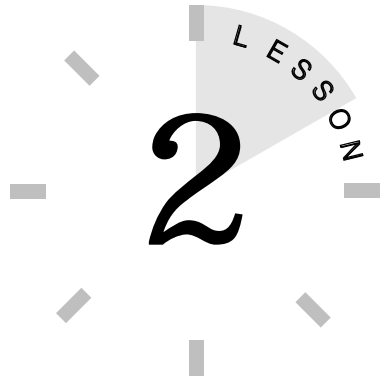# 2

CUSTOMIZING AND MAINTAINING NETSCAPE®

In this lesson, you learn about changing Netscape's on-screen appearance and how to make configuration changes.

CHANGING NETSCAPE'S APPEARANCE

Quite a bit of space in the Netscape window is occupied by toolbar and Directory buttons and the Location text box, as shown in Figure 2.1. This cuts down on the amount of viewing space left to display Web pages. There are a few simple changes you can make to secure more room on your screen. In this section, you learn how to maximize and customize your Netscape screen.

REMOVING THE TOOLBAR

The nine icons that make up Netscape's navigation toolbar are shortcuts to commands that appear on the **File**, **Edit**, **View**, and **Go** menus. Hiding all three toolbars allows you to see more of the current page (see Figure 2.2). To remove the toolbar, follow these steps:

1. Open the **View** menu.

2. Select the toolbars you want to show or hide.

FIGURE 2.1   The typical Netscape view of a document.

FIGURE 2.2   Netscape window with all three toolbars hidden.

TIP

Change Your Video Mode   Another way to display more of the current page on your screen, without removing the toolbars, Location text box, and Directory buttons, is to change your video mode. If you bought your computer and monitor within the last three years, there is a good chance it supports a video mode higher than the standard 640×480 VGA mode. Check your system's control settings to adjust the video resolution.

CHANGING COLORS

Most users eventually become tired of seeing the same screen colors day after day. Fortunately, if you become bored with Netscape's screen colors, you can change them by following these steps:

1. Open the **Edit** menu and choose **Preferences**. This opens the Preferences dialog box, as shown in Figure 2.3.
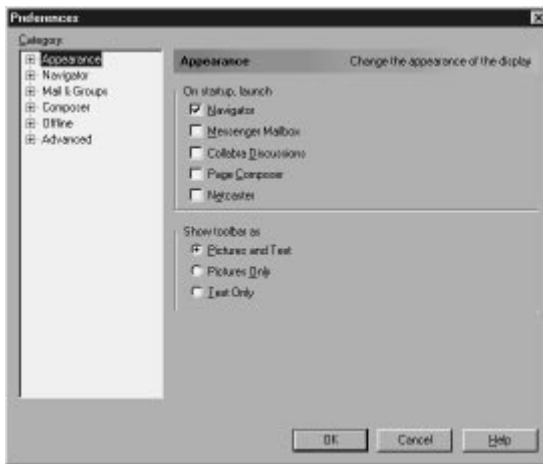

FIGURE 2.3 Netscape's Preferences dialog box.

2. In the Preferences dialog box, choose **Colors** under the Appearance category (refer to Figure 2.3).

3. You can change the color of links, previously viewed links, text colors, and the screen background. Select the item you want to change and then click the corresponding **Choose Color** button. The Colors dialog box appears.

4. From the Colors dialog box, select a new color to use and then click **OK**.

5. To exit the Preferences dialog box and activate your choices, click **OK**.

> **TIP**
>
> **Changing Color on the Mac with the Apple Colorpicker** Changing colors on the Mac is a bit different from Windows. Click the To **Create a Custom Color** dialog box for a visited link and then click **Default Color**. The Apple System Colorpicker appears, which enables the user to select from any color in the system palette.

Color choices are purely a matter of taste. Experiment with different selections until you create the look you want.

> **TIP**
>
> **Override!** Make sure you choose the **Always Use My Colors, Overriding Document** check box if you want to view your color selections on every Web page. By overriding the colors of some sites on a Mac, you may find text is hard to read and graphics look out of place. More and more designers are color-coordinating their sites so that each element works to complement the other.

