When you visit a website, the web server hosting that site could be anywhere in the world. In order for you to find the location of the web server, your browser will first connect to a Domain Name System (DNS) server.

When you connect to the web, you do so via an Internet Service Provider (ISP). You type a domain name or web address into your browser to visit a site; for example: google.com, bbc.co.uk, microsoft.com.

The unique number that the DNS server returns to your computer allows your browser to contact the web server that hosts the website you requested. A web server is a computer that is constantly connected to the web, and is set up especially to send web pages to users.

Your computer contacts a network of servers called Domain Name System (DNS) servers. These act like phone books; they tell your computer the IP address associated with the requested domain name. Every device on the web has a unique IP address; it is like the telephone number for that computer. Traditionally these were numbers of up to 12 digits separated by periods/full stops but they are now being updated to sets of up to 32 characters.