

## Computer Terminology

Term	Definition	What they really mean!!
CPU – Central Processing Unit	The control unit fetches instructions from memory and decodes them to produce signals which control the other part of the computer.	The Brains of the computer
RAM – Random Access Memory	A data storage device for which the order of access to different locations does not affect the speed of access.	Short Term Memory
Motherboard	The main printed circuit board in an electronic device, particularly a computer, which may contain sockets that accept additional boards	Matriarchal to the whole machine.
Megahertz	Millions of cycles per second. The unit of frequency used to measure the clock rate of modern digital logic, including microprocessors.	Fast.
Gigahertz	Billions of cycles per second. The unit of frequency used to measure the clock rate of modern digital logic, including microprocessors.	Faster.
Hard drive	The drive contains a motor to rotate the disk at a constant rate and one or more read/write heads which are positioned over the desired track by a servo mechanism. It also contains the electronics to amplify the signals from the heads to normal digital logic levels and vice versa.	File Cabinet—Storage Space.
Floppy drive	A small, portable plastic disk coated in a magnetisable substance used for storing computer data, readable by a computer with a floppy disk drive. The physical size of disks has shrunk from the early 8 inch, to 5 1/4 inch ("minifloppy") to 3 1/2 inch ("microfloppy") while the data capacity has risen.	Portable storage space.
Jump Drive/Thumb Drive		Newer portable storage space.
USB – Universal Serial Bus	An external peripheral interface standard for communication between a computer and external peripherals over an inexpensive cable using biserial transmission.	Connects parts of the computer to the main part.
USB Hub		Links many usb devices to the main machine.
IDE	A disk drive interface standard based on the IBM PC ISA 16-bit bus but also used on other personal computers. The ATA specification deals with the power and data signal interfaces between the motherboard and the integrated disk controller and drive. The ATA "bus" only supports two devices - master and slave.	Connects things to Motherboard.
SATA Hard drive		A serial attachment of a hard drive or device.
Keyboard	A hardware device consisting of a number of	Typewriter keys.

	mechanical buttons (keys) which the user presses to input characters to a computer.	
Mouse	The mouse is a device used to manipulate an on-screen pointer that's normally shaped like an arrow. With the mouse in hand, the computer user can select, move, and change items on the screen.	Not a cat. Two button device to point and click.
---Left Click	As is stated	Index finger makes things go.
---Right Click	As is stated	Middle finger gives you menus or choices.
---Double click	Click twice the left mouse button	Starts an executable program.
CRT – Cathode Ray Tube	An electrical device for displaying images by exciting phosphor dots with a scanned electron beam.	Little TV. Monitor
LCD	An electro-optical device used to display digits, characters or images, commonly used in digital watches, calculators, and portable computers.	A better little TV. Monitor
Pixels – Picture Element	The smallest resolvable rectangular area of an image, either on a screen or stored in memory. Each pixel in a monochrome image has its own brightness, from 0 for black to the maximum value (e.g. 255 for an eight-bit pixel) for white. In a color image, each pixel has its own brightness and color, usually represented as a triple of red, green and blue intensities	Little dots that make a picture.
Resolution	the maximum number of pixels that can be displayed on a monitor, expressed as (number of horizontal pixels) x (number of vertical pixels), i.e., 1024x768. The ratio of horizontal to vertical resolution is usually 4:3, the same as that of conventional television sets.	More dots better picture
Internet	The Internet is the largest internet (with a small "i") in the world. It is a three level hierarchy composed of backbone networks, mid-level networks, and stub networks. These include commercial (.com or .co), university (.ac or .edu) and other research networks (.org, .net) and military (.mil) networks and span many different physical networks around the world with various protocols, chiefly the Internet Protocol.	Lots of computers hooked together. Information source.
WWW – World Wide Web	An extensive user community has developed on the Web since its public introduction in 1991. In the early 1990s, the developers at CERN spread word of the Web's capabilities to scientific audiences worldwide.	Same as Internet
DPI – Dots per inch	A measure of resolution for printers, scanners and displays.	Dots of color per inch.

