

Getting Started with the Internet: A Guide for Beginners

1. Introduction Welcome to the world of the internet! This guide will help you take your first steps online. Don't worry if you have no prior knowledge – we'll start from the very basics.

2. What You Need

- **A Device:** You can use a computer, tablet, or smartphone.
- **Internet Connection:** Make sure you have access to Wi-Fi or mobile data.

3. Getting Internet Access

- **Choosing an Internet Service Provider (ISP):** Research local ISPs and choose a plan that suits your needs. Popular options in the UK include BT (including EE and Plusnet), Sky, Virgin Media, and TalkTalk. There are lots of providers available and you should research which is the best fit for you.
- **Setting Up Your Router:** Your ISP will provide a 'router'. This is a device that connects to your phone line and provides connection to the internet. Plug it into a power source and connect it to your phone line or cable outlet. Follow the instructions provided by your ISP to complete the setup.

4. Connecting to Wi-Fi

- **Finding Wi-Fi Settings:**
 - **On a Computer:** Click on the Wi-Fi icon in the bottom-right corner (Windows) or top-right corner (Mac) of your screen.
 - **On a Tablet or Smartphone:** Go to the Settings app and look for Wi-Fi or Network settings.
- **Selecting Your Network:** Find your network name (SSID) in the list of available networks and click or tap on it.
- **Entering the Password:** Enter the Wi-Fi password provided by your ISP. This is usually found on a sticker on your router.

5. Using a Web Browser

- **Opening a Browser:** Look for an icon like Chrome, Safari, or Firefox and tap or click on it.
- **Navigating the Web:** Type a website address (e.g., www.google.com) into the address bar and press Enter.

6. Searching for Information

- **Using Search Engines:** Go to a search engine like Google. Type what you're looking for into the search bar and press Enter.
- **Exploring Results:** Click on the links that appear to find the information you need.

7. Staying Safe Online

- **Creating Strong Passwords:** Use a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols. Avoid using easily guessable information like your name or birthdate.
- **Recognising Scams:** Be cautious of emails or messages asking for personal information. Look out for poor spelling and grammar, and never click on suspicious links.

8. Communicating Online

- **Email:** Create an email account on services like Gmail or Outlook. Use it to send and receive messages.
 - **Creating an Account:** Go to the website (e.g., www.gmail.com) and click on "Create account." Follow the prompts to set up your email.
- **Video Calls:** Use apps like Microsoft Teams to make video calls with friends and family.
 - **Downloading the App:** Go to your device's app store, search for the app (e.g., Microsoft Teams), and click "Install."
 - **Making a Call:** Open the app, sign in, and follow the instructions to start a video call.

9. Learning More

- **Online Courses:** Websites like Learn My Way and BBC WebWise offer free courses to help you improve your internet skills.
- **Argyll and Bute Council Website:** Visit Argyll and Bute Council for local services, information, and support. You can find details on bin collections, school holidays, planning applications, council tax, and more.
- **Asking for Help:** Don't hesitate to ask friends, family, or local libraries for assistance.

10. Practice Makes Perfect

- **Explore:** Spend time browsing different websites and using various online services.
- **Stay Patient:** Learning something new takes time, so be patient with yourself.