APPENDIX D

Glossary of Computer Terms

As computer technology continues to change, a new vocabulary continues to evolve. The following glossary provides brief definitions of the key terms and concepts that are part of this vocabulary.

The sources I consulted to update this glossary for the eleventh edition of *The Gregg Reference Manual* include *Webster's New World Computer Dictionary,* 10th ed., Wiley, New York, 2003, and *Microsoft Computer Dictionary,* 5th ed., Redmond, Wash., 2002.

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NOTE: When boldface type is used to highlight a word or phrase within a definition, it signifies that the highlighted word or phrase is defined elsewhere in this glossary.

➡ *See ¶544 for a list of common computer abbreviations.*

Access. To call up information out of **storage.**

   Random access. A technique that permits stored information to be directly retrieved, regardless of its location on the storage medium.

   Sequential access. A technique for retrieving stored information that requires a sequential search through one item after another on the storage medium.

Access time. The amount of time it takes for requested information to be delivered from **disks** and **memory.**

Active matrix display. A type of **monitor** typically used on **laptop** or portable **computers;** provides a brighter, more readable display than older **LCD** equipment.

Adapter. A **circuit board** that plugs into a **computer** and gives it additional capabilities. (See also *Circuit board*.)

AI. See *Artificial intelligence.*

Algorithm. A step-by-step procedure designed to solve a problem or achieve an objective.

Alpha testing. First-stage testing of **computer** products, typically done in house by the developer. (See also *Beta testing; Gamma testing.*)

Alphanumeric. Consisting of letters, numbers, and symbols.

Antivirus software. A **program** designed to look for and destroy **viruses** that may infect the **memory** of a **computer** or **files** stored on a **computer.**

Applet. A small **application,** that is, a **program** designed to perform a simple task. An applet is usually embedded within a larger program or **downloaded** from the **Internet** when needed.

Application (or app). A **program** designed to perform **information processing** tasks for a specific purpose or activity (for example, **desktop publishing** and **database management**). (See also *Applet; Killer app.*)

Archive. A **file** compressed for more efficient use of storage space. The compression of files may be accomplished by means of such **programs** as StuffIt.

Artificial intelligence (AI). **Computer** systems that attempt to imitate human processes for analyzing and solving problems.

Ascending sort. Sorting records from A to Z or 0 to 9. (See also *Descending sort*.)

ASCII (pronounced *as-kee*). An acronym derived from American Standard Code for Information Interchange. ASCII is a standard 7-**bit** code that represents 128 **characters.** The use of this standard code permits **computers** made by different manufacturers to communicate with one another.

B, b. *B* is the abbreviation of *byte; b* is the abbreviation of *bit.*

Background printing. The ability of a **computer** to print a **document** while other work is being done on the **keyboard** and the **display screen** at the same time.

Backup. **Storage** of duplicate **files** on **disks, diskettes,** or some other form of magnetic medium (such as tapes) as a safety measure in case the original medium is damaged or lost. (One word as a noun or an adjective: *backup* procedures; two words as a verb: *back up* your hard disk.)

Bacn. An **e-mail** message that might be considered **spam** except for the fact that the recipient has elected to receive it. Bacn (pronounced *bacon*) has been described as "e-mail you want but not right now." Newsletters, alerts, and automated reminders are considered examples of bacn.

Bandwidth. The volume of information that a network can handle (usually expressed in bits per second). The greater the bandwidth, the more quickly **data** can be **downloaded** from the **Internet** or moved from a **network** to a user's **computer.** The term *bandwidth* is now also used to refer to a person's attention span (as in "Burt is a low-bandwidth kind of guy") or a person's ability to handle an assignment (as in "Sally lacks the bandwidth to do this job"). The question "How's your bandwidth?" means "Are you busy?"

Basic Input/Output System (BIOS). A set of **programs** stored in read-only **memory** (ROM) on IBM or IBM-compatible **computers.** These programs control the **disk drives,** the **keyboard,** and the **display screen,** and they handle start-up operations.

BBS. See *Bulletin board system.*

Beta testing. Second-stage testing of **computer** products, typically done by potential customers and outside experts to identify problems that need to be fixed before the product can be released for sale. (See also *Alpha testing; Gamma Testing*.)

Binary code. The language used by **computers** in which **data** and instructions are represented by a series of 1s and 0s.

Binary numbering system. A numbering system in which all numbers are represented by various combinations of the digits 0 and 1.

BIOS. See *Basic Input/Output System.*

Bit (b). An acronym derived from binary digit. The smallest unit of information that can be recognized by a **computer.** Bits are combined to represent **characters.** (See also *Byte.*)

Bitmap. A method of storing a graphic image as a set of **bits** in a computer's **memory.** To display the image on the screen, the **computer** converts the bits into **pixels.**

Bits per second (bps). A measurement that describes the speed of **data** transmission between two pieces of equipment. (See also *Transfer rate.*)

BlackBerry. A wireless **palmtop computer** that is especially helpful to business travelers. It permits users to send and receive e-mail and view other documents that they have on file. (See also *Wi-Fi.*)

Blawg. See *Blog*.

Bloatware. A **program** that uses an excessive amount of **disk** space and **memory.**

Block. A segment of **text** that is selected so that it can be moved to another location or processed in some other way. (See also *Block delete; Block move; Cut and paste.*)

Block delete. A **command** to delete (or erase) a segment of **text.**

Block move. A **command** to reproduce a segment of **text** in another place and at the same time erase it from its original position. (See also *Cut and paste.*)

Block protect. A **command** to prevent a **page break** from occurring within a block of **text** (for example, a table). (See also *Orphan protection; Widow protection.*)

Blog. A *blog* (short for Web log) is an online diary in which an individual records and publishes his or her thoughts on one or more subjects. A blog devoted to legal matters is known as a *blawg*.

Blogger. Someone who creates and maintains an online diary.

Blogosphere. The complete set of **blogs** on the Internet.

Blook. A *blook* is a **blog** that has been turned into a book or an online book that is published on a blog.

Bluetooth. A **protocol** that permits a wireless exchange of information between **computers,** cell phones, and other electronic devices within a radius of about 30 feet.

Board. See *Circuit board.*

Boilerplate. Standard wording (for example, sentences or paragraphs in form letters or clauses in legal documents) that is held in **storage.** When needed, it can be used as is, with minor modification, or in combination with new material to produce tailor-made **documents.**

Bookmark list. See *Favorites.*

Boot (short for *bootstrap*). To start a **computer** and load the **operating system** to prepare the computer to **execute** an **application.**

Bozo filter. A **program** that screens out unwanted **e-mail** or other messages from individuals or organizations you no longer want to hear from.

bps. See *Bits per second.*

Bricks-and-clicks. Refers to a traditional business with a Web site. (See also *Clicks-to-bricks.*)

Bricks-and-mortar. Refers to a traditional business that sells merchandise only in stores. (See also *Clicks-and-mortar.*)

Brochureware. A product that is being actively marketed, even though the product is not yet (and may never be) ready for sale. (See also *Vaporware.*)

Browser. See *Web browser.*

B2B. Business-to-business (online transactions).

B2C. Business-to-consumer (online transactions).

B2G. Business-to-government (online transactions).

Buffer. A holding area in **memory** that stores information temporarily. Also called *cache.*

Bug. A **software** defect that causes a **program** to malfunction or cease to operate. Some writers now use *bug* to refer to **hardware** problems as well. (See also *Debugging; Glitch.*)

Bulletin board system (BBS). An **online** information system, usually set up by an individual (called a *system operator,* or **SYSOP**) on a nonprofit basis for the enjoyment of other individuals with similar interests. (See also *Internet.*)

Bundled software. **Software** that is sold along with a **computer** system; several software **programs** that are packaged together (also called *software suites*).

Burn. To record information on a disc such as a **CD-R,** a **CD-RW,** a **DVD-R,** or a **DVD-RW.**

Bus. A pathway along which electronic signals travel between the components of a **computer** system.

Button bar. See *Toolbar.*

Byte (B). An acronym for binary term. The sequence of **bits** that represents a **character.** Each byte has 8 bits.

