web server to see if any change to the page has occurred. If there's no change, the original page is retrieved from a cache (a location on your hard disk). If there's a change, the updated page is retrieved from the Web server.

Finding Information on the Web

Finding information on the Web is easy once you know how to do it. When traveling the Web, look for access points. Sometimes clicking on icons or hyperlinks will automatically take you from one site to another. Remember that when you position the mouse pointer over a hypertext link, the arrow should change to a hand. If the mouse pointer remains as an arrow, clicking will take you nowhere. Fortunately, the Web comes equipped with a few special "search" sites, called **search engines** that are designed to help you find the information you need.

Search engines will prompt you to input *keywords* (word related to the topic about which you need information). The search engine then checks its database and connects you to possible sites to try. There are lots of search engines available: Yahoo!, Alta Vista, Lycos, Excite, Web Crawler, and Infoseek are but a few.

Once you've found the page you're looking for you may want to search the page for a specific word or phrase. Remember that you can use the **Find** button to search for the word or phrase.

Next, you will compare a few search engines by searching for sites on tennis.

Yahoo!

Yahoo! is a useful site for locating information and is has one of the simplest interfaces available for searching the Web. If you have a specific topic in mind, you may begin from the search box. Just type the keywords or phrase into the search box and click **Search**. If you don't know where to start, scan the categorical lists on the Yahoo! home page. A dozen main categories, ranging from Arts to Society and Culture give you a starting point and a sense of direction. Each of the larger categories lists three or four subcategories to narrow the search. Clicking on a main category takes you to another page with a list of possible subcategories.

► **To search using Yahoo!**

- 1 In the **Location** box, type **http://www.yahoo.com** and press the ENTER key.
- 2 In the Search box at the top of the Yahoo page, type the word **tennis**
- 3 Click the **Search** button.
- 4 How many category matches were found? _____
- 5 How many categories are displayed on the page at one time _____
- 6 To go to the next category matches you would click the _____ link.

AltaVista

Digital's AltaVista is another popular search engine. AltaVista can access more than 30 million Web sites found on more than 275,000 servers, and 4 million articles from 14,000 Usenet newsgroups.

While AltaVista probably has the most impressive database, its interface is not as user friendly as Yahoo!

► **To search using AltaVista**

- 1 In the **Location** box, type **http://www.altavista.digital.com** and press the ENTER key.
- 2 In the Search box at the top of the AltaVista page, type the word **tennis**
- 3 Click the **Search** button.
- 4 How many matches were found? _____
- 5 How many matches are displayed on the page at one time _____
- 6 To go to the next set of matches you would click the _____ link.
- 7 Click the **Refine** button (at the top of the AltaVista page) to see how you can refine the search.
- 8 Click the **Back** button to return to the list of documents.
- 9 Click in the search box after the word **tennis** and press the SPACEBAR and type **courts** so that you are searching for **tennis courts**.
- 10 Click the **Search** button.
- 11 How many matches were found? _____

Infoseek

Infoseek gives users an easy way to search for and retrieve articles from computer publications, Internet newsgroups, and Web pages.

► **To search using Infoseek**

- 1 In the **Location** box, type **http://www.infoseek.com** and press the ENTER key.
- 2 In the **Enter phrases and/or keywords** box at the top of the Infoseek page, type the word **tennis**
- 3 Make sure the radio button for **Web** is filled in.
- 4 Click the **seek** button.
- 5 How many pages were found? _____
- 6 How many matches are displayed on the page at one time _____
- 7 To go to the next set of matches you would click the _____ link.
- 8 To refine the search:
 - a Scroll up to the top of the page.
 - b Click **Search only within these xxx pages**.

- c In the search box type **United States tennis**.
- d Click the **seek** button.

9 How many pages were found? _____

Excite

Like most search engines, Excite looks for documents containing the exact words you entered into the search box. Excite also looks for ideas closely related to the words in your search.

► **To search using Excite**

- 1 In the **Location** box, type **http://www.excite.com** and press the ENTER key.
- 2 In the search box at the top of the Excite page, type the word **tennis**
- 3 Click the **Search** button.
- 4 How many news articles were found? _____
- 5 How many directory matches were displayed? _____
- 6 How many hits were found? _____
- 7 To go to the next set of matches you would click the _____ link.

Lycos

Lycos is another search engine.

► **To search using Lycos**

- 1 In the **Location** box, type **http://www.lycos.com** and press the ENTER key.
- 2 Leave the **Search** box set to **The Web**.
- 3 In the **for** box, type the word **tennis**
- 4 Click the **Go Get It** button.
- 5 How many matching categories were found? _____
- 6 How many matching Web pages are displayed? _____
- 7 To go to the next set of matching Web pages you would click the _____ link.

As you can see from this exercise, search engines can produce different results. When researching a topic you may want to use more than one search engine.

Previewing and Printing

As more instructors begin to place course material on the Web, you will find that you may have to go to the professor's Web site to locate a homework assignment. Sometimes you may want to print these assignments. However, it is a good idea to preview the document before you print it so that you know how many pages will be printed. *Note: You are limited to printing 20 pages at any one time in the University Computing Labs.*

The **Print Preview** command, which appears on the **File** menu, allows you to preview the Web document before you print it. And the **Print** button allows you to print the content area of the current Web page. You can choose printing characteristics in the **Print** dialog box. On some Web pages instead of the **Print** command you may have the **Print Frame** command appearing on the **File** menu. The type of **Print** command that is available depends on the Web page layout, however the commands allow you to print either the current Web page or current frame. (Note: A **frame layout** is a Web page that is divided into two or more parts or frames.)

► To print a page

- 1 Go to the CSC001 course Web page, clicking in the **Location** box and typing
`http://www.csus.edu/indiv/j/josephd/csc001/main.htm`
- 2 Press the ENTER key.
- 3 Scroll down to the **Successful Student Characteristics** section.
- 4 Click the **On Being a Student** link.
- 5 Choose **Print Preview** from the **File** menu.
- 6 Take a few moments to examine the page:
 - a This document contains _____ pages.
 - b To go to the next page, you can click the _____ button and to go back to the previous page, you can click the _____ button.
 - c If you want to see two pages at a time, you would click the _____ button. And to go back to viewing one page at a time, you would click the _____ button.
 - d To read the document text, you need to _____ or click the _____ button.
- e Click the **Close** button to return to the Netscape window.
- f Print the document.
- g Pick up your printout.
- h Keep the document and read it later.