



The Kaplan eGuide to Office XP

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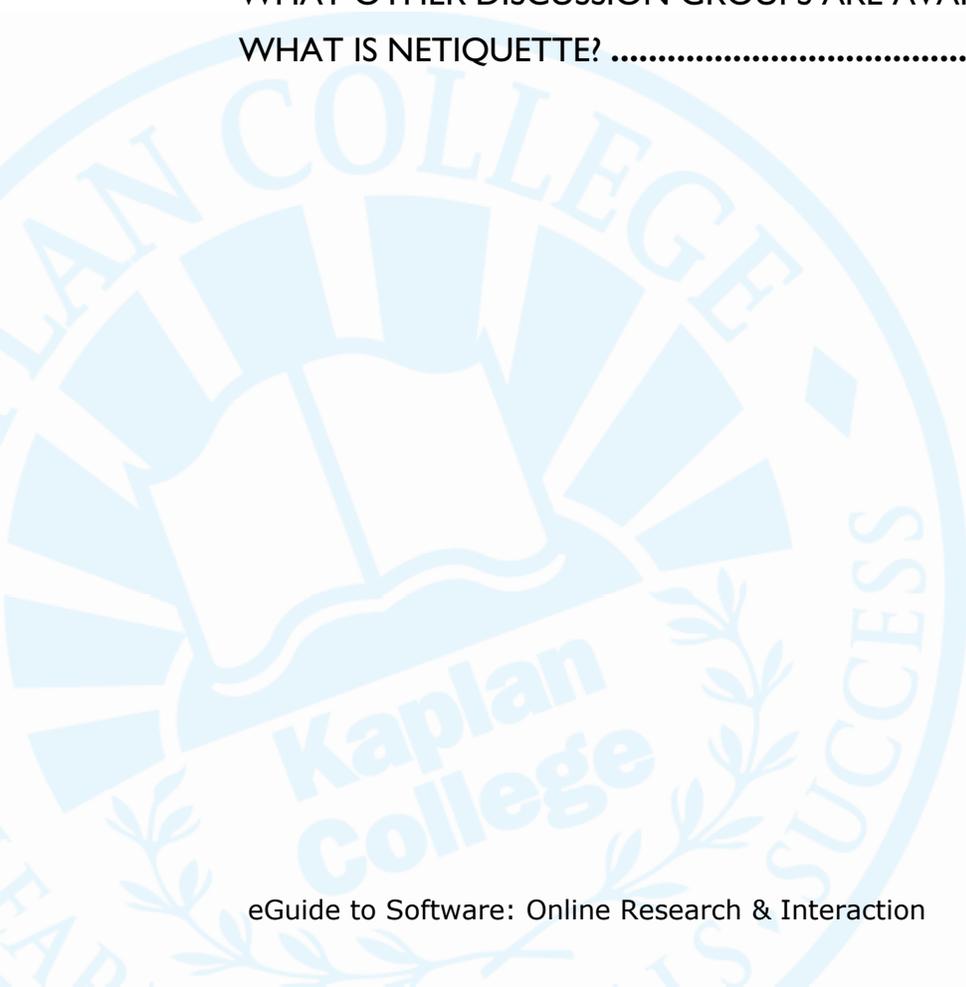
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Online Research & Interaction

HOW DO I USE THE WEB TO FIND INFORMATION?

There are several types of websites that will help you find information on the Web:

Search Directories

Search directories employ people to catalog information on special topics from across the Web and organize these links into categories and subcategories. One of the most popular Web directories is Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com). About.com (www.about.com) is another popular search directory in which Web guides build individualized websites to organize information (be warned, though, that About.com relies heavily on pop-up ads). The largest non-commercial Web directory is The Open Directory Project (www.dmoz.org).