Cache. See *Buffer.*

Cancelbot (from *cancel robot***].** A **program** that detects **spamming** in **newsgroups** and automatically issues a cancel **command.** (See also *Ham.*)

Card. See *Circuit board; Adapter.*

Carpal tunnel syndrome. A wrist or hand injury caused by using a **keyboard** for long periods of time. A type of repetitive strain injury **(RSI).** (See also *Mouse elbow.*)

Cathode-ray tube (CRT). See *Display screen.*

CD-R. Compact disc-recordable.

CD-ROM (pronounced *cee-dee-rom***).** An acronym derived from compact disc-read-only memory. A form of optical **storage.** One compact **disc** can hold up to 250,000 text pages; it can also be used to store **graphics,** sound, and video. (See also *DVD-ROM.*)

CD-RW. Compact disc-rewritable.

Cell. A box or rectangle within a table or **spreadsheet** where a **column** and a **row** intersect; an area in which information can be entered in the form of **text** or figures.

Central processing unit (CPU). The brains of an **information processing** system; the processing component that controls the interpretation and execution of instructions. (See also *Motherboard.*)

Character. A single letter, figure, punctuation mark, or symbol produced by a **keystroke** on a **computer.** Each character is represented by a **byte.**

Character set. The complete set of **characters**—alphabetic, numeric, and symbolic—displayable on a **computer.** (see also *ASCII.*)

Character string. A specified sequence of typed **characters,** usually representing a word or phrase. A character string is often used to locate a particular word or phrase wherever it appears in a **document** so that it can be automatically replaced with another word or phrase. If a person's name has been consistently misspelled or a date appears incorrectly in several places, the error can be easily corrected. (See also *Search and replace.*)

Characters per inch (cpi). The number of **characters** in a **fixed-pitch font** that will fit within 1 inch.

Characters per second (cps). The number of **characters** printed in 1 second; a measurement frequently used to describe the speed of a **printer.**

Chat. A method of communication in which people type text messages to each other, thereby holding a conversation over a **network** such as the **Internet.** (See also *Newsgroup.*)

Check box. A small box that appears onscreen alongside each option displayed in a **dialog box.** When an option is selected, an **X** or a check mark appears inside the box.

Chip. An **integrated circuit** used in **computers.**

Chip jewelry. An obsolete **computer.**

Circuit board. A board or card that carries the necessary electronic components for a particular **computer** function (for example, **memory**). The circuit boards that come with the original equipment perform the standard functions identified with that type of equipment. Additional circuit boards expand the kinds of functions that the equipment can perform. Also called a *board,* a *card,* or an *expansion board.*

Clear. A **command** to erase information.

Click. To quickly press and release a **mouse** button *once* while the **cursor** (mouse pointer) is positioned over a specific item on the screen. (See also *Double-click.*)

Clicks-and-mortar. Refers to a business that sells merchandise online as well as in stores. (See also *Bricks-and-mortar.*)

Clicks-to-bricks. Refers to an **Internet** company that opens stores. (See also *Bricks-and-clicks.*)

Client/server computing. A **network** of **computers** that consists of a file server (a computer that runs a **database management system**) and individual clients (computers that request and process **data** obtained from the file server).

Clipboard. A holding area in **memory** where information that has been copied or **cut** (**text, graphics,** sound, or video) can be stored until the information is inserted elsewhere. (See also *Copy; Cut; Cut and paste.*)

Column. A vertical block of **cells** in a table or **spreadsheet.** (See also *Row.*)

Command. An instruction that causes a **program** or **computer** to perform a function. A command may be given by means of a special **keystroke** (or series of keystrokes), or the command may be chosen from a **menu.**

Commercial online service. See *Internet service provider.*

Compatibility. The ability of one type of **computer,** device, data file, or **program** to share information or to communicate with another. (See also *ASCII.*)

Computer. An electronic device that is capable of (1) accepting, storing, and logically manipulating **data** or **text** that is **input** and (2) processing and producing **output** (results or decisions) on the basis of stored

programs of instructions. Some computers are also capable of processing **graphics,** video, and voice input. Most computers include a **keyboard** for **text entry,** a **central processing unit,** one or more **disk drives,** a **display screen,** and a **printer**—components referred to as **hardware.**

Control menu. An onscreen Windows element that appears in a box in the upper left corner of a **window.** The control menu allows the user the option of adjusting the size of the window, closing or reopening the window, or switching to another window.

Cookie. A small text **file** that a Web **server** stores on a user's hard drive when the user visits certain **Web sites.** A cookie contains all the information that a user has to submit on a first visit to a particular Web site in order to gain access. When a user revisits that Web site, the cookie makes it unnecessary for the user to enter the same information all over again. The positive aspect of cookies is that they make it possible for users to take advantage of the convenient "shopping cart" feature of many Web sites. Unfortunately, cookies also make it possible for marketing organizations to monitor users' browsing patterns; users then find themselves the targets of custom-tailored marketing campaigns.

Copy. To reproduce information elsewhere. The original information remains in place. (See also *Cut.*)

cpi. See *Characters per inch.*

cps. See *Characters per second.*

CPU. See *Central processing unit.*

Cracker. The preferred term (rather than **hacker**) used to refer to a **computer** criminal who penetrates a computer to steal information or damage the program in some way.

Crash. A malfunction in **hardware** or **software** that keeps a **computer** from functioning. (See also *Bug; Glitch.*)

CRT. Cathode-ray tube. (See also *Display screen.*)

Cursor. A special **character** (usually a blinking underline, dot, or vertical line) that indicates where the next typed character will appear on the **display screen.** Also known as the **mouse** pointer (arrow) or **I-beam pointer.** Microsoft Word refers to the cursor as the *insertion point.* (See *also Prompt.*)

Cursor positioning. The movement of the **cursor** on the **display screen.** Most **computers** have four keys to control up, down, left, and right movement. Many computers also permit the use of a **mouse** to position the cursor.

Cut. To remove **text** from its original location and place it on a **clipboard.** (See also *Copy; Paste.*)

Cut and paste. To move a **block** of **text** from one place to another.

Cyberspace. A realistic simulation of a three-dimensional world created by a **computer** system; also referred to as *virtual reality.* Now commonly used to refer to the world of the **Internet** as a whole.

Cybersquatting. Registering a potentially valuable Internet address in the hope of selling it at a profit later on to an organization for which this address would be ideal.

Cybrarian. The electronic equivalent of a librarian. A person who makes a career of **online** research and **data** retrieval.

Data. Information consisting of letters, numbers, symbols, sound, or images—in a form that can be processed by a **computer.**

Data compression. A procedure for reducing the volume of **data** so as to shorten the time needed to transfer the data or to reduce the amount of space needed to store the data.

D

Database. A stored collection of information.

Database management system (DBMS). The **software** needed to establish and maintain a **database** and manage the-stored information.

DDE. See *Dynamic data exchange.*

Dead-tree edition. The paper version of a publication available **online.**

Debugging. Locating and eliminating defects in a **program.** (See also *Bug.*)

Decimal tab. A type of tab that aligns **columns** of figures on the decimal point.

Default settings. The preestablished settings (for margins, **font,** type size, tab stops, and so on) that a **program** will follow unless the user changes them.

Delete. A **command** to erase information in **storage.**

Denial of service (DoS) attack. A malicious act intended to shut down a **Web site** or a **network** by flooding it with too much information. Users who attempt to visit the site will be denied access.

Descending sort. Sorting records from Z to A or 9 to 0. (See also *Ascending sort.*)

Desktop. The electronic work area on a **display screen.**

Desktop computer. A **microcomputer** that is bigger than a **laptop.**

Desktop publishing (DTP). A system that processes the **text** and **graphics** and, by means of page layout **software** and a **laser printer,** produces high-quality pages suitable for printing or in-house reproduction.

Dialog box. A message box on the **screen** that supplies information to—or requests information from—the user.

Dictionary. A **program** used to check the spelling of each word entered in the **computer.**

Digerati. A term referring to the elite group of intellectuals in the computer world (in the same way that *literati* refers to the elite group of intellectuals in the literary world).

