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Overview

The Internet is based on IP addresses for communication. An IP address is the address of a TCP/IP stack, therefore every machine with TCP/IP has an IP Address - dial up networking usually sees your ISP assign you an IP each time you phone in and log on (not necessarily the same IP each time, either). A typical IP address is 207.68.137.62 (which is microsoft.com). When you tell your web browser to go to "www.microsoft.com" (the URL address), the browser knows what IP is associated with the URL simply making a DNS request.

DNS means "Domain Name Server" and is a service your ISP (Internet Service Provider) provides to you. The DNS at your ISP has a huge table of URL names and the corresponding IP addresses, and can tell your browser what the correct IP to use is; your browser then uses the IP address to go to the new site. However, DNS servers cannot hold every single URL-IP address entry that can exist at any point in the whole global Internet; so each DNS is linked to other DNS's throughout the world in a hierarchical manner (there's about 5 "master" DNS servers in the world that do have the complete list) and can request a search for information on a DNS that is unknown to itself. A DNS search can involve many requests around many DNS servers before reaching a "master" DNS machine for the ultimate verdict, and therein lies our loss of speed.

Using FastNet, you manage a local table of DNS-IP addresses (the Hosts file located on your Windows directory) and tell your system to check that table first, before asking the DNS at your ISP. No TCP/IP network traffic at all need be generated. DNS lookups occur whenever you use URL for finding an Internet resource - so mail, FTP, gopher, IRC can all benefit.

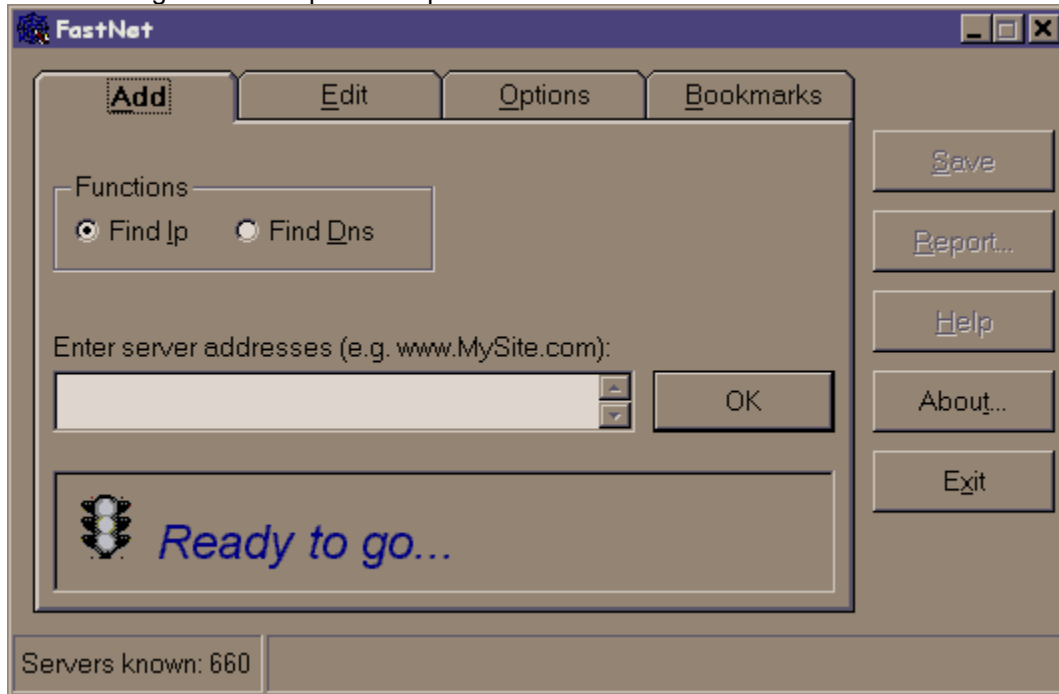
Generally, the more URL-IP address entries you can place in your Hosts file, the better. DNS lookups that take the longest time to resolve are the ones that offer the most speedup.

Add function

Overview

Adds new servers to the Hosts file.

Click on image for more specific help.



Please follow the steps below:

1. Select **Find IP** or **Find DNS** according to the kind of search you prefer.
2. Type in the server name or the IP address into the Input Box in the FastNet window.
3. Press <Ctrl-Enter> if you want to add more servers and type in new server names or IP addresses.
4. At the end, press the <OK> button to start the function; then wait for the answer.

