

Internet Connection

The Internet is a large system of computer networks containing a vast amount of information. To connect to the Internet, you will need a computer, a modem and a telephone line (or a direct line to the Internet), and an Internet service provider (ISP). Examples of Internet service providers are MCI Worldcom, Earthlink, and America Online (AOL). To find a provider, look in computer magazines or the Yellow Pages, ask friends, or contact a local computer users group or your school office for suggestions.

To use a Web browsing program such as Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer, your computer needs some sort of physical connection to the Internet. In an office or school environment, this connection may be a direct line, which means that the computer is connected to the Internet through a local area network (usually referred to as LAN). You will normally see this type of connection in large corporations, universities, and, increasingly, in schools.

Modem

A device that allows computers to communicate with one another via telephone or cable lines.

Direct line

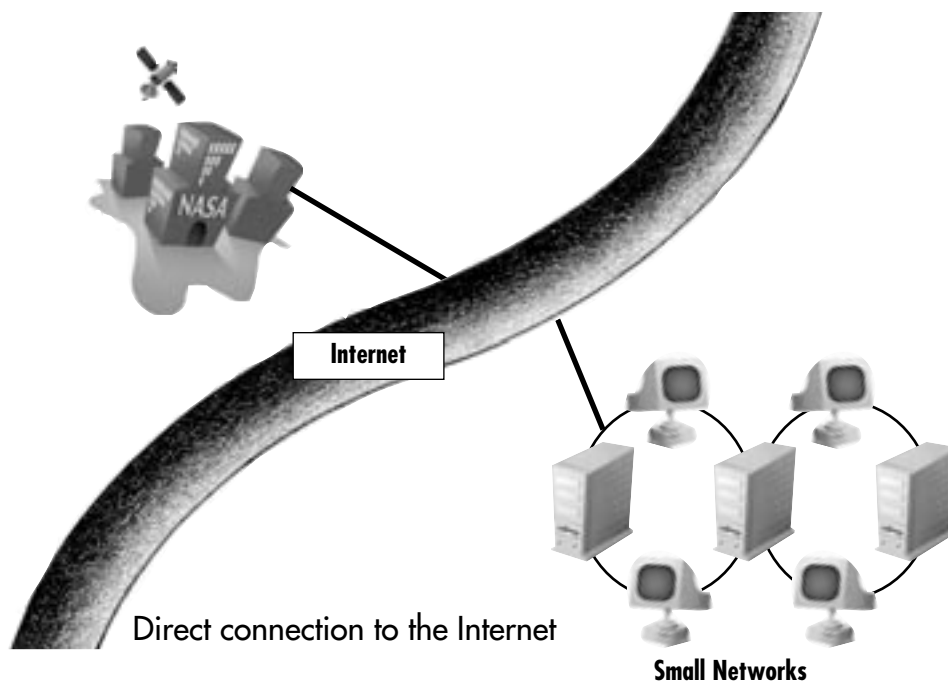
The connection of a computer to the Internet by means of a LAN (local area network).

ISP

Internet Service Provider: an organization that provides access to the Internet. America Online (AOL), Earthlink, and AT&T WorldNet are examples of ISPs.

LAN

Local Area Network: network in which groups of computers are connected within a small area such as an office or building.



Computer Requirements

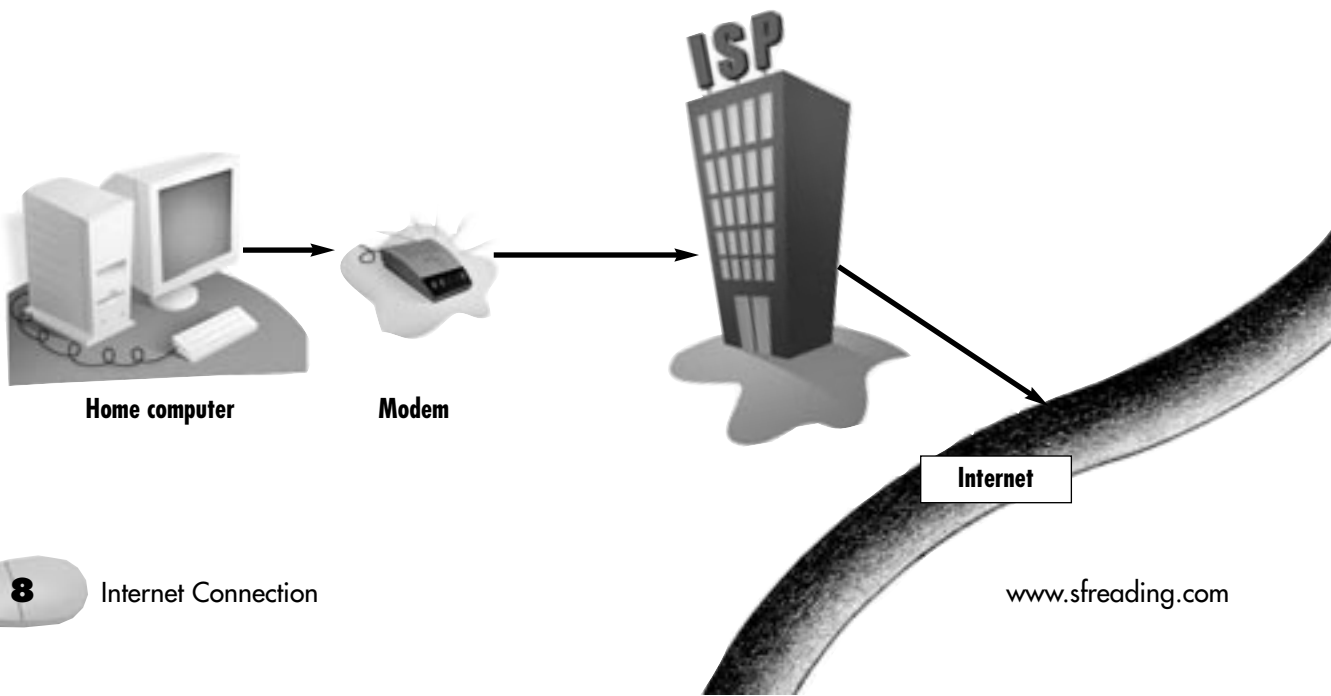
Getting the most out of the World Wide Web requires a computer that can handle the multimedia information (text, pictures, sound, video clips) that is being sent to your computer. The minimum recommended platform is a personal computer (PC) with a Pentium processor or a Macintosh with a Power PC processor. If you are buying a computer for the first time, be sure to tell your dealer that you want it to be Internet-ready.

Multimedia
Describes a computer or a software program that uses sound with animation and/or video.

Server
A computer in a network that contains information or programs that are shared with others.

A modem connection allows a computer user to “dial” into another computer, called a server, using a modem. The server has a direct connection to the Internet and acts as a gateway to allow access to the Internet. While your computer is connected to the server, it is on the Internet. This is the method that most families and individuals use to connect to the Internet from their home computers.

An account with an Internet service provider is required to connect to the Internet from home. For a monthly or yearly fee, an ISP allows your computer to connect to the Internet.



Increasingly, telephone and cable companies are offering new methods of connecting to the Internet that promise faster connections. These faster connections—such as Ethernet—allow your computer to communicate more quickly with other computers. This is becoming increasingly important as more and more providers of content on the Internet incorporate pictures and sounds into their pages. Picture and sound files take a longer time to download, or appear on the screen, than plain text. People who don't like to wait a long time for these images to appear will want a faster connection.

Ethernet
A method of networking computers in a LAN (local area network).

Download
To receive a file sent from another computer.

