
The AMODEUS Project

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A short introduction to the World-Wide Web

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Introduction

The RP1 System Modelling Glossary (SM/WP 26) defines the common vocabulary used within RP1. It is intended as a reference companion for reading RP1 papers.

The System Modelling Glossary is now available on the World-Wide Web (WWW). If you are already familiar with the WWW, just point your WWW client at the following URL:

`http://www-lgi.imag.fr/Les.Groupes/IHM/index.en.html`

else read on: this document explains the basic concepts of the WWW, how to access it, and how to access the System Modelling Glossary on the WWW.

What is the World-Wide Web?

The World-Wide Web is a global distributed hypertext system running on top of the Internet. Started as an internal project at CERN in Switzerland, the service has been made available to Internet users since 1993. Since then, hundreds—if not thousands—of servers have been created throughout the world and are now accessible with a few mouse clicks.

Each server runs independently and allows access to hypertext documents which can contain text, graphics, pictures, sound and movies. A server can also provide links to other servers. Servers usually do have links to many other servers and thus all WWW servers constitute a “web”. Note that the links are transparent to the user, and that you can jump from one web server to another without even noticing it!

The World-Wide Web system has also another objective: it realizes a seamless integration of most of the resources available on the Internet. Using the WWW, one can connect to WWW servers, but also to FTP servers, gopher servers, WAIS servers, and so on. Each resource (e.g., a WWW page, a file, a directory) is described using an URL or Uniform Resource Locator.

How to access the WWW?

To access the World-Wide Web, you will need a WWW client. The most widely-used client is Mosaic from NCSA. Mosaic comes in X-Window, MS-Windows for PC and Macintosh versions. The software is free for non-commercial use.

You can get a copy of Mosaic from NCSA's FTP server at the following address:

`ftp.ncsa.uiuc.edu`

under the directory:

`/pub/Mosaic/`

There also alternative clients such as MacWeb, Lynx, Cello, TkWWW, EmacsWWW...

When you launch Mosaic, it will connect to the NCSA home page. To connect to another server, choose the Open URL... item under the File menu and type the complete address (or URL, see below) of the server you want to connect to.

To connect to the System Modelling Glossary type the following line:

`http://www-lgi.imag.fr/Les.Groupes/IHM/index.en.html`

A bit of jargon

Computer scientists just love jargon and acronyms! There's nothing to do about it and the World-Wide Web is no exception. You have already noticed that WWW is short for World-Wide Web. W3 is also sometimes used. Here are the main acronyms you may encounter when "surfing" or discussing the Web:

URL

Stands for Uniform Resource Locator. Characterizes a resource (e.g., WWW page, file, directory) in a unique way. An URL conforms to the following syntax:

```
[protocol]://[site]/[path]
```

where [protocol] is the protocol that must be used for connecting to the server (eg., http (see below), ftp, gopher, ...)

[site] is the name of the site to connect to (eg., ftp.mrc-apu.cam.ac.uk)

[path] is the directory or file path of the server (eg, /pub/amodeus/sysmod/)

Using the URL syntax, the address of the system modelling directory on the Amodeus FTP server is:

```
ftp://ftp.mrc-apu.cam.ac.uk/pub/amodeus/sysmod/
```

HTTP

HyperText Transfer Protocol. The communication protocol used on the World-Wide Web to transfer HyperText documents written in HTML. Similar to FTP for file transfer.

HTML

HyperText Markup Language. The document description language used by WWW servers. Every page you can see with a WWW client is an HTML document. Derives from SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language). Similar in principle to Latex or other document formatting languages.

References

Here are a few pointers to relevant literature and technical documents. Most of these are available on the World-Wide Web.

Tim Berners-Lee, Robert Cailliau, Ari Luotonen, Henrik Frystyk Nielsen, Arthur Secret: *World-Wide Web*, to appear in Communications of the ACM.

Kevin Hughes: *Entering the World-Wide Web: A Guide to Cyberspace*, Enterprise Integration Technologies Technical Report.

PostScript version:

`ftp://ftp.eit.com/pub/web.guide/guide.61/guide.61.ps`

Tim Berners-Lee: *Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP)*, CERN Technical Report, december 1991.

PostScript version: `ftp://info.cern.ch/pub/www/doc/http-spec.ps.Z`

Tim Berners-Lee and D. Connolly: *Hypertext Markup Language*, CERN Technical Report.

PostScript version: `ftp://info.cern.ch/pub/www/doc/html-spec.ps.Z`