

Moms Internet Guide Questions and Answers

Put the Smackdown on Pop-ups

Q: How do I keep those darned pop-up ads from popping up all the time?

—Kate W. in Boise, Idaho

A: Pop-ups *are* annoying, aren't they? You're trying to do something on a website, and they so rudely interrupt.

Fortunately, it's a quick, free fix. Most major Internet browsers—the programs that let you view websites—have pop-up blocking options. If you use Internet Explorer®, [go to the Microsoft® site for instructions](#) on how to block pop-ups. If you use Firefox®, [visit the Mozilla site for more info](#).

[AOL®](#), [Yahoo!®](#), and [Google™](#) also offer free toolbars that include pop-up blockers. Click on the link of the site you use most to download the toolbar. That toolbar will appear at the top of your screen whenever you browse the Web. It lets you choose whether to show pop-ups from specific websites.

Let Your Friends Take a Look

Q: If I see something online that I want to show a friend—such as a webpage or something on the page—how do I take a picture to send them?

—Erika D. in Saugerties, New York

A: It depends on how much you want to show them. If you want to get just one image from the page, you usually can just right-click on the image and scroll to “Save Picture As...” on the little menu that appears. Then just save the image to your desktop (as a .gif or a .jpg file) and attach the file to your email.

If you want to show them the entire webpage, the easiest way is to lead them to it directly by copying and pasting the Web address into the message. Otherwise, you can take a picture of the page by holding down the “Ctrl” key while pressing “Prnt Screen” on your keyboard. Then go to your message, right-click in the message, and select “Paste.” You'll see a picture of the page appear in the message.

Get Around Those Annoying Errors

Q: I'm trying to get into a webpage and it gives me some weird message. Why can't I get to the page I want? What does this stuff mean?

—Kristen W. in Lexington, Kentucky

A: Whenever there's a problem connecting to the page, you'll see some sort of error message. Different messages mean different things, but the number on the message gives you an idea of what's happening.

“400” means there's something wrong with the address you entered. Check each character in the address to make sure it's spelled or entered correctly.

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“401” or “403” tells you that you don’t have permission to see the page (or the password is wrong). If you think you have access to the page or an account for the page, try typing the password again. Remember that some passwords are case-sensitive, which means the uppercase and lowercase letters in the password must be correct. (For example, a password might read: MyKids007).

“404” is a dreaded message that means bad news for your page. It means the page you’re looking for is temporarily out of service or is gone altogether. Try doing a search for the address to see if what you’re looking for can be found elsewhere.

Show Me What I’m Missing

Q: Sometimes a site asks if I have Shockwave®, Flash, or ActiveX®. What does this mean?

—Kate P. in Orlando, Florida

A: When you visit a site and it asks for one of these programs or players, it’s looking for a way to let you watch the animation or interact with part of the site. If you see a window appear asking for the software, it usually asks if you want to download the program or plug-in.

Just follow the prompts to get what you need—they don’t take up a lot of room and don’t interfere with how your computer works. Otherwise, the site you see may have a link to download the plug-in or player. Just click on the link to download what you need.

If you’re not sure if you want the software, you can do a quick search for the product name to find out if it’s something you need.

OMG! R U Ready to Chat with Your BFF?

Q: How do I start chatting with someone online?

—Catie H. in Cincinnati, Ohio

A: Starting an online chat session is a great way to connect with friends in a flash.

Instead of waiting for them to reply to an email (which could take days or weeks, depending on the friend), chat sessions give you an instant connection. First you’ve got to find out where your friends are online (Yahoo!, Google, AOL, etc.). If you’re not using the same program, you can send an email to your friend inviting him or her to join, or you can set up an account in his or her preferred program. Once you’re both online and in the same place, look for the chat feature and start a session.

You also can set yourself up with an IM program, such as [Yahoo! Messenger](#) or [AIM®](#) (from AOL). Just download the program and register with your own screen name. Ask your friends for their screen names and add them to your contact list. Anytime you want to chat, just click on their name to open a session.

The Present I Can’t Seem to Unwrap

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Q: My friend sent me something as an attachment, but I don't know what to do with it. How do I know what program I should use?

—Erin J. in Tuscon, Arizona

A: Each attachment uses something different, so it's hard to give just one answer. First, make sure the attachment is something you're expecting to get from a trusted source. If it seems weird, leave it alone. Otherwise, here's what to do.

Before you open the file, right-click on the attachment and save it to your desktop. Then click on the file and follow the prompts. If you're not sure what program to use, you might want to ask the sender what program is needed.