

Department for the Aging
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Glossary of Technical Terms



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GLOSSARY

Back (button): Brings you to the previous webpage you visited

Blog: (Short for web log) is a website created by someone where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order

Bookmark: Bookmarks (or Favorites) let you record the addresses of websites you want to revisit

Browser: A Web or Internet browser, often called just a "browser," is the program people use to access the World Wide Web. Web browsers allow a user to quickly and easily access information provided on many websites. Some common browsers are Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape Communicator and Apple Safari

Burn: When you "burn a disc," you write data on it. For example, you "burn" songs or files to CDs. It's simply "writing" data to a CD

Cable Modem: A cable modem is used for connecting to the Internet and is much faster than a typical dial-up modem. A cable modem is different than dial-up because it doesn't connect to a phone line. Instead, the cable modem connects to a local cable TV line, hence the term "cable modem." This allows cable modems to have a continuous connection to the Internet

Click: To tap on a mouse button, press it down, and then immediately release it. The phrase to *click-on* means to select a screen object by moving the mouse pointer to the object's position and clicking a mouse button. *See also: Double-click*

.com: Web address suffix used for businesses, commercial enterprises, or online services like America Online

Compact Disc (CD): CDs are circular discs that are 4.75 in (12 cm) in diameter that store data, such as music. They are in the CD-ROM of your computer

Copy: To copy a piece of data, you need to select, or highlight it and choose "Copy" from the Edit menu within the program. To insert the copied data into a document, choose "Paste" from the Edit menu and the data will be pasted into the document. *See Also: Paste*

CPU: Central Processing Unit or "brain" of the computer. It processes everything from basic instructions to complex functions. Any time something needs to be computed, it gets sent to the CPU. The CPU can also be referred to simply as the processor

Cursor: A special symbol usually a solid rectangle or a blinking under-line character that signifies where the next character will be displayed on the screen

Data: Computer data is information processed or stored by a computer. This information may be in the form of text documents, images, audio clips, software programs, or other types of data. Computer data may be processed by the computer's CPU and is stored in files and folders on the computer's hard drive

Desktop: Your computer's desktop is much like a physical desktop. Your computer's desktop serves the same purpose, to give you easy access to items on your hard drive. It is common to store frequently used files, folders, and programs on your desktop. This allows you to access the items quickly instead of digging through the directories on your hard drive each time you want to open them. You can also customize your computer's desktop with the pattern or background image of your choice

Domain Name: A name that identifies one or more Internet addresses. Domain names are used in URLs to identify particular Web pages

Double-click: Double clicking involves clicking your mouse button quickly two times. To perform a double click, and not just two clicks, the mouse button must be pressed twice within a very short time, typically about half a second. A double click is recognized by your computer as a specific command, just like pressing a key on your keyboard. Double clicking is used to perform a variety of actions, such as opening a program, opening a folder, or selecting a word of text. In order to double click an object, just move the cursor over the item and press the left mouse button quickly two times

Download: The process of taking information stored on the internet and copying it to your computer's hard drive. This is the process in which data is sent to your computer. The opposite of this process, sending information to another computer, is called uploading. *See Also: Upload*

DSL: Stands for "Digital Subscriber Line." Used for transferring data and connecting to the Internet over regular phone lines

.edu: Web address suffix for educational institutions and universities

E-mail (Electronic Mail): The transmission of messages over communications networks. You can send the message to the recipient by specifying the recipient's e-mail address. To see if you have e-mail, you may have to check your electronic mailbox periodically, although many systems alert you when mail is received. You can attach and receive files, such as pictures, by using your e-mail account. On-line services and Internet Service Providers, such as Yahoo and MSN, offer e-mail but you must set up an account following their instructions. Visit respective website(s) for more information

E-mail Address: The unique address within the Internet which allows people to send mail to you and you to them (using their e-mail address)

Favorites: Favorites (or Bookmarks) lets you record the addresses of websites you want to revisit

File: A file is a collection of data stored in one unit, under a filename. This can be a document, a picture, an audio or video file or other collection of data

Firewall: A system designed to prevent unauthorized access to your computer

Folder(s): Just like real folders, folders on your hard drive store files. These files can be documents, programs, and any other kind of computer file. Folders can also store other folders, which may store more files or other folders, and so on. Folders allow you to organize your files the way you want

