

A

Alias

A name that is substituted for a more complicated name. For example, an alias may be used instead of a more complicated mailing address, or for a mailing list.

ANSI

An acronym for American National Standards Institute. The American body responsible for setting telecommunications standards in the US. Unfortunately these often differ from those set by the ISO, the world standards authority.

Applet

A computer program written in Java for transfer over the web.

ASCII

The American Standard Code for Information Interchange, a standard way for computers to use bits and bytes to represent characters. An ASCII file contains simple text without any special formatting codes.

ATM

An acronym for Asynchronous Transfer Mode, a method of transmitting bytes across communications links.

Avatar

A graphical representation of a person in a chat room. The word comes from Hindu mythology in which spirits come down and inhabit bodies.

B

Backbone

A network through which other, smaller networks are connected.

Bandwidth

Describes the capacity at which a given communications channel, such as ordinary copper telephone line, can transfer information; increasing bandwidth increases the speed at which data transfer takes place. The greater the bandwidth, the greater amount of data can be transferred.

Baud Rate

A measurement of how quickly a modem transfers data. Although, strictly speaking, this is not the same as bits per second, the two terms are often used interchangeably.

BIOS

Basic Input Output System. This is the basic set of instructions that tell the computer how to act. Most computers have these instructions built into a chip that plugs into the motherboard.

Bit

Short for binary digit; either a 1 or a 0; the smallest unit into which digital information may be broken.

BPS (Bits per Second)

A measure of the speed of data transmission; the number of bits of data that can be transmitted each second. Modems are generally measured by their BPS rate (14.4K - 14400 BPS, 28.8K - 28800 BPS)

Boot up

The process of turning on the computer, which includes a number of functions that are performed automatically every time the power switch is turned on.

Browser

A client software program used to search networks, retrieve copies of files and display them in an easy-to-read, often graphical, format. Browsers such as SPRY Mosaic, Netscape Navigator, and Microsoft Internet Explorer are used to access information on the World Wide Web.

Byte

A collection of eight BITS.

C

Chat

A program that connects computers on a network for instantaneous, multi-way communication. People who use chat can type messages for delivery to a server, which displays the messages instantly so that users who are logged on to the chat service can respond immediately. On the Internet, chat is sometimes referred to as Internet Relay Chat (IRC).

Client

A software program that provides access to network resources by working with information stored on a server.

CMOS

Complimentary Metal Oxide Semiconductor. A CMOS computer circuit consumes very little power and is used in computers to keep track of the system setup information, data, time, type of disk and hard drives, etc. that a computer has installed. The CMOS information is powered by the computer's on-board battery. So if the on-board battery fails, the information in CMOS is lost.

Compressed File

Computer files that have been reduced in size by a compression program. Such programs are available for all computer systems.

CPU

Central Processing Unit. This is the brains of the computer. You'll hear computers described in terms of which CPU is installed in them. A Pentium, AMD, a Xeon, etc.

Crash

An unexpected shutdown either of a program or the whole system.; sometimes traumatic, always frustrating ; often fixable by turning off the computer and turning it back on; results in losing any unsaved work. Can also be used in instances of a hard disk physically being damaged.

Cyberspace

A term coined by author William Gibson. It describes the imaginary space in which computer users travel when "surfing" the Internet.

D

Dedicated Line

A telephone line that is leased from the telephone company and used for one purpose only. In the early days of the Internet, it was a line dedicated to a server.

Dial-in Direct Connection

An Internet connection that is accessed by dialing in to a computer through a telephone line. Once connected, your computer acts as if it were an Internet host. This type of service is often called SLIP, CSLIP or PPP.

Dial-up Service

A common Internet term for a dial-on terminal connection.

Digital

Terms used to describe any information that has been translated into a corresponding series of 1s and 0s; any information - text, sound, image, color, may be digitized.

Discussion Board

A forum on a Web site for the discussion of a specific topic or set of related topics.

Domain Names

A name given to a host computer on the Internet. E-mail names are good examples of domain names (i.e., anyone@netcom.com).

Dot

Short for the "period" or "fullstop" usually heard in a reference to a url -- "www.webtrail.com"

Download

The process of transferring information from one computer to another, usually from a server to a client. You download a file from another computer to yours.

