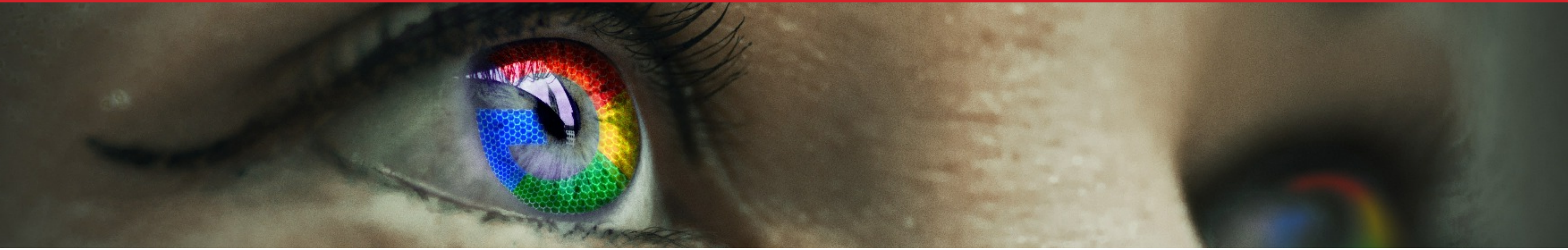
Web Browser Basics



Half the world's population of 4 billion people use the Internet every day.

Whether you are searching for a new cleaning contractor or the latest hilarious cat video, you are almost certainly using an Internet browser. Currently, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge are the most popular browsers. However, one company dominates Internet search. On average, there will be 2 trillion Google searches per day during 2019.

What is a web browser?

An Internet browser or web browser is a software application that enables you to view content on your computer or mobile device as colourful, interactive webpages instead of unreadable code. Each web browser has its pros and cons such as speed, performance, ease of use and security. You will find that some websites and web-based applications will work better on one browser than another. For this reason, it's sensible to have more than one browser on your PC or smartphone. For many people, Google Chrome is the default option. However, if you find that a webpage will not load correctly or an online tool is not working, you can quickly switch to Microsoft Edge or Mozilla Firefox instead.

Customise your user experience

Browsers come with a range of handy features and settings that you can change to meet your preferences. There are also lots of little helper applications that perform specific tasks known as extensions. These enable you to customise your browser experience. There are numerous ad blockers and privacy extensions, for example.

However, hackers and cyber criminals can also use extensions to attack your computer, hijack your bandwidth and steal your data. You should only ever use extensions from trusted sources and keep them updated.

Cyber security alert

The growth of cybercrime makes safe Internet browsing a priority. The size of the problem is immense. 4.5 million cybercrimes were committed across the UK last year with two in every five businesses becoming victims. When reviewing search results, it is important to check that a website is legitimate. Remember to look for the little padlock symbol and letters ‘https’ at the start of the web address. This is widely used for secure communications over the Internet. Unfortunately,

cybercriminals are clever and sneaky. Even if the websites you visit are trustworthy, the online advertisements displayed on them can be malicious and infect your computer or mobile. You should always be cautious of websites that offer free music, movies and software downloads. This is a common method of spreading malware and viruses.

Web content filtering

In order to minimise the chances of your staff clicking on the wrong thing, Modern Networks recommend that our clients use web content filtering. Based on a set of rules, this tool allows you to block offensive, unproductive, malicious and even illegal content.

Updates and security patches

Just like any other software application, it is important to update your browser and use the latest version. This will ensure you have the most recent security patches. Google Chrome, for example, auto-updates by default. However, it’s easy to change the settings yourself. As we mentioned earlier, it’s essential you also keep your browser extensions up-to-date.

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Configure your browser

It's easy to configure your browser to improve security and privacy. You should block malicious sites and third-party cookies, disable Flash, stop pop-ups, turnoff tracking and the autofill function that remembers your passwords.

A safe window on the world

The Internet browser is like a window on the world, giving you access to a wealth of useful content, productivity tools and entertainment. However, like any open window, it's also an invitation to criminals. Just as you can close and lock your windows, you can take many simple precautions to safeguard your web browsing.

See our handy safe browsing checklist on page 5.

About Modern Networks

Modern Networks is the leading provider of managed IT and telecoms services to the UK's commercial property sector. We provide managed services to over 1,700 landmark office buildings and shopping centres. We offer everything from fast, friendly 24/7 technical support, computers, Office 365 and managed print to Cloud telephony and business broadband. Committed to cyber security best practice, Modern Networks is Cyber Essentials certified. Contact us now to learn more.

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Your safe browsing checklist:

☑ Keep your browser up-to-date and security patched.

☑ Lookout for web addresses (URLs) with the padlock symbol and letters "https" for secure communications.

☑ Beware of phishing sites designed to trap you. Spelling mistakes, poor grammar and design errors can give them away.

☑ Ensure you have anti-virus installed and your data backed up.

☑ Use web content filtering to block offensive, unproductive and illegal websites.

☑ Keep your operating system and applications up-to-date.

☑ Only download content from trusted sources.

☑ Only use trusted extensions. Keep them up-to-date.

☑ Block pop-ups.

☑ Check your default browser settings and change them where necessary to improve security and privacy.

☑ Configure your browser to delete cookies on closing.

☑ Avoid using "Autofill" features that store passwords and other sensitive information in your browser.

☑ Use malware and phishing filters or safe browsing mode in your browser.