Directory. A list of the **files** stored on a **disk.**

Disc. A nonmagnetic **storage** medium that is used in conjunction with optical technology. (See also *CD-ROM.*)

Disk. A random-**access,** magnetically coated **storage** medium used to **store** and **retrieve** information. (See also *Diskette; Hard disk.*)

Disk drive. The component of a **computer** into which a **disk** is inserted so that it can be read or written on.

Disk operating system. See *DOS.*

Diskette. A small, nonrigid **disk** with limited **storage** capacity. Also known as a *floppy disk.*

Display screen. A device similar to a television screen and used on a **computer** to display **text** and **graphics.** Also called a *video display terminal (VDT)* or a *monitor.*

Distributed processing system. A form of a **local area network** in which each user has a fully functional **computer** but all users can share **data** and **application software.** The data and software are distributed among the linked computers and not stored in one central computer.

DNS. D̲omain n̲ame system.

Document. Any printed business communication—for example, a letter, memo, report, table, or form. (See also *File.*)

Documentation. The manuals or guides distributed with hardware or software.

Domain. Typically, a three-letter element in a Web address or an **e-mail** address. The domain—commonly referred to as the *zone*—indicates the type of organization that owns the **computer** being identified in the address. For example, *.com* signifies a commercial organization; *.edu* signifies an educational institution. (See ¶1508b for a list of the most common domains.)

DOS (pronounced *dahs* or *doss*). An acronym derived from d̲isk o̲perating s̲ystem. The term refers to a **program** that allows the **computer** to manage the **storage** of information on **disks** and controls other aspects of a computer's operation.

DoS (pronounced *dee-oh-ess*). See *Denial of service attack.* (Note the differences in spelling and pronunciation between DOS and DoS.)

Dot. The period symbol used in **e-mail** and Web addresses. Always referred to as a *dot* (never as a period). Thus the **domain name** *aol.com* would be pronounced *ay-oh-ell-dot-com.* **Internet** surfers who spend a lot of time in the *.com* domain are sometimes referred to as *dot communists.*

Dot-com. An organization that sells its products or services on a **Web site** (with a URL endng in *.com*). A dot-com that fails to stay in business is referred to as a *dot-bomb.*

Dot matrix printer. A **printer** that uses pins to produce **characters** made up of small dots. This kind of printer is generally used by organizations that want to produce form letters or mailing labels economically.

Double-click. To quickly press and release a **mouse** button *twice* while the **cursor** (mouse pointer) is positioned over a specific item on the **screen.** (See also *Click.*) The expression "Double-click on that" means "That's really quite good."

Download. To transfer information to the user's **computer** from another computer.

Drag-and-drop editing. A **software** feature that allows the user to (1) highlight **text** to be moved and (2) use a **mouse** to drag the text to a new location.

DRAM. D̲ynamic r̲andom a̲ccess m̲emory.

Drop-down menu. See *Menu.*

DSL. D̲igital s̲ubscriber l̲ine. DSL is a high-**bandwidth** method of connecting to the **Internet** by means of telephone lines.

DTP. See *Desktop publishing.*

Duplexing. A procedure that permits two **computers** to transmit **data** to each other simultaneously.

DVD. D̲igital v̲ideo **disc** or d̲igital v̲ersatile d̲isc.

DVD-E. D̲igital v̲ideo **disc**-e̲rasable.

DVD-R. D̲igital v̲ideo **disc**-r̲ecordable.

DVD-RAM. D̲igital v̲ideo **disc**–r̲andom-a̲ccess **memory.**

DVD-ROM. D̲igital v̲ideo **disc**–read-only **memory.**

DVD-RW. D̲igital v̲ideo **disc**–read/write.

Dynamic data exchange (DDE). A technology that permits the user to transfer or **paste data** from one **application** (for example, a **spreadsheet**) to another (for example, a report). Because of the dynamic link created by this technology, any change in the data in the original application will be automatically reflected in the data copied in the second application. (See also *Object linking and embedding.*)

Easter egg. An unexpected image or message that pops up on the **display screen** when the user innocently enters a secret combination of **keystrokes.** Programmers playfully code Easter eggs into **software** and **operating systems** as a way of surprising and amusing users engaged in more serious tasks.

E-book. A small reading device that displays **downloaded** digital text.

Editing. The process of changing information by inserting, deleting, replacing, rearranging, and refor-matting. Also known as *changing* or *customizing.*

Ellipsis marks. Three spaced dots (. . .) that appear as part of a **menu** option. Ellipsis marks indicate that a **dialog box** will appear if that option is selected.

E-mail (short for *electronic mail*). The term *e-mail* refers to the transfer of messages or **documents** between users connected by an electronic **network.** The term is also used to refer to the message that is being transmitted in this way. The original form—*E-mail*—is rarely seen except at the beginning of a sen-tence, and industry professionals now commonly write the word without a hyphen—*email.* One wit has suggested replacing the term *e-mail* with *e-pistle.*

Emoticon. See *Smiley.*

Encryption. Coding confidential **data** so that only a user with the right **password** can read the data.

Enter. To **input data** into **memory.** (See also *Type.*) Also the name of a key on a **computer keyboard.**

Escape key. A key that permits the user to leave one segment of a **program** and move to another.

Ethernet. A type of **computer network.**

Ethernet card. A **circuit board** that allows a **computer** to be connected to a **network** by cable.

Execute. To perform an action specified by the user or the **program.**

Expansion board. See *Circuit board.*

Expert system. See *Artificial intelligence.*

Export. To save information from one **computer** or **program** to another.

Extranet. A technology that permits users of one organization's **intranet** to enter portions of another organization's intranet in order to conduct business transactions or collaborate on joint projects.

E-zine. A magazine published in an electronic format. Also called *Webzine.*

Face time. Time spent dealing with someone face to face (as opposed to time spent communicating electronically). Sometimes referred to as *facemail.* (See also *f2f.*)

FAQ. Frequently asked question. Pronounced as a word (to rhyme with *pack*) or as separate letters.

Favorites. A customized list of a user's favorite **Web sites** that permits the user to access a particular Web site with a single **command.** Also referred to as a *bookmark list* or a *hot list.*

D

Fax (n.). A shortened form of the word *facsimile.* A copy of a **document** transmitted electronically from one machine to another.

Fax (v.). To transmit a copy of a **document** electronically.

Fax modem. A device built into or attached to a **computer** that serves as a facsimile machine and a **modem.**

Field. A group of related **characters** treated as a unit (such as a name); also, the area reserved for the entry of a specified piece of information.

File. A collection of information stored electronically and treated as a unit by a **computer.** Every file must have its own distinctive name. (See also *File name.*)

File name. The name assigned to a **file** stored on a **disk.**

File transfer protocol (FTP). A set of guidelines or standards that establish the **format** in which **files** can be transmitted from one **computer** to another.

Firewall. A security system usually consisting of **hardware** and **software** that prevents unauthorized persons from accessing certain parts of a **program, database,** or **network.**

Fixed-pitch font. A **typeface** such as Courier in which each **character** has exactly the same **width** (`like this`). Also referred to as a *monospace font.*

Flame (n.). An inflammatory **e-mail** message; one deliberately designed to insult and provoke the recipient. (See also *Rave.*)

Flame (v.). To send an inflammatory message.

Flat-panel display. A type of **desktop computer** monitor that consists of an **LCD** in a thin case. A flat-panel display has a much smaller **footprint** than the traditional **CRT.**

Floppy disk. See *Diskette.*

Folder. A **storage** area on a **disk** used to organize **files.**

Font. A typeface of a certain size and style. Includes all letters of the alphabet, figures, symbols, and punctuation marks. (See also *Monospace font; Proportional font;* ¶1305d for samples.)

Footer. Repetitive information that appears at the bottom (the foot) of every page of a **document.** A page number is a common footer. (See also *Header.*)

Footnote feature. The ability of a **program** to automatically position footnotes on the same page as the **text** they refer to. If the text is moved to another page, any related footnotes will also be transferred to that page.

Footprint. The amount of space a **computer** occupies on a flat surface.

Forelash. Negative reactions to a technology not yet in existence but excessively promoted in advance.

