

Glossary

Address Book – A feature of an email program, or a stand-alone application, that stores and organizes a list of email addresses and other contact information a computer user frequently uses.

Alerts – Automatic notifications, often by email, that news on topics you've specified is now online.

App – Shorthand for application, app is popularly used to describe software that enhances the usefulness of mobile phones, media players, and social networking sites.

Artificial Intelligence – Computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence.

Auto-Complete – Feature that predicts a word or phrase before the user types it in completely.

Blog – (short for Weblog) Writings similar to a journal or diary by individuals that are posted to the internet. Someone who writes a blog is a “blogger”.

Bookmark – A reference to a file or webpage you plan to frequently visit. Most internet browsers let you maintain and organize a list of bookmarks (also called “favorites” when using Microsoft Internet Explorer) to make it easy to return to them again.

Boolean Phrases – Linking words or symbols in all caps that indicate the relationships of words to each other and refine online searches.

Botnet – A collection of compromised zombie computers running programs automatically under remote direction.

Broadband – (Broad Bandwidth) A high-speed network connection capable of supporting a wide range of frequencies.

Browser – A software program that is used to look at various kinds of internet resources. The most popular browsers are Microsoft Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Safari.

Byte – A group of eight bits that represent a character. Computer memory and disk capacity are measured in bytes. (A bit is the smallest unit of measurement for computer data.)

Cache – The hard drive space your browser uses to temporarily store webpages. When returning to a recently visited page, the browser can get a copy of it from the cache rather than the original server, saving time and network traffic. The larger amount of space you allocate for the cache, the more webpages can be stored.

Cellular Data – A way for your phone to access the internet that's offered by your mobile carrier.

Chatbot – A computer program that mimics conversations with humans.

Chat Room – A system where people can “chat” on a website through their browser.

Client – A computer or piece of software that requests information or services from a server. Your computer becomes a “client” when you connect to your ISP for a service such as surfing the internet or using email.

Compression – A method by which data, images, and text can be stored using less disk space. After a file is compressed into a smaller file size, it will require less time to transmit over a network.

Contact Group – A group of email addresses specified by a user. A contact group allows one to easily send a message to multiple recipients by entering the group name in the “To:” field.

Cookie – A piece of information sent by a Web server to be stored by your Web browser. Whenever the browser makes additional requests to that server, the server is able to use the information stored in the “cookie” to customize a response based on data from a previous connection.

Crowdsourcing – Meeting a challenge by asking many people – via the internet – if they can help.

Crowdturfing – Organized, for-pay efforts that hire people to create accounts under false names and post certain reviews or push a brand or website.

CSS – (short for Cascading Style Sheet) A specification for the presentation of html documents that allow Web developers to easily control the style and layout of single or multiple webpages.

DNS – (Domain Name Server) A computer which translates a domain name into a set of numbers called an IP address.

Domain Name – A “domain name” is a unique name that is used to represent and help locate a specific Web server on the internet. For example, “www.website-compass.com” is a domain name. Each domain name corresponds to a set of numbers called an IP address.

DSL – (Digital Subscriber Line) Allows users to download and upload data over standard telephone lines. It provides a constant internet connection over which users can receive voice and data simultaneously. It isn’t available in many areas because it requires a short distance to the DSL provider’s origin.

E-Learning – Any kind of learning that is provided through the digital technology used by computers.

E-Patient – An internet user who looks online for health information.

EBook – (short for Electronic Book) A book in digital format that can be read on a computer or other digital device.

EDU – When these letters appear as the last part of a Web address, it indicates that the host computer is run by an educational institution, usually in the United States.

Emoticon – (or Smileys) Short for emotion icon. Symbols composed of punctuation that help convey how an email message should be interpreted by the reader. EX: :) = Happy,): = Sad

Emojis – Icons or small digital images that are used online to express emotions or an idea.

E-Zine – A periodic publication distributed by email or posted on a website.

FAQ – Short for Frequently Asked Question.

Favorite – See Bookmark.

Filter Bubbles- Process by which websites show you search results and feed items based on your past choices and other factors.

Firewall – A specially programmed computer that connects networks (usually a local network to the internet) and for security reasons lets only certain kinds of data in and out.

Firewire – (Also known as IEEE 1394) A fast type of computers connection-similar to USB-2 that allows for high rates of data transfer.

Flash – A multimedia program for viewing and creating interactive and animated content on the Web.

Forum – A section of a website where users post and read topics common interest.

Freeware – Software provided at no charge by its originator.

FTP – (File Transfer Protocol) A common method of transferring files between two computers connected over a network. FTP is a way to login to an internet server for the purposes of retrieving and/or sending files. Many publicly accessible internet sites allow their materials to be obtained using FTP. Most FTP sites require a username and password.

