

EXPLOITING THE NET

The following Unit is about the possibilities the Internet gives you both in terms of leisure activities and to exploit learning and working opportunities.

A. HOW TO SEARCH



1 Go through the five paragraphs and label them choosing from the list below.

- Par. 1: ☐ a. How engines work
- Par. 2: ☐ b. Saving time surfing the Net
- Par. 3: ☐ c. Evaluating results
- Par. 4: ☐ d. Engines which help
- Par. 5: ☐ e. Two ways to search

Par. 1 – With billions of web pages online, you could spend a lifetime surfing the **Web**, following **links** from one page to another. It can be amusing perhaps, but not very efficient if you are looking for specific information. Where do you start? Searching the Internet requires part skill, part luck and a little bit of artistry!

Par. 2 – You have probably heard of **search engines** such as *Yahoo!*, *Google*, and *Ask Jeeves*. There are literally dozens of these tools to help you locate what you are looking for. The **trick** is to understand how they work, so you can use the right tool for the job.

Par. 3 – Search engines break down into two categories: **directories** and **indexes**. Directories (*Yahoo!*) are good at identifying general information. Like a card catalogue in a library, they classify websites into similar categories, such as **accounting firms**, English universities and natural history museums. The results of your search will be a list of websites related to your search term. For instance, if you are looking for the Louvre museum website, use a directory. But what if you want specific information, such as biographical information about Leonardo da Vinci? Web indexes are the way to go, because they search all the contents of a website. Indexes use software programs called **spiders** and **robots** that **scour** the Internet, analyzing millions of web pages and newsgroup postings and **indexing** all of the words. Indexes (*MSN Search* and *Google*) find individual pages of a website that match your search

Answer the following questions.

- Do you usually send and receive email?
- Do you know what a nickname is?
- Do you know e-Bay?
- How often do you surf the Net?
- What do you search for?

criteria, even if the site itself has nothing to do with what you are looking for. You can often find unexpected **gems** of information this way, but be prepared **to wade** through a lot of irrelevant information too.



Par. 4 – Search results may be **ranked** in order of relevancy (the number of times your search term appears in a document) or how closely the document appears to match a concept you have entered. This is a much more **thorough** way to locate what you want.

Par. 5 – Regardless of which search engine you use, it really pays to find out the particulars of how it works. Take the time to read the **search tips** on the respective sites. For instance, how does the engine **handle** searches that include more than one word? Most engines, but not all, return results that include any of the words. Because there is so much information online, you will usually want to limit the **scope** of your searches.



2 In turns ask and answer the following questions.

- How do directories operate?
- What is better if you are looking for biographical data or historical events?
- What are spiders and robots?
- What are search tips?

GLOSSARY



accounting firms: aziende contabili

gem: (qui fig.) chicca

to handle: gestire

to index: elencare secondo un ordine

to rank: elencare

scope: raggio

to scour: perlustrare

thorough: dettagliato

trick: trucco

to wade: farsi strada

B. ELECTRONIC MAIL (EMAIL)



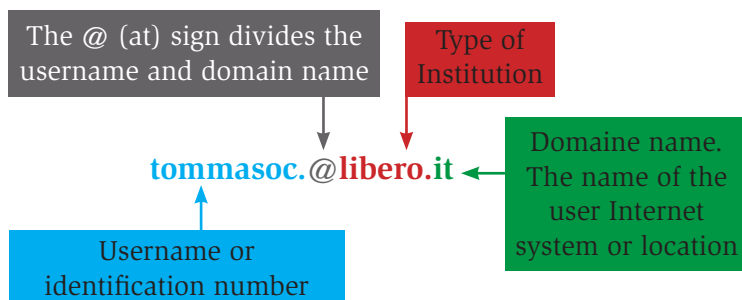
3 While listening to the following passage, fill in the blanks with the missing words.

Even with the (1) excitement of the Web, Electronic Mail (email) is the most frequently used application of the Internet. Many people who have (2) to the Internet at school, home, and work, use the Internet for no other purpose than to (3) and receive e-mail.

It is all very (4) You create the message, **log** onto the Internet, and send it. The message first goes to your Internet Service Provider's mail server, which in turn sends it to the recipient's mail server. On the (5) your message may go through several servers, each (6) the domain name in order to route it to the appropriate server. The message then remains in the recipient's mail server until he/she (7) it by "checking his/her mail".



Each email address you send is made up of certain (8)..... that help route it to the proper recipient:



The benefits of email are (9)....., mostly it is quick. Also, many people feel that the rules for regular mail do not apply to email, making it less (10)....., which in turn makes e-mail easier to compose and send.