Font: A font is a specific typeface of a certain size and style. For example, one font may be **Arial 12 pt bold**, while another font may be *Times New Roman 14 pt italic*. Most word processing programs have a Font menu that allows you to choose the typeface, size, and style of the text

Forward (button): Use forward to return to the webpage you just came from

Frozen: When the screen stays the same and does not change no matter what buttons you press on your mouse or keyboard. Often, the cursor will not move when you move the mouse. A computer typically freezes due to a software malfunction. If your computer does freeze, you will have to restart the computer to get it to function again. You can typically force your computer to shut down by holding the power button for several seconds. Since most computer freezes happen unexpectedly, it is a good idea to save your work often

Google: Google is the world's most popular search engine. *See also: Search Engine*

.gov: Web address suffix reserved for United States government agencies

Hard Drive: When you save data or install programs on your computer, the information is written and stored to your hard drive. Because the data is stored magnetically, information recorded to the hard drive remains intact after you turn your computer off

Hardware: Computer hardware refers to the physical parts of a computer and related devices. Internal hardware devices include hard drives. External hardware devices include monitors, keyboards, mice, printers, and scanners

Home (button): Takes you to the homepage of the web-site

Homepage: This is the front and main-page of a Web-site. This page usually provides links to the site's content and often describes the purpose of the site

Hyperlink or Link: A hyperlink is a word, phrase, or image that you can click on to jump to a new document or a new section within the current document. Hyperlinks are found in nearly all Web pages, allowing users to click their way from page to page. Text hyperlinks are often blue and underlined. When you move the cursor over a hyperlink, whether it is text or an image, the arrow should change to a small hand pointing at the link. When you click it, a new page or place in the current page will open. Hyperlinks are often referred to as just "links"

Icon: Icons are a visual representation of something on your computer. For example, a blue "e" on your screen most likely represents the Internet Explorer program. By clicking and dragging icons, you can move the actual files they represent to various locations on your computer's hard drive. By double-clicking an application icon, you can open the program

Install: To connect or set in position and prepare for use. In computer terminology, install usually refers to putting software on a computer (install the software), or adding hardware components to your computer (install the hardware)

Internet: is the virtual space in which users send and receive email, login to remote computers, and browse databases of information.

Many people think the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) is the same thing, but they are not. The World Wide Web is one of the many features of the Internet. E-mail is also a feature of the Internet

Internet account: Purchased through an Internet service provider, the account assigns a password and email address to an individual or group

Keyboard: A keyboard is a board of keys. Along with the mouse, the keyboard is one of the primary input devices used with a computer. The keyboard's design comes from the original typewriter keyboards

Laptop: Laptop computers, also known as notebooks, are portable computers that you can take with you and use in different environments. They include a screen, keyboard, and a track pad or trackball, which serves as the mouse. Because laptops are meant to be used on the go, they have a battery which allows them to operate without being plugged into a power outlet. Laptops also include a power adapter that allows them to use power from an outlet and recharges the battery

Left-click: Most computer mice have at least two mouse buttons. When you press the left one, it is called a left click. By default, the left button is the main mouse button, and is used for common tasks such as selecting objects and double clicking

Link: *see: Hyperlink*

Log-in: If you are ever asked to enter your username and password, you are being asked to enter your login information. A login is a combination of information that authenticates your identity. This could be a name and password or an ID number and security code

Log-on: To make a computer system or network recognize you so that you can begin a computer session. Most personal computers have no log-on procedure you just turn the machine on and begin working

Media: In general, "media" refers to various means of communication. For example, television, radio, and the newspaper are different types of media. In the computer world, "media" is also used as a collective noun, but refers to different types of data storage options

Menu Bar: A menu bar is a horizontal strip that contains lists of available menus for a certain program. Nearly all programs have a menu bar. It includes menu items and options specific to the particular program. Most menu bars have the standard File, Edit, and View menus listed first

Modem: The word modem is actually short for Modulator/Demodulator. A modem is a communications device that can be either internal or external to your computer. It allows one computer to connect another computer and transfer data over telephone lines. The original dial-up modems are becoming obsolete because of their slow speeds and are being replaced by the much faster cable and DSL modems

