

To access the Web a **browser** is used. This is a program that allows users to read a hypertext document. There are a variety of browsers available, e.g. Lynx, Netscape, Mosaic. The type of browser is determined by the user's local computer system.

A critical factor for success in using the Internet is understanding how people, machines, and resources are addressed on the Internet. Similar to postal addresses and telephone numbers, Internet addresses have rules and conventions for use.

TCP/IP defines how each computer on the Internet is distinguished from every other. Each computer has a unique Internet number. This number is referred to as an "IP Address." IP addresses are difficult for people to use so textual equivalents were created. Thus for almost every IP address there exists a textual (domain) name address. For example:

**IP Address**

192.41.140.35

**Domain Name Address**

www.nato.int

Domain names are hierarchical. Each portion of the address, separated by a period, is called a domain. Each address begins with the most specific domain at the left (the computer's name), and ends with the most top-level domain to the right. The middle portion usually indicates the department or organization involved. For example:

pa.acda.gov

pa  
acda  
gov

computer or server name  
U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency  
government site

Top-level domains include geographic as well as organizational designations. For example:

us  
ca  
org  
com  
mil  
edu

USA  
Canada  
an organization  
a commercial site  
a military site  
an educational site

A **Uniform Resource Locator (URL)** is a standard used on the Internet for specifying the location of information and the Internet tool needed to access it. This standard format incorporates the **domain name address**. The method of access, or Internet tool, is listed first, followed by a semi-colon and a double forward slash. The domain name address is listed next, followed by the file path of the document.