GIF – (Graphics Interchange Format) A file format that uses compression for saving and viewing images.

Gigabyte – A measure of computer storage capacity equal to 1,000 megabytes or 1 billion bytes.

GOV – When these letters appear as the last part of a Web address, it indicates that the host computer is run by a government body, probably in the US.

Hacker – A person who tries to defeat computer security measures and break into websites and computers.

Hashtag – A word or phrase preceded by (#) and used to categorize social media messages.

History – A browser feature which keeps track of Web resources that have been recently visited.

Home Page – (or Homepage) Originally, a Home Page was defined as the webpage your browser was set to use when it was started up. The more common meaning now refers to the main webpage for an organization, business, person or simply the main page out of a collection of webpages.

HTML – (HyperText Markup Language) A coding language used to create hypertext documents for use on the Web. HTML files contain instructions on how your browser displays text, images, links and etc. HTML files usually end in “.htm” or “.html.”

HTTP – (HyperText Transfer Protocol) The standard protocol for moving hypertext files across the internet.

Hypertext – Text that contains links to other documents. Words or phrases in the document that can be chosen by an internet user which causes another document to be retrieved and then displayed.

Internet of Things (IOT) – A collection of unique objects represented and connected virtually.

IP Address – A numeric address which identifies a particular computer or server over a network.

ISP – (Internet Service Provider) An institution that provides access to the internet.

Java – A network-oriented programming language specifically designed for writing programs that can be downloaded to your computer and run. By using small Java programs called “applets,” webpages can include functions such as animations, calculators, chatrooms, games, etc.

Javascript – A programming language used to add interactive and dynamic features to webpages. It shares some characteristics with Java but is independent.

JPEG – (or JPG) Named after the committee that created it, the Joint Photographic Experts Group, this is a file format that uses compression for saving and viewing images.

LAN – (Local Area Network) A computer network limited to an immediate area, usually the same building or just one floor of a building.

LINK – (short for Hyperlink) A hypertext connection that can take you to another document or another part of the same document. On the World Wide Web, links appear either as underlined text or as pictures/icons. To follow a link, double click on the underlined text or on the corresponding icon.

Local Shared Object – Also known as a “Flash cookie,” it’s placed on your computer by a Flash plug-in and stores data.

Mail Server – A computer or application that stores, sends, and receives email over a network.

Mailing List – A special type of email address that remains all incoming mail to a list of subscribers. Mailing lists specialize in specific topics so internet users can subscribe to the ones that interest them.

Megabyte – A measure of a quantity of data. (A million bytes or, technically, 1024 kilobytes.) A megabyte is large when referring to files containing only simple text messages. A megabyte may not be much when referring to files containing complex color photographs.

Modem – (Modulator, DEModulator) A device that connects a computer to a phone line and allows the computer to talk to other computers through the phone system.

MPEG – (short for Motion Picture Experts Group) A file format that uses compression for sending and viewing audio/video files.

Net – These letters that appear as the last part of a Web address originally indicated that the host computer was run by a networking company, usually an ISP in the United States. Today “.net” is commonly used since there are no restrictions on who can register for a “.net” domain name. Net can also refer to a network or, when capitalized, the internet itself.

Netiquette – Also called digital etiquette, it’s a set of guidelines for how to behave appropriately online.

Network – The connection of two or more computers together so that they can share resources results in a computer network. Connect two or more networks together and you have an internet.

Newsgroup – A discussion group for sharing information on an area of interest.

Omnibox – Similar to the traditional web browser address bar, it can also be used like a search engine.

Password – A combination of letters and numbers a person chooses and then is required to use when logging in to a computer program or system.

PDF – (Portable Document Format) A file format developed by Adobe that allows system-independent documents to be created and distributed across multiple computer systems and have them appear as they were intended.

Phishing – Attempting to acquire personal or financial information by masquerading as a trustworthy entity.

Photo filter – Feature that allows social media users to modify the appearance of an image.

Pinboard – Virtual bulletin board on Pinterest used to collect images.

Plug-in – A piece of software that extends or enhances the capabilities of another program.

Browser plug-ins commonly add features such as audio, video, animation, etc. One of the most popular plug-ins is Flash Player.

Podcast – From “iPod” and “broadcast,” an audio program you can listen to any time.

POP – (Post Office Protocol) A protocol by which a mail server lets you retrieve your email and download it to your computer. A POP server uses this protocol to enable users to download email.

PPP – (Point-to-Point Protocol) A communication protocol for connecting a computer to the internet through a phone line.

Protocol – An agreed-on set of rules that define how computers “talk” to each other over a network.

