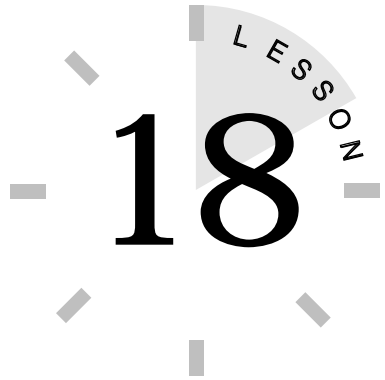


RETRIEVING FILES WITH FTP



In this lesson, you learn how to use Netscape to access FTP servers on the Internet and transfer files.

WHAT IS AN FTP SERVER?

Not all sites you find on the Web are graphic-based Web servers storing hyperdocuments. There are numerous FTP servers you can tap into that act as file warehouses. In the earlier days of the Internet, a system was developed to handle the transfer of files between computers; that system is FTP (File Transfer Protocol). From FTP servers, people could tap into file warehouses: text files, program files, and more.



FTP File Transfer Protocol is a set of rules that dictate how files are exchanged between computers.

There are plenty of FTP sites you can access to look for files. Public access archives let you log on to the site as an anonymous user to search for data. Many FTP servers enable you to use an anonymous logon to connect and access unrestricted areas on their servers. Once connected, you can search for data and download files onto your computer without leaving the Netscape program.



Anonymous Logon Many FTP sites let you connect to their system anonymously to view or download stored files. However, you cannot make changes to the files or upload any of your files.

You may be accustomed to using an FTP program provided by your Internet Service Provider or one that you found on the Internet. With Netscape Communicator, you can access FTP sites without using a special FTP program. You can connect to FTP sites by using the same method used to connect to HTTP sites, but, instead of typing in the prefix `http://`, type in the prefix `ftp://`.

When you log on to an FTP server, notice that the files are arranged into directories or folders, which appear as links on your Netscape screen. To open a directory, click the directory name (link). When you select a file, Netscape attempts to view or play the file or open the appropriate plug-in or helper application to do the job. If Netscape can't view the file, it will ask you if you want to download the file. You can save the file on your computer's hard disk and open it later.

Finding your way to the right file on an FTP server isn't always a quick process. You usually have to dig through several layers of directories and subdirectories to find the right file. The hierarchical system is similar to how you store files on your computer. For example, if you're using Windows 95, Explorer lets you look through your folders indexed in a directory tree. Start with an index or root file; then continue to open subdirectories to find the information you want.



You've Already Used FTP! When you downloaded a copy of the Netscape Navigator program, you transferred the file from Netscape's FTP server onto your computer.

WORKING WITH FTP FILES

To help you determine which files you want to view or download, you need to learn how to read the various file extensions you may come across in an FTP archive.

Text files Plain text files use the extension `.TXT` and are easily read from the Netscape window.

Executable files PC program files often use the extension `.EXE`. Most `.EXE` files are self-extracting. You must download the file to use it. Mac users look for `.SEA` files, which are also self-extracting program files.

ZIP files PC files ending with the `.ZIP` extension are compressed by a program such as WinZIP or PKZIP. If you download a zipped file, you will need to unZIP (extract) it by using the same type of program.

BinHex files Files ending with the `.Hqx` extension are Mac files.

UNIX files Files ending with the `.tar`, `.tar.z`, or `.gnu` extension are compressed UNIX archival files.

Compressed files are quite common on FTP servers. There are many programs available to compress files, thus leaving more room on your computer and you can download them faster. Depending on your operating system, you may be accustomed to working with compressed files. For example, PC files are often compressed into a `.ZIP` format. To view a ZIPped file, you must use a program such as WinZIP or PKZIP to open the file. Macintosh files are often compressed into a `.SIT` or `.Hqx` format. Here are a few other file types to be aware of:

- `.ARC` Files compressed with PKARC for DOS
- `.ZOO` Files compressed with Zoo210
- `.PIT` Files compressed with Mac's Packit program
- `.shar` Archived UNIX Shell files
- `.z` Files compressed with a UNIX compression program

ACCESSING AN FTP SERVER

To jump to an FTP server by using Netscape, follow these steps:

1. Start your Internet connection and open the Netscape program.
2. In the Location text box, type `ftp://ftpX.netscape.com/` (where *X* is 2 through 20, such as `ftp2` or `ftp3`, and so on) and press Enter. This takes you to one of the Netscape FTP servers (see Figure 18.1).