Monitor: The term "monitor" is often used synonymously with "computer screen" or "display." The monitor displays the computer's user interface and open programs, allowing the user to interact with the computer, typically using the keyboard and mouse

Mouse: A device that controls the movement of the cursor or pointer on a display screen. The mouse is one of the primary input devices used with today's computers. The name comes from the small shape of the mouse, which you can move quickly back and forth on the mouse pad, and the cord, which represents the mouse's tail. A wireless mouse has no cord

Mouse pointer: A pointer is a small arrow or other symbol on the display screen that moves as you move the mouse. You can select commands and options by positioning the tip of the arrow over the desired choice and clicking a mouse button. Pointers are often referred to as mouse pointers. These are examples of (mouse) pointers:



Grabber pointer



I-beam pointer



Selection pointer

MP3: Stands for "MPEG-1 Audio Layer-3." It is the most popular compressed audio file format. To listen to MP3s on your computer, you'll need an MP3 player. To create an MP3 file from a CD audio track, you'll need an encoder program to convert the audio track to an MP3 file. Once you have converted your favorite songs to MP3 files, you can listen to them on a portable MP3 player, like the Apple I-Pod

Multimedia: As the name implies, multimedia is the integration of multiple forms of media. This includes text, graphics, audio, video, etc. For example, a presentation involving audio and video clips would be considered a "multimedia presentation." Educational software that involves animations, sound, and text is called "multimedia software."

.net: Web address suffix for networks usually reserved for organizations such as Internet service providers

Network: A group of computers that are connected

Netiquette: Netiquette, or net etiquette, refers to etiquette on the Internet. Good netiquette involves respecting others' privacy. Areas where good netiquette is highly stressed are e-mail, online chat, and newsgroups

Offline: When a computer or other device is not turned on or connected to other devices, it is said to be "offline." This is the opposite of being "online," when a device can readily communicate with other devices. For example, if you try to print to your printer and you get one of those frustrating errors saying, "The specified printer could not be found," the printer is probably offline. You should check to see if the printer is connected properly and, yes, turned on as well. Offline can also mean not being connected to the Internet. When you disconnect from your computer, your computer is offline

Online: When a machine is "online," it is turned on and connected to other devices. Recently, however, the term "online" usually means being connected to the Internet

.org: Web address suffix for non-commercial organizations

Password: A password is a string of characters used for authenticating a user on a computer system. For example, you may have an account on your computer that requires you to log in. In order to successfully access your account, you must provide a valid username and password. This combination is often referred to as a login. While usernames are generally public information, passwords are private to each user

Most passwords are comprised of several characters, which can typically include letters, numbers, and most symbols, but not spaces. While it is good to choose a password that is easy to remember, you should not make it so simple that others can guess it. The most secure passwords use a combination of letters and numbers and do not contain actual words

Paste: Just like you can paste a note on a sheet of paper, you can paste data into a document on a computer. The paste function can be used to paste copied data into text documents. To paste data, you first need to copy it. This is done by first selecting the data you want to copy and then choosing "Copy" from the program's Edit menu. Once you have data copied, you can paste it within the same document or within a different document in the same program
See also: Copy

Pointer: *See: Mouse Pointer*

Print (button): Lets you make a hard copy of the current page loaded in your browser

Printer: A device that prints text or illustrations on paper.

Refresh (button): The refresh button updates the currently displayed Web pages

Right-click: Most computer mice have at least two mouse buttons. When you press the left one, it is called a left click. When you press the one on the right, it is called a right click. Clicking on the right displays a cascade menu that you perform functions from

Save: To copy a file from a computer's main memory to a disk or other storage medium. Most applications prompt the user to save data upon exiting

Scanner: Device that can read text or illustrations printed on paper and translate the information into a form the computer can use. Larger scanners include machines into which you can feed sheets of paper. These are called *sheet-fed* scanners. Sheet-fed scanners are excellent for loose sheets of paper. A *flatbed scanner*, is like a photocopy machine. It consists of a board on which you lay books, magazines, and other documents that you want to scan

Search button: Connects to directories

Search Engine: Google, Excite, Lycos, AltaVista, and Yahoo are all search engines. They index millions of sites on the Web, so you can easily find Web sites with the information you want. By creating indexes, or large databases of Web sites (based on titles, keywords, and the text in the pages), search engines can locate relevant Web sites when users enter search terms or phrases

Software: Computer software is a general term that describes computer programs. Since software is virtual and does not take up any physical space, it is much easier (and often cheaper) to upgrade than computer hardware.

