

Navigating the Web

In its early days, the Internet was not easy to use. You needed knowledge of the UNIX operating system to communicate with other users and retrieve information. In the late 1980s, the *World Wide Web* (commonly known as the Web) was developed to make the Internet user-friendly. Today, the Web is composed of interconnected computers, networks, and network servers, all of which let you provide or use information, see full-color graphics, hear sounds and music, chat with other users, download files, talk online, see visually exciting tours of various places, and more.

Hypertext is the key ingredient of the World Wide Web. Hypertext creates *links* between computer files that can be on the same computer, in the next province, or half the world away. These links create a web of information, hence the name World Wide Web.

A *home page* is the first screen, or page, of a *Web site*. Additional documents at the same site are known as *Web pages*. You can reach them through the home page or via other links. Netscape Navigator's function is as a *Web browser*, a computer program that lets you access home pages and browse through the Web via links.

Navigating Using Links

When you open Netscape Navigator, you see the Netscape Communications Corporation's home page in the content area of the Navigator window. As you scroll down the page, you'll notice underlined or colored words and phrases. These are *hypertext links* that can transport you to various Web sites and pages. Some of the images on the page are also links. Both hypertext links and image links are called *hyperlinks*, as shown in Figure 2-1.

When you point to an image or text link, the mouse pointer changes to a hand pointer. After you use a text link to go to another page, the color of the link changes. This lets you distinguish between followed links and those links you have not yet viewed.

Moving through the Web by going from link to link, often with no particular objective, is called *browsing* or *surfing* the Web. Moving through the Web to find a particular Web page is referred to as *navigating* to the page.