Glossary: Databases

1. **attribute**

The characteristics of an entity. In databases, attributes are represented in fields, eg attributes of a film could be the actors, director and duration.

2. **CSV**

Comma-separated values - a standard file format for a flat-file database used in spreadsheet and database software.

3. **data**

Units of information. In computing there can be different data types, including integers, characters and Boolean. Data is often acted on by instructions.

4. **database**

A data store designed in an organised way, making it easier to search for the information you need.

5. **element**

A unique piece of data within a database.

6. **encryption**

Files that are encrypted have been altered using a secret code and are unreadable to unauthorised parties.

7. **entity**

An object, eg a person or film. In databases, entities are the subjects whose attributes are stored as records.

8. **field**

An element of a database record in which one piece of information is stored. For example 'name' in an electronic address book.

9. **flat-file database**

A database consisting of only one table often stored as a CSV file.

10. **hard disk drive**

A device used to store large amounts of data.

11. **integrity**

Refers to the validity of a database. The integrity can be damaged by changes to the structure or software bugs.

12. **memory**

The part of a computer that stores data.

13. **MySQL**

Open source database management system.

14. **NoSQL (not only SQL)**

A form of non-relational database.

15. **off-the-shelf**

A type of software which is readily available and should be suitable for a large amount of people.

16. **primary key**

The unique identifying value for records in a database.

17. **programming language**

A language used by a programmer to write a piece of software.

18. **query language**

A type of programming language used to work with databases. A typical example is SQL.

19. **record**

All of the data relating to one entity in a database.

20. **spreadsheet**

A piece of software used to manipulate data, often used in modelling.

21. **SQL**

Structured query language - a programming language used to control databases.

Spelling database - one word

Language Data IS or data ARE? - Data is the Latin plural of datum. In general writing, you are free to use data as singular or plural. If you want to use a singular noun, it is safer to use a synonym such as information or evidence; and if you are writing about science or medicine, treat data as plural. Another important point to consider is when to use much and when to use many. If you are treating data as a mass noun, singular, use much. If you are treating data as the plural of datum, use many.