

Glossary

Active Window The *window* that is currently selected.

Application *Software* that is used for a particular task, such as word processing or database management. This term is used interchangeably with the word *program*.

Back Up (verb) To make a copy of *programs* or data *files* to prevent accidental loss. You back up all of your work on a removable *disk* in case the main copy is deleted or damaged. You can restore the main copy from the back up copy.
(noun) A copy of a *program* or data *file*.

Binary See *bit*.

Bit Short for *binary* digit (either a 1 or 0 in the binary number system). A bit is the smallest unit of information processed by a computer. There are 8 bits in a *byte*.

Bitmap A file format for digital images that can be processed by Windows *programs*.

Browser An application to find, read, and print information from the *World Wide Web*.

Button A graphic element (*icon*) resembling a push button that, when clicked, performs a specified command. Also refers to mechanical buttons on the *mouse*.

Byte A unit of information (8 *bits*) that represents a single character such as a letter or a number. Because bytes are so small, computer *memory* and *disk* storage amounts are usually given in *kilobytes* (*KB*, one thousand bytes), *megabytes* (*MB*, one million bytes), or *gigabytes* (*GB*, one billion bytes).

CD or CD-ROM Compact *Disc*-Read Only Memory contains up to 650 million *bytes* of text, video and sound information. You cannot make changes to the *disc*.

CD-R A *compact disc* (*CD*) to which you can write data once; the data cannot be changed after it is written. Writing to a CD-R or CD-RW requires a *CD disk drive* designed for reading and writing. Many CD drives will only read, not write, CDs.

CD-RW *Compact Disc*-Read Write CDs can be used to copy and store data or other types of *files*. Changes can be made to these *discs*. They are more expensive and less reliable than *CD-R discs*. See *CD-R*.

Character Any letter, number, or symbol such as a punctuation mark. Computers are very literal. They will read each character, including letters, punctuation and even the spaces between them.

Check Box A small square in a dialog box that adds or removes a check mark when it is clicked. Each check box represents an option or choice. Any, none, or all check boxes in a category may be selected at a time. Also see *Radio Button*.

Clipboard A temporary storage location used to transfer data between *documents* and between *applications*. Typically, you transfer data to the clipboard by using an *application's* Copy or Cut command and you insert data from the clipboard by using the *application's* Paste command.

CPU/Processor The Central Processing Unit, often called the microprocessor or system unit, is the computational and control unit of the computer.

Cursor The vertical line that marks where information will be entered when typing text or pasting from the *clipboard*.

Default The method by which an action is taken automatically, unless a different method is set by the user. The *operating system* and *applications* come with defaults set by the manufacturer, and the user can set different defaults.

Desktop The main *screen* where *windows*, *icons*, *menus*, and *dialog boxes* appear.

Dialog Box A small *window* displayed by the *operating system* or a *program*. It contains options (such as *command buttons*, *check boxes*, *radio buttons*, *list boxes*, etc.) that the user may select.

Digital Image An image (picture or graphic) that is in *binary* format so that it can be processed by a computer.

Disk A medium for storing information. It can be a hard drive in the computer, or a removable disk such as a floppy disk, external USB drive, *CD* or *DVD*, or even *memory* in an attached camera. (When referring to CDs and DVDs, the spelling is *disc*.)

Document Information or Data that is created using an *application*. A document may be a business report, a spreadsheet, a picture, a letter, or other format. It can be printed, but is stored in a computer as a *file*.

Drive or Disk Drive A device used for storing and retrieving information on disks.

Driver A *program* that tells the *operating system* how to interact with the computer's *hardware*.

DVD A Digital Video Disc or Digital Versatile Disc. A DVD is similar to a *CD* but with much greater capacity (4.5 *GB*). See *CD*, *CD-R*, *CD-RW*.

email (verb) To exchange electronic messages and computer files over a communications network, such as the Internet. (noun) An electronic message.

Extension Part of a *file name*. The extension is a period followed by (usually) three characters that tells the *operating system* which *program* to use with the *file*. For example, the extension for a Word *document* is *.doc*. The *program* often assigns the extension to the *file name* to identify in what *program* it was created.

FAQ Frequently Asked Questions. Acronym often seen on *web sites* to explain features.

