



## Glossary of Computer Terms

**4G or 5G** - cellular network signals that allow data to be sent to smartphones, e-readers, tablets, and other devices

**Android** - an operating system for smartphones and tablets that are not Apple or Microsoft products

**antivirus program** - software that helps detect and destroy viruses

**app** - software program for tablets and smartphones

**Apple** - company that makes Mac, or Macintosh computers, which run on a different operating system than PCs. They also produce the iPhone, iPad, and iPod.

**application (application software)** - computer software designed to help the user to perform specific tasks

**arrow keys** - keys on the key board that allow you to move the cursor around the screen

**attachment** - file sent along with an email

**bits per second (bps)** - measurement of a modem's data-transmission speed

**blog (web log)** - regularly updated website where an author and/or contributors share ideas and opinions

**Bluetooth** - short-range radio technology between communication devices

**bookmark** - website address saved to be revisited (also referred to as "favorite")

**bootup** - to turn on the computer

**broadband** - high-speed communication network that allows for multiple transmissions simultaneously

**browser** - software program (such as Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Safari, or Internet Explorer) that allows your computer to communicate with the World Wide Web

**bug** - error or defect in software or hardware that usually results in the computer not working properly

**byte** - measurement of space. A byte equals a single alphabetic or numeric character.

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**caps lock key** - key on the keyboard that allows you to type in uppercase without holding down the shift key. It is deactivated by depressing and releasing the key again.

**CD-R** - functions like a CD-ROM, but you can also copy information from your computer onto it

**CD-ROM (compact disc, read-only memory)** - type of disk that holds files or software that can be transferred onto your computer

**CD-RW (compact disc re-writable)** - blank CD that is used to copy information to/from your computer

**central processing unit (CPU)** - computer part that serves as the pathway for all information

**click** - depressing and releasing the mouse button to initiate an action onscreen

**click and drag** - action taken with the mouse to move items on the screen, such as a file or an icon

**close box** - box in your title bar where you click to close a window

**cloud** - cloud computing refers to programs and services offered over the Internet, including online storage and backup services

**collapse box** - box in a title bar where you click to shrink a window

**computer case** - computer part that houses the CPU, hard drive, RAM, modem, and disk drives

**copy** - editing tool that allows you to duplicate text and place it elsewhere in a document

**crashing** - when an error occurs and an application or the whole computer unintentionally shuts down

**cut** - editing tool that allows you to remove text from a document

**cyberspace** - figurative reference to the intangible world of the Internet, such as the World Wide Web and email

**D: drive** or **E: drive** - computer part where you insert a CD or DVD to read, listen to, view, or install its contents (see disk drive)

**desktop** - (1) non-laptop computer; (2) name for the main screen display on the computer (whether it is a laptop or a desktop)

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**digital certificate** - attachment to an electronic message used for security purposes

**disk drive** - computer part that reads information or software from a disk

**domain name** - person's or organization's chosen website name, including the suffix that identifies the type of website (for example: *whitehouse.gov*)

**double-click** - quickly depressing and releasing the mouse button twice on an icon or text to take an action, such as to open a document or a software program

**download** - transfer data or files from one location to another (for example, from a website to your computer)

**dpi (dots per inch)** - refers to the resolution of an image. The more dpi, the more detailed the image.

**drag** - see click and drag

**Droid** - smartphone that uses the Android operating system

**DVD (digital versatile disc)** - disk that holds 26 times the data of a CD; most commonly used to view movies

**email (electronic mail)** - to send or receive typed messages via the Internet

**email address** - person's or organization's address used to receive email (for example, *abby@AskAbbyStokes.com*)

**emoticon** - playful use of keyboard characters and symbols to represent emotional responses (also referred to as smileys), usually used in email or text messages (for example, >: -( means angry)

**encryption** - secret code added to data for data security

**Enter or Return key** - keyboard feature that performs actions; also can be used like a return key on a typewriter when typing a document or email

**e-reader** - device used for reading electronic books

**error message** - message from the software indicating that an error has occurred. Sometimes a code or number is given in the message so a technician can identify the problem.

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**Ethernet port** - used to connect a computer to a DSL or cable modem as well as another computer or a local area network

**external hard drive** - a storage device that plugs into your computer to transfer and store documents, photos, or music to save space or for safekeeping

**external modem** - modem that is housed separately from the computer case and is connected by a cable

**Facebook** - social networking website where you and your “friends” can view whatever ideas, photos, or links to websites you each choose to share

**Facetime** - Apple program that allows you to call, IM, or video call other users over the Internet at no cost

**favorite** - see bookmark

**file** - collection of information stored in one named grouping. There are many different kinds of files (for example, data files, text files, image files).

