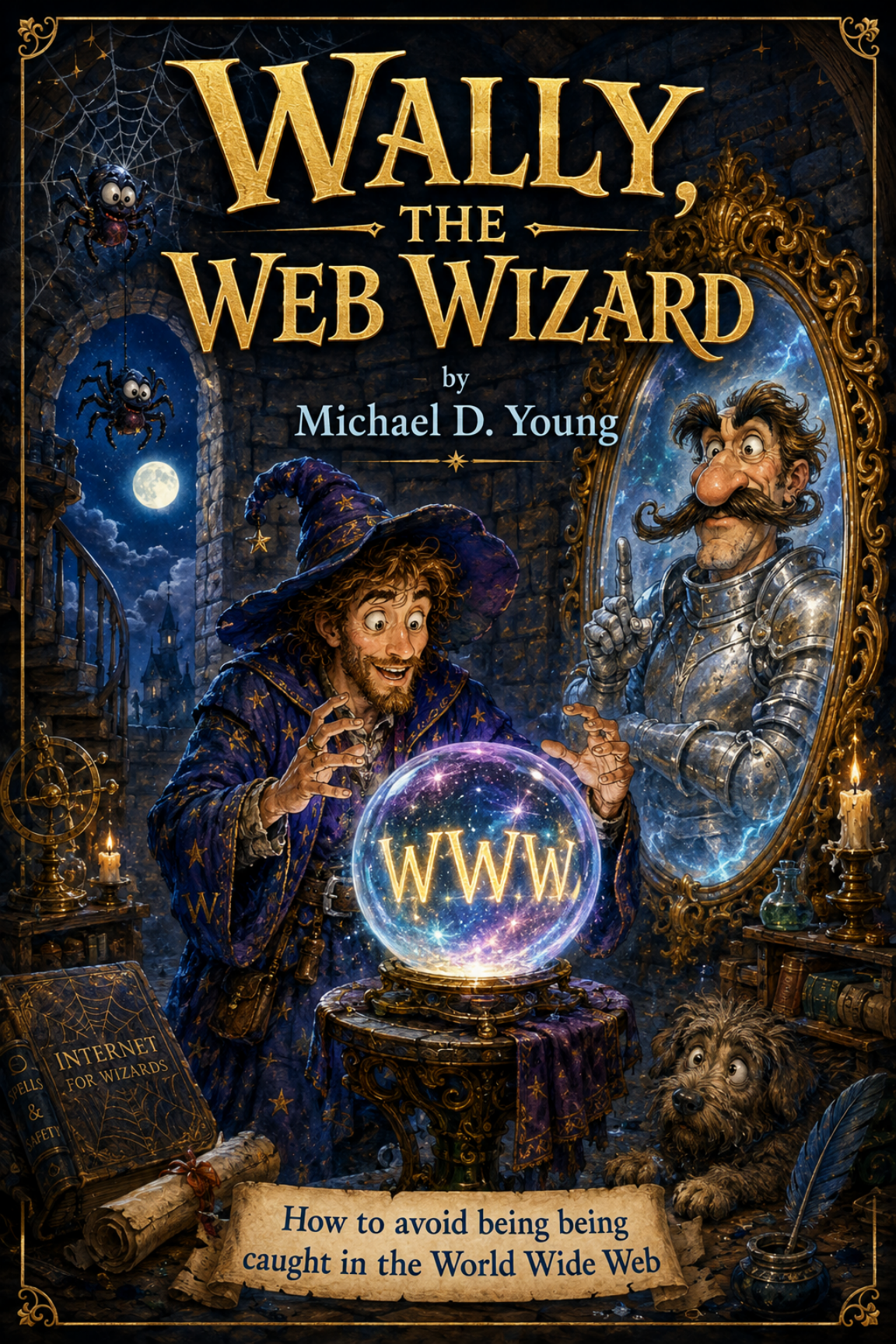


WALLY, THE WEB WIZARD

by
Michael D. Young



How to avoid being being
caught in the World Wide Web

CHAPTER 1: WWW

In a tower so high, in the dead of the night,
A wizard named Wally stood over the light.
Of a clear crystal ball as he spoke a new spell,
“O give me the power the future to tell.”

The crystal ball swirled with colors and let out strange wailing and beeping noises, high and low and then high again. It buzzed and clicked and when it was done, he saw two words forming in the swirling colors.

He leaned in closer to read them and saw something he did not understand. “Hello World!” It read, and underneath, he saw three letters. Actually, the same letter three times.

