



Jargon Buster

Here's a Helpful A-Z

ActiveX controls

They can enhance your browsing experience by allowing animation or help with tasks such as installing security updates at Microsoft Update. If you do not trust the website and publisher, click 'Don't run' when prompted.

Administrator

A user with sufficient access rights to allow them to manage the access rights of other users and carry out other high-level computer management tasks.

Android

An operating system used by a number of smartphone and tablet manufacturers. The world's most prolific operating system for smartphones.

Antispyware software

Software specifically designed for the detection and prevention of spyware. Often bundled in an internet security package.

Antivirus software

Software specifically designed for the detection and prevention of known viruses. Often bundled in an internet security package.

Attachment

Files, such as programs or documents, that are attached to an email.

Authentication

The process for verifying that someone or something is who or what it claims to be. In private and public computer networks (including the internet), authentication is generally done with passwords.

Backup

Copying data to ensure its availability in the case of computer failure or loss.

Bandwidth

The speed at which a network can transmit data – typically used to describe speed of internet connections.

Bluetooth

A type of short-range wireless connection between devices like mobile phones, headsets and computers.

Browser

A program that lets users read and navigate pages on the Internet, such as Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Mozilla's Firefox, Google's Chrome or Apple's Safari.

Bug

An error or flaw in a computer program.

Cloud

Online storing can be called 'cloud storage'.

Cloud computing

The delivery of storage and computing capacity to end users via the internet. Commonly used for backing up data and hosting applications.

Cookie

A small file which asks permission to be placed on your computer's hard drive. Cookies allow web applications to personalise your experience by gathering and remembering information about your preferences.

Desktop firewall

Software designed to prevent unauthorised access to a computer over the internet.

Discoverable

The status of a Bluetooth device that has been set up to broadcast its existence to other Bluetooth devices.

Domain name

A website address, alternatively known as a URL.

Download

To obtain content from the internet, as an email attachment or from a remote computer, to your own hard drive.

Email attachment

Files, such as documents or photographs, that are attached to an email.

Email filter

Software that scans incoming email for spam or viruses, or outgoing email for viruses – and filters it accordingly.

Encryption

The process of converting data into cipher text (a type of code) to prevent it from being understood by an unauthorised party.

.exe file

Executable file: used by programs to install and run on computers.

File sharing

Making files available over the internet to other users, typically music or video files.

Firewall

Hardware or software designed to prevent unauthorised access to a computer or network over the internet.

Gigabyte

1000 megabytes.

Hacker

A hacker is a person who violates computer security for malicious reasons or for personal gain.

Hard drive

See hard disk

HTML

Hypertext Mark up Language: the computer code that is used to form the basis of building web pages.

iCloud

Apple's secure cloud storage and backup product.

Instant messaging

Chat conversations between two or more people via typing on computers or portable devices. Systems include BlackBerry Messenger, Facebook Chat, MSN Messenger, AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo!

iOS

Apple's operating system used on its iPhone and iPad devices.

ISP

Internet Service Provider: a company that provides access to the internet.

IP address

Internet Protocol address: a unique address that is used to identify a computer or mobile device on the internet.

Java

One of today's most popular and widely used programming languages. Originally developed by Sun Microsystems (now Oracle).

Javascript

A programming language derived from Java that is used to make web pages more interactive.

Kilobyte

1000 bytes.

Linux

An open-source, freely-available operating system.

LAN

Local Area Network: a local computer for communication between computers. Can be wired or wireless.

Malware

Software used or created by hackers to disrupt computer operation, gather sensitive information, or gain access to private computer systems. Short for 'malicious software'.

Megabyte

1000 kilobytes.

Memory stick

A removable memory device, normally connected to a computer via USB.

MP3

The technology used to store sound files, typically for music or podcasts.

MP3 player

A device that plays MP3 music files.

Network

A number of computers that are connected to one another, together with the connecting infrastructure.

Online backup

A backup method in which data is transmitted over the internet for storage, often referred to as 'cloud' backup.

Open source

A term generally used to describe computer software that has been developed in a collaborative way, often by volunteers on a non-commercial basis.

Operating system

The software that enables your computer or mobile device to operate.

Pairing

When two Bluetooth-enabled devices are linked in order to communicate with each other.

Patch

A software update, often related to improving security.

PDF

Portable Document Format: a method of saving a document so that it can be opened and viewed on devices using different operating systems.

PIN

Personal Identification Number.

Piracy

Illegal duplication or use of material covered by intellectual property laws, such as copyright.

Pop-up

A small window which appears over a web page, usually to display an advertisement.

Privileges

Access rights to computers or data – normally varying between users according to what they are and are not entitled to see.

Profile

A list of personal details revealed by users of social networking, gaming, dating and other websites. Profiles may normally be configured to be public or private.

Removable media

Storage devices that can be removed from a computer, such as CDs/DVDs, USB sticks and portable hard drives.

Router

A device that routes network or internet traffic. Typically found in home/small office environments within a WiFi device (wireless hub).

Server

A computer that serves files or services to other computers over a network or the internet.

Smartphone

A mobile phone built on a mobile computing platform, with more advanced computing ability and connectivity than a standard mobile phone.

Spam

Unsolicited commercial e-mail. Also known as junk e-mail.

Spyware

Malware that secretly monitors a user's activity or scans for private information.

Sync

To link two devices – typically a computer and smartphone or tablet – to ensure they hold the same data such as contacts, emails and music files. Short for synchronise.

Tablet

An ultra-portable, touchscreen computer which shares much of the functionality and also the operating system of smartphones, but generally with more computing power.

Terabyte

1000 gigabytes.

Traffic

The transmission of information over a network or the internet.

USB

Universal Serial Bus: a means of physically connecting computers and peripherals such as external storage, keyboards and MP3 players.

Username

A code name that, with a password, unlocks a user account.

Virus

A file written with the sole intention of doing harm, or for criminal activity.

Webmail

An email system that uses a web browser to read and send emails, rather than a standalone email program such as Microsoft Outlook or Apple Mail.

Wireless hotspot

A publicly accessible wireless internet connection.

Wireless hub

See router.

Wireless network (WiFi)

A local area network which uses radio signals instead of a wire to transmit data.