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Using a Web Browser

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Have you heard of Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, or Safari? Well, they are all Internet Browsers – apps (programs or software) that allow you to see web pages and cruise the internet. No computer should be without one! Windows computers come with Microsoft Edge included for free, but the others are free as well.

Do not confuse a web browser with a search engine. A search engine, such as Google, is a web page that you use to search the internet for something – and you can get to Google on any browser. All web browsers will do the same things, maybe in slightly different ways, and it is up to you to pick the ones you like to use. Here are some tips and information for using any browser:

1. You need internet access to use a browser. If you do not have internet access and try to use it you will get a message that you are not connected.

2. Use the “search/address bar” to enter either text you want to search the internet for OR a web page address (like www.thestug.org). The browser will determine if you are doing a search (not entering a valid web address) and will use the default search engine to do the search and display your results. Firefox, for example, will use Google by default as its search engine. Most browsers will allow you to change the default to another search engine in “settings.” If you enter a valid web page address you will “go to” and see that web page.

3. The “search/address bar” displays the web page address of the page you are looking at. You can highlight and copy this address to paste it in a document, email, etc.

4. As you browse the internet and click on different things, new web pages will be displayed – and you are creating a “chain” of web pages. Not every “click” will create a new web page in the chain, some may create a new “tab,” for example. Use the “left and right arrows” to go to previous web pages (left) or to web pages you have already viewed (right).

5. The little “house” or “home” icon will take you back to your starting web page.

6. The menu of options, including “settings,” “help,” and more is displayed by clicking on the three lines (called a “hamburger”) or three dots in a vertical line.

7. TABS – those things on the top row of your browser (or near the top), are used to create a new “window.” You may think of a tab as if you opened another session of your browser. As you click on different links sometimes a new tab will be created for you. Tabs can be helpful if you learn how to use them. Create a new tab by clicking on the plus sign “+” at the right end of the tab row. It is easy to return to a web page by clicking on the tab. In your browser settings it is possible to have a set of tabs opened and ready for you when you open the browser.

8. SETTINGS – Can provide the many options, help, and defaults for your browser. Most browsers will have a video of how to use it and will describe what each setting option does.

9. By all means go to Google and ask, “How do I use Google Chrome” (or any browser you prefer) to see videos and help. Take a few minutes to learn more about your browser!

10. FAVORITES or BOOKMARKS will let you create a list of all your favorite web pages. You can organize this list any way you like, including creating “folders.” Clicking on a bookmark may or may not create a new “tab.”

11. History, cookies, and other records are created by all browsers. Look in settings and ask Google about the options for your browser to turn off these things or to delete them. Usually it is a good thing to delete your history upon exiting your browser session.

Learning is good for you. And learning how to use your browser opens up more ways to learn using the internet. Enjoy your potential.