

THE INTERNET:

Setting up a connection to the Internet depends largely on the user's current computer system environment. If the user is part of a larger organization that has an established local area computer network, he or she should approach the system administrator to request Internet access.

If the user wishes to obtain access as an individual, at home or as part of a smaller organization, the following components are required: a computer, a modem (14400 baud or higher), communications software (e.g. Procomm, Telix, etc.), and a browser (e.g. Netscape, Mosaic, etc). The choice of browser will place restrictions on the hardware and software configuration of the user's computer. If the user wishes to run Netscape, for example, it will be necessary to have MS Windows version 3.1 or higher which, in turn, requires that the computer processor be a 386 or higher.

After acquiring the necessary computer components, the next step is identifying an Internet service provider in the user's geographical area. A commercial provider sells Internet access much like a telephone company sells telephone access. Fees are billed monthly or annually. A regional network provider may also allow the user to obtain access to the Internet. Whomever is chosen as an Internet provider, they will usually assist the user in setting up a connection. Typically, they will be able to provide all of the necessary software (communication and browser) in a single package, along with instructions on how to install it on the user's computer.

To summarize cost factors, in addition to the purchase of a computer, modem and software, there will also be on-going charges from the Internet provider depending on usage. Typically, there is a monthly base fee. For example, 50 hours of connect time monthly might cost \$20.00 (\$CDN) per month, and any additional connect time used would be charged at a separate rate, for example \$00.50 per hour. Additional fees are charged for any special services provided, for example personal home page creation and storage.