



Traceroute: Where Is Your Information Going?

When you visit a website, the information on your computer/device travels to many different places before reaching the destination site. In this activity, you will be further exploring this concept using a traceroute website, a site that displays the route your information takes as it travels across a network.

Go to <http://tinyurl.com/39kmf2>

In order to traceroute a website, enter the URL in the “Remote Address” box, then hit “Proxy Trace”.
(This might take a minute or so.)

- The nodes or “hops” along the route will appear as a list of domain names (like whitehouse.gov) and IP addresses (like 198.82.247.34) on the right side of the browser window.
- Some of them (but not all!) will also be shown on the map.
- All routes go through Colorado because the server for the traceroute website you’re using, yougetsignal.com, is located in Colorado.

Try this with several sites and answer the following questions.

1. How long is the routing trace to these websites?

Destination Website	Number of Hops
www.facebook.com	
www.cnn.com	
www.berkeley.edu	
www.mediasmarts.ca (Canada)	
www.berlin.de (Germany)	
www.cas.cn (China)	
Your school’s website:	

2. Pick a traced route from above and compare the full list of domains and IP addresses (“hops”) to your neighbor. Are they different? If so, how?

3. Choose a computer (either from the list above or on your own) that is some distance away and traceroute it three times (in different browser tabs). Compare the list of domains and IP addresses that show up. Does the output differ? How?

4. Can you say that the length of a route depends on the geographical distance between the two endpoints? Why or why not?