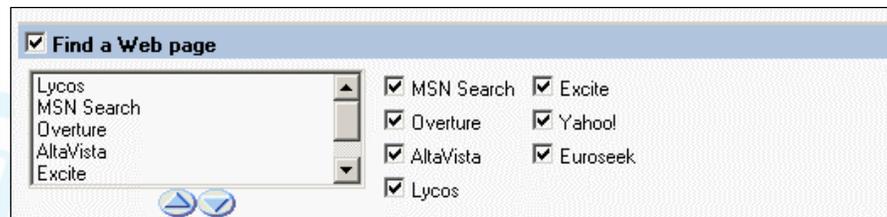
The advantage of a search directory is that the links have been evaluated, organized, and sometimes even summarized by a real human. The disadvantage is that the information is updated and maintained by real humans, who are sometimes slow and imperfect.

Pop-Up Ads

Pop-up ads are ads that pop up in a new window. While they are fairly harmless, they can slow down your Internet connection and become nuisances.

Search Engines

Search engines rely on computer programs called “spiders” to go out and catalog websites and keep track of what is



available on the Web. Currently, the most popular search engine is Google (www.google.com). Other options include Ask Jeeves (www.ask.com) and Teoma (www.teoma.com). Researchers should never rely on the results of only one search engine.

Meta-Search Sites

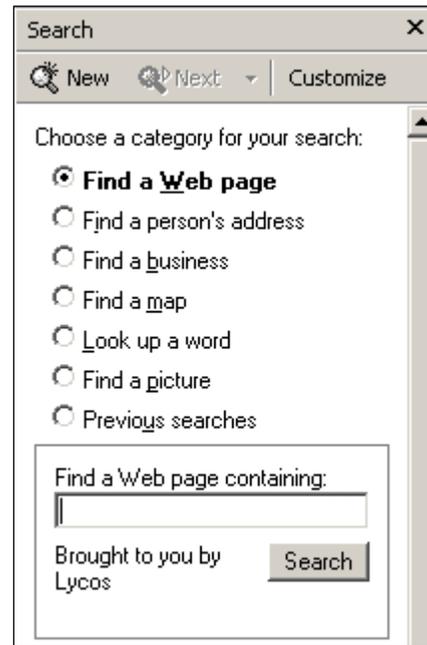
If you are tired of running searches on multiple search engines, try a meta-search site. Meta-search sites will submit your search to search engines and directories for you, and present you with all of the results. Two popular meta-search sites include Dogpile (www.dogpile.com) and HotBot (www.hotbot.com).

Internet Explorer Search Button

Most people do not realize that Internet Explorer comes with a meta-search site built right in!

One quick way to run multiple searches at once is to customize the “Search” button on your Internet Explorer toolbar. It is actually very simple to do:

- On the toolbar, click **Search**.
- When the new search toolbar opens, click **Customize**.
- Once the new window opens, next to “Find a Web page,” check the boxes next to all seven search engines.
- Click **OK**.
- Enter your search term in the search window.
- When you are finished reviewing the results of one search, click the **Next** button to see what the other search sites found.
- To start a new search, click **New**.



Web Logs

Sometimes called “blogs,” most Web logs are little more than personal online diaries or journals like Megnut (www.megnut.com).

However, many professionals keep Web logs that record the latest information on their professional fields. Others are focused on finding and recording hard-to-find online information.

Web logs are organized chronologically, with the newest information first. Some encourage feedback, questions, and discussion. Some examples of professional Web logs include the following (you can get to the blog by typing or copying and pasting the URL into your Web browser):

- *SherpaBlog*: Anne Holland is a freelance marketing consultant who gives us the latest information on the world of online marketing.
<http://sherpablog.blogspot.com>
- *Lawsites*: Lawyer Robert Ambrogi keeps track of good websites for legal research.
<http://www.legaline.com/lawsites.html>
- *Docnotes*: One family doctor keeps notes on current medical information.
<http://www.docnotes.com/>
- *Code Blog*: This blog offers a glimpse into the daily life of a critical-care nurse.
<http://www.docnotes.com/>

Specialized Websites

Until now, we have focused on websites of general interest. However, a number of websites focus on helping people find specialized information.

