

This was suggested by a recent NYTimes podcast.

If you're browsing the web and come across an interesting hyperlink that tempts you, or you get an e-mail from a friend (at least you think it's from a friend) with a hyperlink attached, you can look before you leap to make sure you know exactly where you're going. And trust me, there are some places you don't want to go.

Just right-click on the link and select "Copy Link Location". Then open Word, Notepad or some other text editor, right-click and select "Paste". You'll then see the actual URL address and can decide if you want to check it out.

Try it out. At the Bates home page, under the "Hot List Menu", right-click on "Bates Magazine" and select "Copy Link Location". Now open Word or other text editor, right-click and select "Paste". You should see the following:

<http://www.bates.edu/go/quick/bates-magazine>

Better to light one candle than to curse the darkness. Now you can browse the web with a little more certainty.

Someone asked:

"Can't you do the same thing simply by hovering over the link and seeing where it leads in the status bar?"

The simple answer is, not always. Sometimes it doesn't show anything and if it does and someone wants you to go somewhere they don't think you want to go, they can get very creative. But once you paste it into a text file you're seeing exactly where the link will take you.

Also, if you're linking from an e-mail, you're not in a browser and don't have that possible though potentially misleading clue.

Better safe than sorry. Of course, I can always come by and reimage your computer. :-)

"Why not paste it into the Location field of a Web browser and inspect it there before clicking on it?"

This seems reasonable. I'm not sure if the NYTimes suggestion was based on some technicality I don't understand or appreciate but, as I remember it now, it was primarily aimed at hyperlinks in e-mails so as long as you don't blindly try a hyperlink from an e-mail message before verifying it's URL, I think you'll be safe.

Thanks to all those who pushed for clarification.