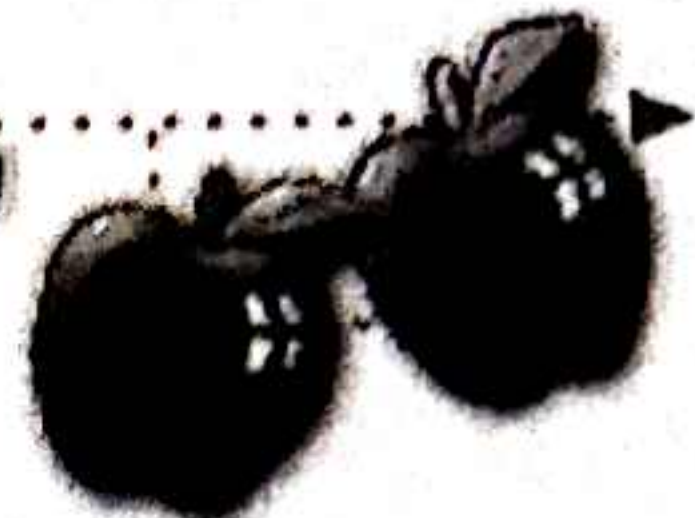


TUTORIAL TUESDAY



FT What?

by Scott Holstad

Have you noticed the Internet is comprised of almost nothing but acronyms? You know: HTTP, HTML, WWW, IRC, etc. Have you come across this one -- FTP? What in the dickens do these things mean anyway? Well, we don't have time to go over all of 'em, so let's just tackle FTP for today.

FTP stands for File Transfer Protocol. Ohhhh, that explains it ... (NOT). Simply put, FTP allows you to send and receive files (programs, text files, binaries, games, etc.) over the Internet! With it you can "upload" (or send) files to FTP servers or "download" (receive) files you want from FTP sites.

But why, you ask, would I want to use FTP? Actually, chances are you've already used it -- the most common use of FTP is when a Web browser is used to download a piece of software from the Internet. Uploading, while not as common, is equally important. Anyone who wants to create their own Web page must use an FTP program (called a "client") to transfer files from their home computer onto the host computer. Also, large downloads (like the 4MG+ of Navigator 3.0) are more reliable and can be faster using a dedicated FTP program. If you're interested in finding useful FTP sites, read the "Daily bLink" piece, "[Using the Internet and FTP to Obtain Software.](#)"

When you access an FTP site, you're actually logging onto a remote computer. Companies are understandably picky about who they let access their systems, and what can be accessed. (They don't want everyone downloading their accounting info!) Since it would be logistically unfeasible to require everyone to have a unique username and password, most FTP sites have been designed to allow "anonymous" access. Thus, anyone can access a restricted FTP directory (and not the accounting data) via the anonymous account. Often, you can access such sites automatically -- you can usually do so over the Web. (Although not all Web browsers have FTP functionality built in, Netscape Navigator(TM) and Internet Explorer both do.) Sometimes, however, you'll be prompted for a username and password. Typically, you can use "guest" or "anonymous" for the username, while your email address will serve as the password.

Mac and Windows users can both rely upon nifty GUI (graphical user interface) programs to enhance their FTP experiences. [Fetch](#) is the most commonly used Mac FTP software, while PC users often utilize [WS-FTP](#) (32-bit (Windows 95) or [16-bit](#) (Windows 3.1)).

So how to you use a GUI (pronounced "gooey") FTP client? Pretty simple, actually.

Fetch

- 1) Assuming you have an open Internet connection, open Fetch by clicking on its icon.
- 2) A window will pop up, asking for info to make an FTP connection. In the Host area, type in your intended

destination (such as "mirror.aol.com"), in the User ID blank, type "anonymous," and in the Password blank, type your email address. Then click OK.

3) Two windows will pop up: one displays scrolling messages; the other shows the directory to which you have connected.

4) Now, simply search for the file you wish to download, highlight it, and choose Get.

5) If you wish to upload something (which isn't always allowed), simply choose Put File, and a Finder menu will appear allowing you to choose a file on your own computer to copy onto the remote system.

WS-FTP

1) Assuming you have an open Internet connection, open WS-FTP by clicking on its icon.

2) A dual-windowed box will appear. The left window shows your hard drive's directory. The right window displays the FTP site's directory.

3) A window will pop up, asking for info to make an FTP connection. In the Host Name blank, type in your intended destination (such as "mirror.aol.com"). In the User ID blank, type "anonymous," and in the Password blank, type your email address. Then click OK. You can automatically save your default username and password by checking the box beside Anonymous Login.

4) After making your connection, you can simply highlight the file(s) you wish to upload or download and do it!

Sometimes FTP sites are busy and you won't be able to access them. The best thing to do in those instances is to try again a little later. FTP servers can only accommodate a limited number of people at once (often between 50-100), so it's simply a matter of attempting at the right time (like 2 a.m.) Hey, you need software, right? Well, don't get left out in the cold -- snag an FTP client, build a software library, and proclaim yourself an Internet power user. Soon, those hokey looking acronyms will be second nature.



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The Vault



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