

Lesson 1-1: Introduction to the Internet

Figure 1-1

The Internet is the largest network in the world, consisting of millions of computers all over the world, all connected together.

Figure 1-2

Web pages are stored on Web servers—computers that are permanently connected to the Internet.



Figure 1-1

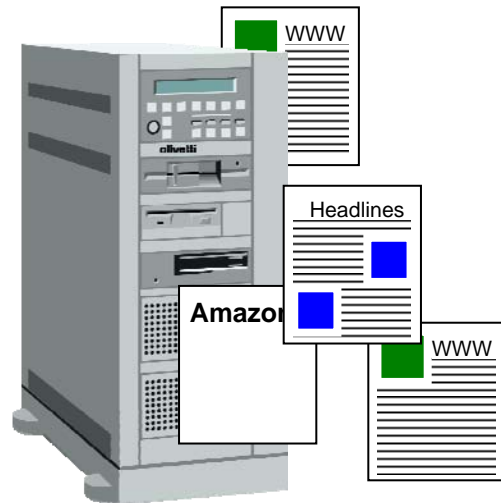


Figure 1-2

① ECDL

Skill Set: 7.1.1.1

Req. File: None

The Internet is the largest computer network in the world. It consists of millions of computers all over the planet, all connected to each another.

The Internet was born in the 1960's when the United States military worried that a nuclear bomb could destroy its computer systems (there weren't many of them back then). So it placed several computers far apart from each other and connected them with some super-fast telephone lines so that the computers could talk to each other. If a nuclear bomb blew up one computer, another computer could instantly take over; thus, the computer network wouldn't go down. Years passed and other organizations, such as colleges and universities, started connecting their computers to this growing network to share information.

Although the Internet has been around a long time, it wasn't until the 1990's that someone thought of a wonderful idea called the *World Wide Web*. The World Wide Web is what you probably think of when you think of the Internet, although it's really just a part of the Internet. The Web consists of millions of documents that are stored on hundreds of thousands of computers that are always connected to the Internet. These documents are called *Web pages*, and you can find Web pages on every subject imaginable—from your local newspaper to online catalogs to airline schedules, and much, much more.

Web pages are stored on *Web servers*. A Web server is a computer, not unlike your own computer, only bigger and faster. There are hundreds of thousands of Web servers located all over the world. Web servers are always connected to the Internet so that people can view their Web pages 24 hours a day.

So what can you do once you're connected to the Internet? Plenty. Table 1-1: *What Can I do on the Internet?* shows just a few of the many things there are to do on the Internet.

Table 1-1: What Can I do on the Internet?

Task	Description
Send and Receive E-mail	Exchanging electronic mail (or e-mail) is the most used and most popular feature on the Internet. Just like regular paper mail, you can send and receive e-mail with people around the world, as long as they have access to a computer and the Internet. Unlike regular paper mail, e-mail is usually delivered to its destination almost instantly.
Browse the World Wide Web	The World Wide Web is what most people think of when they think of the Internet—although it's really only a part of the Internet. The World Wide Web is an enormous collection of interconnected documents stored on Web servers all over the world. The World Wide Web has information on every subject imaginable.
Join online discussions with newsgroups	Newsgroups are discussion groups on the Internet that you can join to read and post messages to and from people with similar interests. There are thousands of newsgroups on topics such as computers, education, romance, hobbies, politics, religion, and more.
Chat with other online users	Chatting lets you communicate with people on the Internet instantly—no matter how far away they are! Most chats are text-based, meaning you have to type when you converse with people on the Internet. A growing number of chats have voice and even video capabilities—all without having to pay long distance charges.
Download software	You can download pictures, demo programs, patches and drivers for your computer, and many other types of files and save them to your computer.
Listen to music and watch videos	You can listen to sound on the Web, such as radio stations, or music by your favorite artists.