



Tips for Tech Savvy Seniors

# An Introduction to the Internet

## Beginners Guide: Part 1

The internet can seem like a daunting and scary place if you didn't grow up with computers, but it's become very user-friendly over the last few years. These days it's easy for anyone to jump on the world wide web to see what's on offer.

### Using the internet

The internet is a massive web of connected computers, all of which can talk to each other. When you connect to the internet, your computer can talk to other computers and they can talk to your computer. You can use the internet every day for such things as:

- Sending **emails**, which are letters that can be sent for free to anyone and arrive instantly.
- Looking up news, weather, health information, lotto and sport results, government information and forms.
- Ordering groceries, electronics, white goods and more from **online stores**.
- **Searching** for information on just about any topic, from train timetables to the date of your next bowls game, phone numbers and more!
- Sharing your photo and video collection, and seeing the shared collections of others.
- Talking or **video chatting** with online friends – at any time, for free.
- **Downloading** and watching movies, reading book reviews or watching sport.

## How to connect to the internet

You access the internet via an **Internet Service Provider (ISP)** like Telstra. The connection is provided for a monthly fee, similar to a phone service, and includes a special piece of hardware called a **modem**. Your **ISP** will guide you through how to set up the modem, and your computer will be ready to work with it right away, usually over a wireless (or **Wi-Fi**) connection. There are several kinds of internet connection:

- **ADSL**, which transforms an existing phone line into a high-speed data line. This used to be the most common kind of connection, but the NBN has now replaced it in many parts of Australia.
- **4G/5G**, which uses mobile phone networks to connect you to the internet.
- **Satellite**, which transmits data from satellites, usually for people in remote areas.
- **Cable**, which used to be the fastest kind of internet, but is now being phased-out in favour of the NBN.
- **NBN**, which is the newest and fastest kind of internet access in Australia. It uses either a cable, or a special transmitter on top of your house.

## Internet speeds and quotas

When it comes to choosing an internet connection, there are different speeds and different monthly quotas available on different plans.

- **The speed** of a connection is how fast web pages appear, how fast video and music streams, and how fast files can download. It also affects how many devices in your home can connect at the same time. Speed is measured in **megabits per second (Mbps)** and most options are between 10 and 100 Mbps.
- **The monthly quota** is the volume of data and media you can download. Data is measured in **megabytes (MB)** and **gigabytes (GB)**. Many NBN plans have unlimited data, but some cap the amount. If you go over the cap, or quota, the speed of your internet may be slowed down or you may be charged extra.

## How to choose an internet plan

If you just want to browse the web and send a few emails, then a 'light' and low-volume account will be enough. If you want to download a lot of apps, photos and videos, watch videos online and video chat with family and friends, then you need a higher-level or unlimited plan.

## Using a web browser and web search

Most of the things you do on the internet are via an app called a **web browser**. The default browser that comes with Windows computers is called **Edge**, but there are other options you can download for free, such as **Chrome** or **Firefox**.

- **The address bar** is at the top of the browser window. Type a web address in here, such as **www.wikipedia.org**, to load that web page.
- **Links** are highlighted words on a web page that you can click to go to a different page. A link can also be an image.
- **Searching** is one of the most common ways to find things on the internet. Instead of typing in a web address in the address bar, just type some words. The browser will use its **default search engine**, such as **Google** or **Bing**, and show you results from around the web. Click any result to go to that page.
- Some web pages have a **Search bar** just for that page. For example, Wikipedia lets you search just for Wikipedia articles, by using the Search bar in the top right of the page.
- You can also visit the home page of a search engine, such as **www.google.com**. Here, the large search bar in the middle of the page will search the whole internet.
- The first few results of a web search will often be **advertisements** and are clearly marked as such.