Format. The physical specifications that affect the appearance and arrangement of a **document**—for example, margins, spacing, and **font.**

Forms mode. The ability of a **program** to store the **format** of a blank **document** or form so that it can later be viewed on the **display screen** and completed by the user. Once a fill-in has been entered, the **cursor** automatically advances to the beginning of the next area to be filled in. (See also *Style sheet; Template.*)

Forum. See *Newsgroup.*

Freenet. A local **network** that offers free (or low-cost) **access** to **host computers** located in libraries and to other public-interest groups in the community. A freenet may also offer limited access to the **Internet.**

Freeware. Copyrighted **software** that is available for use without charge. (See also *Shareware.*)

f2f. Communicating face to face.

FTP. See *File transfer protocol.*

Function keys. Keys on a **keyboard** (for example, F1) that give special **commands** to the **computer**— for example, to set margins or tabs.

G or GB. See *Gigabyte.*

Gamma testing. Third-stage testing of **computer** products, typically done just before the products are released for sale. (See also *Alpha testing; Beta testing.*)

Gateway. A machine that links two **networks** using different **protocols.**

Gigabyte. A measurement of the **storage** capacity of a device. One gigabyte represents 1024 **megabytes.** This term may be abbreviated as *G* or *GB;* however, *GB* is the clearer abbreviation since *G* also stands for the metric prefix *giga* (meaning 1 billion). A gigabyte is often referred to as a "gig."

Gigahertz (GHz). A measurement used to identify the speed of the **central processing unit.** One giga-hertz is equal to 1 billion cycles per second.

GIGO. Garbage in, garbage out. In other words, your **computer output** is only as good as your computer **input.**

Glitch. A **hardware** problem that causes a **computer** to malfunction or **crash.** (See *Bug.*)

Global. Describing any function that can be performed on an entire **document** without requiring individual **commands** for each use. For example, a global **search-and-replace** command will instruct the **computer** to locate a particular word or phrase and replace it with a different word or phrase wherever the original form occurs in the document.

Gopher. A **protocol** used for locating and transferring information on the **Internet.** The use of Gopher has diminished as the Web's **hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP)** has become the dominant protocol.

Graphical user interface (GUI). A visual computer environment that permits the user to **click** on **icons** or select options from a **menu.**

Graphics. Pictures or images presented or stored using a **computer.**

Grok. To research and comprehend something in great detail and great depth.

Groupware. Software that lets **network** users collaborate on a variety of **documents.**

GUI (pronounced *goo-ee*). See *Graphical user interface.*

Hack. To work on an electronic project.

Hacker. A dedicated **computer** programmer. The term *hacker* is sometimes used erroneously to refer to a computer criminal who penetrates and tampers with computer **programs** or systems. The preferred term for a computer criminal is **cracker.**

Ham. A legitimate **e-mail** message that is blocked because it contains one or more **keywords** associated with **spam** messages.

Handheld computer. A portable computer smaller than a **notebook computer.** Also called a **palmtop computer.**

Hard copy. **Text** or **graphics** printed on paper; also called a **printout.** (See also *Soft copy.*)

Hard disk. A rigid type of magnetic medium that can store large amounts of information.

Hard hyphen. A hyphen that is a permanent **character** in a word. A word that contains a hard hyphen will not be divided at this point if the word comes at the end of a line. (See also *Soft hyphen.*)

Hard page break. A page-ending code or **command** inserted by the user that cannot be changed by the **program.** A hard page break is often used (1) to prevent a table from being divided between two pages and (2) to signify that a particular section of a **document** has ended and the following **text** should start on a new page.

Hard return. A **command** used to end a paragraph, end a short line of **text,** or insert a blank line in the text. (See also *Soft return.*)

Hard space. A space inserted between words in a phrase that should remain together (for example, the word *page* and the number, month and day, number and unit of measure). The hard space ensures that the phrase will not be broken at the end of a line.

Hardware. The physical components of a **computer:** the **central processing unit,** the **display screen,** the **keyboard,** the **disk drive,** the **modem,** the **mouse,** and the **printer.** (See also *Software.*)

Hardwired. Describes something physically built into a system using hardware, instead of being accomplished by programming.

Header. Repetitive information that appears at the top (the head) of every page of a **document.** A page number is a common header. (See also *Footer.*)

Hit. A single request for information made by a client **computer** from a Web **server.** The popularity of a given **Web site** is often measured by the number of hits it receives. However, this number can be extremely misleading, since a particular Web page may contain a number of elements, each one of which will be counted as a hit when a visitor opens that page. Thus the number of hits recorded for a particular Web page can be significantly greater than the actual number of visitors to that page.

Home. The upper left corner of the **display screen;** the starting position of a page or **document.**

Home page. The main page for a **Web site** established by an organization or an individual; it usually serves as the entrance for a series of related pages.

Host computer. A **computer** that provides information or a service to other computers on the **Internet.** Every host computer has its own unique host name.

Hot key. A **keyboard** shortcut that allows quick access to a **command** or **menu** option.

Hot list. See *Favorites.*

HTML. See *Hypertext markup language.*

HTTP. See *Hypertext transfer protocol.*

Hyperlink. An element in a **hypertext document** that is highlighted by means of underlining or the use of a different color. When a user clicks the highlighted element, the user is connected with another element in the same document or another document.

Hypermedia. An extension of **hypertext** that integrates audio, video, and **graphics** with **text.**

Hypertext. A technology that links **text** in one part of a **document** with related text in another part of the document or in other documents. A user can quickly find the related text by clicking on the appropriate **keyword,** key phrase, **icon,** or button.

Hypertext markup language (HTML). The formatting language used to establish the appearance of a Web page.

Hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP). The **protocol** used on the **World Wide Web** that permits Web clients **(Web browsers)** to communicate with Web **servers.** This protocol allows programmers to embed **hyperlinks** in Web documents, using **hypertext markup language.**

Hyphenation. The ability of a **program** to automatically hyphenate and divide words that do not fit at the end of a line. If the **text** is later revised so that the divided word no longer begins at the right margin, the hyphen is automatically removed and the word prints solid. (See also *Soft hyphen.*)

I-beam pointer. A **mouse-** or **keyboard-** controlled **cursor** that looks like a capital I.

Icon. A symbol (such as a picture of a trash can or a file folder) that represents a certain function. When the user **clicks** on the icon, the appropriate function is **executed.** (See also *Graphical user interface.*)

ICQ (from *I seek you*). An instant messaging service.

IM. See *Instant messaging.*

Import. To **retrieve** any **text** or other information created by one **program** (for example, images created by a **graphics** program) and transfer it to another program (for example, a **spreadsheet** program).

Indexing. The ability of a **program** to accumulate a list of words or phrases that appear in a **document** (along with their corresponding page numbers) and to print or display the list in alphabetic order.

Information processing. The coordination of people, equipment, and procedures to handle information, including the **storage, retrieval,** distribution, and communication of information. The term *information processing* embraces the entire field of processing words, figures, **graphics,** video, and voice **input** by electronic means.

Information Superhighway (or I-way). The **Internet.** Also referred to as the *Infobahn* (based on the German term for its network of highways, the *Autobahn*).

Ink-jet printer. A nonimpact **printer** that forms **characters** by spraying tiny, electrically charged ink droplets on paper.

Input (n.). Information entered into the **computer** for processing.

Input (v.). To **enter** information into the **computer.** (See also *Type; Key.*)

Input device. A **hardware** component (such as a **mouse,** a **keyboard,** or a microphone) that lets the user **input** information.

Insert. To add information to **a file.**

Insertion point. See *Cursor.*

Instant messaging (IM). A **chat** program that lets people communicate over the **Internet** in real time.

Integrated circuit. Multiple electronic components combined on a tiny silicon **chip.** (See also *Microprocessor.*)

D

Integrated software. **Software** that combines in one **program** a number of functions normally performed by separate programs.

Interface. The electrical connection that links two pieces of equipment so that they can communicate with each other. Also, the **software** that controls the interaction between the **hardware** and the user.