File Information saved in a computer. A file can be either data (a *document*), or a collection of commands or instructions (a *program*).

File Name The name of a *file*. Windows allows up to 256 characters, including spaces, for the file name plus a period and the *extension*.

Flash Drive See *USB Flash Drive*.

Flash Memory See *Non-Volatile Memory*.

Highlight See *Select*

Folder Folders are collections of *files* and *sub-folders*. You should organize and name your folders so that *files* are easy to locate.

Font The term applied to styles of letters, numbers, punctuation marks and symbols. For example, the font used in this document is called Times New Roman. This is another common font, called Arial.

Format (document) The appearance of text (such as font or paragraph alignment), images (such as borders and backgrounds), and pages (such as margins).

Format (disk) To prepare a *disk* for holding information. Formatting a *disk* deletes all information that was previously on it.

GB Gigabyte. A unit of information equal to about a billion *bytes* in a computer.

Graphics Pictures or images created using a *program*, camera, or scanner.

Hard Drive or Hard Disk The permanent data and *program* storage in a computer. It consists of one or more rigid plates with magnetic coating. The data on the hard disk should be *backed up* regularly.

Hardware The physical parts of a computer, including the peripheral equipment such as printers, modems, and mouse devices.

Home Page The main page for a *web site*, usually seen first when the *web site* is accessed. Also, the page you select as the opening page for your *browser*.

Hover To place the *mouse pointer* over an item without clicking on it.

HTML Hypertext Mark-up Language, the programming language used to create *web pages*. HTML *files* have the *extension* .htm or .html.

Hyperlink (link) A highlighted, colored, or underlined word, phrase or other *graphic* on a *web page* that, when clicked, will cause a new page to be displayed.

Icon A small image or graphic displayed on the *screen* to represent some item (such as a *folder* or software *program*), action or command (such as print or copy) that can be activated by the user. Icons represent the file, folder, program or action rather than displaying the entire item.

Insert To add new information between existing information, such as inserting a word in a sentence, or inserting a row in a spreadsheet or database.

Insertion Point The vertical line that marks where information will be entered when typing text or pasting from the *clipboard*.

Internet A vast, world-wide communications network between computers, including *email* and the *World Wide Web*.

Keyboard The set of keys used for typing text, *scrolling*, and controlling other functions in programs.

KB (Kilobyte) A unit of information equal to 1,024 *bytes*.

Link See *Hyperlink*.

List Box A small window in a *dialog box* with text or graphic choices. Some list boxes open to show a longer list when clicked. Other list boxes are *scrolled* through using *scroll* arrows.

MB (Megabyte) A unit of information equal to about one million *bytes*.

Memory A temporary information storage area in the circuits of the computer. A camera's memory is stored on removable memory cards

Menu Bar A rectangular bar at the top of an *application's* window that displays available menus. Clicking on the menu name displays a list of options or commands.

Modem Modem is short for modulator/demodulator and is the device in or attached to the computer that permits data transmission over telephone or cable lines. Modems are needed to connect to the *internet*, whether using dial-up, DSL, cable, or satellite.

Motherboard Refers to the circuit board in the computer which contains the microprocessor, *memory*, the expansion slot connectors and other circuitry which makes up the heart of the computer.

Mouse A hand-held movable device used to point to and activate computer functions. Both *mice* and *mouses* are used for the plural.

Mouse Pointer See *Pointer*

Non-Volatile Memory *Memory* storage that does not lose its information when the power is turned off, as opposed to *RAM* which does lose the information. *Flash Memory* is the most common type of non-volatile memory, used in USB Flash *Drives*, camera memory cards, cell-phones, and many other items.

Notification Area The area on the *taskbar* to the right of the *taskbar buttons*. The notification area displays the time and can also contain shortcuts that provide quick access to programs, such as Volume Control and Power Options.

Open To activate a *program* or data *file* so it is visible and usable on the *screen*.

Operating System The *software* that controls the functions of the computer, including starting and stopping, organizing *files* and *folders*, saving and printing *files*, and managing multiple *applications* simultaneously. The Microsoft Windows operating system is used in over 90% of personal computers.