- People such as Frank Schmallager provide websites that cover their areas of expertise; in this case, justice and crime.
<http://talkjustice.com/>
- Advertising-driven specialized websites such as *Findlaw.com* or *WebMD* provide specialized information for both professionals and the general public.
<http://findlaw.com>
<http://webmd.com>
- Government agencies, such as Small Business Administration or the Central Intelligence Agency, offer websites with information on their department’s specialization.

<http://www.sba.gov>
<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>.

- Many magazines, such as *Entrepreneur*, have websites with a good bit of information on their topic.
<http://www.entrepreneur.com>

Keeping Track

As you work through your courses, keep notes on the names, addresses, and contents of the websites you visit. Knowing where to find the information again can help you out not just in other classes, but also as you work in your field.

Library Databases

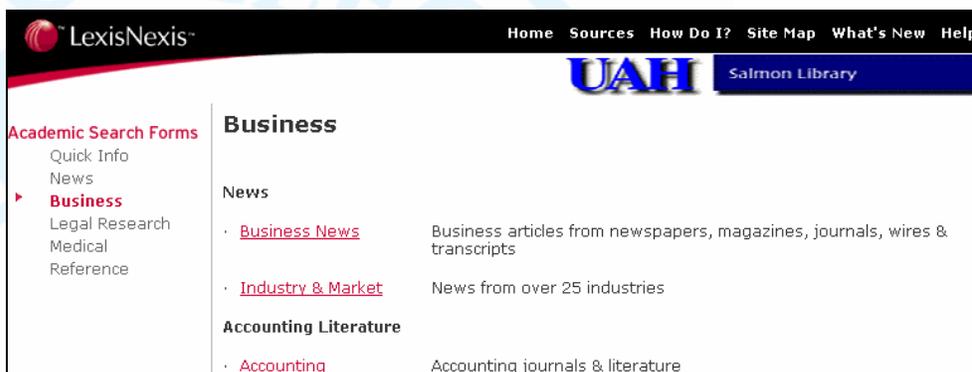
Finally, do not forget to look in the library!

While many people have to pay for access to specialized library databases, as a Kaplan College student, you have free access to many. One of the most important databases for you to be familiar with is Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe.

To get to Lexis-Nexis:

- From your class homepage, click **Library** in the upper right-hand corner.
- From the next page, click **Enter UAH Salmon Library** (make a note of the access number that appears right above this link—this is your Kaplan ID).
- Click **Electronic Articles** under Online Resources.
- Under Database Resources on the right-hand side, click **Lexis-Nexis**.
- Sign in to Lexis-Nexis using your last name and your Kaplan College ID (if you do not remember your ID from student orientation, enter your email into the box for help).

From this menu, you can do a search of almost all contemporary newspapers, perform legal research, read contemporary business news and industry reports, read medical news, or use basic reference materials.



The screenshot shows the LexisNexis website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Sources, How Do I?, Site Map, What's New, and Help. Below this, the UAH Salmon Library logo is visible. The main content area is titled "Business" and includes a sidebar with "Academic Search Forms" (Quick Info, News, Business, Legal Research, Medical, Reference) and a main section with "News" (Business News, Industry & Market) and "Accounting Literature" (Accounting).

The library also gives you access to several other databases, including specialized databases in computer science and business. You will use your Kaplan ID to log in.

HOW DO I KNOW THE INFORMATION I FIND IS RELIABLE?

Many people are worried about whether or not the information they find on the Internet is reliable. When trying to make this determination, think about how you judge whether or not information you get from other sources (TV, magazines, other people, newspapers) is reliable. When someone passes on some piece of information or opinion, how do you go about evaluating it when you are offline? You might ask questions like these:

- Who is the person giving the information? Do they seem like they researched this topic carefully? Do I think this person is otherwise reliable? Does this person have any particular biases?
- Can you verify this information using other sources?
- Does the information seem too good (or convenient) to be true? Does the information seem overly simple?
- Did this person have the most current information?
- Does this person explain where he or she found this information, such as from another book, article, or broadcast?

These are the same sorts of questions you will want to ask when trying to determine whether or not a website is giving you the most accurate and current information.