URL Parsing

If you type the entire URL for a page you are setting up, or a URL you copied from your web browser into the Hosts field, FastNet will grab only the informations from the URL that it needs to set up the Hosts file. For example, if you type in `http://www.MySite.com/dirname/filename.html`, when you press the <OK> button, FastNet will transform it in `http://www.MySite.com/dirname/filename.html` and will find the corresponding IP address.

This is the text field where you can enter the site name or the IP address you want to add to the Hosts file.

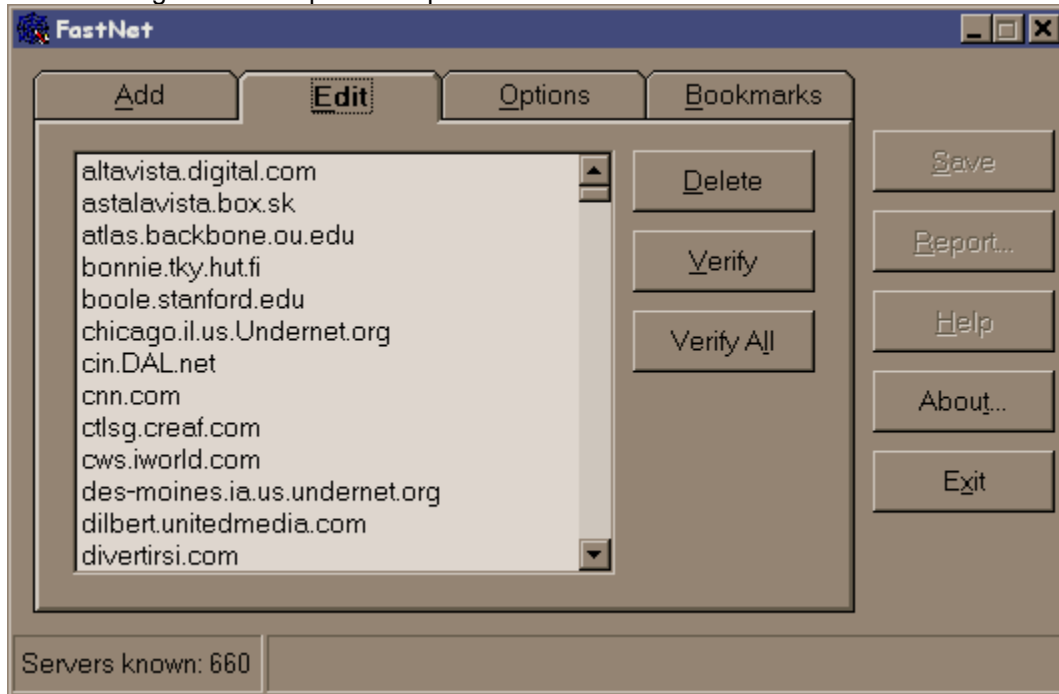
This button is used to find the IP number or the DNS of the site you entered into the site address text box. Once pressed it will lookup the IP number or the DNS and will place it into the Hosts database.

Edit function

Overview

In this tab you can view and manage your Hosts database.

Click on image for more specific help.



The available functions are the following:

Delete

Deletes the selected servers from the Hosts database.

To remove existing unwanted entries select them and press the <Delete> button.

In case of mistakes, avoid to save your modifications and they will not have effect.

Verify

Checks and updates the IP addresses of the selected URL in the Hosts database.

To fix existing entries where the IP numbers have changed just select the site names, then press the <Verify> button and the entries will be updated with the new IP number.

Verify all

Checks all IP addresses in the Hosts database and updates those changed. If your Hosts file contains a lot of servers, this function may be slow. In this case it's useful running it in background mode.

View IP addresses

Double-clicking an item in the Hosts listbox you obtain a messagebox with the corresponding IP address of the server you choosed.

This is the list of servers contained in the Hosts database.

This button is used to delete old or nonfunctioning entries from the Hosts database.

This button is used to save the servers list to file.

