Connecting to and Using the Internet

In order to access library databases, download apps and connect to loved ones, you will need to connect your device to the internet. Most of us use the internet every day without thinking about how it works. Understanding the basics helps when things aren't working properly and also helps you stay safe online.

What is the Internet?

The internet is a global **network** that allows our computers and mobile devices (tablets and smartphones) to send and receive information. It is a network of cables and radio waves (Wi-Fi).

How Can I Connect to the Internet?

To connect your computer/mobile device to the internet, you must be connected via a cable or radio waves (Wi-Fi).

You can connect your mobile device to the internet by going to a nearby hotspot on the map included in this package. Or you can contact an Internet Service Provider such as TELUS to set you up with wireless internet service at home for a monthly fee.

Using the Internet

When you open your computer or mobile device, you then need to open software called an **internet browser** to get to a website (Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari, etc.). Using an internet browser, you request to go to a specific website using a **URL**. For example, www.westvanlibrary.ca or www.google.ca.
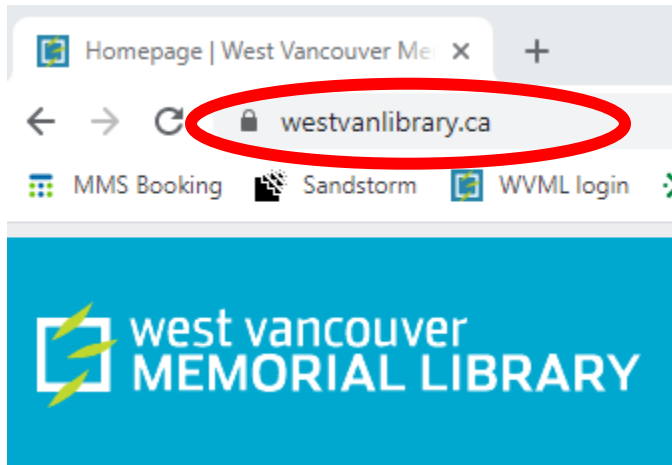
The internet and the **World Wide Web** (WWW) are not the same thing. You use the internet to access the WWW. The billions of web pages that make up the WWW live on big computers around the world called **servers**. When you go to a website on your computer, you are actually asking another big computer (where the website lives) to send you information.
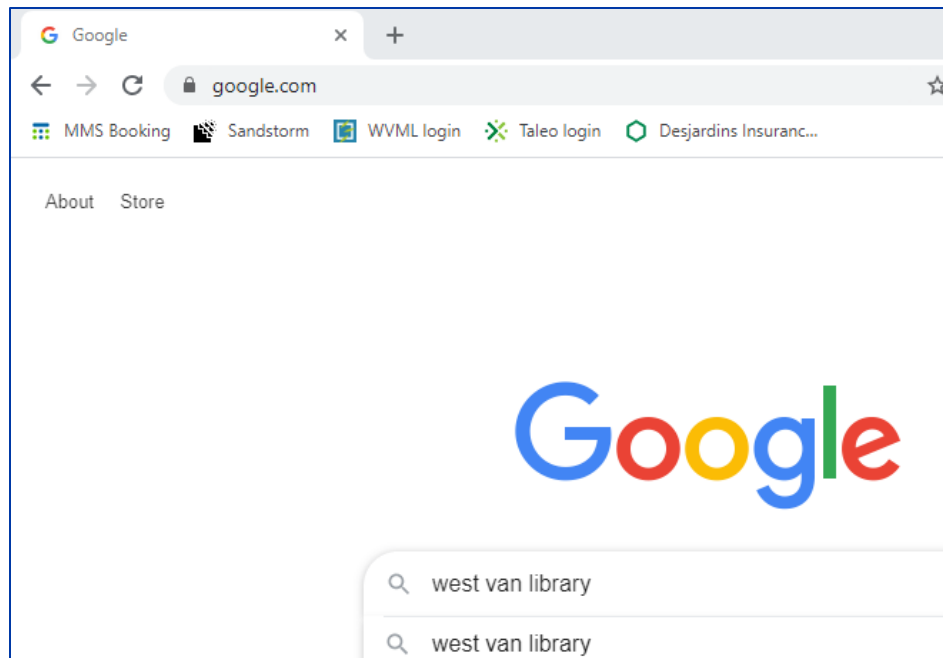
Websites

There are many different kinds of websites out there. Blogs, search engines like Google, online retail stores and online magazines are just a few different kinds of websites! Websites can be made up of many web pages or just one or a few web pages.

There are two different ways to get to websites:

1) Typing the **URL address** (e.g. www.westvanlibrary.ca) into the address bar of an internet browser

2) Opening an internet browser and typing the website name or URL into google.com

A Note on Google

Remember that www.google.com is a search engine and a search engine is a type of website. You can get to google.com by using an internet browser, such as Google Chrome. You can also get to www.google.com using any internet browser (e.g. Firefox, Safari, etc.). Google.com is like a library of almost all of the web pages on the internet.

Best Practices

What Happens on the Internet Stays on the Internet

Be mindful of what you share online because you may not be able to take that information back. For example, if you post a picture on social media and then delete it, you never know who may have downloaded it already.

Create Strong Passwords

Use more than 8 characters—the longer the better! Or consider getting a password manager, which is the #1 security measure that tech experts recommend.

More Tips

- Always check and modify Security/Privacy settings after you open a new account
- Remember, you do not need to give out all the information that sites ask for—only enter in the required information
- Consider creating usernames that do not give away your last name and profile pictures that do not show your face (e.g., your pet instead)
- Consider creating two emails: one you use for family, friends, government sites etc., and another that you use for creating accounts for social media, online shopping, etc.
- Don't access sensitive information over public Wi-Fi (e.g. do your online banking using your protected home internet, not a public hotspot)
- Use the 3-2-1 rule for storage (3 copies, 2 formats, 1 offsite)
- Update your software when prompted
  - Update notifications can seem annoying, but making sure your software is up to date means that you are staying safe and secure and your device is running at its best!

Learn More

- Where Does the Internet Come From? http://tiny.cc/1olm1y
- How Google Search Works http://tiny.cc/9olm1y

North Vancouver City Library

604.998.3450
info@nvcl.ca
Monday – Saturday
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

North Vancouver District Public Library

Lynn Valley: 604.984.0286
Parkgate: 604.929.3727
Capilano: 604.987.4471
info@nvdpl.ca
Monday – Friday
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

West Vancouver Memorial Library

604.925.7400
info@westvanlibrary.ca
Monday – Sunday
9 a.m. – 6 p.m.