To learn more about what information is and is not reliable, visit *Library Smart* at www.librarysmart.com. From there, click **Evaluating Info** on the left side of the screen.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT INTERNET RESEARCH?

There are several websites that have good resources on learning more about searching the World Wide Web.

Pandia, at <http://www.pandia.com>, is a meta-search site that includes a good tutorial on improving your search skills. You can reach their tutorial by going to their website and clicking on **Search Tutorial**. Scroll down the page to see the topics they cover. You can review the basics with them or skip straight ahead to the article, “Advanced Internet Searching—As Easy as Ordering Pizza.”

Internet Detective, located at <http://www.sosig.ac.uk/desire/internet-detective.html>, is a highly recommended British tutorial on Web research. Go to their site and click **English** to begin.

WHAT IS WEBMAIL?

Webmail is an easy-to-use email account that is available through your Web browser. This means that you have access to your email account whenever you get access to a Web browser!

If you have AOL, MSN, or Earthlink, you will already have a webmail account. You can learn more about accessing your email over the Web by visiting your ISP’s website, such as <http://www.aol.com>, <http://www.msn.com>, or <http://www.earthlink.net>.

If you do not already have a webmail account, you can sign up for free webmail account at several sites. We recommend Hotmail because in Lesson 8 we will show you how to read your Hotmail email through Outlook. You can sign up for a Hotmail email account by going to <http://www.hotmail.com/> and clicking the tab **New Account Sign Up**.

If you prefer to use Yahoo! Mail, which has a number of special free features including an online calendar and an address book, go to <http://mail.yahoo.com> and click **Sign Up Now**.

After you sign up with either Yahoo! Mail or Hotmail, your first email will be from the service provider to explain more about using the service. If you run into any problems, click their help links.

HOW DO I USE AOL INSTANT MESSENGER?

AOL Instant Messenger (or AIM) allows you to communicate immediately with other Internet users who are also signed up with the AIM service or who are using AOL.



If you do not already have AIM on your computer, you will want to download it for this class:

Go to the AIM signup page at <http://www.aim.aol.com> and click the **New Users** button.

Choose a screen name. Your screen name must start with a letter and be from 3-16 characters in length. It is recommended that you choose a dedicated screen name just for use with Kaplan College so that you can communicate during class time uninterrupted by instant messages from non-Kaplan people. Please choose a professional-sounding screen name, ideally something that uses your own name so that you are easily identifiable to your classmates. Playful, amusing, or informal screen names are not appropriate for use in the Kaplan College setting. Some examples:

- JohnDoe
- JDoe
- JohnDoe23
- JMDoe
- JohnD43
- JohnMichaelDoe
- JohnMichaelDoe21

Choose a password (4-16 characters; it is a good idea to use both letters and numbers).

Enter your email address and your birth date.

Once you've submitted this registration, a confirmation will be mailed to your email address; you'll need to respond to it within 48 hours in order to activate your registration.

Once you have completed the registration screen, you will see links for downloading the AIM software.

To download the AIM software, click on the version you'll need and follow the instructions for downloading and installing the software. After you've installed AIM, get started by double-clicking on the AOL Instant Messenger icon and entering your screen name and password.

The first time you sign on, you'll see a Welcome Wizard; if you choose to click through it, you'll get some introductory information on using AIM, adding and finding "Buddies" (people you chat with frequently), and creating an AIM profile. You can access this Wizard at any time by clicking on the **Help** option at the top of the AIM window and then clicking **New User Wizard**.

Buddy Lists

Now that you're signed onto AIM with your Kaplan College-dedicated screen name, you'll want to create a Buddy List of your fellow classmates and your instructor. Buddy Lists are like keeping an address book for email. You can see when people on your Buddy List are signed on to AIM and can communicate directly with them by clicking on their names in the list (rather than having to type their screen names). Before getting started, communicate with the members of your class and your instructor by internal Kaplan email to exchange AIM screen names so that everyone can create a Buddy List for the class.

