



To make the most of your service, it is helpful to understand the basic principles behind hosting an Internet (web) site, and to learn the terms that will frequently be used in these discussions. For more advanced explanations (on a wider range of topics), see the *Glossary* section of the *ServInt Virtual Hosting User's Manual*.

**Q. What is a Server?**

**A.** A server is a computer that stores information many people can access. It runs special software to make its contents viewable to outside users.

**Q. What is a Domain Name?**

**A.** A domain name is the name that people type into their browsers to reach your site. For example, *www.dcfree.net* is a domain name.

**Q. What is an IP address ?**

**A.** Every computer connected to the Internet has a unique number called an Internet Protocol address. While people think of web site addresses as their domain name, computers only see the IP address, which is in a numeric form that they can understand. When connecting to a web site, you can type the IP address or the domain name of the site.

**Q. What is TCP/IP?**

**A.** To exchange files and information on the internet, each computer on the internet must be able to speak the same language. Transmission control Protocol / Internet Protocol is the language used by computers to transfer information throughout the internet.

**Q. What is PPP?**

**A.** Point to Point Protocol allows you to use a modem to connect your home computer to the Internet.

**Q. What is HTML?**

**A.** HTML stands for Hyper-Text Markup Language ("Hypertext" is text which is linked to other text, as the clickable links on web pages are). HTML marks are placed around the text on your pages in order to tell a web browser how to make the page look, what graphics to include, et cetera.

**Q. What is HTTP?**

**A.** Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol is the language spoken by web servers to send web pages to a user's web browser.

**Q. What is a Web Browser?**

**A.** A web browser is a software program which you use to look at web pages (for example, **Netscape Navigator**, **Netscape Communicator**, **Microsoft Internet Explorer**, or **AOL Web Browser**). If you tried to look at web pages without a web browser, all you would see is the HTML "source" file that they were written in; viewed through a web browser, they are displayed as you want them to appear.

**Q. What is a Web Server?**

**A.** A web server is a computer connected to the web (Internet) that makes web pages available to the world.

***Q. What is Unix, or a Unix Server?***

**A.** Unix is an operating system, just like Windows 95 or Macintosh OS is. A Unix server is a computer which runs the Unix OS. The computer which holds all of the D.C. FreeNet web pages is a Unix server. While Unix does not have a friendly point-and-click environment for users to work with, we use it because it is the fastest and most reliable operating system for a web server to use. A Unix server can also be a web server, an FTP server, a mail server, etc. (and they usually are!).

***Q. What is Telnet? What is a Telnet Client?***

**A.** Telnet allows you to communicate with a Unix server as though you were sitting in front of it. A Telnet client is a program you run on your home PC which connects to a Telnet-capable server, much the same way that your web browser connects to web servers.

***Q. What is FTP? What is an FTP Client?***

**A.** FTP or File Transfer Protocol lets you “download” files from other computers that interest you, or “upload” them to your site so that others can see them. An FTP client is a program you run on your home PC which connects to a FTP-capable server, much the same way that your web browser connects to web servers.

***Q. What is the InterNIC?***

**A.** The InterNIC is an organization which assigns domain names and keeps records of which ISP is responsible for them.

***Q. What is a Mail Server?***

**A.** A mail server is a computer which operates 24 hours a day, collecting E-mail for its users and/or sending their outgoing mail. Since the mail server is operating continuously, users can connect at any time and download or send mail. Some ISPs maintain different mail servers for incoming and outgoing mail; others (like DC FreeNet) use the same server for the sake of simplicity.

***Q. What is POP Mail? What is a POP Server?***

**A.** The Post Office Protocol is a communications method for receiving incoming mail which you download from a remote mail server and read on your home computer. A POP server is where you download your mail from.

***Q. What is SMTP Mail? What is an SMTP Server?***

**A.** Simple Mail Transport Protocol is a communications method used for sending E-mail from your home computer to your ISP's mail server, and then out to the Internet. An SMTP server is where you send outgoing mail to.