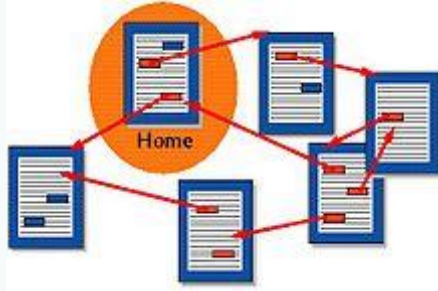# Hyperlink

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

Several documents being connected by hyperlinks.

In computing, a **hyperlink**, or simply a **link**, is a reference to data that the reader can follow by clicking or tapping.[1] A hyperlink points to a whole document or to a specific element within a document. Hypertext is text with hyperlinks. The text that is linked from is called anchor text. 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 Wikipedia, or Google, many words and terms in the text are hyperlinked to definitions of those terms. Hyperlinks are often used to implement reference mechanisms such as tables of contents, footnotes, bibliographies, indexes, letters and glossaries.

In some hypertext, hyperlinks can be bidirectional: they can be followed in two directions, so both ends act as anchors 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 World Wide Web 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 transclusion, for which the link target is a document fragment 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 crawler.