It is not just friends and co-workers who are receiving and sending email. While surfing the Net, you will find email addresses everywhere. When you visit a website, you can click on the Webmaster link and let the company know what you think or read an article and immediately send the author an email. Every company performs its business or part of it through emails. This is why email **recovery** is not only possible but essential.

GLOSSARY

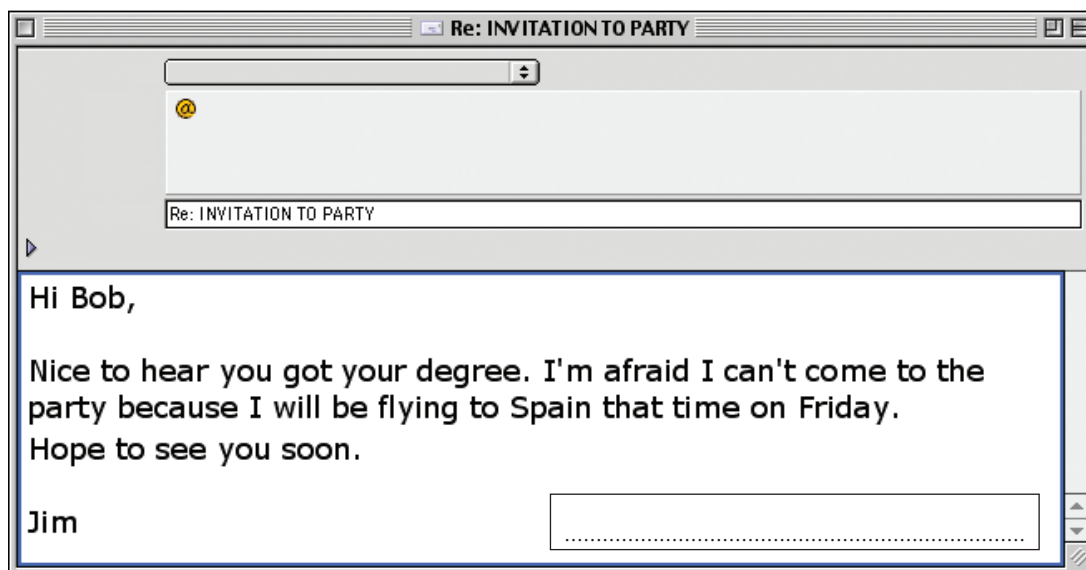


to log: registrarsi,
connettersi
recovery: recupero



4 This is an email message. Answer the following questions.

- Where are these parts of the mail? (write in the spaces provided)
 - the header
 - the message
- Who sent this email?
- Who received it?
- What is the mail about?





Email common abbreviations

IMHO in my humble opinion
FWIW for what is worth
FYI for your information
ASAP as soon as possible
FAQ frequently asked questions
TTYL talk to you later
BTW by the way
LOL laughing out loud
RTFM read the fine manual! *
ROFL rolling on the floor laughing

* sarcastic

MOVING DEEPER

Skype

One of the newest applications used for chatting (**featuring** text, video and audio) is Skype. Skype was founded in 2003 by Niklas Zennström and Janus Friis. Skype created a little piece of software that makes communicating with people around the world easy and fun. With Skype you can say hello or share a laugh with anyone, anywhere. And if both of you are on Skype, it's free.

Video calling is simple to set up and a great way to see family, friends or colleagues. Making a video call using Skype requires a webcam, in addition to a headset or speakers and microphone. You just have to install the software for the webcam and then plug in the webcam to the computer. Skype will automatically detect the webcam and offer a way to test it to ensure everything is working correctly. Once that is done, any Skype call can include video.

Skype is available in 28 languages and is used in almost every country around the world.

GLOSSARY



featuring: che include



Skype
video call

Extra Material

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C. SOCIAL NETWORK WEBSITES



5

The terms below (a-g) are in the text that follows. Match each term with the right definition, writing the letter in the box provided.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| a. share | <input type="checkbox"/> Easy to use. |
| b. audience | <input type="checkbox"/> Part of something that you notice because it seems important. |
| c. notify | <input type="checkbox"/> Use together. |
| d. hide | <input type="checkbox"/> Make not clearly visible. |
| e. stream | <input type="checkbox"/> Formally tell someone about something. |
| f. feature | <input type="checkbox"/> Group of people something is addressed to. |
| g. user-friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Long and usually continuous series of events. |

These social network websites are designed to build online communities of people who share their interests and activities. They provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services.

Social networking has created new ways to communicate and share information. Social networking websites are used regularly by millions of people and have become a part of everyday life.

