

Accessing an FTP Server

Lots of free and inexpensive software is available on the Internet at sites called *FTP* sites. FTP (File Transfer Protocol) is one of the older Internet tools. It was originally used to copy files from one mainframe to another. Many FTP sites are now available to the public, and they contain files that you can copy, or *download*, to your computer. Unlike graphical Web sites, FTP sites are text-based. Although you can access many FTP sites through Web links, FTP sites are not part of the World Wide Web.

In the past, users had to log in, or sign on, to the FTP sites with a login name (a user id) and a password. Now, anyone can log on to an *anonymous FTP site* and download files. The user id is "anonymous" and the password is your e-mail address. Netscape enters this information for you automatically when you access an FTP site.

Connecting to an FTP Site

Although Web pages can have links to FTP sites, you must connect to many sites manually. To connect to an FTP site manually, you type the site's URL in the Location field and press **ENTER**. Netscape takes care of everything else—it connects to the FTP site and logs you in.

To enter the URL, add **ftp://** to the beginning of the FTP site address. For example, the URL of the FTP site **ftp.netscape.com** is **ftp://ftp.netscape.com**.

After you have connected to an FTP site, you'll see a screen similar to the one in Figure 2-11. Follow any directions you see on your screen, especially time restrictions. Remember that you are a guest on someone's system, and you are allowed to use the FTP site only through the good graces of the system administrator.

FTP sites can only handle a given number of users at one time. Many sites are very popular, and it might be difficult to connect to them. Some of the more popular sites list alternate sites, called *mirror sites*, to which you might be able to connect instead. A mirror site has the same information as the main site but is usually less crowded. You should connect to the mirror site located nearest you.