

Computer and Internet Terms

Computer Terms

- **Application software (APP)** Computer programs designed to directly deal with solving the user's problems. Examples would include programs for accounting, word processing, financial analysis, computer games, etc.
- **Backup** The act of making a second (backup) copy of the data stored on a disk or other storage device, to safeguard against loss of data if there is damage to the primary copy.
- **Baud rate** A measurement of the speed at which data are transmitted between two computers, the number of signal per second being transmitted.
- **Bit** Abbreviation for "binary digit," the most common unit computers use for representing data internally.
- **Byte** A group of eight bits, the most common unit computers use for internally representing individual characters, digits, or other data.

Computer Terms

- **CD-ROM** Abbreviation for Compact Disk-Read Only Memory. A small disk device capable of storing extremely large amounts of data, but which cannot be erased and reused for storing other data (the reason it is referred to as “read only”).
- **Central processing unit (CPU)** The part of a computer that controls the entire system and does mathematical processing of data.
- **Chip** Common term for very small silicon wafers upon which electronic circuits have been created for use in computers. Used for microprocessors, electronic memory, and other internal computer electronic components.
- **Communications program** Computer program containing the instructions that allow a computer to send data to and receive data from another computer.
- **Cursor** A block, underline character, arrow, or other symbol used on a display screen to indicate a particular location on the screen.

Computer Terms

- **Data** The symbols, writing, words, or other items used to represent facts, objects, events, or ideas. Accounting
- **Disk drive** Device for recording onto and reading from one type of computer storage disk—either a diskette, or hard disk. Varying sizes and types of disks are not interchangeable among disk drives.
- **Display screen** or **Monitor** Usually a television-like screen used for displaying computer output, however, may also be an LCD or other device.
- **Documentation** The printed operating instructions that accompany a computer or software.
- **Electronic worksheet or spreadsheet** A general purpose computer program that operates like a large columnar pad of paper in the computer's memory, which can do calculations on data typed onto the sheet. Allows data and formulas to be typed in, edited, calculated, and printed out. Example – Microsoft Excel
- **Entry** The act or result of putting data into a computer.

Computer Terms

- **Ethernet** A type of network interface card that connects an individual computer to a network. Computers on the Internet that use the TCP/IP protocols are frequently connected to the Internet over an Ethernet link.
- **FAX modem** A device to connect computer to telephone line to send data FAX messages.
- **File** A collection of related data existing upon a computer storage device.
- **Floppy disk** or **Diskette** Flexible plastic disk coated with a magnetic material, upon which computer programs and data may be stored. Usually from 3 to 8 inches in diameter.
- **Hard disk** A type of computer storage disk, usually consisting of a metal platter coated with a magnetic material. Capable of storing larger amounts of data than floppy disks.

Computer Terms

- **Hardware** The physical parts of a computer.
- **Input** The data put into a computer.
- **Keyboard** Typewriter-like computer input device.
- **Kilobyte (K)** A unit for measuring computer memory and storage capacity, roughly equal to 1,000 characters or bytes of data. Technically, one K is 1,024 bytes.
- **LAN** Local area network
- **Megabyte** One million bytes, or 1,000 kilobytes.
- **Memory** Term usually referring to the electronic memory circuits of a computer; however, sometimes also extended to imply all memory and storage devices used by a computer.

Computer Terms

- **Menu** A list of choices displayed on a computer display screen, from which the user may choose a program action.
- **Modem** A device that allows a PC to communicate and exchange information with other modem-equipped computers via telephone lines. The current standard for modems is 56k, which allows you to transfer data at up to 56,000 bits per second.
- **Mouse** Computer input device consisting of a small box having one or more buttons on top, for giving instructions to a computer.
- **MSDOS** Operating system program popular among users of the IBM-PC and compatible computers.
- **Operating system** A program or collection of programs that coordinates and controls the various devices making up a computer system.

Computer Terms

- **Output** The act or result of printing or displaying information generated by a computer.
- **Peripherals** The add-on hardware devices used in conjunction with a computer, printer, display screen, disk drives, etc.
- **Printer** Device that transfers computer output onto paper.
- **Dot matrix printer** Printer that forms characters by selectively coloring or inking dots in a grid or matrix of dots. Characters thus printed often appear to consist of rows of dots.
- **Ink-jet printer** A low-cost, near laser quality printer that uses liquid ink.
- **Laser printer** A fast, high-quality printer.

Computer Terms

- **Program** A set of pre-defined commands or instructions that tells a computer how to go about solving a problem or doing some job.
- **Random-access memory (RAM)** Electronic memory circuits in a computer that may be both read from and written to, and which lose the data they contain whenever electricity is turned off to the computer. Sometimes referred to as volatile memory.
- **Read-only memory (ROM)** A memory device (usually electronic memory circuits) that may only be read by a computer. The data stored in ROM memory is permanent (non-volatile) and is not lost when electricity is turned off to the computer.
- **Small computer systems interface (SCSI)** Used to connect hard drives and tape drives to computer.