Here are some of the most popular:



Facebook's target audience is more for young people than adults. Users can add friends and send them messages, and **update** their personal profiles to notify friends about themselves. Users can also join networks organized by workplace, school, or college. The name of the website comes from the name of the book given to students at the start of the academic year by university administrations in the US with the intention of helping students **to get to know** each other better.

MySpace was the most popular social network in the US in 2006, but its popularity has gradually **faded**. Nevertheless, after Facebook, it remains one of the most important social networks in the US. MySpace intends to focus on becoming a **hub** for discovering and sharing games, music, and video, PC World notes. Although more open than Facebook, MySpace recently introduced a new one-click privacy option that allows people to hide their entire profile to everyone **but** their friends.



Pip.io lets users define their audience as **loosely** or **broadly** as they choose. In the company's own words, "Pip.io helps us organize the people we know so that we can say what we want to who we want." Users can choose to make contacts "bi-directional," allowing for back-and-forth communication, or "uni-directional," which allows communication in only one direction and blocks personal messaging.

Users can create invite-only environments called Rooms, where a private **feed** is established and cannot be viewed by outsiders the way Facebook Pages can. What is more, **posts** made on Pip.io have no character limit and can contain in-line media (unlike Twitter). In addition, the user interface is clean, simple and easy to use.



Google+ was launched on the market as a challenge to Facebook. As with Facebook's service, Google+ has a central web page that displays an **ever-updating stream** of the comments, photos and links shared by friends and contacts.

A toolbar across the top of most of Google's sites – such as its main search page, its Gmail site and its Maps site – allows users to access their personalised data feed. They can then contribute their own information to the stream. Google+ will also offer a special video chat feature, in which **up to** ten people can jump on a conference call. Google will automatically store photos taken on mobile phones on its Internet servers, allowing a Google+ user to access the photos from any computer and share them.

Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service, created in March 2006. With Twitter you can send short text messages (140 characters in length), called “tweets”, to your friends, or “followers”. The short format of the tweet is a defining characteristic of the service. It allows informal collaboration and quick information sharing; you can share information with people that you would not normally exchange email with, opening up your circle of contacts to an **ever-growing** community. You can send your messages using the Twitter website directly, as a single SMS alert, or via a **third-party** application such as Twirl, Snitter, etc. Your tweets are displayed on your profile page, on the home page of each of your followers, and in the Twitter public **timeline**.



GLOSSARY



broadly: ampiamente

but: (qui) eccetto

ever-growing: in costante aumento

ever-updating stream: flusso in costante aggiornamento

to fade: dissolversi, svanire

feed: (qui) canale

to get to know: far conoscere

hub: centro di connessione

loosely: liberamente

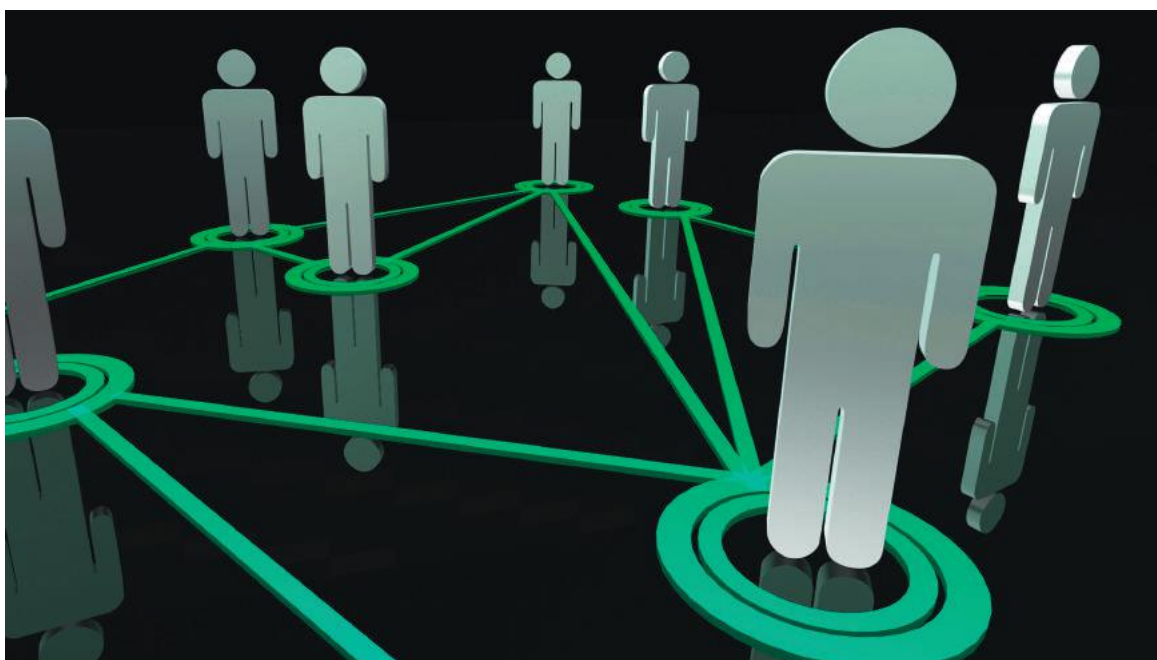
post: messaggio (su un newsgroup o una mailing list)