Internesia. Forgetting where one obtained a piece of information on the **Internet.**

Internet (or Net). A system that links existing **computer networks** into a worldwide network. The Internet may be accessed by means of commercial online services (such as America Online) and **Internet service providers.**

Internet community. A group of individuals with common interests who frequently exchange ideas on the **Internet.**

Internet protocol (IP) address. A unique set of numbers that identifies a **computer** over a **network.**

Internet service provider (ISP). An organization that provides access to the **Internet** for a fee. Companies like America Online are more properly referred to as *commercial online services* because they offer many other services in addition to Internet access—for example, news, travel services, and financial and shopping information.

Internet telephony. Another name for **Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).**

Intranet. A private **network** established by an organization for the exclusive use of its employees. **Firewalls** prevent outsiders from gaining access to an organization's intranet. (See also *Extranet.*)

I/O. An abbreviation for *input/output.*

IP address. See *Internet Protocol address.*

ISP. See *Internet service provider.*

Java. A programming **language** designed for **programs** or **applets** used over the **Internet.**

JPEG. Joint Photographic Experts Group. A format for storing complex **graphics** in compressed form. The file extension. *jpeg* or *.jpg* indicates that a particular file uses this format.

Justification. Aligning lines of **text** at the left margin, the right margin, both margins, or the center. Text aligned at both margins is considered *fully justified.* Text aligned only at the left margin is said to have a *ragged right margin.* (See also ¶1344g–h.)

K or KB. See *Kilobyte.*

Kern. To make fine adjustments in the space between any two **characters.**

Key. To **enter characters** into the **memory** of a **computer.** (*Key* is being replaced by the word *type.* See also *Type.*)

Keyboard. The device used to **enter** information into a **computer.**

Keystroke. The depression of one key on a **keyboard.**

Keyword. A word or phrase that briefly identifies a **document.** Keywords serve as the basis for a variety of computer operations—for example, conducting an **online** search.

Killer app (short for *application*). **Software** that is considered "so great it will blow you away."

Kilobyte. A measurement of the **storage** capacity of a device. One kilobyte represents 1024 **bytes.** *Kilobyte* may be abbreviated *K* or *KB;* however, *KB* is the clearer abbreviation since *K* also stands for the metric prefix *kilo* (meaning 1000).

Kluge (pronounced *klooj*). An expedient (but often inelegant) way to solve a problem when time is of the essence.

LAN. See *Network, local area.*

Landscape orientation. The positioning of a page so that information is printed across the long dimension of the paper. (See also *Portrait orientation.*)

Language. The **characters** and procedures used to write **programs** that a **computer** is designed to understand.

Laptop computer. A portable **computer.** Also known as a *notebook computer.*

Laser printer. A nonimpact **printer** that produces sharper **text** and **graphics** than any other type of printer. (See also *Dot matrix printer; Ink-jet printer.*)

LCD. See *Liquid crystal display.*

L33t. The term *l33t* (pronounced *leet*) is an **alphanumeric** expression derived from "elite." This term is used to describe a person's prowess in accessing restricted **Web sites.** (See also *W00t.*)

Line or paragraph numbering. The ability of a **program** to automatically number each line or paragraph sequentially in a **document.** The line or paragraph numbers can be deleted before the preparation of the final **printout.**

Line spacing. The ability of a **program** to automatically change vertical line spacing (for example, from double to single to double again).

Linux. A type of **open source software.** When combined with other components, Linux serves as an increasingly popular **operating system** that competes with Microsoft Windows.

Liquid crystal display (LCD). A type of **monitor** typically used on **laptop computers** or portable **computers.** (See also *Active matrix display; Flat-panel display.*)

Listserv. Any **software** that manages a **mailing list.** The most widely used programs are LISTSERV (as distinct from the generic terms *listserv* and *listserve*), Listproc, and Majordomo.

Load. To transfer information or **program** instructions into a **computer's memory.**

Local area network (LAN). See *Network, local area.*

Log off or log out (v.). To exit or leave a **computer** system. (See ¶803f.)

 Logoff or logout (n.). The process of exiting a **computer** system.

Log on or log in (v.). To **access** a **computer** system. (See ¶¶802, 803e.) *Log onto* and *log into* are not correct.

 Logon or login (n.). The process of accessing a **computer** system.

M or MB. See *Megabyte.*

Macro. A time-saving feature (like telephone speed dialing) that allows the user to store in **memory** a set of **keystrokes** or **commands** that will accomplish a certain task.

Macro virus. A type of **virus** that attaches itself to **documents** or **word processing templates.**

Mail merge. The process of taking information from a **database** and inserting it into a form letter or other **document** in order to customize the document for an individual recipient. For example, mail merge can be used to create the inside address and the salutation for a form letter. (See also *Forms mode.*)

Mailbomb. A deluge of **e-mail** messages from one or more sources, deliberately intended to overload the recipient's **computer** and make it **crash.** A mailbomb is typically sent to punish someone guilty of **spamming** or some other serious breach of **netiquette.**

Mailing list. An **e-mail** discussion group devoted to one or more specific topics.

Mainframe. A large **computer** system.

Malware. **Software** that disrupts normal **computer** functions or sends a user's personal **data** without the user's authorization.

Maximize. A **command** used in a **graphical user interface (GUI)** that enlarges a **window** so that it fills a desktop.

Megabyte. A measurement of the **storage** capacity of a device. One megabyte represents more than 1 million **bytes.** *Megabyte* may be abbreviated *M* or *MB;* however, *MB* is clearer since *M* also stands for the metric prefix *mega* (meaning 1 million). A megabyte is often referred to as a "meg."

Megahertz (MHz). A measurement used to identify the speed of the **central processing unit.** One megahertz is equal to 1 million cycles per second.

Memory. The part of a **computer** that stores information. (See also *Storage*.)

   Random-access memory (RAM). The temporary memory that allows information to be stored randomly and accessed quickly and directly (without the need to go through intervening **data**).

   Read-only memory (ROM). The permanent memory of a **computer;** a set of instructions that has been built into the computer by the manufacturer and cannot be accessed or changed by the user.

Menu. A list of choices shown on the **display screen.** For example, a **format** menu would include such options as the type style and the type size to be selected. A menu is often referred to as a *pull-down menu,* a *drop-down menu,* or a *pop-up menu* because it appears **onscreen** after the user **clicks** the **menu bar** or some other item on the screen.

Menu bar. The bar across the top of the **screen** or **window** that displays the names of available **menus.**

Merge. A **command** to create one **file** by combining information that is stored in two different locations. For example, a **computer** can merge the **text** in a form letter with a mailing list to produce a batch of letters with a different name, address, and salutation on each letter. (See also *Mail merge.*)

Microcomputer. A small and relatively inexpensive **computer,** commonly consisting of a **display screen,** a **keyboard,** a **central processing unit,** one or more **disk drives,** and a **printer,** with limited **storage** based upon a **microprocessor.** (See also *Desktop computer; Laptop computer.*)

Microprocessor. An **integrated circuit** on a silicon **chip** that serves as the **central processing unit** of a **computer.**

Middleware. A type of **software** that connects different **applications** that were not originally designed to work together.

Minimize. A **command** used in a **graphical user interface (GUI)** that reduces a **window** to an **icon** or a label, usually at the bottom of a **desktop.**

MIPS. An acronym derived from millions of instructions per second. Used to measure the speed of a processor.

Modem. An acronym derived from modulator/demodulator. A device that (1) converts digital signals into tones for transmission over telephone lines and (2) converts the tones back into digital signals at the receiving end.

Monitor. The **display screen** of a **computer.**

Monospace font. See *Fixed-pitch font.*

Morph (from *metamorphosis*). To change one image into another by means of digital technology.

Motherboard. The **computer's** main **circuit board,** which contains the **central processing unit,** the **memory,** and expansion slots for additional circuit boards called *adapters* or *cards.* (See also *Adapter.*)

Mouse. A hand-operated electronic device used to move a **cursor** or pointer on the **display screen.** Mostly used with **microcomputers.** Referred to in Spanish as *el maus.* (See also *Word of mouse.*)

Mouse arrest. To be placed under mouse arrest is to be denied further access to an **Internet service provider** or a **commercial online service** as a result of violating the terms of service.