Groups

To create your Buddy List, first click on the **List Setup** tab. Three folders, or "Groups," are automatically created by AIM: Buddies, Family, and Co-Workers. You can rename these Groups to anything you like (such as the names of your classes) by clicking twice, slowly, on the Group name; on the first click, the name will highlight in yellow, and on the second click the name will become an editable field. Type in the new name and click **Return**.

To add a new Group, click on the second icon at the bottom of the AIM screen, the one that shows a group of people and a plus sign. This creates a new Group. Type in the name of the Group, then hit return to add the Group to your list.

Adding a Buddy

To add a Buddy to one of the Groups, go to the List Setup tab and select the Group name once so the name is highlighted in yellow. At the bottom left of the AIM screen, you'll see an icon with a plus sign and an image of a single person. Click on this icon to add a Buddy. The Buddy will appear beneath the selected folder; type in the Buddy name, then hit return to add the Buddy. If you need to assign that Buddy to a different Group, you can move it by clicking and dragging it to the correct Group.

If someone who isn't on your Buddy List tries to communicate with you, you'll receive a pop-up window asking if you'd like to accept a message from an AIM user (their screen name will be given). To accept the message, click **Yes**, and their message will come through. If you want to add this person as a Buddy, click on the **Add Buddy** button at the bottom of your conversational window. A new pop-up window will ask you to choose which Group to add the Buddy to; select the Group from the drop-down menu and click **OK**. You are also given the option of creating a new Group to add the Buddy to.

Deleting a Buddy

To delete a Buddy, go to the List Setup tab and click on the Buddy's name, then click on the icon at the bottom of the AIM screen showing a single person with a minus sign above them. This removes the Buddy name from your List Setup. If that Buddy tries to communicate with you later, you'll receive the pop-up window described above. (If you want to keep a Buddy from being able to communicate with you, see "Blocking and Unblocking a Buddy" below.)

Communicating With a Buddy

Once you've added your Buddies, click the **Online** tab at the top of the AIM screen. You'll see all of your Buddies listed by screen name. If they are online, they will appear under their Group, and if they are offline, they will appear in a Group called "Offline" with their screen name in gray italic type. You can hide that Offline list by clicking on the small arrow to the left of the Group name.

To communicate with a Buddy, double-click on his or her name. A window will pop up with that Buddy's name at the top; type in the text field and either click **Return** or click the **Send** button at the bottom right corner of the window to send the message. The window now splits into two halves; the top half shows the conversation and the bottom half is where you type your responses. You can use your mouse to change the size of the two halves: position your cursor at the dividing line between the two halves, and it will turn into a vertical arrow. Click and drag to proportionally grow or shrink either the top or bottom half.

Creating a Chat

You can talk to more than one Buddy at a time by creating a chat. While you are in the Online tab, select all the Buddies you'd like to invite to the chat, click on **People** at the top, and then **Send Chat Invitation** from the drop-down menu. A pop-up window will display the names of the invitees; below this is a standard chat invitation, which you can change if you wish. Once you have verified that you have the right invitees and are happy with the wording of the invitation, click **Send**. You and your invitees, should they accept the chat, will be able to talk together.

Blocking and Unblocking a Buddy

If someone has added you to his or her Buddy List, they will be able to see when you are online, even if you delete their name from your list. If you do not want someone to see when you are online, you can block him or her; that way, you will always appear to be offline to that person. When a Buddy is on your Block List, you cannot communicate with them, and they cannot communicate with you.

To block a Buddy, go to the "List Setup" tab, select the Buddy name, then click the **People** menu from the top of the AIM display. From the drop-down list, click **Block Buddy**. A pop-up message appears, asking if you want to add the selected Buddy to your Block List. Click **Yes**. You will now see a red circle with a line through it next to the Buddy's name; this means that Buddy has been blocked. You will not know if that Buddy is online, and he or she will not know if you are online.

If you want to communicate with that Buddy you will have to remove him or her from your Block List first. To unblock a Buddy, select the Buddy name, click **People** and then **Unblock Buddy** from the drop-down menu. Your Buddy will no longer be blocked and you will be able to communicate with him or her again.