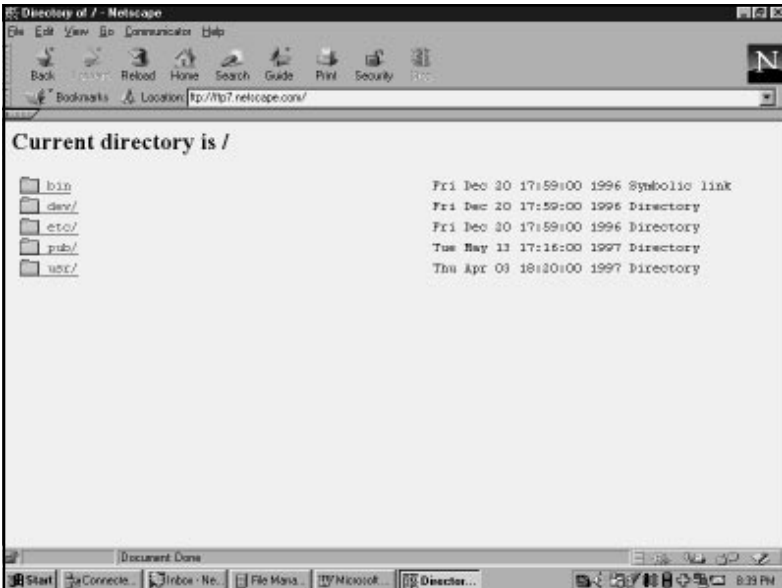


Figure 18.1 The Netscape FTP server.



Server Busy? Netscape has many FTP servers, if the first one is busy, try another. Type in **`ftp://ftp2.netscape.com/`**, **`ftp://ftp3.netscape.com/`**, and so on up to 20.

3. Scroll down the page to find a directory listing.
4. Click the `pub/` directory. This opens another page listing the subdirectories found within the `pub/` directory.
5. Click the Cooltalk directory. This opens the Cooltalk directory that lists directories where you can find the Netscape CoolTalk program file. Choose the Mac directory.
6. The next page lists the contents of the Mac directory, which happens to include program files (for a Mac) that you can download onto your computer (shown in Figure 18.2).

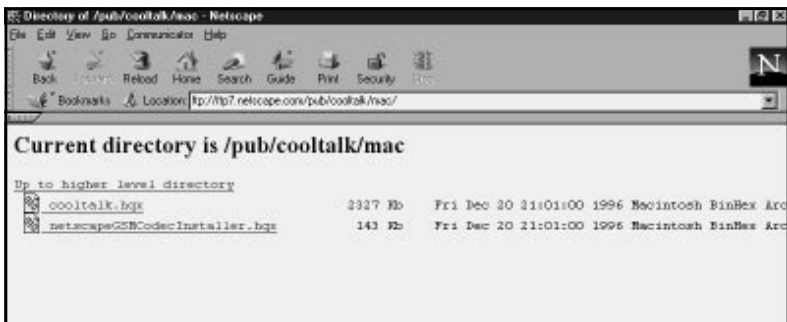


FIGURE 18.2 Files are listed as links on the FTP page and often indicate the size and date of creation.

As you can see, the FTP directories are easy to navigate. You will have to go through the various layers of directories and subdirectories to find what you're seeking.



What About FTP Sites that Require Passwords? If you need to log on to a password-protected FTP site and you already have a user name and password, the URL should look similar to **ftp://gagrimes:telephone@ftp.gonzo.com**. The order is **ftp://user:password@ftp.site.com**.

LOCATING FILES ON AN FTP SERVER

Looking through FTP sites is similar to looking for buried treasure. You never know what kinds of great files are stored on a faraway FTP server. Where do you begin to locate the files you want? There are thousands of FTP servers you can search. You'll find a monster listing of FTP sites at the following URL:

<http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/Mosaic/Interfaces/ftp/ftp-interface.html>

This site enables you to look through FTP servers based on alphabetical names. For example, if you want to tap into the University of Ohio's FTP server, click the L to O link.

You may also use a program called Archie to help you look up specific types of files on various FTP servers. Follow these steps to use Archie:



Archie An Internet search tool to help you locate files.

1. In Netscape's Location text box, type <http://hoohoo.ncsa.uiuc.edu/archie.html> and press Enter. This opens the Archie Request Form page, as shown in Figure 18.3.



More Archie Sites Some other Archie sites you can use are <http://www-ns.rutgers.edu/htbin/archie> and <http://www.wg.omron.co.jp/AA-eng.html>. You'll find many more by searching for Archie under Yahoo! or Lycos.