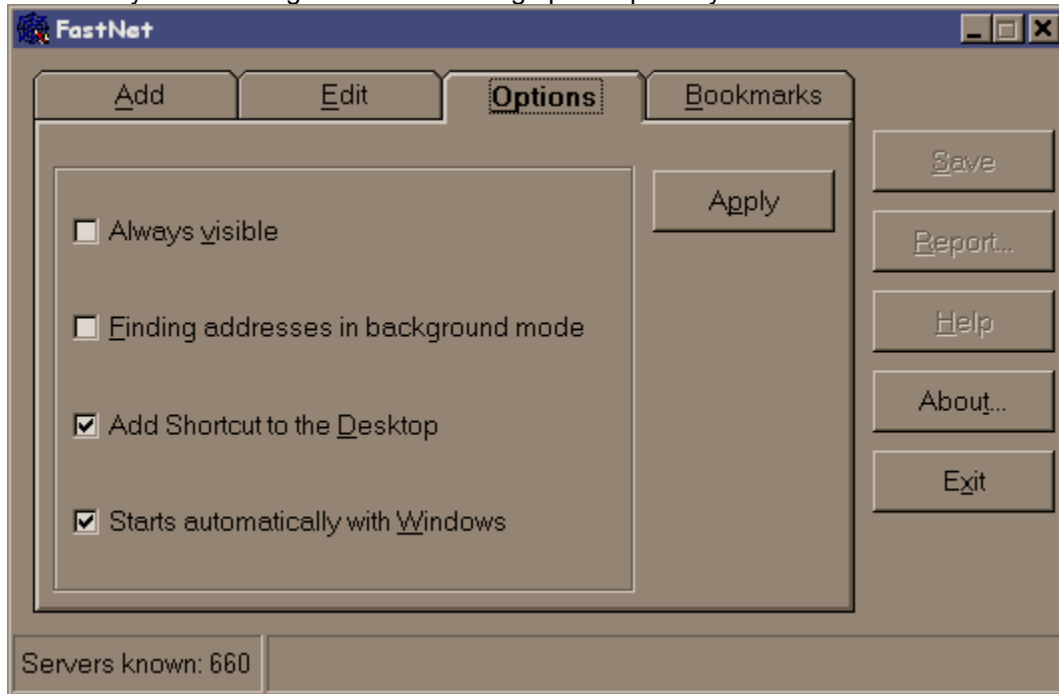
This button is used to fix selected entries whose IP numbers have changed.

This button is used to fix all existing entries whose IP numbers have changed.

Options

Overview

In this tab you can configure FastNet setting up the options you are interested in. .



Your preferences will be saved pressing the <Apply> button.

Always visible

With this option, FastNet stays on top of all other windows.

Finding addresses in background mode

FastNet can hang out in the system tray while finding IP addresses. A single click on the FastNet icon will resize the main screen and then can be easily dropped back down to the system tray until needed again. A right click on the Icon will give you a menu for resizing FastNet, Save, Report, Help, About and Exit functions.

Add shortcut to the desktop

Creates a FastNet shortcut on the Desktop. It can be very helpful when you want quick access to the program.

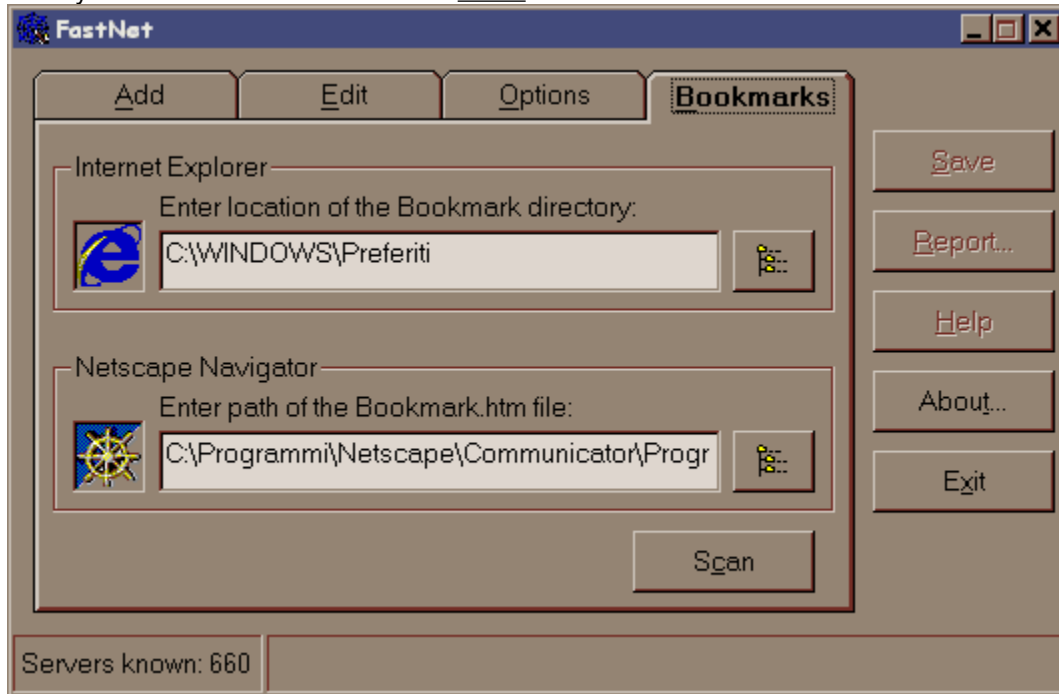
Start automatically with Windows

Creates a FastNet shortcut in the Startup folder.

