

## UNDERSTANDING THE INTERNET & WHAT IT CAN DO FOR YOU

You've heard about the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW or the Web). We're always seeing Internet sites on TV and radio or seeing printed ads that give us the locations of their Internet site.

### WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The Internet is a collection of computers and computer networks. It consists of computers, communication devices, and connecting paths. Some parts of the Internet are themselves networks. You could think of the Internet as a community of personal computers, with software programs called clients - that communicate with other programs called servers - on host computers that are part of the Internet. The Internet is made up of millions of computers around the world that can communicate with each other.

### Using the Internet, you can:

- Send and receive electronic mail (e-mail)
- Connect to the resources of the WWW

### WHAT IS THE WORLD WIDE WEB?

The World Wide Web (WWW or the Web) is a vast assembly of text, images, audio and video data that is scattered across networks and computers worldwide. The WWW is a connected organization of multimedia information on the Internet. The information is stored electronically as a group of linked files on computers on the WWW. These Web sites can be accessed on demand by users all over the world.

### WHAT IS A WEB SITE?

A Web site is a document that is stored electronically on a computer on the WWW. It requires no paper, unless you decide that you want to print out a copy of the document.

In a Web site you typically enter at a particular location or address (<http://www.ntma.org>) that introduces you to the entire site. The first access point is usually called the Home Page. From the Home Page you can branch out to the other pages, which contain different types of information.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO ACCESS THE WEB?

1. **A telephone.**
2. **A modem** that can ideally handle 14.4 or 28.8 kilobytes per second or faster – the faster the better, so that you won't have to wait while transmitting files. If your modem is slower than 14.4 kilobytes per second, you can still access the Web, but the process will be more time consuming.
3. **An account with an online service provider** or an Internet service provider (ISP). Online services, such as America Online (AOL), Prodigy and Compu-Serv are all online services and have large computer networks, with gateways to the Internet. Other types of ISPs are local in your area -- which means a company has a special telephone line to the Internet.

### WHAT IS A BROWSER?

A browser is a program that lets you examine sites on the WWW. If you decide to use AOL, Compu-Serv or some other company that has a complete package, they will provide you with the browser software. If you decide to go with a local ISP, you may want to go out and purchase a good browser software package such as, Netscape Navigator, which is a recommended Web browser.

### NTMA AND THE INTERNET

The National Tooling & Machining Association (NTMA) wants to assist in improving the competitiveness of the U.S. tooling and machining industry, by establishing an online information and communication service tailored specifically to

the needs of the companies that make up the industry. The online system will permit access to vital technical and business information in a timely, responsive manner.

Many companies feel it's vital to do business on the Internet. The Internet is becoming so essential that NTMA feels it is important for you to establish a presence on the WWW to make contacts with individuals or other organizations.

NTMA's goal is to identify the consistent or common needs of its members and collect information and data which could be used to assist them. NTMA is working very aggressively towards the goal of publishing more text and reports on the Internet site. Prior to NTMA's Internet site, members had to exercise a great deal of their budgets toward marketing.

### **WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO PUBLISH ON THE WEB?**

You have information to offer -- As a professional, you can provide an electronic brochure of your services to potential clients. An increasingly common use of a Home Page is for advertising and public relations -- to describe and illustrate products or services that your business offers. Another great reason for a company Home Page is the old cliché, "It's cheaper to keep an old customer than to solicit a new one." One possible

way to show your client better customer service, could be by providing information online, which would save them a phone call. An example may be that your customer could access, 24 hours a day, information such as job status:

<b>Customer ID #</b>	<b>Description of Work</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
5930HTM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CNC Turning on 3/4" stock</li><li>• Steel with 15 Random Holes</li></ul>	April 2000

As most people know, advertising in the yellow pages or trade journals has its limits. NTMA members can market the companies via the Internet and they are able to directly reach the primary source of customers for just pennies a day. This is a substantial savings towards the bottom line, thus increasing the overall strength of the industry.

**This BMA was written by NTMA's Computer Services Team**