WWW

He raised his eyebrows and then lowered them again, wrinkling his forehead and pursing his lips. How was this the future? What could this possibly mean?



Whenever he had a question that was too difficult, he knew where to turn. He cleared his throat and looked over at his magic mirror and said, "Magic mirror on the wall, please explain what's in the ball!"

As soon as he said this, a face appeared in his magic mirror, but it was not the usual face that helped him answer questions. Instead, he looked like a knight in armor with an enormous nose and the biggest, bushiest eyebrows he had ever seen.

"Who are you?" Wally asked. "How did you get in my mirror?"

The knight smiled. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am Sir Brows, expert of the Internet! The mirror downloaded me the first time that you connected to the Internet. Your old mirror would not have been able to answer the questions you will need when browsing the Internet. And if there is one thing I know how to do, it is brows!" He lifted his bushy eyebrows several times to help make his point. But even with an introduction, Wally still felt confused.

"What is this inter-net? Is it something for catching magical creatures? That would be really handy!"

Sir Brows only laughed. "Well, you can get caught up in this kind of net, that's for sure! But no, it's not like a net that you catch fish in. Maybe I should explain it another way. Look at your crystal ball. What letters do you see?"

Wally glanced down again and saw that they were the same. "WWW. I mean, I like that combination of letters. I already have it on the back of my robe because those are my initials: Walter Wendall Willoughby, the wizard. Is that why these letters showed up in the ball?"

Sir Brows only laughed. "Well, that is appropriate. And no, they stand for something else: the World Wide Web. It's another name for the Internet. Look over in the corner. Is

that your pet spider?"

Wally looked over to where his pet spider, Webley, was working on an enormous web of her own. It took up the entire corner of the room, and he knew it had taken a long time to get it just right.

"That spider's web is a lot like the World Wide Web. It has many strands that all connect, just like the Internet connects people together. You can pull on one strand and move another stand on the other side. It connects all over the place and can be very useful for the spider, but very dangerous for the fly. Be careful around it so that you don't get stuck."

Wally looked at the web and then back down at the crystal ball, understanding a little. "All right, so this is the future. This is how people connect with each other in the future. What can you do with this inter-net?"

"You can do many good things on the Internet. I guess one of the best would be, well, e-mail."

Wally cut in. "Oh, e-mail. What does the e stand for? Wait, wait, don't tell me. I bet it's 'elephant'. In the future, you sent your mail on an elephant."

Sir Brows raised both of his eyebrows, which looked like he had a pair of fur coats on his forehead. "No, no, no! Don't interrupt. It stands for electronic, which I guess is not a word you would understand yet either. Listen, and I will help you understand. No one sends mail by elephant. Not now and not in the future. Well, like I said, there are many good things like sending messages to each other, looking up new recipes, seeing adorable pictures of kitty cats and puppies, playing fun games, hanging out with friends, learning new things, getting answers to your questions. Actually, it's a lot like having a magic mirror."

Wally thought this sounded amazing. How had he not known about this before? "So everyone can use it? It sounds like in the future that everyone is a wizard!"

Sir Brows chuckled again. "Many people can use it and, yes, it's a bit like magic, but you know, just like magic, you can do good things with it and you can do bad things with it. There are people who use the Internet to cheat, to lie, and to steal from other people. There are even people on the Internet who might want to hurt you. Be careful about how you use it so that you don't get hurt."

Wally nodded, thinking about the witch that lived in the next forest over. She was fond of building things with gingerbread and luring children into her oven. She was definitely using her magic to hurt people. "So, you can show me how to use this inter-net for good? Where do we start?"

"Yes," Sir Brows said, "I can teach you all you need to know, but before we begin, you must promise me you will listen carefully to what I have to say and that you will obey the rules that I give you. There are there to help you and as long as you follow them, the Internet can be a wonderful, even magical place. Do we have a deal?"

Wally nodded, rubbing his hands together excitedly. "Yes, yes, we have a deal. Now, I want to see the elephant mail!"

Sir Brows sighed. "Electronic mail. All right, I suppose that is as good a place as any to get started."

THE WEB IS ONLY BEGINNING

Keep Wally Browsing

Wally has discovered the World Wide Web -
but Sir Brows still has a lot to teach him.

Michael D. Young

Next up: phishing emails, online predators,
cyberbullying, trolls, malware, screen balance,
and the perils of in-game spending.

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Fantasy, humor, heart - and a little internet magic.