Bookmarks function

Overview

Adds your bookmarked servers to the Hosts file.



If you use **Internet Explorer** type in the path of the Explorer bookmarks folder into the corresponding Input Box (e.g. c:\windows\preferred).

If you use **Netscape Navigator** type in the path of the Netscape bookmark.htm file into the corresponding Input Box (e.g. c:\Program Files\Netscape\Users\Bookmark.htm).

Press the <Scan> button to start searching

FastNet will find your bookmarked site names and then, for unknown ones, will search the corresponding IP addresses and will store them into the Hosts file.

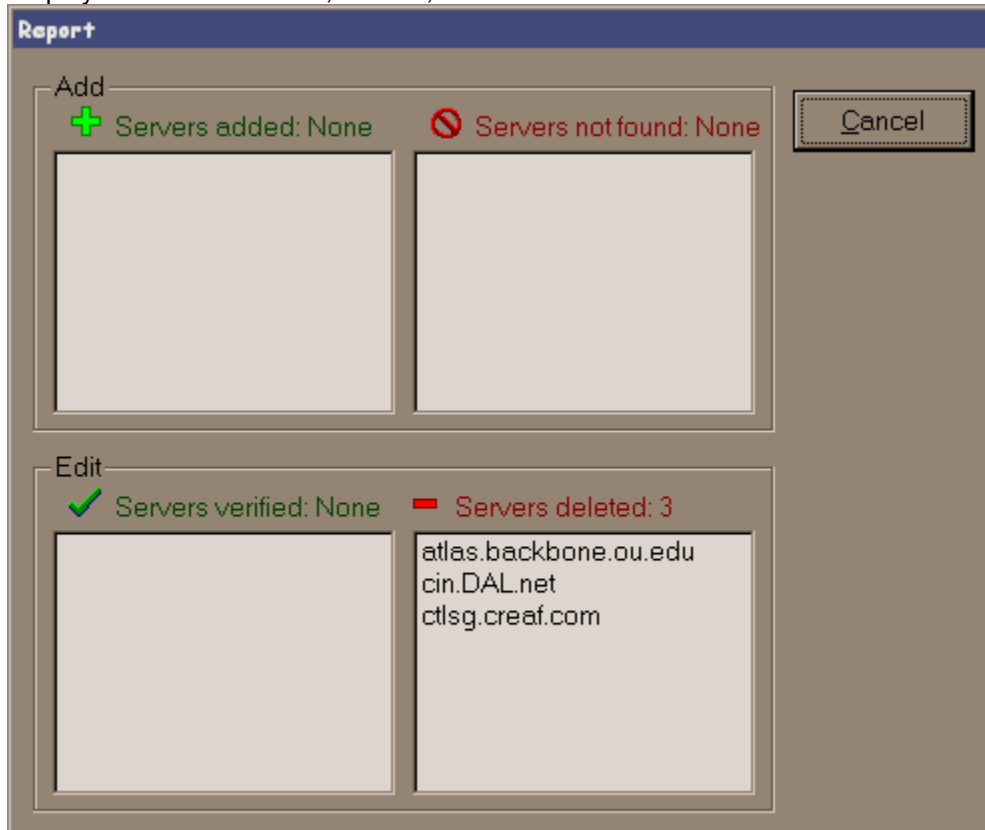
Common functions

Save button

Saves on disk all changes made in the Hosts file, and creates a backup copy of previous Hosts file with Bak extension. If you quit the program without saving changes, a messagebox will appear asking you for saving modifications.

Report button

Displays four lists of added, verified, deleted and not found entries entries in the current session.