Mouse elbow. A repetitive strain injury (similar to tennis elbow) that is caused by repeatedly using a **mouse.** (See also *Carpal tunnel syndrome.*)

Mouse potato. A person who sits glued to a **computer screen** (in the same way that a couch potato sits glued to a TV screen).

Mousetrapping. Blocking someone's exit from a **Web site.**

MS-DOS (pronounced *em-ess-dahs* or *-doss*). Derived from Microsoft disk operating system. An operating system used on the first IBM and IBM-compatible **microcomputers.**

Multimedia. The use of several types of media (such as **text, graphics,** animation, sound, and video) in a **document** or an **application.**

Multitasking. The ability of a **computer** to **execute** more than one **program** at a time. The derivative term "multislacking" means playing games at the computer instead of working.

Net. See *Internet.*

Netiquette. A set of guidelines for formatting and composing **e-mail** messages. (See also ¶¶1375–1389.)

Netizen. A "citizen" of the Net; an active participant in the **Internet community.** Netizens in general are sometimes referred to as *netkind.*

Network. A system of interconnected **computers.** (See also *Notwork; Sneakernet.*)

    Local area networks (LANs) use cable to connect a number of computers within the same location or in close proximity.

    Wide area networks (WANs) use telephone lines or other **telecommunications** devices to link computers in widely separated locations.

    Internet is a system that links existing networks into a worldwide network.

Newbie. A newcomer to a **bulletin board system** or some other **network** facility.

D

Newsgroup. An electronic discussion group maintained over the **Internet** or tied into **a bulletin board system.** Each newsgroup is typically organized around a specific interest or matter of concern. Also called a *forum.*

Newsreader. A **program** that permits users to read and respond to messages posted on **Usenet.**

Notebook computer. A portable **computer.** Also known as a *laptop computer.*

Notwork. A **network** that does not live up to its advance billing. Also called a *nyetwork.*

Number crunching. Processing large amounts of numerical **data.**

Object linking and embedding (OLE). A process that permits the user to take material (referred to as an *object*) from one source and **insert** *(embed)* it in another **document.** If the user subsequently makes changes in the original material, those changes will be automatically transferred to the second document as a result of the OLE linking process. (See also *Dynamic data exchange.*)

OCR. See *Optical character reader.*

Offline. Refers to the state in which a **computer** is temporarily or permanently unable to communicate with another computer (even though it is turned on and capable of performing other functions). The term *offline* is also used humorously to refer to "real life." The expression "Let's take that offline" means "Let's discuss that in private."

Offscreen. Refers to any **computer** function that does not produce a display on the **screen.**

OLE (pronounced *oh-lay*). See *Object linking and embedding.*

Online. Refers to the state in which a **computer** is turned on and ready to communicate with other computers.

Onscreen. Refers to anything displayed on the **screen** of a **computer.**

Open. To transfer a file from a **disk** into the **memory** of a **computer.**

Open source software. **Software** that makes the underlying source code available to all users at no charge. Users may make changes and improvements as long as they do not try to sell the software commercially. **Linux** is the best example of open source software currently available.

Operating system (OS). **Software** that manages the internal functions and controls the operations of a **computer.**

Optical character reader (OCR). A device that can scan **text** from **hard copy** and **enter** it automatically into a **computer** for **storage** or **editing.** Also called an *optical scanner.*

Option button. An **onscreen** element that allows a user to select one option from a group of items. An empty circle precedes each option not selected. A dot appears in a circle to signify that the user has selected that option. Also referred to as a *radio button.*

Orphan protection. The ability of a **program** to prevent the first line of a paragraph from printing as the last line on a page. When the first line of a paragraph does appear as the last line on a page, it is referred to as an *orphan.* (See also *Widow protection.*)

OS. See *Operating system.*

Outlining. The ability of a **program** to automatically number and letter items typed in an indented **format.**

Output. The results of a **computer** operation.

Output device. A **hardware** component (such as a **monitor,** a **printer,** or a sound speaker) that delivers the results of **computer** operations to the user.

Overwriting. Recording and storing information in a specific location on a **storage** medium that destroys whatever had been stored there previously.

Page break. A **command** that tells the **printer** where to end one page and begin the next. (See also *Hard page break; Soft page break.*)

Page numbering. The ability of a **program** to automatically print page numbers on the pages that make up an entire **document.** If the document is revised and the total number of pages changes, the page numbering is automatically adjusted.

Pagination. The ability of a **program** to take information and automatically divide it into pages with a specified number of lines per page. If the information is changed because of the addition, deletion, or rearrangement of copy, the material will be automatically repaged to maintain the proper page length. (See also *Soft page break.*)

Palmtop computer. A portable computer smaller than a **notebook** (or **laptop**) **computer** that fits on the palm of your hand. Also called a **handheld computer.**

Papernet. Ordinary mail service. (See also *Voicenet.*)

Password. A user's secret identification code, required to **access** stored material. A procedure intended to prevent information from being accessed by unauthorized persons.

Paste. A **command** that transfers information from a **clipboard** and inserts it in another location. (See also *Cut and paste.*)

Patch. A small **program** that improves an existing piece of **software** or corrects an error in it.

PC. See *Personal computer.*

PDA. See *Personal digital assistant.*

PDF. *See Portable Document Format.*

Peripheral. A device that extends the capabilities of a **computer** (for example, a **printer).**

Personal computer (PC). A **microcomputer** for personal and office use.

Personal digital assistant (PDA). A palm-sized, handheld **computer.**

Personal information manager (PIM). A **database management system** that permits a user to **store** and **retrieve** a wide range of personal information (for example, names, addresses, phone numbers, appointments, and lists of people to call and things to do).

Phishing. A type of computer fraud that tries to trick users into revealing their passwords and other confidential information.

Pica. A measurement used for a **font;** equal to 1/6 inch or 12 **points.**

PIM. See *Personal information manager.*

Piracy. The illegal copying of **software** or other creative works.

Pitch. The number of monospace **characters** (each with exactly the same width) that will fit in a 1-inch line of **text.** (See also *Fixed-pitch font.*)

Pixel. An acronym derived from picture element. The smallest element (a dot) on a **display screen.** Pixels are used to construct images on the screen.

Platform. A term used to define the type of **microprocessor** and **operating system** on which a **computer** is based.

Plug-and-play. The ability to plug in a **peripheral** and have it work without difficulty. The term *plug-and-play* is now sometimes used to refer to a new employee who can immediately do the job without any preliminary training. Because of the problems some users have experienced with items so labeled, they refer instead to *plug-and-pray.*

POD. Publishing on demand. A process that allows for the printing of individual copies as orders come in (as distinguished from the traditional method of printing a number of copies on the basis of estimated sales for the foreseeable future).

Podcasting. Posting audio **files** online so that they can be **downloaded** to a portable audio player such as an MP3 player.

Point. A measurement that indicates the size of a **font;** 72 points equals 1 inch and 12 points equals 1 **pica.**

Pointer. An **onscreen** device that indicates the current position of the **mouse.**

Pop-up menu. See *Menu.*

Port. A socket on a **computer** into which an external device (such as a **printer** cable) can be plugged.

Portable Document Format (PDF). A **format** that makes it possible—with the help of Adobe Acrobat— to view documents that employ different **fonts,** various types of **graphics,** and complex layouts.

Portrait orientation. Positioning paper so that information is printed across the short dimension of the paper. (See also *Landscape orientation.*)

Posting. A message entered into a **network** (such as a **newsgroup**) or on a **Web site.**

Print preview. A **software** feature that reduces the pages of a **document** so that a full page (or two facing pages) can be seen on the screen before being printed. This feature permits the user to spot and correct problems in **format** and **page breaks.**

Printers. Output devices of various types that produce copy on paper. (See also *Dot matrix printer; Inkjet printer; Laser printer.*)

Printout. The paper copy of information produced on a **printer.**

Program. An established sequence of instructions that tells a **computer** what to do. The term *program* means the same as **software.**

Programming language. The rules, conventions, and specific **commands** used to write a **computer program.** Most programs must be converted into machine **language** or **binary code** so that the instructions can be performed on a specific **computer platform.**

Prompt. An onscreen symbol (for example, a **cursor**) that indicates where to **type** a **command;** a message that indicates what action is to be taken.