CHANGING FONTS

Another way to customize your Netscape screen is by selecting a different font. Go to the Preferences dialog box (choose **Edit**, **Preferences**) and select **Fonts** under the Appearance category (see Figure 2.4).

From the Fonts section, you can change to a proportional font such as Times Roman or a fixed font like Courier. A proportional font gives each character the amount of room it needs. For example, the letter "i" does not require as much space as the letter "w." A fixed font assigns the same amount of space to every character. Because they're more aesthetically pleasing, proportional fonts are common on Web pages.
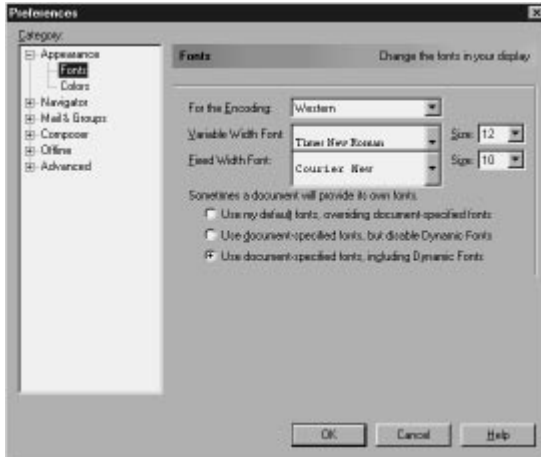
FIGURE 2.4 You can change the appearance of fonts on the Netscape screen.

CONTROLLING IMAGES

You can find controls for fine-tuning the way Netscape displays pictures by selecting the **Advanced** category under the Preferences dialog box (see Figure 2.5).
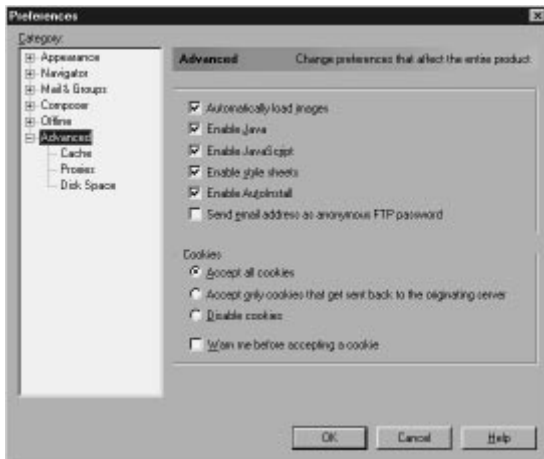

FIGURE 2.5 The Advanced configuration settings.

The **Automatically Load Images** option allows you to specify whether you want to display images with Web pages. If you choose not to check this option, icons will appear in place of the images on your Web pages. This choice saves a lot of time, especially, if you have a slow Internet connection. To display the page's images, click the **Images** button on the toolbar. When **Automatically Load Images** is turned off, a new Images icon appears on the Navigation toolbar.

MANAGING YOUR CACHE

One way to fine-tune Netscape's performance is by learning to manage your cache. The *cache* is the memory (disk and RAM space, depending on your operating system) that Netscape Navigator uses to store Web pages you have viewed. Every time you download a Web document, it is stored in Netscape's cache. Once it's stored, you can easily go back and forward to the page without having to download again. This keeps Netscape moving more smoothly.

Cache   A temporary holding area for data. Many programs, such as Netscape, use a cache to store frequently used data or files.

Netscape comes with some default settings for cache size. There may be times when you want to change the cache sizes to help Netscape store more pages. For example, if you're using Netscape to play large files that use a plug-in, such as Shockwave, you probably need to increase the size of the cache so that Netscape can store the huge files associated with the plug-in. On the Mac, the cache setting is all disk space. The memory cache is set in the Netscape Info dialog box and retrieved through the Finder.