E

EDI

An acronym for Electronic Data Interchange. Also referred to as electronic commerce.

Electronic Commerce

The transacting of business electronically rather than via paper.

E-mail (Electronic Mail)

A means of sending typed messages from one computer to another, over a network or the Internet.

Emoticon

Emoticons, or smileys :-), are used to convey emotion. The expressions and inflections of voice we use to convey emotion, irony, sarcasm, etc. when talking are lost when communicating over the Internet. To make up for that, a system of symbols has developed which uses common keyboard marks.

F

FAQ

Frequently Asked Question. This is often a file which new users can refer to when using a new service or piece of Internet software. It contains answers to frequently asked questions, hence the name.

File Transport Protocol (FTP)

A service for moving an electronic file of any type from one computer to another over the Internet.

Flame Mail

An excessively angry or rancorous message, generally containing personal insults, sent through e-mail.

Flamer

Someone who writes flame mail.

Floppy Disk

A removable storage medium that is used in conjunction with a floppy drive, usually 5.25-inch or 3.5-inch in size.

Forum

The dedicated area where people come together to discuss issues, hobbies, or news. Also called newsgroups.

Freeware

Software provided free by its originator. See shareware.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

An area or document dedicated to answering common questions about a subject, website, forum, etc.

G

GB (Gigabyte)

1,000 Megabytes. A measure storage space. Hard Drives are measured in GB capacity.

GIF (Graphic Interchange Format)

One of two popular systems used to compress the size of image files so they require less bandwidth to transfer on the Web.

GUI

This is an acronym for Graphical User Interface. Examples are Windows and Apple's Macintosh operating system. The concept originated in the early 1970s at Xerox's PARC laboratory.

H

Hard Disk

The rigid storage medium located within a hard drive; the relatively large storage area where a computer's operating system, applications, and data usually reside.

Helper App

A "helper application" or add-on program particularly for a web browser that increases the functionality and the type of files that the browser can display. See also Plug-in.

Home Page

The opening page of a World Wide Web document, sometimes called the welcome page.

Host

A computer connected directly to the Internet. A service provider's computer is a host.

HTML (HyperText Markup Language)

This is an acronym for HyperText Mark-up Language which is used to format information so that it can be structured and made accessible to the World Wide Web (WWW). The language itself is a simplified derivative of SGML, a widely used standard developed in the mid 1980's. The technique employed is to encase the information in special markers (called tags) which tell the WWW applications how the text is to be interpreted.

HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)

The protocol that forms the basis of World Wide Web technology. HTTP is the set of rules governing the software that transports hyperlinked files along the Internet.

Hyperlink

A code which contains an "address," which when clicked, will take you to that address.

I

IDE

Integrated Drive Electronics. An interface used mainly by hard drives and CD-ROM drives to connect to the computer.

Internet

A collection of networks linked together using a common protocol. The global computer network achieved through the interconnection of smaller computer networks around the world.

IP (Internet Protocol)

The standard protocol used by systems communicating across the Internet.

IP Address

A digital code that precisely locates a computer connected to the Internet.

IRC (Internet Relay Chat)

A software tool that makes it possible to hold real-time keyboard conversations online.

ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network)

Large bandwidth telephone line. Allows you to transfer information quickly.

ISO

An acronym for International Organization for Standardization

ISP (Internet Service Provider)

A company that provides a connection to the Internet. Service providers sell access to the network. Services offered differ between ISPs.

J

JAVA

A relatively new programming language developed by Sun Microsystems mainly to enhance the "online experience" of the World Wide Web.

Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG) Graphic Format

A commonly used compression technique for graphics images on the Internet.

K

K (Kilobyte)

1024 bytes

L

LAN (Local Area Network)

The regional server or servers your computer is connected to. These in turn are connected to other servers creating a network in your office, home, etc.

Listserv

Mailing list that acts as a newsgroup. Messages sent to a listserv address are sent to everyone who has subscribed to the list. Responses are sent back to the listserv address.

Local File

A file stored on the hard disk of your computer, as opposed to a file stored on an Internet server or some other remote computer.