Creating an Away Message

If you are signed on to AIM but have stepped away from your computer, or you are otherwise busy and unable to respond to instant messages, you can program an away message to automatically respond to anyone who attempts to communicate with you.

Click on **My AIM** at the top of the screen and then click **Away Message**. There are two default messages: "Default Away Message," which tells anyone who messages you "I am away from my computer right now;" and "Playing Game," which sends the message "I am not available because I am playing a computer game that takes up the whole screen." You can use either of those two, or personalize your own message. To make a personalized message, click **New Message** under the Away Message drop-down list. In the pop-up window, enter a label for your new away message (i.e. "Lunch" if it's the message you'll put on AIM when you're at lunch), write the message itself, then click **I'm away**. If you check the box "Save for later use" you will be able to reuse the same message later.

Once your away message is activated, a yellow notepad icon will appear next to your name for other AIM users who have you in their Buddy Lists. If someone tries to instant message you, your message will automatically answer. A floating window will appear on your computer with your Away Message as well as a record of anyone who has instant messaged you while you were away. If you want to keep

AIM windows from popping up on your screen while you're busy or gone, check the box "Hide windows while I'm Away." When you return and want to receive and send messages again, click the I'm Back button.

Getting Help with AIM

Student Services will provide basic support for AIM users. If you have any issues, please contact Student Services by calling 1-866-KC ASSIST (Toll Free), emailing help@kaplancollege.edu**link, or clicking on the Live button for a live chat with a student services representative. If Student Services cannot handle your inquiry, they will refer you to AIM support. Alternatively, you can try to troubleshoot your own registration or download problems by going to AIM's FAQ page http://www.aim.com/help_faq/starting_out/getstarted.adp, or clicking on the Help menu at the top of the AIM screen for more information.

Etiquette

When you make the first contact with a Buddy, it's best to start off by "pinging" him or her, i.e. checking to make sure they're at the computer and able to talk. This way, if the Buddy is busy or unable to respond right away, you haven't spent time typing a detailed message that may never get answered, and the Buddy won't feel pressure to get into a conversation with you if it isn't a good time for him or her.

Some people begin their ping by actually typing the word "ping"; feel free to use another method, as long as the message is short and simply asks whether the recipient has time to talk right now. If the answer is no, the best thing to do is to IM back something like, "Okay, we'll chat later" and let the conversation end there.

If someone pings you and you're too busy to chat, respond and let the person know that you can't talk at the moment. Letting them know when you will be free, or asking them to email you instead of using AIM, is preferable to ignoring the message altogether. It is also good etiquette to use Away messages if you will not be available to use AIM for a period of time but want to remain signed on.

Using AIM is like a cross between an email and a phone conversation. It is more informal than an email and more like a conversation than a correspondence, but because you aren't in direct verbal or physical contact, there remains a certain amount of distance to the communication. This distance can lull the user into feeling "hidden" and can result in inappropriately casual communication. Don't forget there is a person at the other end of AIM, and that once you click Send, your words are out there! Take care to treat your AIM Buddies with the same respect you would treat a classmate in a physical classroom—be your best self when you're chatting. Swearing, personal insults, or any type of sexual conversation will not be tolerated.

If you have persistent trouble with someone on AIM, you can simply block that person. If you do experience trouble with a Kaplan classmate on AIM, however, we would ask that you discuss it with the instructor before blocking the classmate.

It is still important to use proper grammar when instant messaging, especially since you will be using it in an educational setting. But the pace of an instant message can be fast, and it's very common for mistypes and other minor errors to make their way into the conversation. The important thing is to communicate as clearly and efficiently as possible, so don't sweat the small mistakes that will inevitably occur.

WHAT ARE EMAIL LISTS?

Sometimes you will have a tough time locating the information you need on a Web page. If so, it helps to be in contact with an expert or with other people with the same interests. These people can

often provide you with information, resources, feedback, and a different perspective on what you may have already found.