**firewall** - security measure that can be turned on to protect a computer from unauthorized users

**Fitbit** - mobile wrist device that records and wirelessly transmits physical activity

**font** - style of type

**forum** - online discussion site where people can read posts from others—often concerning a particular topic—and respond with their own posts

**freezing** - when the mouse and keyboard become temporarily inoperative

**function keys** - set of keys on the keyboard, rarely used nowadays, that carry out special commands

**gigabyte(GB)** - measurement of computer hard-drive space; roughly 1,000 megabytes

**Google+** - social networking website that utilizes circles to organize people by groups where they share ideas, photos, or links to websites

**GoogleGlass** - mobile eyewear device that connects to the Internet wirelessly and responds to verbal commands

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**hacker** - highly skilled computer user who gains entry to information on computers not intended for them by “cracking” the programming codes

**hard boot** - to shut down the computer when it is frozen, either by switching it off or by cutting off the electrical supply

**hard drive (C: drive)** - place in the computer where information is permanently stored

**hardware** - physical pieces of a computer (i.e., monitor, mouse, keyboard, computer case)

**hashtag(#)** - symbol that is used directly before relevant keywords in a tweet. Hashtags help categorize tweets so they show up more easily in Twitter searches.

**hertz** - measurement of computer processor speed

**homepage** - first page of any website on the Internet

**hotspot** - location providing public wireless connection to the Internet

**http (hypertext transfer protocol)** - prefix to a website address (which no longer needs to be typed in) that helps direct your browser software to the website

**I-beam** - one of the many faces of the mouse; cursor that fits between the characters of text to allow you to make changes

**icon** - small picture or image seen on the screen that represents a software program, a document, or a command

**information superhighway** - nickname for the World Wide Web, referencing its seemingly limitless information

**Instagram** - social networking website where users can edit and share photos

**installing** - process where the computer reads and stores software onto the hard drive

**instant messaging (IM)** - real-time communication with an individual on the Internet that allows faster transmission than an email and is often briefer in content

**internal modem** - modem that is housed inside the computer case

**Internet** - huge, worldwide, ever-growing system of computers linked by telecommunications networks that share data

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**ISP(Internet service provider)** - company that provides access to the Internet

**keyboard** - used to type information into the computer

**Kindle** - portable e-reader designed and sold by [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) that allows you to download and read digital books, newspapers, magazines, and other electronic publications

**laptop** - portable non-desktop computer that combines the drives, keyboard, mouse, and monitor into one much smaller unit

**link** - website feature that allows you to click on text and be transferred to another page with information on the subject indicated

**LinkedIn** - social networking site for professionals. It is used to network and list or find jobs.

**login name** - unique name chosen by a user to identify him- or herself while on the Internet

**login password** - private set of letters or numbers used to confirm the identity of the computer user

**logoff** - disconnecting from the Internet (also referred to as signing off)

**logon** - connecting to the Internet (also referred to as signing on)

**Mac or Macintosh** - see Apple

**maximize box** - box on a PC Title Bar that allows you to increase the size of a window

**megabyte(MB)** - measurement of computer space

**megahertz(MHz)** - measurement of computer processor speed

**menubar** - bar that appears below the title bar in a window and offers menus of different commands

**message board** - see forum

**minimize box** - box on a PC title bar that allows you to shrink a window

**modem** - computer part that allows you to connect to the Internet through a phone or cable line

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**monitor** - computer part that houses the screen; measured diagonally from top corner to opposite bottom corner

**mouse** - handheld device used to move the pointer on the screen

**mouse buttons** - controls on the top of the mouse that you click to carry out a command (see click)

**mouse pad** - pad that sits underneath the mouse and helps you to control its movement

**netbook** - small portable computer designed primarily for wireless Internet access and with most but not all the features of a larger computer; contains no media drive

**netiquette** - network etiquette; guidelines for how to communicate your ideas or feelings via email or chat rooms (for example, USING CAPS INDICATES THAT YOU ARE SHOUTING)

**newbie** - person who is new to using the Internet or a particular program or website

**Nook** - portable e-reader designed and sold by Barnes&Noble that allows you to download and read digital books, newspapers, magazines, and other electronic publications

**notebook computer** - smaller version of a laptop

**online service provider** - see Internet service provider

**operating software** - system (such as Windows 10 or Mac Yosemite) that organizes and manages your computer

**paste** - editing tool that allows you to place text that you have cut or copied

**patch** - computer code created to correct a problem (i.e., bug) within an existing program

**PC** - compatible software or hardware that works with a PC (vs. a Mac)

**peripherals** - additional pieces of hardware, such as a printer or scanner, attached to the computer

**personal computer** - any computer intended to be used by an individual (rather than, say, a large business)—includes PCs and Macs

**phishing** - scam email sent to elicit private information from the recipient to be used for identity theft

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**Pinterest** - social networking website where users post (or pin) images of ideas, collections, and projects to share

**pirated software** - software that has been illegally copied

**pixel** - (abbreviated from “picture element”) tiny dots that together make up images on computer screens and digital photos

**podcast** - audio (and sometimes video) file that can be downloaded from the Internet onto a computer, smartphone, or tablet

**pointer** - arrow that appears on the screen and moves according to the manipulation of the mouse; also referred to as the arrow, mouse arrow, or cursor

**port** - place on the computer where the cable from a different computer part is plugged in

**post** - to submit text (often in the form of a comment or update) to a blog, message board, forum, or social networking website