Lotus

Lotus Development Corporation - the software company responsible for the Notes line of products. Now owned by IBM

M

MAC

Short for "Macintosh"; the other type of personal computer, manufactured by Apple Computer, not a PC

Megabyte (MB)

1 million bytes. A measure of the quantity of data. A megabyte is a lot when you are talking about files containing simple text messages, but it's not much when you are talking about files containing color photographs.

Microsoft

The computer industry giant responsible for DOS, Windows, Windows 95 and assorted business and personal software.

MIME

An acronym for Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions.

Modem (Modulator-Demodulator)

A device that converts digital signals from your computer into analog signals for transmission through a phone line, and vice versa (called demodulation).

Mouse

A small, handheld device attached to a computer; when moved across any flat surface (such as a desk), it results in the movement of something on the computer screen called a cursor; includes one or more buttons that allow the user to select graphics or text onscreen.

MPEG (Motion Picture Experts Group)

A video file compression system used on the web.

N

Network

Two or more computers connected to one another for the transfer and sharing of information.

Netiquette

Internet etiquette, the correct form of behavior to be used while working on the Internet and Usenet. It can be summed up as, "Don't waste computer resources and don't be rude."

Netscape

A computer company in California famous for their Netscape Navigator Internet web browsing software.

Newbie

An individual new to the Internet. Used with both affection and malice--depending on whether you're being welcomed or being flamed.

Newsgroup

Open forums or electronic bulletin boards on the Internet, where readers can share information, ideas, tips, and opinions with each other.

Notes

A group of applications from the Lotus Development Corporation which allows organizations to share documents, exchange email messages and custom build databases.

O

Online

Connected. You are online if you are working on your computer while it is connected to another computer. Your printer is online if it is connected to your computer and ready to accept data.

OS (Operating System)

The primary program running on a computer; started automatically when the computer is turned on; all other programs run within the operating system. Examples: DOS, Windows 95, UNIX, OS/2 Warp, and System 7 (Mac). Windows itself is not an operating system.

P

PC (Personal Computer)

Usually refers to what 's commonly known as an IBM-compatible computer, made by any one of dozens of manufacturers or backyard entrepreneurs.

PDF

Portable Document Format. A document format read by Adobe System's Acrobat viewer. This format is excellent for displaying instruction manuals and other large documents in a "web-ready" state.

Plug-in

A helper application that works within a browser. It adds more functionality to a browser commonly associated with the Netscape Navigator browser software.

Port

Generally, port refers to the hardware through which computer data is transmitted; the plugs on the back of your computer are ports. On the Internet, port often refers to a particular application. For instance, you might telnet to a particular port on a particular host. The port is actually an application.

Posting

A message sent to a newsgroup or the act of sending such a message.

Postmaster

The person at a host who is responsible for managing the mail system.

PPP (Point-to-Point Protocol)

A protocol that allows a computer to use the TCP/IP (Internet) protocols (and become a full-fledged Internet member) with a standard telephone line and a high-speed modem. PPP is a standard for this which replaces SLIP.

Protocol

A set of rules computer programmers apply when writing code for a specific software. Computers and networks interact according to standard protocols, which determine the behavior that each side of a network connection expects from the other side.

Q

Query

A search question that has been asked in a manner the computer's database system can understand and use.

R

RAM (Random Access Memory)

The working space within a computer that may be used at one time; increasing the amount of RAM increases the speed at which a computer works because more of a program may be loaded into the working space at one time, so less time is spent accessing parts of the program from the hard drive. Information stored in RAM is lost when the computer's power is turned off.

Replication

A capability of Lotus Notes to automatically distribute document databases across physical telecommunications networks. Notes supports a wide range of network protocols including X25 and Internet TCP/IP.

Remote Computer

A computer located somewhere else along a network as, for example, the computer containing the online catalog of your local public library. Remote is a relative term, relative, that is, to the computer immediately at hand (the local computer). A remote computer can actually be located within the same room, or it can be halfway around the world.

ROM (Read Only Memory)

This memory is the core instructions for the computer, it generally cannot be altered (read only) and is burned into the chips making up the specific motherboard.

Router

A system used to transmit data between two computer systems or networks using the same protocol.

