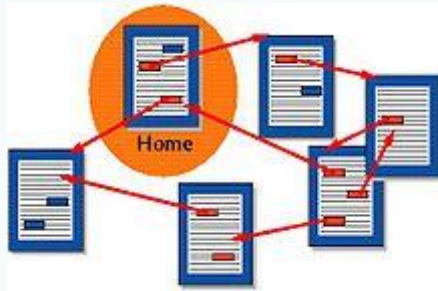# Hyperlink

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

An example of a hyperlink with a mouse pointer hovering above it

Several documents being connected by hyperlinks.

In , a **hyperlink**, or simply a **link**, is a reference to that the reader can follow by clicking or tapping. A hyperlink points to a whole document or to a specific element within a document. is text with hyperlinks. The text that is linked from is called . A software system that is used for viewing and creating hypertext is a *hypertext system*, and to create a hyperlink is *to hyperlink* (or simply *to link*). A user following hyperlinks is said to *navigate* or *browse* the hypertext.

The document containing a hyperlink is known as its source document. For example, in an online reference work such as , or , many words and terms in the text are hyperlinked to definitions of those terms. Hyperlinks are often used to implement reference such as tables of contents, , , , and .

In some hypertext, hyperlinks can be bidirectional: they can be followed in two directions, so both ends act as and as targets. More complex arrangements exist, such as many-to-many links.

The effect of following a hyperlink may vary with the hypertext system and may sometimes depend on the link itself; for instance, on the most hyperlinks cause the target document to replace the document being displayed, but some are marked to cause the target document to open in a new window. Another possibility is , for which the link target is a document that replaces the link anchor within the source document. Not only persons browsing the document follow hyperlinks. These hyperlinks may also be followed automatically by programs. A program that traverses the hypertext, following each hyperlink and gathering all the retrieved documents is known as a Web *spider* or .