Quicktime – A multi-platform software format and program developed by Apple for viewing video or listening to audio. It supports over 200 kinds of digital media.

Refresh – (also Reload) A feature in Web browsers that lets you load webpages again to see if the content has been updated or changed.

RSS – (short for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary) An XML-based format for syndicating internet content. RSS “feeds” are gathered and read using an RSS reader commonly referred to as an aggregator.

Scareware – Bogus software that masquerades as legitimate security programs.

Search Engine – An automated program (also called a spider, crawler, robot, or bot) that indexes millions of websites addresses. Special software within the search engine then sorts and ranks these sites based on a variety of criteria relevant to keywords someone uses in a search.

Secure Server – A Web server which uses encryption to prevent others from reading data sent to or from your browser. Online shopping sites normally use secure servers so that others cannot intercept credit card ordering information. You can usually tell if you are on a secure server if the “http” section of the domain name is followed by an “s.” Example:

“https://www.websitecompass.com.”

Server – A computer, or software package, that provides a specific service to another computer, known as a client, over a network. The term can refer to a particular piece of software or to the machine on which the software is running. A single server machine could have several different server software packages running on it, thus providing many different servers to clients on the network.

Shareware – Software that is freely distributed but for which the author expects payment from people who decide to keep the software and use it.

Sharenting – Term used to describe parents over-sharing about their children on social media channels.

Shred – To make a computer file unusable by replacing the data with random binary code.

Shelfie – A type of selfie featuring your bookshelf.

SMTP – (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) The method by which internet mail is delivered from one computer to another. An SMTP server is the computer to which you send outgoing email.

Social Gifting – Consumer’s ability to send gifts using automatic information and connections so social media friends.

Spyware – (also referred to as Adware) Software that secretly gathers user information and then transmits it to a third party via the internet. It is typically bundled as a hidden component of certain freeware or shareware programs downloaded from the internet.

SSL – (Secured Sockets Layer) A protocol that transmits internet communications in encrypted form. Information can be sent between your computer and a server privately and unaltered.

Streaming – A technique where audio or video transferred over a network immediately begins to play while the rest of the file is still downloading. Streaming was developed so users wouldn't have to wait on lengthy download times to view or listen to larger files.

Subreddit – A forum dedicated to a specific topic on the website Reddit.

Superzoom – Instagram feature that creates a funny, overly dramatic zoom-in.

Symmetrical – Type of internet plan that offers the same download and upload speeds.

T-1 – A connection capable of carrying data at 1,544,000 bits-per-second. At maximum theoretical capacity, a T-1 line could move a megabyte in less than 10 seconds.

Tabbed Browsing – A new feature available on major browsers that allows multiple webpages to be open in one browser window.

Taskbar – A bar at the edge of a graphical user interface's display that allows quick access to current or favorite applications.

Thread – A series of replies to a particular subject. Threads are commonly found in forums, newsgroups, and email programs.

Tumblogs – Name for the blogs posted on Tumblr.

USB – (Universal Serial Bus) USB is designed for low- to mid-speed peripheral devices such as keyboards, mic, printers, joysticks, and modems. It supports up to 127 devices connected in a "chain" to your computer. These devices are automatically recognized as they are plugged into the chain. A newer version, USB 2.0, allows peripherals to communicate with your computer up to 40 times faster than the original version of USB.

Vaguebooking – An incomplete, cryptic, and confusing Facebook status.

vCards – Digital "business cards" that can be attached to email messages. They usually contain information such as contact and business names, phone numbers, and website addresses. vCards appear as attachments to email messages with a .vcf file extension name.

Web 2.0 – Technology that allows website visitors to not only read information, but also to contribute to it or use it to collaborate with others.

Webcam – (or Cam) A camera that sends live or recorded video or a series of still pictures over the internet.

Webmail – A system where a user can access email through a webpage using an internet browser. Webmail can be easily sent, read, and organized from any computer with an internet connection.

Wireless Network – A network that allows devices to communicate using radio or light transmissions instead of wires.

XML – (eXtensible Markup Language) Similar to HTML, XML is a programming language that enables Web developers to create their own customized tags. XML enables the definition, transmission, validation, and interpretation of data between applications and between organizations.

ZIP – A format for data compression. (Not to be confused with a Zip Disk, a name used by Iomega for a removeable storage device that typically holds 100-250 MB.)

Zombie – A computer attached to the internet that has been compromised by a computer virus or Trojan horse and is being controlled by a hacker.

Zone – The last part of an internet domain name. If the zone is three letters long, it's a code indicating the type of organization that owns the domain. If the zone is two letters, it's usually the country code in which the organization that owns the computer is located. Some common zones are: .com, .net, .edu, .gov, and .org.