Hyperlink

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hyperlink-Wikipedia.svg)

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

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sistema_hipertextual.jpg)

Several documents being connected by hyperlinks.

In [computing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computing), a **hyperlink**, or simply a **link**, is a reference to [data](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_(computing)) that the reader can follow by clicking or tapping.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperlink#cite_note-1) A hyperlink points to a whole document or to a specific element within a document. [Hypertext](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypertext) is text with hyperlinks. The text that is linked from is called [anchor text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia), or [Google](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google), many words and terms in the text are hyperlinked to definitions of those terms. Hyperlinks are often used to implement reference [mechanisms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanism_(engineering)) such as tables of contents, [footnotes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Footnotes), [bibliographies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliographies), [indexes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Index_(publishing)), [letters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_(message)) and [glossaries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossaries).

In some hypertext, hyperlinks can be bidirectional: they can be followed in two directions, so both ends act as [anchors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTML_element#Anchor) 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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transclusion), for which the link target is a document [fragment](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_crawler).