This is where email lists come in. From using your Kaplan College email, you have probably noticed that you can send an email to more than one person by simply adding the additional email address. Email lists make this even easier. Instead of remembering several names or email addresses, of all you have to do is remember the email address or name of the list. The list is actually a piece of software that records the names of those who have subscribed. When someone sends an email to the list, each member of the group receives a copy of the email.

Email groups range in size from a few members (such as the members of a study group or employees of a small company) to over a thousand. Some very large email lists only allow certain members to post while others allow anyone to post.

While these groups are often called Listservs after one of the oldest programs that provided email lists. Currently, two of the more popular and easily managed email list programs are Yahoo! Groups (<http://groups.yahoo.com>) and Topica (<http://www.topica.com/dir/?cid=0>).

You can use the directories at these sites to find groups that interest you. Some groups even allow you to read monthly archives of their old posts.

Flames, Spam, and Trolls

Of course, not every bit of information on an email list or discussion board is helpful or constructive.

Among the biggest problems facing all sorts of online discussion is spam—unsolicited commercial email or other messages. Spam often quickly fills up online discussions with irrelevant and/or inaccurate material.

Another problematic type of email is flame—an email or message (usually a response) that makes an irrational and personal attack on someone with whom the sender disagrees. When people start sending multiple flame messages to each other, a flame war erupts, often preventing the group from discussing larger and more important issues. The best way to prevent a flame war is to simply refuse to respond to someone who sends a flame message.

Of course, some people like to start fights. When a user deliberately sends messages to provoke other users into a fight, this person is called a troll.

WHAT ARE NEWSGROUPS?

Next to email lists, newsgroups are one of the oldest ways of finding and distributing information and connecting with people with common interests on the Internet.

Newsgroup names often look a little bit like URLs (or Web addresses), with one-word or hyphenated names separated by periods: for example, `biz.comp.accounting`.

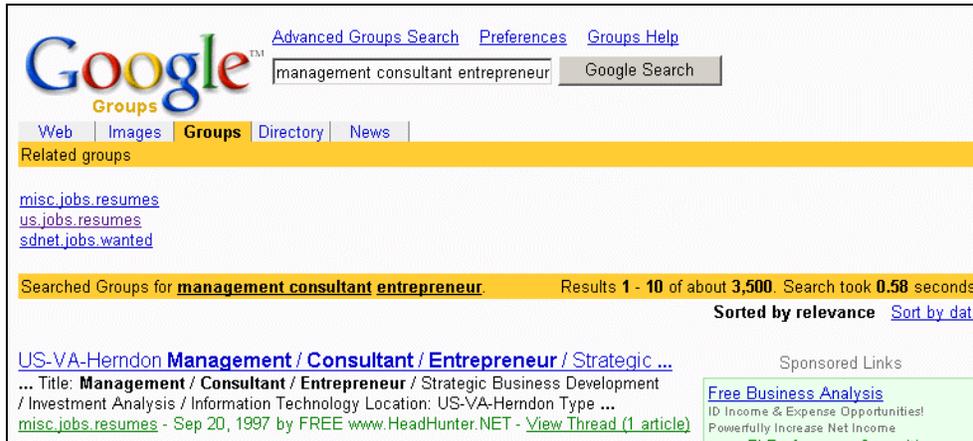
Unlike Web addresses that are grouped by the suffix (`.com`, `.edu`, `.gov`), newsgroups are grouped by prefixes. These prefixes tell you something about the topic of the newsgroup:

- `biz.` groups discuss business topics.
- `comp.` groups discuss computer topics.
- `alt./misc./talk.` groups discuss general topics (from law, to education, to entertainment).

