

## Understanding URL's (Uniform Resource Locators)

A URL is the address of a web page. URL's are unique to each page they represent, just like street addresses are unique to each building, and even apartment within each building, they represent. They consist of a specific set of information that directs the computer where to look for a web site. As you supply more information, the computer will take you to more specific pages of the web site. You will always see the URL for the web page you are currently on in the Address Bar of your web browser. You can enter URL's to go to in this area as well.



### Now let's examine a URL:

**<http://www.carnegielibrary.org/locations/pccenter/classinfo.html>**

**http** is the protocol. http stands for hypertext transfer protocol. Another protocol is ftp, which stands for file transfer protocol. These protocols tell the computer what action to take and coordinate the transfer of information from one computer to another. In most cases, you no longer need to enter http in the location bar when typing in a URL, it will be automatically assumed.

**www** is the service to be used on the Internet. It is usually www although it can be other things like "mail" or "info".

**carnegielibrary** is the domain name. This is the name of the company, organization, or server that houses this web site. In this case, it is standing for *Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh*.

**.org** is the domain suffix. It helps identify what type of site you are viewing, commercial or otherwise. There are a limited number of domain suffixes and each signifies a different type of site.

<b>.com</b>	Represents business, commercial, and personal web sites. Examples include <a href="http://www.honda.com">www.honda.com</a> or <a href="http://www.potterybarn.com">www.potterybarn.com</a> .
<b>.edu</b>	Used by educational institutions, like technical schools, colleges, and universities. Examples include Pitt's address at <a href="http://www.pitt.edu">www.pitt.edu</a> and Penn State's address at <a href="http://www.psu.edu">www.psu.edu</a> .
<b>.net</b>	Used by networked organizations or internet service providers like <a href="http://www.webtv.net">www.webtv.net</a> or <a href="http://www.netzero.net">www.netzero.net</a> .
<b>.org</b>	Organizations that are usually non-profit. Our address, <a href="http://www.carnegielibrary.org">www.carnegielibrary.org</a> , is one example of this type of site.
<b>.mil</b>	Used by military agencies.
<b>.gov</b>	Denotes government agencies: state, national or international. Examples are <a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov">www.whitehouse.gov</a> and <a href="http://www.irs.gov">www.irs.gov</a>

**locations/pccenter** are folders. You could type **www.carnegielibrary.org** in the *Address Bar*, but this would take you to the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh main page. By typing in these two folder names, you can go directly to web page of the exact location you desire within a larger web site. In this case, first to library's different locations list, and then specifically to the PC Centers' page within. Other examples of folders in the library are locations/reference for the Reference department web site or locations/homewood for the Homewood branch library web site.

**classinfo.html** is a file name. Usually, files are the equivalent of a web page or, in other words, one page of a book. Typing in all the information up to this point would take you to the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, PC Centers. Once you add the file name you get taken to specific web page within the PC Center site, in this case the class information page. Examples of other files on the PC Center web site are owt.html (the Open Work Time page) and classdescrip.html (the Class Descriptions page). *The .htm or .html is the file extension. It tells the computer how to interpret the information contained in the file. .htm and .html tells the computer that this is a HTML or Hypertext Mark-up Language file. HTML is simply the computer language web pages are written in.*

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### Now you're ready for a quick analogy!



All houses need four things to be houses: a roof, a floor, walls, and an entry point. URL's also need four things to work: a protocol, a service, a domain name, and a domain name suffix. Other items, like windows, plumbing, and electric increase a home's effectiveness but they are not necessary. Just like these other items, the folders and file name will increase a URL's effectiveness but you do not need them to use a URL.