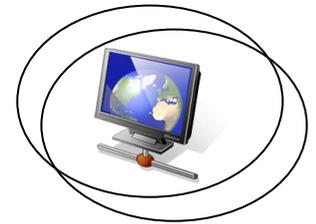# *Purposes of Websites*

In 1989, Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web while he was working at CERN. His job was to ensure that research scientists could find and share research information on the Internet in the most efficient and useful way. He wrote the first World Wide Web server, invented HTML (*the language used to create web pages*), and created the first browser. He also coined the term "World Wide Web."

You can think of a website as a collection of web pages, images, videos and other digital assets hosted on a computer system known as a web server. Apache is the most commonly used web server software. Web pages are accessed using a software program called a browser. Although websites were originally used for sharing information between researchers and scientists, they have evolved since then. Websites are now created for a number of different purposes.

- Commercial
- Educational
- Governmental
- Non-commercial (non-profit, personal)
- Internal communications

Commercial

Commercial sites are set up for the purpose of selling products or services. For example, travel agencies, shops, banks, insurance companies. Some commercial sites offer immediate downloads of a product on payment of the product's price via their shopping cart. Other sites will send goods through the post or through their own distribution network. Amazon sends books, DVD's and other items through the post. Many supermarkets will deliver shopping that has been ordered and paid for online. However, not all commercial sites offer goods; some offer services instead. Online banking is a good example of this.
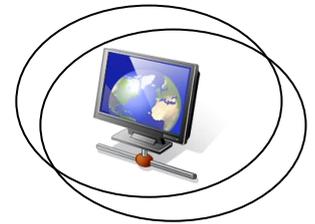
Some sites may offer no products or services at all but provide free information with their income coming from clicks the visitors make on advertisements. For example, the art site DeviantArt allows members to upload artwork and visitors can view the artwork for free. So how do they make money? By displaying adverts! Many sites may appear to offer free information, but you can be sure they will benefit in some way, either from promotion of their own product or by advertising or through sponsored links.

Examples: www.amazon.co.uk www.google.co.uk www.myspace.com

Educational

Educational sites are set up for the use of teachers, students, parents. They are geared at teaching a group of people interested in learning. Sites such as the QCA provide information on all approved qualifications in the UK. Edexcel provide information on particular courses, so that schools, colleges and universities know what they should teach for a particular course. There are many sites a student may find useful; far too many to list.

Purposes of Websites

For example, Wikipedia provides useful information on a range of topics. BBC bytesize is useful for reviewing many GCSE subjects. There are online dictionaries, online encyclopaedias, sites that provide specialized information on a subject. Many universities publish papers on their home sites or provide research information.

Examples: www.southwark.ac.uk   www.edexcel.org   BBC cbeebies   BBC GCSE BiteSize

Governmental

There are many online government services that enable you to find out about:-

- Education and learning
- Employment
- Environment
- Money, tax and benefits
- Motoring

Perhaps you want to apply for a passport or a driving licence or fill in your income tax return or contact your local authority or join the army. In some cases you may be able to fill in a form online, in other cases you will have to download a form, fill it in and then post it. Many government services have their own website. A useful site to go to if you want to find a particular service is Directgov which links to many of the different government sites.

Examples: www.direct.gov.uk   www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk
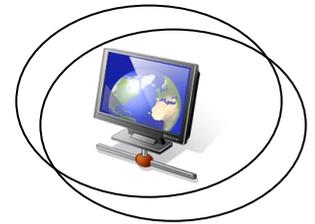

Non-Commercial

There are many sub-categories of non-commercial sites. Here are a few:-

- Personal
- Charities
- Religious or Political

At the smallest level, individuals may develop personal websites where they can write and share information about matters that interest them. Some personal websites turn into communities where particular topics are discussed through forums weblogs. Sharing personal information is becoming increasingly popular as the growth of sites such as MySpace testifies. MySpace is a social networking website offering an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music and videos. You should note that MySpace is a commercial site. However, there are many other social networking type sites that are non-profit.

Many club or organisations provide information online about meetings, notes, newsletters, fund-raising activities etc. Communities may publish a community newsletter online or log the weekly parish notes or publish articles of historical interest relating to their town or village or surrounding area. Many well know charities have websites where you can find out

about their aims, purpose, make donations etc. Finally, there are many sites that advocate particular viewpoints, such as political or religious sites.

Examples: www.charitychoice.co.uk   www.conservatives.com

Internal Communications

Websites on the internet are public access sites. However, many organisations use a private website to communicate information to their employees. Private websites are only accessible from within the organisations network; they are closed to the public. The organisations network may provide additional features, such as internal email, file and printer sharing, messaging. In fact, you can think of this type of network as a sort of mini Internet, only it's actually called an **Intranet**. Do you have an Intranet here at college?

Construction Features

How are websites constructed? What features can a site include? Here are some features a website may include:-

- Hyperlinks: normal, active and visited
- Menu bars (normal or tabbed) and sidebars (normal or tree)
- Graphic hyperlinks
- Frames
- Hotspots
- Graphics, animation, sound, flash
- Action buttons and interactivity
- Interactive features:- email links, log in, JavaScript, forms, Java applets
- Download speeds as affected by browser and memory size of pages

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Task 1a (P1)

As we have seen, websites may be created for a number of different purposes. Search for and select four websites, one of each different type.

- State the purpose of each site.
- Include screenshots of each site, and list the construction features used.

Task 1b (M1)

a) Find examples of each of the construction features listed above. Explain how each construction feature helps the user to find and use information on the site. Enhance your written explanation using screenshots and annotation.