Computer Terms

- **Storage device** Any device upon which a computer may store data in permanent form. Data is not lost from a storage device when the electricity to a computer is turned off, as is the case with electronic memory.
- **Surge protector** Electronic device for protecting a computer or other electronic device from the harmful effects of sharp surges of voltage in electric power lines.
- **Utility software** Computer programs for handling the organizational and “housekeeping” chores in running a computer, such as deleting files of old data, copying disks, printing a directory of the information stored on a disk, etc.
- **WAN** Wide area network
- **Word processing** Using a computer to accept, edit, organize, and print out text. Example – Microsoft Word

Internet Terms

- **Address** An individualized name (or number) identifying a computer user or computer. Used in network communications for the transmission of messages for a particular person or machine.
- **Bookmark** Most Web browsers give you an option of adding a URL to a list. By doing this, you can store the linking information (the URL) to any Web pages you plan to revisit.
- **Browser (Web browser)** A software application (either text-based or graphical) that lets you browse (surf) the World Wide Web.
- **Cache (Pronounced “cash”)** A region on the computer memory where frequently accessed data can be stored for fast access.
- **Chat room (or chatline)** A location on an online service that allows users to communicate with each other about an agreed-upon topic in “real time” (or “live”) as opposed to delayed time with e-mail.

Internet Terms

- **Cookie** Small bits of data that a Web page asks a browser to store on a user's computer, either in RAM or on the hard drive.
- **Dial-up** As opposed to a dedicated or leased line; a type of computer linkage using regular telephone lines, generally referring to the kind of connection one makes when using a terminal emulator and a regular modem.
- **Download** To receive a file sent from another computer via modem.
- **E-mail (electronic mail)** Online communications between computer users.
- **Encryption** The process of scrambling a message so that a key, held only by authorized recipients, is needed to unscramble and read the message.
- **FAQ** Frequently Asked Questions.

Internet Terms

- **Firewalls** Hardware and/or software that is set up on a network to prevent intruders from stealing or destroying confidential files.
- **Freeware** Noncopyrighted software made available free for public use by the author.
- **FTP (File Transfer Protocol)** The process of transferring files or programs from one computer to another. An FTP site is a computer on the Internet that stores files and provides access to them.
- **GIF** Graphic Interchange Format, the most common format used for graphics on the Internet.
- **Helper applications** Additional software occasionally needed to help a Web browser program deal with a specialized file on the Internet.
- **Home page** An introductory WWW page or Web server at a Web site that provides hyperlinks to other Web pages.

Internet Terms

- **HTML (HyperText Markup Language)** The computer language used to create hypertext documents. A system of marking up, or tagging, a document so it can be published on the World Wide Web.
- **HTTP (HyperText Transfer Protocol)** The client-server protocol upon which the World Wide Web is based.
- **Hyperlink, hypertext** A link within one document connected to other documents, other places within the same document, pictures, or HTML pages. Think of a hyperlink as an invitation to visit another place. A simple click on the link will take you there.
- **Internet** The worldwide network of networks based on the TCP/IP protocol. A noncommercial, self-governing network devoted mostly to communication and research with roughly 66 million users worldwide.
- **Internet Service Providers (ISP)** An organization that lets users dial into its computers to connect to its Internet link for a fee. ISPs generally provide an Internet connection and an electronic mail address. Some providers also include World Wide Web browsing software. At Ann's Choice we use either Comcast or Verizon.

Internet Terms

- **Intranet** Internal networks, based on Internet technology, designed to connect the members of a specific group or single company (a closed-user group).
- **IP (Internet Protocol)** Main protocol upon which the Internet is based.
- **JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group)** A format that is used to display graphics on Web pages.
- **Login, logon** The process of identifying yourself to your computer or an online service. The initial identification procedure to gain access to a system as a legitimate user. The usual requirements are a valid user name (or user ID) and password.
- **Logout, logoff** The concluding steps for formally ending a session with a system. Physically disconnecting or powering down a terminal does not necessarily result in a logout.

Internet Terms

- **Mailing list** or **Contacts** Electronic discussion groups that link a relatively small group of people together by common interests and that are distributed throughout the Internet via its global e-mail system.
- **Multimedia** Documents or platforms that combine different kinds of data (text, video, graphics, audio).
- **Online** Refers to the successful connection with another computer via telephone lines or through a network.
- **PDF (Portable Document Format)** A PDF file preserves the look of a document. It is commonly used to make available publications on the Web. A free Acrobat Reader is needed on a computer before PDF files are readable. The Reader can be downloaded from the Adobe Corporation web site at www.adobe.com.

Internet Terms

- **Search engine** A WWW site that serves as an index to other sites on the Web.
- **Server** A computer (or service) that provides information or a service to other computers on a network.
- **Spam** Generally referred to as the Internet equivalent of junk mail, spam ranges from annoyances like mass e-mailings and advertisements, junk mail, and chain letters, to fraudulent product or service promotions, and harassing or threatening e-mails.
- **Upload** To send or transmit a file from one computer to another via modem.

Internet Terms

- **URL (Universal Resource Locator)** A Web site's address. An example is: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/> (ISU Extension's home page).
- **Usenet** Refers mostly to the newsgroups, but also to e-mail. Usenet travels on the Internet, but also over modems and satellites.
- **Username, user-id** An address that designates a personal account on a large computer. For example, in `jsmith@xyz.com`, "jsmith" is the user-id.
- **Virus** A piece of programming code inserted into other programming to cause some unexpected and usually undesirable event, such as deleting or damaging files.
- **Web site** A group of related pages, images, and files on a Web server.
- **WWW (World Wide Web)** One of several features of the Internet. It contains graphics, video, audio, text, and much, much more.