third party: di terze parti (ovvero esterna a Twitter)

timeline: sequenza di messaggi (post)

to update: aggiornare

up to: fino a





6 Ask and answer the following questions in turns.

- a. Are you on Facebook or any other social network?
- b. How long have you been on it?
- c. Are your parents on it, too?
- d. How often do you use it?
- e. In your opinion, are there any possible drawbacks of being on a social network?
- f. What are the advantages?
- g. Do you think social networks are a good alternative to using your mobile to communicate with friends? If so, why?
- h. Would you recommend any of the above mentioned social networks?

MOVING DEEPER

Blogging

A **blog** (a blend of the term **web log**) is a type of a website or part of a website updated with new content from time to time. Blogs are usually kept by an individual with regular **entries** of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly **displayed** in reverse-chronological order. Although not a **must**, most good quality blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other via **widgets** on the blogs and this interactivity distinguishes blogs from other static websites.

Many blogs provide commentary on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic. The possibility for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.

The writer, known as a blogger, makes periodic entries, sometimes as frequently as a few times a day. Blogs can be on any subject, for instance, politics, relationships or daily observations while driving to work. These blogs may be of interest only to the blogger's family and friends or they may command the attention of a global audience. It all depends on how thoughtful and compelling the blog is. What distinguishes a blog from other online content is that it is highly personal, reflecting the point of view of the blogger.

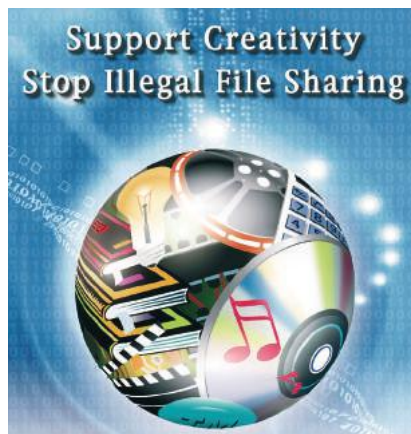
GLOSSARY



to display: mostrare
entry: inserzione
(a) must: un imperativo
widget: congegno grafico, componente grafico di una interfaccia



D. FILE SHARING AND DOWNLOADING



File sharing is one of the fastest growing and most talked about applications of the Internet. File sharing can occur when two computers are connected together via the Internet or a network. Until recently, the biggest **challenge** for those who wanted to share files was finding others who also wanted to share files.

In 1999, Shawn Fanning, a university undergraduate, wrote Napster a small MP3-sharing application. This software allowed users to connect to a central server. The server stored information about the shared files on the computers that were connected to it.

In order to get and run these files you need to learn how to download and set them up on your own computer. **Downloading** refers to the actual transferring of the document from the Internet to your own computer.

Before you start downloading you must make sure that you know what type of software is appropriate for your computer. The type of computer, the operating system and specifications of your computer dictate what type of programs you can run. You may not have the capacity to run certain software or the software may not be available for the platform you are using.

Then, you have to **set up a separate download directory**. It preserves your programs from getting mixed up with any other programs/files on your system, and helps you to know where you can find them.

Before you start downloading anything you should have virus protection.

Computer viruses are just like the real thing: they **keep** spreading until you get a cure and some can be deadly for your work and programs on your computer. Viruses spread when you launch an infected application or start up your computer from any external storage device that has infected system files. Some viruses stay active in memory until you turn off your computer. Other viruses stay active only as long as the infected application is running. Some viruses are programmed specifically to damage the data on your computer by corrupting programs, deleting files, or erasing your entire hard disk!

Remember if you want to have some fun on the Internet – “Safe Downloading” means putting your anti-virus software on your computer before you start!