Help button

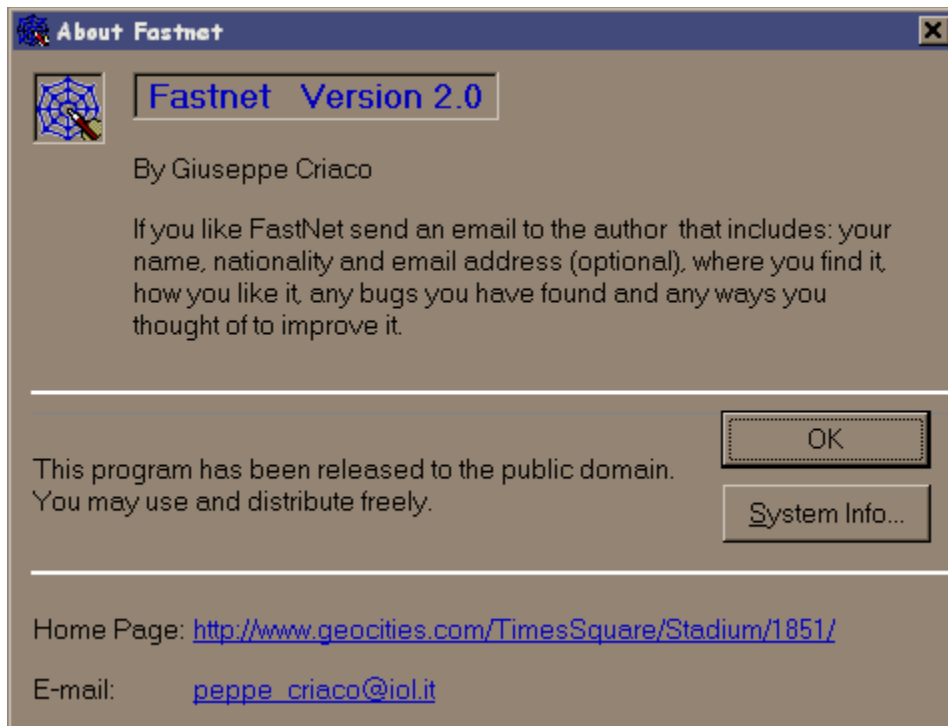
Starts this help.

For contextual help, set focus on required object and press <F1>.

See also the Readme.txt located in the FastNet directory.

About button

Shows a screen with Copyright details and some other informations about the program.



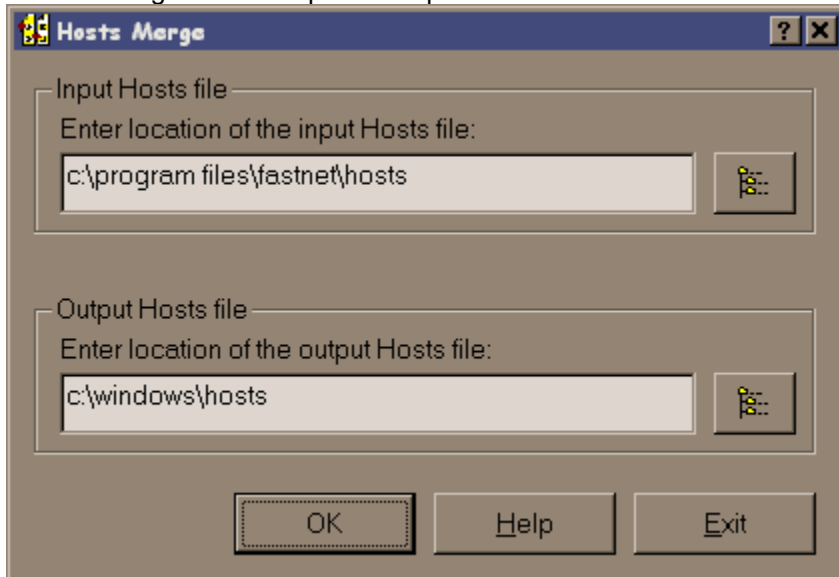
Exit button

Exits FastNet.