To take a look at Netscape's cache options you can set, follow these steps:

1. Open the **Edit** menu and choose **Preferences**. Select **Cache** under the Advanced category. This opens the Preferences dialog box, shown in Figure 2.6.
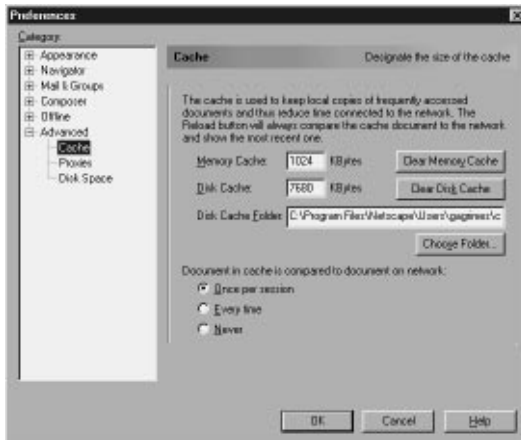

FIGURE 2.6   Use the cache options to help regulate Netscape's performance.

2. In the **Memory Cache** text box, you can increase Netscape's cache by typing in a higher number.

> **Careful!**   You should never decrease the size of your cache, particularly the default setting, or you'll run into trouble.

3. The **Disk Cache** text box (labeled **Cache Size** on a Macintosh) tells how much disk space is allotted for cache. By default, it is 5,000K (1,000K for Macintosh users).

4. The cache options let you tell Netscape how many times to check a Web document against the original. This keeps the information up-to-date by verifying the cache

contents with documents on the network. The less Netscape has to check, the faster Netscape will perform. The **Once per Session** option is usually sufficient unless you are viewing sites that contain information which is frequently updated, such as stock prices or sports scores.

TIP   **How Often Is Once per Session?**   If you choose the Once per Session option, Netscape verifies a document the first time you view it. If you view the same Web document later in the session, verification by Netscape is not necessary. Chances are the document hasn't changed from its original form since the first time you viewed it.

TIP   **Never Say Never!**   If you want to speed up Netscape's performance, choose the **Never** option under **Verify Documents**. If you don't mind reloading pages you have previously viewed, this can improve Netscape's speed.

5. To exit the Preferences dialog box, click **OK**. To exit without making any changes, click **Cancel**.

TIP   **Are You Networked?**   If you're using Netscape on a network, you'll find other configuration settings you can change in the remaining categories in the Preferences box. Be sure to consult your network administrator for more information about your setup.

SETTING UP A DEFAULT HOME PAGE

When you first start Netscape Navigator 4.0, it automatically loads a default home page, usually Netscape's own corporate home page. However, you can change your *starting page*. For example, you may prefer to use your service provider's home page, a search engine, a trade rag page, a stock page, or a news page as your starting page.

Follow these steps to designate a specific home page to use:

  1. From the Navigator window, open the **Edit** menu and choose **Preferences**. The Preferences dialog box appears.

  2. Choose **Navigator** under **Category** to display the browser's configuration settings (see Figure 2.7).
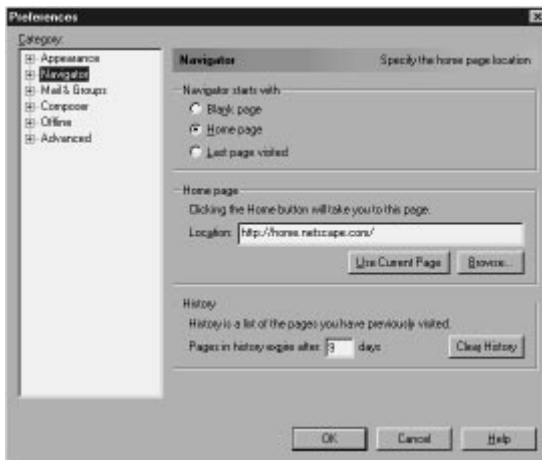

FIGURE 2.7   The Navigator section of the Preferences dialog box.

  3. Under the **Home Page** section, locate the **Location** text box.

  4. In the text box, delete any existing text and type the new URL (Web page address) that you want to designate as your starting page.

5. Click **OK** to exit the Preferences dialog box.

The next time you start Netscape Navigator, your new home page will appear. Whenever you want to return to the home page after visiting other Web sites, click the **Home** icon in the Navigator's toolbar.

> **TIP**
>
> **Quick Click**   If you click the Netscape Status icon in the upper-right corner of the Navigator window, you'll automatically return to Netscape's home page.

In this lesson, you learned how to configure and customize Netscape Communicator to suit your individual needs and tastes. In the next lesson, you learn how to use Netscape Navigator to start surfing the Web.