

HANDOUT: internet and social media

Internet introduction

The Internet is a worldwide network that connects millions of computers to each other. It was started as a project of the United States Department of Defense and Universities in the 1960s, and has grown in the past ten years into a global network that allows people from all kinds of backgrounds to communicate with each other using their computers. The Internet provides several different services to its users, some of which will be described below.

World Wide Web

Part of the Internet is the World Wide Web (or "WWW", "The Web"). This WWW consists of information that is available on computers in the form of "Websites". A website is basically a collection of pages (also called "web pages") of information including text, pictures and other elements that are written in such a way that it can be reached and read from other computers that are connected to the Internet. A typical website can look as follows.

To be reached, a website needs to have an address called a "Uniform Resource Locator" or **URL**, that looks similar to the following: <http://www.nairobits.com/>

When you see such an address in a document or on a web page, it is often underlined and is then called a **Hyperlink** or simply **Link**, because it will link you to that web page when you click with your mouse on it. Often, the link only consists of an underlined piece of text or a picture that can be clicked on are all hyperlinks. Note that hyperlinks may change their colour once you have clicked on them. This is for you to remember that you have visited that page before. In the above Figure, the Purple links are all visited, the Blue link is not visited yet.

Search Engines

It is often not easy to find the information you want on the WWW. There is no such thing as a directory available to locate what information can be found where. However, there are web pages that can locate information for you. These web pages are called "Search Engines". In a search engine, you simply fill in what information you want to find on the WWW and it will come back with a list of URLs that contain that information. See below for an example from Google, which is one of the best search engines.

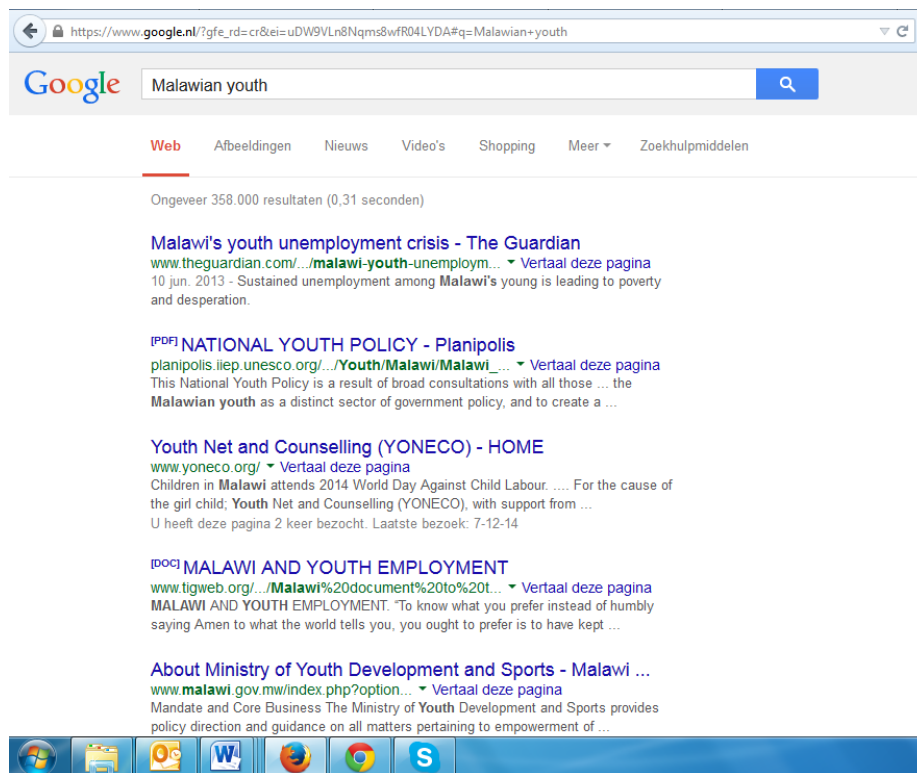


Figure 11-2. The Google Search Engine with results for a query on "Malawian youth".

Navigating on the Web using these kind of links is also called, "**Surfing the Internet**", "Surfing the Web" or "Web browsing". The software you are using to surf on the Web (and that the two figures above are taken from) is called a "Web browser".

Social media: facebook and twitter

Social media or a **social networking service** (also **social networking site** or **SNS**) is a platform to build [social networks](#) or [social relations](#) among people who share interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. A social network service consist of a personal profile, and enables you connect with other members. Three important social media are facebook, twitter and youtube

Facebook is a **social networking website** that makes it easy for you to **connect and share** with your family and friends online. Originally designed for college students, Facebook was created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg while he was enrolled at Harvard University.

By 2006, **anyone** over the age of 13 with a valid email address could join Facebook. Today, Facebook is the world's largest social network, with **more than 1 billion users** worldwide.



Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets". People have a public profile, thus you can also read tweets from famous people.



Youtube: YouTube is a video-sharing website The content can be uploaded by anyone who has a profile, and may includes video clips, TV clips, music videos, and other content such as video blogging, short original videos, and educational videos.