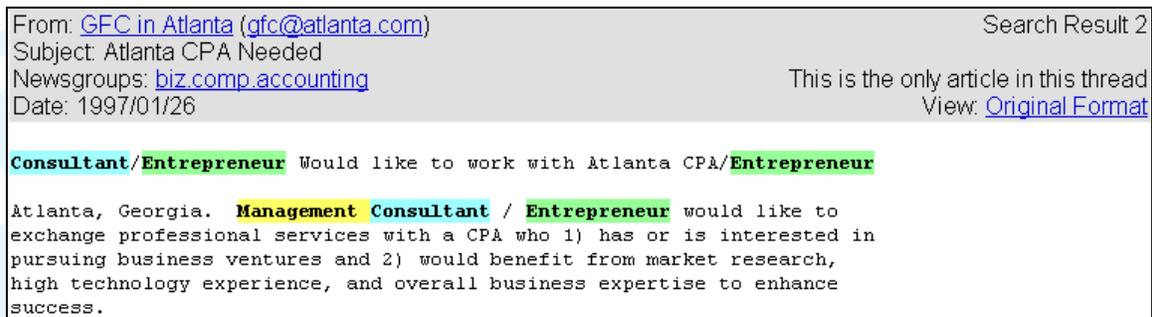
While many people who post to newsgroups are simply ordinary Internet users who have a particular interest, some newsgroup posters are well-known experts who enjoy sharing advice and opinions about their interests.

While some ISPs provide direct access to newsgroups, the quickest way to access them is through Google Groups (groups.google.com). Google Groups allows you to search through all newsgroup posts and identify which posts and groups are most likely to have the information you want.

For instance, if you were searching for information on becoming a management consultant, you might search for “management consultant entrepreneur” to find out where other freelance management consultants exchange information. Typing those words in, you would get this screen:



Under “related groups,” you will find a list of groups that seem most likely to exchange the type of information you are looking for (though Google is sometimes wrong!). Below that are specific newsgroup posts that might fit the search terms you entered. Selecting one of these will pull up a copy of that newsgroup post.



This window tells you the email address of the person who wrote the post, the subject of the post, when the post was written (since Google Groups includes material over 10 years old, be sure you check the date!), and the name of the newsgroup in which the post appeared.

If you want post to or read messages from a newsgroup, you can sign up with Google Groups by going to <http://www.google.com/accounts>.

WHAT OTHER DISCUSSION GROUPS ARE AVAILABLE?

If newsgroups seem overly complex, keep in mind that many websites have their own discussion boards (sometimes also called discussion groups or bulleting boards). Kaplan College courses use one type of message board system. One site that offers a number of topical message boards is DelphiForums at <http://www.delphiforums.com/>.

WHAT IS NETIQUETTE?

Particularly when communicating over the Internet, people tend to forget that those reading their messages are real human beings with their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and values. For that reason, Internet users have developed an informal code of conduct they call “netiquette” (short for Internet etiquette). We have already talked about spam, flames, and becoming a troll, all of which are considered impolite. Here are some other pointers to remember when communicating with others online:

- Avoid typing in caps unless you are trying to emphasize something. Even then, use all capital letters sparingly.
- Avoid forwarding joke emails, even if you think they are funny. Chances are, the person you are sending it to has already seen it.
- If someone directs a flame message to you, try to ignore it. If you have to respond, ignore the personal attacks and focus on responding to the parts that are on-topic. Remember, no one else who reads the message will believe the personal attacks and will respect you more for just ignoring them.
- If you get a virus warning in your email or from a discussion group, do not forward it to anyone until you have made certain it is not a hoax (you can check <http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/jdbmgr.exe.file.hoax.html> for a list of known hoaxes). Almost all virus warnings are hoaxes! If you are in doubt, do not forward the warning.
- Always be polite online. You never know who is actually reading the post; it could be your employer, your significant other, or the person who is interviewing you for a new job next week. Better safe than sorry.
- When participating in a discussion group, do your best to focus on the topic at hand. Remember, some people have slow Internet connections and some even have to pay by the hour for Internet service. If it takes them extra time to download your messages, it is only polite that you try to keep those messages on topic.
- Like different towns, clubs, or social groups in real life, every discussion group has its own norms. Before you post for the first time, read some old posts and see what kind of behavior is expected.
- Try to avoid responding to another message just to say “I agree.” If you are adding a message to an online group, always try to add something to what has already been said, such as providing an additional example or information. If you just want to send a note of agreement or encouragement, send it through private email.