SPAM: Junk e-mail or irrelevant postings to a newsgroup or bulletin board

Stop (button): Stops the browser from loading the running page

Template: A pre-formatted file that serves as a starting point for a new document

Toolbar: A set of icons or buttons that are part of a software program's interface or an open window. The toolbar typically sits directly under the menu bar. Toolbars serve as an always-available, easy-to-use interface for performing common functions

Upload: While downloading is receiving a file from another computer, uploading is the exact opposite. It is sending a file from your computer to another system

URL: A Uniform Resource Locator is the address of any resource on the Internet. A URL is the address of a specific Web site or file on the Internet. Some examples of URLs are: <http://www.msnm/>, <http://yahoo.com>

Username: A username is a name that uniquely identifies someone on a computer system. A username is almost always paired with a password. This username/password combination is referred to as a login, and is often required for users to log in to websites. When you choose a username for an e-mail account, the part before the "@" is your username

Virus: Computer viruses are small programs or scripts that can negatively affect the health of your computer. Some viruses can duplicate themselves, attach themselves to programs, and travel across networks. In fact opening an infected e-mail attachment is the most common way to get a virus

There are many anti-virus programs available that scan incoming files for viruses before they can cause damage to your computer. Some of these programs include Norton AntiVirus®, McAfee VirusScan®, and Virex®. It is a good idea to have one of these programs on your computer to prevent a virus attack. It is also important to update your virus definitions file at least once a month so that your anti-virus program can check for all the latest viruses

Webpage: Web pages are what make up the World Wide Web. Please note that a Web page is not the same thing as a Web site. A Web site is a collection of pages

Website: A web-site is a collection of Web pages. For example, Amazon.com is a Web site, but there are millions of Web pages that make up the site

Windows: Microsoft Windows is the most popular operating system for personal computers. There are several versions of the Windows operating system, including Windows XP (for home users) and Windows 2000 (for professional users)

Wireless: wireless is the term used to describe any computer network where there is no physical wired connection between sender and receiver, but rather the network is connected by radio waves and/or microwaves to maintain communications. The two most common types of wireless capabilities computers have are Wi-Fi and Bluetooth

Wi-Fi: The technology used for wireless networking. If your computer has a wireless card, it is most likely Wi-Fi compatible. The wireless card transmits to a wireless router, which is also based on the Wi-Fi standard. Wireless routers are often connected to a network, cable modem, or DSL modem, which provides Internet access to anyone connected to the wireless network

Bluetooth: Is the technology often used for wireless keyboards and mice, wireless printing, and wireless cell phone headsets. In order to use a device such as a Bluetooth keyboard or mouse, your computer must be Bluetooth-enabled or have a Bluetooth adapter installed

WWW: World Wide Web--also known as WEB--this is the generic name given to all of the hypertext-based HTML documents on the Internet. It is important to know that this is not a synonym for the Internet. The World Wide Web, or just "the Web," as ordinary people call it, is a subset of the Internet. The Web consists of pages that can be accessed using a Web browser. The Internet is the actual network of networks where all the information resides

Yahoo!: Yahoo! is one of the Internet's leading search engines. Besides being a portal and search engine, Yahoo! offers several other services as well. Some of these services include:

- Yahoo! Finance - stock quotes and financial information
- Yahoo! Shopping - online retail and price comparison services
- Yahoo! Games - online games playable over the Internet
- Yahoo! Groups - organized discussions among Internet users
- Yahoo! Travel - travel information and booking services
- Yahoo! Maps - maps and directions
- Yahoo! Messenger - instant messaging
- Yahoo! Mail - free Web-based e-mail

To learn more about Yahoo! services, visit the [Yahoo! home page](#).

Zip: A zip file (.zip) is a "zipped" or compressed file. For example, when you download a file, if the filename looks like this: "filename.zip," you are downloading a zipped file. "Zipping" a file involves compressing one or more items into a smaller archive. A zipped file takes up less hard drive space and takes less time to transfer to another computer