S

SCSI

Small Computer Systems Interface. A set of standards used by an input device to interface with the computer. SCSI systems can "daisy-chain" up to seven devices to a single connection. Because several devices can connect to one single input connection, each device must be properly terminated for the entire chain of devices to work.

Search Engine

A tool used which matches key words you enter with titles and descriptions on the Internet. It then displays the matches allowing you to easily locate a subject. Similar to a card catalog, but not as efficient. Common search engines are Google, Yahoo, Alta Vista, Infoseek and Lycos.

Server

A computer or its software that "serves" other computers by administering network files and network operations.

Shareware

Software that is freely distributed, but the author expects payment from people who decide to keep and use it.

Signature

A short piece of text transmitted with an e-mail or newsgroup message. Some systems can attach text from a file to the end of a message automatically. Signature files contain detailed information on how to contact someone.

Smiley

A symbol in e-mail and newsgroup messages used to convey emotion, or simply amusement. Create smileys by typing various keyboard characters. For example, :-) means happy or happiness. See also, Emoticon.

SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol)

One method a computer uses to send e-mail from one computer to another. Other methods include Multi-purpose Internet Mail Extensions (MIME) and Privacy Enhanced Mail (PEM).

SQL, Structured Query Language

an official ANSI language for retrieving information from a database.

Most database software providers add extensions. The "official" pronunciation is "sequel,"

Stream

Audio or video transfer of signals in digital form. It is then downloaded on your computer and played back using various tools.

Surfing

The random, aimless exploration of web pages achieved through following links that look interesting within a document.

T

T1 Line

A line connecting a computer to a high-speed, high-bandwidth, digital electronic communication carrier.

TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol)

A set of protocols (communications rules) that control how data is transferred between computers on the Internet.

Telnet

An Internet protocol used for logging on to a remote computer, as well as the software that implements it. Telnet makes all Internet hosts appear to the user as if they use the same techniques for presenting information on screen and the same commands for performing tasks (such as typing and editing commands).

Threaded

Organized according to thread, or line of discussion, in a newsgroup or on a discussion board. A thread is a more or less continuous chain of postings on a single topic.

TWAIN

"Technology without an interesting name"

Actually its the interface used by a input device such as a scanner to import images (generally graphics) into the computer.

U

UNIX

A computer operating system, popular with high-end computer users, academics and the research community.

Upload

The process of transferring information from one computer to another, generally from a client to a server. For example, you upload a file from your computer to another.

URL (Universal Resource Locator)

The specific path to a World Wide Web file, including filename and extension.

Usenet

The "user's network." A large network connected to the Internet. It contains Newsgroups or discussion areas on almost any topic available. Messages are posted publicly for all to see.

V

Virus

A program that uses various techniques for duplicating itself and traveling between computers. Viruses vary from harmless nuisances to serious problems that can cause millions of dollars' worth of damage.

VR (Virtual Reality)

A simulated three-dimensional environment, displayed in real time with interactive capabilities. VR applications have been developed for the World Wide Web, although the technology is still at an early stage.

VRML (Virtual Reality Mark-up Language)

Protocol language which allows 3-D representation of graphics. Chat rooms are increasingly using VRML to represent chatters graphically with avatars.

W

W3

An acronym for the World Wide Web.

WAN

An acronym for Wide Area Network. A larger computer network that is geographically dispersed, such as one that stretches across a university campus.

Web

see World Wide Web (WWW).

Web Page

A single screen (document) on a Web site.

Web Site

The location of published hypertext content. Physically, a Web site can occupy an entire Web server or a part of a server; or it can be spread out among different servers as long as its sections are all linked, directly or indirectly, to the same home page.

WWW (World Wide Web)

An acronym for the World Wide Web. The WWW is a hypermedia retrieval system for information. Based on hypertext, the Web provides a quick and easy method of delivering and receiving information files which are read by a browser. The Web's ability to transfer files containing not just text but also graphics, sound, and video makes it the most versatile of all the Internet services.

WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get)

Pronounced "wizziwig," it is a generic term meaning what you see on your screen is what is going to print out on your printer.

X

X Windows Protocol

A network terminal standard developed at MIT that enables a user to run and display multiple network applications at the same time.

Y

Yahoo

A popular search engine used to index the web.

Z

'Zine

Electronic magazines, published on the Internet.

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