Proportional font. A **typeface** in which the width of each **character** varies (as in this sentence), so that the letter I takes much less space than the letter M. (See also *Font.*)

Protocol. A set of standards that permits **computers** to exchange information and communicate with each other.

P2P. Peer-to-peer (network).

Publishing on demand. See *POD.*

Pull-down menu. See *Menu.*

Push technology. A process that allows a user to obtain automatic delivery of specified information from the **Internet** to the user's **computer**—for example, stock market quotes, weather forecasts, and sports scores.

Radio button. See *Option button.*

RAM. See *Memory, random-access.*

Rave. To annoy someone by persistently talking about something. The act of raving is different from **flaming** in that flaming is deliberately provocative and even insulting, whereas raving is simply annoying because it goes on so long.

Read. To transfer information from an external **storage** medium into internal storage. (See also *Storage, external* and *internal.*)

Record (n.). A collection of all the information pertaining to a particular subject.

Redlining. A **word processing** feature that allows writers and editors to display (by means of a shaded panel or some other method) the additions and deletions they have made in a **document.** Redlining in drafts of reports, contracts, and manuscripts makes it easy for others to see the changes that have been made. All redlining is removed from the final version of the document.

Response time. The time a **computer** takes to **execute** a **command.**

Retrieve. To call up information from **memory** or **storage** so that it can be processed in some way.

ROM. See *Memory, read-only.*

Row. A horizontal block of **cells** in a table or **spreadsheet.** (See also *Column.*)

RSI. Repetitive strain injury; sometimes referred to as *chiplash.* (See also *Carpal tunnel syndrome; Mouse elbow.*)

Ruler. A bar (displayed on the **screen**) that shows the width of the page, the margin settings, the paragraph indentions, and the tab stops.

Save. To store a **program** or **data** on a **storage** device such as a **disk.**

Scanner. An **input** device that can copy a printed page into a **computer's memory,** thus doing away with the need to **type** the copy. A scanner can also convert artwork and photographs into a digital format and store these in memory.

Screen. See *Display screen.*

Screen dump. A **printout** of what is displayed on the **screen.**

Screen saver. A **program** that changes the **screen** display while the user is away from the **computer.** Originally intended to prevent images from becoming etched on a **monitor's** screen when that was still a problem. Now used primarily for esthetic purposes.

Scroll. To move information horizontally or vertically on a **display screen** so that one can see parts of a **document** that is too wide or too deep to fit entirely on one screen.

Scroll bar. An **onscreen** element that allows a user to **scroll** by using a **mouse.**

SCSI (pronounced *scuz-zy*). See *Small computer system interface.*

Search and replace. A **command** that directs the **program** to locate a **character string** or information (**text,** numbers, or symbols) wherever it occurs in a **document** and replace this material with new information. (See also *Global.*)

Search engine. A free **program** that helps Web users locate **data** by means of a **keyword** or concept. Among the most popular search engines are Google, Yahoo!, Excite, WebCrawler, and AltaVista.

Server. A computer that delivers **data** to other computers **(clients)** linked on the same **network.**

Shareware. Software that usually may be **downloaded** and used initially without charge; the author may subsequently ask for some payment. (Compare with *Freeware.*)

Shouting. The use of all caps in **e-mail.** This practice is considered a violation of **netiquette** and is actively discouraged.

Shovelware. Mediocre material used to fill up space on a **CD-ROM** or a **Web site.**

Sig block. The signature block that automatically appears at the end of every outgoing **e-mail** message. Also referred to as a *.sig file.*

Small computer system interface (SCSI). A type of **hardware** and **software interface** for connecting **peripherals** such as a **disk drive** or a **CD-ROM.**

Smiley. In **e-mail** messages, a facial expression constructed sideways (for the "lateral-minded") with standard **characters.** Also referred to as an *emoticon* (emotional icon). For example:

:-)	I'm smiling.	>:-(	I'm angry.	:-J	I'm being tongue-in-cheek.
:-D	I'm laughing.	:-@	I'm screaming.	:-+	I'm exhausted—my tongue
:-(	I'm sad.	:-&	I'm tongue-tied.		is hanging out.
:-<	I'm very sad.	:-x	My lips are sealed.	%-)	I've been staring at the
:'-(	I'm crying.	#-)	I'm feeling no pain.		screen too long.
;-)	I'm winking.	:-O	I'm shocked.	8-|	What next?

Japanese smileys do not require you to turn your head sideways. For example:

^L^	I'm happy.	(>_<)	I'm angry.	(^_^)/	I'm waving hello.
^o^	I'm laughing out loud.	(@_@)	I'm stunned.	(;_;)/	I'm waving good-bye.
\(^_^)/	I'm joyful.	(!_!)	I'm shocked.	(=_=)	I'm sleepy.

Although smileys tend to be quite amusing, many people find them excessively cute. In any case, do not insert smileys in business correspondence except in informal messages, when you are sure the recipient will welcome them.

Snail mail. A term employed by **e-mail** users to refer to regular mail service.

Sneakernet. The procedure for transferring **files** from one **computer** to another when the computers are not connected by an electronic **network.** (Users remove **diskettes** or other **storage** devices from one computer and carry them on foot to another.)

Soft copy. Information shown on the **display screen.** (See also *Hard copy.*)

Soft hyphen. A hyphen that divides a word at the end of a line; considered soft (nonpermanent) because the hyphen will automatically be deleted if the word moves to another position as a result of a change in the **text.** (See also *Hard hyphen; Hyphenation.*)

D

Soft page break. A line inserted by the **program** to show where a page will end. If copy is added or deleted, the original **page break** will be replaced with a new soft page break at the appropriate place. (By contrast, a **hard page break** will remain fixed, no matter what changes are made in the copy.) (See also *Pagination.*)

Soft return. A **software** feature that automatically breaks **text** between words at the right margin. The line ending is considered soft (nonpermanent) because the line ending will change if the user adds or deletes **text.** (See also *Hard return; Word wrap.*)

Software. The instructions that a **computer** needs to perform various functions. The term *software* means the same as **program.** (See also *Hardware.*)

Sort. To arrange **fields, records,** or **files** in a predetermined sequence.

Spam (n.). The electronic equivalent of junk mail; also called <u>unsolicited commercial e-mail</u> (UCE). (See also *Ham.*)

Spam (v.). To send an **e-mail** message to a great number of recipients without regard for their need to know. A user who spams sometimes receives a **mailbomb** in return as a form of retaliation.

Spider. An automated **program** that searches the **Internet** for new **Web sites** and indexes their **URLs** and content descriptions in a **database** for examination by a **search engine** for matches.

Spim. **Spam** that is delivered by **instant messaging** (IM Spim).

Spit. **Spam** that is delivered by **Internet telephony** (IT).

Split screen. The ability of some **programs** to display information in two or more different areas on the screen at the same time.

Spreadsheet. A **program** that provides a worksheet with **rows** and **columns** to be used for calculations and the preparation of reports.

Spyware. **Software** that enables a user to track someone's **computer** activities without that person's consent.

Storage. The **memory** of a **computer.**

  External storage. A magnetic medium such as a **disk, diskette,** or tape used to store information; can be removed from the **computer.**

  Internal storage. An integral component of a **computer;** cannot be removed.

Store. To place information in **memory** for later use.

Streaming. The process of sending and temporarily storing large amounts of audio or video information in small pieces and playing them back on the **computer** so that there is a continuous flow.

Style sheet. A collection of the user's formatting decisions regarding **font,** type size, margins, **justification,** paragraph indentions, and the like.

Surfing the Net. Browsing through various **Web sites** on the **Internet** in search of interesting things.

Surge protector. A device that protects **computer hardware** from being damaged by sudden increases in voltage.

SYSOP (pronounced *siss-op*). An acronym derived from <u>sys</u>tem <u>op</u>erator. A person who operates a **bulletin board system.**

Tab grid. A series of preset indentions (usually a half inch apart). If the tabs are reset by the user, the grid will change to show the new location of the tabs.