Overview

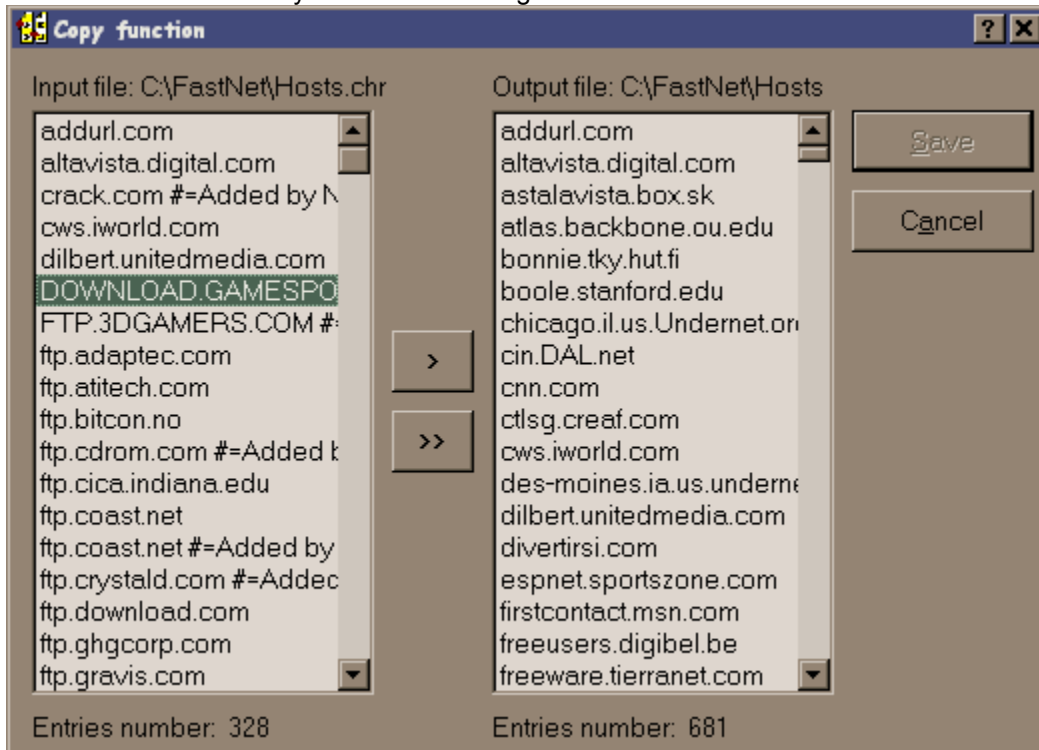
This program merges entries of two different Hosts files. For example, you can add FastNet Hosts entries to your Hosts file.

Click on image for more specific help.



Type in the input and the output Hosts files in the corresponding text boxes, and then press the <OK> button.

FastNet will automatically show the following screen:



Click on image for more specific help.

In this screen you can:

1. Select from the input listbox your preferred servers and copy them to the output listbox pressing the <Copy> button.
2. Copy all servers from the input to the output listbox pressing the <Copy all> button.

Press the <Save> button to save modifications, finally press the <Cancel> button to close the window.

This is the text field where you can enter the path of the input Hosts file you want to merge to the output Hosts file. Typically, you can enter the path of the FastNet Hosts file (located in the FatsNet directory).

This is the text field where you can enter the path of the output Hosts file you want to merge to the input Hosts file. Typically, you can enter the path of the active Hosts file (located in the Windows directory).

This button is used to load in memory the input and output Hosts files. Then it will show the Copy screen.

This listbox contains the input Hosts file servers. You can select the entries you want to add to the output Hosts file and press the **Copy** button or you can press the **Copy All** button to copy all input items.

This listbox contains the output Hosts file servers.

This button is used to copy the selected entries from the input to the output Hosts file.

This button is used to copy all entries from the input to the output Hosts file.

Overview

Q1. Do I have to have FastNet open for it to speed up my browsing?

A1. You do not have to have FastNet open for it to speed up your Internet activities although we recommend that you do have FastNet open to easily maintain the Hosts Database.

Q2. I installed FastNet, now I can't access a site. What can I do?

A2. Open up FastNet and verify the site. See Verify function for more information on how to do this.

Glossary of Terms

URL

TCP/IP

Hosts

URL

It means **Universal Resource Locator**.

It indicates an Internet address expressed in a shape understandable for any Web browser. Web addresses usually start with `http://` (or with another word followed by `://`) and end with `.html` or with a simple final slash (`/`) to point to a predefined file in a folder.

TCP/IP

It means **Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol**.

It is a transmission protocol very used in operating system Unix. It was natively developed by ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency), an American institution of the Department of Defence (DOD). All the computers connected to Internet dialog with this protocol.

Hosts

The Hosts file is found in your Windows System directory. This file holds info about internet sites and IP addresses. Putting in a specific URL and IP address will cause your browser to bypass the DNS lookup step for that URL and go directly to the Internet site using the IP address. If you have problems getting to certain sites due to DNS problems, this can solve that problem by using your own settings for that site.