Pixel picture element. Refers to one of the thousands of dots that make up a picture.

Pointer (Mouse Pointer) The symbol (arrow, I-bar, or other) directed by moving the *mouse*.

Points and Point Size The height of a printed character is specified in units called points. There are 72 points per inch. Also known as *font size*.

Program See *Application*

Quick Launch Bar A *toolbar* to the right of the *Start button* on the task bar. A *program* can be started with a single click on a *button* on the Quick Launch Bar, and the Quick Launch Bar is always visible, while *icons* on the *desktop* may be hidden by other windows. The display of the Quick Launch Bar can be turned on and off.

Radio Button A small circle that contains a dot when it is selected. Each radio button represents an option or choice. Only one radio button in a category may be selected at a time. Clicking a radio button selects a specific function and deselects the other functions. Also see *Check Box*

RAM Random Access Memory. Program and data information is moved into this temporary storage for use by the microprocessor. Information that resides in RAM must be saved on a *disk* prior to turning off the computer or the information will be lost.

Readme A file on a program's installation *disc* that presents updated or important information.

ROM (Read Only Memory) Permanent *memory* that stores key data used by a computer. It can be read, but not modified. The contents of this *memory* are retained after the computer is turned off.

Save To copy a *file* from temporary storage (*RAM*) to permanent storage (a hard *disk* or removable *disk*).

Screen The display shown on the computer monitor.

Select To specify a block of data, text, or graphics by highlighting it using the mouse or keyboard. To perform an operation, such as copying or modifying the *format*, the desired data must be selected

Scroll To move through text or graphics (up, down, left or right) in a *window* in order to see parts of a *document* or list that cannot fit on the *screen*. Scrolling is controlled with a scroll bar and scroll arrows.

Software Instructions (*programs*) that make computer hardware perform tasks.

Start Button The button at the far left of the *task bar*, labeled *start* in Windows 95, 98, ME, and XP. Clicking this *button* gives access to the major functions of Windows, including All Programs, recently used *programs*, My Computer and My Documents directories, and the *button* to turn off the computer.

Sub-folder A *folder* within another *folder*.

System See *Operating System*

Tab (dialog boxes and windows) Part of a *dialog box* or *window* that resembles tabs in a notebook or file divider. Tabs allow moving between different sections of the *dialog box* or *window*.

Tab (word processing) Using a tab stop to indent or begin a column of text.

Tab (keyboard) The T key at the left side of the keyboard that is used to insert a *tab* character in a word processing *document* or to move between fields in a form.

Task Bar The bar at the bottom of the *desktop screen* with the *Start button* on the left, followed by the *Quick Launch bar* (if turned on), the *taskbar buttons*, and the *Notification Area* with the clock.

Task Bar Buttons Each *application window* is represented by a button on the *task bar*. Click a taskbar button to switch to that *application*. When the *application window* is minimized, it only appears as the taskbar button.

Thumb Drive See *USB Flash Drive*.

Title Bar The horizontal bar at the top of a *window* that shows the title of the *window*. On most *windows*, the title bar also contains the *program icon*, and the Maximize, Minimize, and Close *buttons*. The title bar is also used to move a *window* on the *screen*.

Toolbar A row, column or block of *buttons* or *icons*, which, when clicked, activate specific functions of the *application*.

URL (Uniform Resource Locator) The address of a Web page on the Internet.

USB (Universal Serial Bus) A standard connector for attaching peripheral hardware to a computer. Most printers, scanners, cameras, and many mice and keyboards attach with USB connectors.

USB Flash Drive A compact (3/4" x 2") portable *memory* storage device, using a *USB* connector. This is the most common way of carrying *files* between computers today.

Web (World Wide Web) Part of the *Internet*. A system for exploring the *Internet* by using *hyperlinks* to view *web pages*. The World Wide Web is explored using a *browser*.

Web Page A file containing text and graphic data displayed on a web site.

Web Site A group of related *web pages*.

Window An area on the *screen* in which an *program* or *document* is viewed.

Word Processor An *application* designed to produce letters, memos, etc., in which one may create, *format* and edit text and print and save the *document*.

Word Wrap Automatically continues to wrap text from the end of a line to the beginning of a new line as you type.