7 Decide if the following statements are true or false, then correct the false ones.

	T	F
a. You can only share files in the form of texts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Napster made it possible to connect your PC to a central server.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Downloading software from the Net means using software freely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. You can download any kind of software on your PC.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Creating a download directory is useless.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. If you download programs, you need an updated virus protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

GLOSSARY



challenge: sfida

to keep (+ ing form): continuare

E. ON-LINE SHOPPING



8

The parts in *italics* of the following text are in scrambled order. Reorder them according to the logical sequence of actions, writing numbers in the spaces provided. Then listen to the recording and check if you were right.

On-line shopping has never been more popular. Buying on-line saves time and money and allows you to buy things from places you could not go to.

Many e-commerce sites have electronic catalogues that you can **browse** or search for specific **items**.

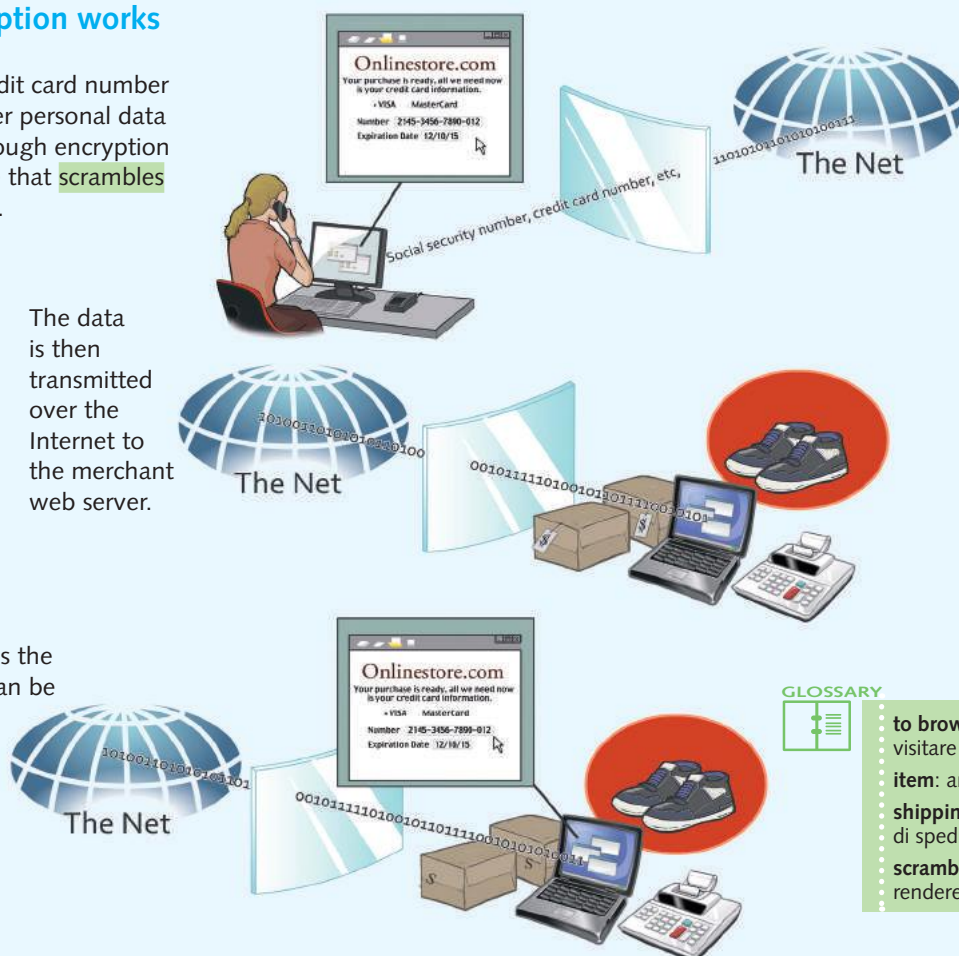
- ☐ Then you receive an on-screen confirmation. Some merchants also send an e-mail confirmation.
- ☐ Your credit card information is encrypted and sent to the merchant.
- ☐ When you have done your shopping, your purchases are totalled, then the tax and the **shipping costs** are added in.
- ☐ You fill in an on-line order form with the shipping information (address, telephone number, etc.)
- ☐ To pay, you type in your credit card number and any other information the merchant requires.
- ☐ As you find items you want to buy, you add them to your electronic shopping cart.

How encryption works

Your credit card number and other personal data pass through encryption software that **scrambles** the data.

The data is then transmitted over the Internet to the merchant web server.

Decryption software unscrambles the data so it can be read.



GLOSSARY



to browse: navigare, visitare

item: articolo

shipping costs: costi di spedizione

scramble: mescolare, rendere indecifrabile

Extra Material

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