Hyperlink	A reference (link) from some point in one hypertext document to (some point in) another document or another place in the same document. A browser usually displays a hyperlink in some distinguishing way, e.g. in a different color, font or style. When the user activates the link (e.g. by clicking on it with the mouse) the browser will display the target of the link.	Click on it and go somewhere else.
URL - Uniform Resource Locator	A standard way of specifying the location of an object, typically a web page, on the Internet.	Web Page Address
Browser	A program which allows a person to read hypertext.	View the Internet
HTML – Hypertext Markup Language	A hypertext document format used on the World-Wide Web	The formatting language that shows things on the Internet
Software	The instructions executed by a computer, as opposed to the physical device on which they run (the "hardware").	Not hardware (programs)
Hardware	The physical, touchable, material parts of a computer or other system. The term is used to distinguish these fixed parts of a system from the more changeable software or data components which it executes, stores, or carries.	Touchable things of a computer
Program	The instructions executed by a computer, as opposed to the physical device on which they run (the "hardware").	Software that helps us?
OS – Operating System	The low-level software which handles the interface to peripheral hardware, schedules tasks, allocates storage, and presents a default interface to the user when no application program is running.	Runs the computer and software.
Window		Small box inside a bigger box
Online	actively using a computer system, especially the Internet.	You are connected
Offline	Not directly connected to the computer (e.g., an off-line tape drive), or with connection suspended ("take the printer off-line").	You are not connected.
Download	To transfer data from one computer to another. Downloading usually refers to transfer from a larger "host" system (especially a server or mainframe) to a smaller "client" system, especially a microcomputer or specialized peripheral, and "upload" usually means from small to large.	From “out there” to your machine.
Upload	To transfer programs or data over a digital communications link from a smaller or peripheral "client" system to a larger or central "host" one.	From your machine to “out there”
Wireless	A term describing a computer network where there is no physical connection (either copper cable or fiber optics) between sender and receiver, but instead they are connected by radio.	No wires.
Hard wired		A Physical line connection

Router	A device which forwards packets between networks. The forwarding decision is based on network layer information and routing tables, often constructed by routing protocols.	Directs traffic
Cursor	A visually distinct mark on a display indicating where newly typed text will be inserted. The cursor moves as text is typed and, in most modern editors, can be moved around within a document by the user to change the insertion point.	Little blinky thing that moves when you move your mouse.
Pentium	Intel's superscalar successor to the 486. It has two 32-bit 486-type integer pipelines with dependency checking. It can execute a maximum of two instructions per cycle. It does pipelined floating-point and performs branch prediction. It has 16 kilobytes of on-chip cache, a 64-bit memory interface, 8 32-bit general-purpose registers and 8 80-bit floating-point registers. It is built from 3.1 million transistors on a 262.4 mm <sup>2</sup> die with ~2.3 million transistors in the core logic. Its clock rate is 66MHz, heat dissipation is 16W, integer performance is 64.5 SPECint92, floating-point performance 56.9 SPECfp92. It is called "Pentium" because it is the fifth in the 80x86 line. It would have been called the 80586 had a US court not ruled that you can't trademark a number.	Brains.
Celeron	Intel Corporation's trade name for its family of Pentium II microprocessors meant for use in low-end computers	Cheaper Brains
Athlon	(K7) AMD's 7th generation x86 processor, released in June 1999.	Competitor of Intel - Brains
Sempron	AMD companies lesser brains	Cheaper Brains
XP	Microsoft's Current Operating System	Good(Home)Better(Professional)
Vista	Microsoft's Next Operating System	Not yet released
OSX	Apple Macintosh's latest operating system	Some like it, some don't
MacIntosh	Brand name for the Apple computer	Graphic Artists
Microsoft	Who doesn't know Bill Gates	Software company
Bootup	To load and initialize the operating system on a computer. Normally abbreviated to "boot". From the curious expression "to pull oneself up by one's bootstraps", one of the legendary feats of Baron von Munchhausen. The bootstrap loader is the program that runs on the computer before any (normal) program can run.	Start the computer

SPAM	To post irrelevant or inappropriate messages to one or more Usenet newsgroups, mailing lists, or other messaging system in deliberate or accidental violation of netiquette.	Junk Mail
Spyware	Any type of software that transmits information without the user's knowledge.	Covert Big Brother
Adware	Any type of software that transmits information without the user's knowledge.	Covert Seller
Malware	Harmful software that can change settings on your machine.	Bad stuff
Virus	A program or piece of code written by a cracker that "infects" one or more other programs by embedding a copy of itself in them, so that they become Trojan horses. When these programs are executed, the embedded virus is executed too, thus propagating the "infection". This normally happens invisibly to the user.	Just like the human kind can be sickening.
Video Card	A circuit board fitted to a computer, especially an IBM PC, containing the necessary video memory and other electronics to provide a bitmap display.	Makes the display work.
Shortcut	Microsoft Corporation's term for a symbolic link, stored as a file with extension ".lnk". Shortcuts first appeared in 1996 in the Windows 95 operating system. Windows shortcuts can link to any file or directory ("folder"), including those on remote computers, using UNC paths. Each shortcut can also have its own icon. A shortcut that links to an executable file can pass arguments and specify the directory in which the command should run. Unlike a Unix symbolic link, a shortcut does not always behave exactly like the target file or directory.	A quick go to button.
Executable	A binary file containing a program in machine language which is ready to be executed (run).	Go code to run
Tower	Box that holds the guts of the computer	On the floor
Desktop	Box that holds the guts of the computer	On the desk
Laptop	Small all inclusive computer	On your lap
Icon	A small picture intended to represent something (a file, directory, or action) in a graphical user interface. When an icon is clicked on, some action is performed such as opening a directory or aborting a file transfer.	A little picture you click on to make it go.

Most technical definitions were gathered from <http://foldoc.org/>