**ppi (pixels per inch)** - relates to the resolution of an item as seen on the computer screen

**printer** - allows you to print text and images from the computer

**profile** - web page on a social networking site where you list your interests, hometown, and whatever other details you choose to share with your “friends,” “connections,” or “followers”—anyone who has access to your information on the site

**QR code (“Quick Response code”)** - type of matrix bar code that consists of black modules arranged in a square pattern on a white background and that, with a QR scanner or smartphone, can be used to access encoded information or serve as a link to a website

**RAM (random access memory)** - temporary memory used when the computer is on

**resolution** - describes the sharpness and clarity of an image

**right-click** - function offered on the PC mouse that allows for more advanced tasks

**router** - device used to route information to/from the computer and to connect networks. It also provides a firewall.

**scanner** - device that copies images and text and converts them into a digital image that can be stored on a computer or emailed



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**scroll bar** - feature that allows you to move a page up and down in order to view all its contents

**scroll box** - part of the scroll bar that allows you to control the movement of the page

**search engine** - website where you can search the rest of the Web for information on a given topic

**shift key** - key on the keyboard that performs several functions, including typing in upper case and highlighting text

**Siri** - “voice assistant” utilizing voice recognition software to perform hands- free tasks on Apple mobile devices

**Skype** - program that allows you to call, IM, or video call other users over the Internet at no cost

**smartphone** - mobile phone that, in addition to making calls and texting, allows users to surf the Internet, access email, download apps, take pictures, and more

**SMS (short message service)** - see text

**snail mail** - nickname for mail delivered by the postal service that negatively refers to the time it takes to be delivered in contrast to the speed with which an email is sent

**social networking** - connecting with friends and family, meeting new people, and sharing ideas, photos, etc., on the Internet

**soft boot** - to close a program or restart the computer without completely shutting it down

**spam** - unsolicited commercial/junk email

**spyware** - software that covertly gathers user information when connected to the Internet without the user’s knowledge

**SSL (secure sockets layer)** - format for transmitting private documents over the Internet. It uses a cryptographic system that involves two keys.

**streaming** - allows you to play audio or video without it being completely downloaded first

**surfing the net** - traveling the Internet from site to site

**surge protector** - device that protects the computer from irregular electrical currents

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**sync** - abbreviation for “synchronize.” In the context of smartphones and computers, it means to transfer information to and from the devices so they have identical copies.

**tablet** - small, lightweight portable computer contained entirely in a flat screen that has many, but not all of the features of a full-size personal computer and is often equipped with a rotatable touch screen instead of a keyboard or mouse

**tap** - depressing and releasing your finger to initiate an action on a touchscreen

**task bar** - bar that appears at the bottom of a PC screen that contains the start button as well as access to other programs and features

**text** - to send a short text message on your cell phone

**title bar** - bar that appears at the top of a window and indicates the name of the software program and the document; also contains the close box

**touch point** - type of mouse used on a laptop that uses a small rubber button for control (see mouse)

**touch screen** - computer monitor or device screen that can be operated by finger touch

**trackball** - type of mouse that uses a ball for control (see mouse)

**tweet** - post written on Twitter that contains 140 characters or less

**Twitter** - social networking website where users post messages of limited length and “follow” whoever’s thoughts are of interest to them

**URL (Uniform Resource Locator)** - technical term for a website address

**upgrading hardware** - increasing the memory capacity or functionality of the computer

**upgrading software** - installing a new and improved version of a software program already installed on the computer

**upload** - to transfer data or files from a computer to a network (for example, transfer photos from your computer to a website)

**USB (universal serial bus)** - most common type of port on a computer; used to plug in a printer, scanner, etc.

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**username** - see login name

**user password** - see login password

**virus** - computer problem created by malcontented computer geeks. Viruses are meant to damage computers and are spread by opening email attachments or links or using someone else's disks.

**virus protection software** - see antivirus program

**voice recognition software** - software that responds to voice commands to take an action and transcribes dictated text to a written format (emails, text, documents)

**wearables** - devices worn on the body that connect to the Internet (examples: Apple Watch, Google Glass, Fitbit)

**webcam** - video camera that feeds its images in real time to a computer where they can be viewed online

**webpage** - any page that follows the home page of a website

**WEP (wired equivalent privacy)** - data encryption that utilizes a password to protect wireless communication

**wi-fi (wireless fidelity)** - enables a computer, e-reader, smartphone, among other devices, to connect to the Internet without being tethered to a modem

**window** - visual frame that appears on your computer screen to contain an application

**Windows 8.1** - operating system used on more recent PCs

**World Wide Web (www)** cyberspace library of information organized by website

**worm** - program, not unlike a virus, that replicates itself over a computer network and usually performs malicious actions

**WPA (wi-fi protected access)** - see WEP

**wrist pad** - pad placed in front of a keyboard or mousepad that helps position your hands in a way that prevents wrist strain

**zoom box** - box on a Mac title bar where you click to increase the size of a window