Tablet. A computer that accepts handwritten notes entered on the **display screen** by means of an electronic pen. The notes are then converted into text.

TCP/IP. See *Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol.*

Telecommunications. The process of sending and receiving information by means of telephones, satellites, and other devices.

Telecommuter. An employee who works away from the office (usually at home) and uses a **computer** (1) to **access** needed information on the organization's **intranet** and the **Internet** and (2) to communicate with other employees, suppliers, and customers or clients.

Teleconferencing. Conducting a conference by using **computers,** video, and **telecommunications** to share sound and images with others at remote sites.

Telnet. A **protocol** that allows a **computer** to connect with a **host computer** on the **Internet.** The use of Telnet has diminished as the Web's **hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP)** has become the dominant protocol.

Template. A preestablished **format** for a **document,** stored in a **computer.** The template determines the margins, the type style and size to be used for the **text,** placement instructions for various elements (such as the date line), and design specifications for certain items (such as a letterhead). A user can simply call up the appropriate template, **insert** text where needed, and then print a final document. The user can modify the original template or create a new template to satisfy personal preferences.

Terminal. Any device that can transmit or receive electronic information.

Text. Broadly speaking, the material displayed on a **screen** or printed on paper. Within a given **document,** the term refers to the body of the document as distinct from **headers, footers,** and other elements.

Text entry. The initial act of typing that places **text** in **storage.** (See also *Type*.)

Thread. A series of posted messages that represents an ongoing discussion of a specific topic in a **bulletin board system,** a **newsgroup,** or a **Web site.**

Toolbar. An onscreen element that offers instant **access** to commonly used **commands.** The commands are represented by **icons** on a row of buttons at the top of the **screen.** Also called a *button bar.*

Touchpad. The device on a **laptop computer** that takes the place of a **mouse.**

Touchscreen technology. The technology that permits a user to perform a function simply by touching the **screen** in an appropriate spot.

Trackball. An input device in which the user rolls a ball (usually with a thumb) to move the **pointer.**

Transfer rate. The rate at which **data** is transmitted between two **computers** or other electronic equipment.

Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP). A collection of over 100 **protocols** that are used to connect **computers** and **networks.**

Treeware. Anything printed on paper.

Trojan horse. A type of **computer virus** that is hidden within an innocent-looking program.

Type. To enter **characters** into the **memory** of a **computer.** For a number of years the verb *type* began to be replaced by the verb *key* as a way of emphasizing the difference between a **computer** and a typewriter. However, the simpler verb *type* has made a comeback in computer terminology and is now the word commonly seen in users' manuals and on **display screens.**

Typeface. See *Font.*

Typeover. See *Overwriting.*

Uniform resource locator (URL). The specific **Internet** address for a resource such as an individual or an organization. (See also *World Wide Web.*)

Uninterruptible power supply (UPS). A battery-powered backup system that provides enough electricity to a **computer** during a power outage (or, in most cases, a brownout or power surge) so that the user can save **files** before shutting down the computer.

Universal Serial Bus (USB). A common standard for connecting multiple **peripherals** to a **computer** as needed.

Upload. To transfer information from a **client computer** to a **host** computer.

UPS. See *Uninterruptible power supply.*

URL (pronounced *you-are-el* or *erl*). See *Uniform resource locator.*

USB. See *Universal Serial Bus.*

Usenet (from Users' Network). A **bulletin board system** or **Internet** site that hosts thousands of **newsgroups.**

User-friendly. Describes **hardware** or **software** that is easy to use. A related phrase, *user-obsequious,* describes hardware or software that is so simplistic in design that it is virtually unusable.

Userid (pronounced *user-eye-dee*). The name a person must use, along with a **password,** to gain **access** to restricted areas on a **network.**

Vaporware. **Software** that is being widely advertised, even though it is still in the developmental stage and has serious problems that may doom its eventual release. The premature marketing of software is designed to deter prospective customers from buying competitive products already available for sale. (See also *Brochureware.*)

Video display terminal (VDT). See *Display screen.*

Virtual reality. See *Cyberspace.*

Virus. A piece of **computer** code designed as a prank or malicious act to spread from one computer to another by attaching itself to other **programs.** Some viruses simply cause a humorous message to appear on the screen. Some cause minor **glitches,** but others cause serious damage to a computer's **memory** or **disks.** Some viruses flood an organization's Web site, interrupting or entirely preventing access to the organization's customers. (See also *Antivirus software; Denial of service attack.*)

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). The transmission of voice communications by means of the **Internet Protocol.** VoIP is an inexpensive alternative to long-distance telephone calls.

Voicenet. Ordinary telephone service.

VoIP. See *Voice over Internet Protocol.*

WAIS (pronounced *ways*). See *Wide-Area Information Server.*

WAN. See *Network, wide area.*

Web. See *World Wide Web.*

Web browser. **Software** that permits a user—with a click of a **mouse**—to locate, display, and download **text,** video, audio, and **graphics** stored in a **host computer** on the Web. The most common Web browsers now in use are Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox.

Web site. One or more related pages created by an individual or an organization and posted on the **World Wide Web.** (See also *Home page.*)

Webcam. A video camera that sends live images over the **Internet** to a **Web site.**

Webcaster. An **application** that can be custom-tailored to satisfy an individual user's need for constantly updated information in specific areas. A Webcaster, when appropriately programmed, will automatically deliver the needed information to the user's **computer.** (See also *Push technology*.)

Webmaster. The person who maintains a specific **Web site** and is responsible for what appears there.

Webzine. See *E-zine.*

Wide-Area Information Server (WAIS). An **Internet** search system that will locate **documents** that contain **keywords** specified by the user.

Wide area network (WAN). See *Network, wide area.*

Widow protection. The ability of a **program** to avoid printing the last line of a paragraph as the first line on a page. When the last line of a paragraph does appear as the first line on a page, it is referred to as a *widow.* (See also *Orphan protection.*)

Wi-Fi. Wireless fidelity. A process that permits high-speed wireless transmission of **data.**

Wiki. A procedure that permits a **Web site** to be continually edited or added to by those who visit the site.

Window. A frame that permits users to view messages they have received or **documents** they are working on.

Windowing. The ability of a **program** to split its **display screen** into two or more segments so that the user can view several different **documents** or perform several different functions simultaneously. (See also *Split screen.*)

Windows. A Microsoft **operating system** used on the vast majority of **PCs.**

Wizard. An interactive feature within an **application** that helps a user through each step of a task, such as creating a customized **document** or adding **hardware.** The term *wizard* is also used to refer to the person in an organization who can quickly find and fix everyone else's **computer** problems.

W00t. The term *w00t* is an **alphanumeric** acronym that stands for "we owned the other team." This term is typically employed by Internet users to express happiness or joy. (See also *L33t.*)

Word of mouse. Gossip spread by **e-mail.**

Word processing. The electronic process of creating, formatting, **editing,** proofreading, and printing **documents.** (See also *Information processing.*)

Word wrap. A **software** feature that detects when a word will extend beyond the right margin and automatically transfers it to the beginning of the next line.

Workstation. A **desktop computer** that runs **applications** and serves as an access point in a local area **network.** (See also *Network.*)

World Wide Web. The component of the **Internet** that combines audio, video, and **graphics** with **text.** Also called the *Web* or *WWW.* (*WWW* is sometimes pronounced *triple-dub,* to avoid pronouncing each W separately.)

Worm. A type of **computer virus** that runs a **program** to destroy **data** on a user's **hard drive.** Worms spread by sending copies of themselves to everyone on the user's list of e-mail addresses.

WWW. See *World Wide Web.*

WYSIWYG (pronounced *wiz-zy-wig*). An acronym derived from <u>w</u>hat you <u>s</u>ee <u>i</u>s <u>w</u>hat you <u>g</u>et. A **computer** design standard that lets the user see on the screen how a page will look when it is printed.

Zombie. A **computer** that has been hijacked by a **cracker** without the owner's knowledge and used to perform malicious tasks on the Internet.

Zone. See *Domain.*

Glossary of
Computer Terms

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