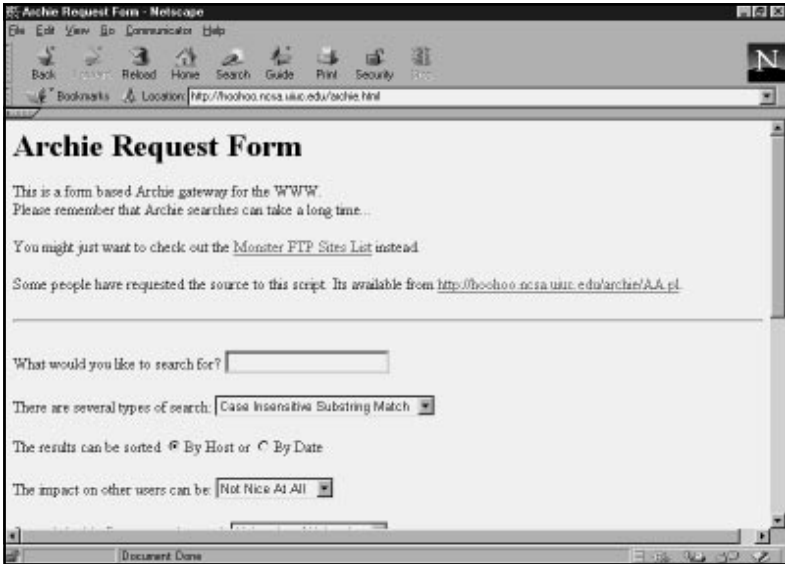


FIGURE 18.3 Archie can help you locate specific types of files among the many FTP sites.

2. Scroll down the page and fill out the Archie Request Form (see Figure 18.4). Enter the keyword(s) you want to search for, and select any other options you want to use for the search. When you're finally ready, click the Submit button.
3. An Archie search can take some time, so be patient. When it's finished, a page with a list of matches appears. Click any match link to connect to the FTP server.

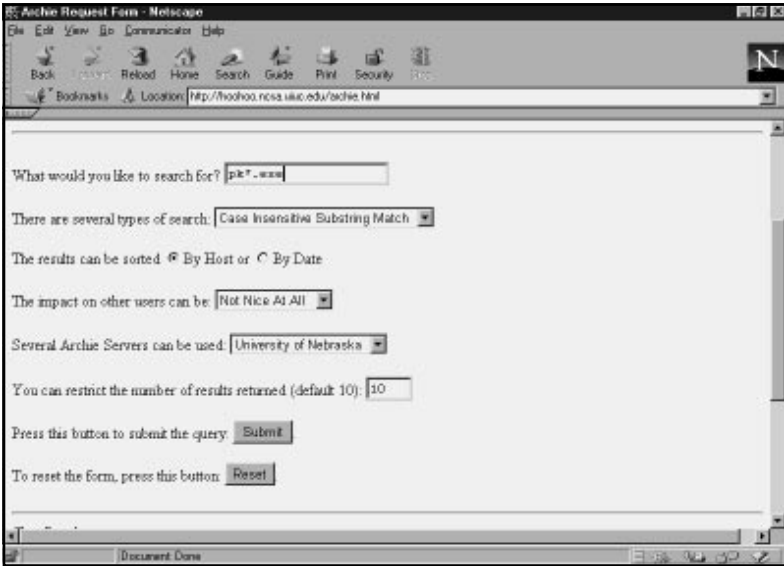


FIGURE 18.4 The Archie search form.

TRANSFERRING FILES

Once you find a file you want, you can download it onto your computer. When you select a file to download, Netscape asks you how you want to continue by presenting a dialog box or immediately opening a Save As dialog box to designate where the new file should be stored. Be sure to note the size of the file in its FTP listing. This information will help you approximate how long the download may take.

Follow these steps to transfer an FTP file onto your computer:

1. Select the FTP file you want to download. If Netscape recognizes the file type, a dialog box appears. Type in where you want the new file stored. If Netscape doesn't recognize the file type, it opens the Unknown File Type dialog box. Click the Save File button to save the file.

2. The download starts. Depending on the size of the file, your connection speed, and the FTP traffic, the download may take a few minutes or a few hours.
3. When the download is complete, you can exit Netscape and check out the file.

Want to pass on your favorite shareware program or graphic image? If you have permission, you can upload files onto an FTP server as easy as downloading them. Use these steps to transfer (upload) a file from your computer to the FTP server:

1. Depending on your operating system, open the directory containing the file you want to upload. For example, if you're using Windows 3.x, open File Manager (or whatever similar tool you use) and select the file you want to upload.
2. From the Netscape window, open the FTP server and directory where you want the file stored.
3. Drag the file icon from the directory window into the Netscape window. (You may have to resize the windows to drag and drop the file.)

If you prefer, you can also use Netscape's menu commands to upload a file. Open the File menu and choose Upload File. This opens a dialog box where you can copy the file to the FTP server.

In this lesson, you learned how to use FTP to find files on the Internet. In the next lesson, you learn about Netcaster.