

## A GLOSSARY OF ONLINE TERMS

**Acrobat:** A program by Adobe that allows documents to be transmitted and read exactly as they were composed. Acrobat works as an Internet browser **plug in**.

**AOL:** America On Line– one of the first popular Internet Service Providers.

**Applet:** A small computer program that may run inside a browser.

**ASCII:** American Standard Code for Information Exchange. The set of codes for plain, unformatted text. Web page files are in ASCII format.

**Bandwidth:** A measure of how much information is being transmitted.

**Banners:** Rectangular graphics, often animated, used for advertising.

**Baud:** Kilobytes per second; a way that modem transmission rates are measured.

**Browser:** A computer program that translates HTML code into text and graphics. The two most popular browsers are Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator.

**Byte:** Eight bits; a bit is a single on-off signal. Computer files are measured in bytes.

**Chat:** Connecting with one or more people online. All those connected to the same “chat room” can send messages to each other and read those sent by others.

**Cookie:** A small file placed on your computer by a website. Cookies allow web servers to recognize repeat visitors or keep track of visits.

**CU-SeeMe:** A software program that allows for two-way audio and video communication on the Internet.

**Cyber-...** A catchall term for online phenomena. For example, cyberzine (an electronic magazine), cyberspace (the world of the internet), cyberterrorism (unleashing computer viruses), cybersquatter (a person who registers a desirable domain name with the intention of profiting from selling it).

**Dial-Up:** A temporary connection to the Internet made by telephoning a server.

**Domain:** A site name on the Internet. Domain names usually end in .com, .edu, .org, or .net, but there are many others which indicate countries, the military, etc.

**Dot:** A period. Thus, “.com” is pronounced “dotcom,” (An exclamation point “!” is called a “bang”)

**Download:** Transfer a file from another machine to yours through the Internet.

**DHTML:** Dynamic Hypertext Markup Language. An extended form of HTML.

**DNS:** Domain Name Server. A computer that translates a domain name ([www.dsj.org](http://www.dsj.org)) into a numerical address that machines can understand.

**DSL:** Digital Subscriber Line— a high-speed online connection made through existing telephone lines.

**e-** ... all purpose prefix to refer to any activity or thing online, e.g. e-commerce, e-mail, e-scam, e-tailer

**Emoticons:** The little text pictures intended to express emotions, like the smiley face: :)

**FAQ** Frequently Asked Questions. A file of information in a question and answer format. Originally developed in connection with online news groups, FAQs are now used in a variety of settings.

**Firewall:** A security measure to protect a local machine or network from attack (hacking) on the Net.

**Flame; flame war:** Posting insulting notes or making personal attacks in a chat room, e-mail list or newsgroup.

**Freeware:** Software programs that are available without charge.

**Frames:** A way of formatting a web page that divides the screen into two or more parts, each displaying a different HTML file.

**Front Page:** Microsoft's WYSIWYG web authoring software.

**FTP:** File Transfer Protocol. Once the main method for transferring files over the internet, it has now been built into web browsers and is seldom used by itself. Many web hosting companies allow people to upload their web files using FTP.

**GIF:** Graphics Interchange Format. (Pronounced "jiff") One of the three graphics format readable by browsers.

**GUI:** Graphical User Interface: The layout of Mac and Windows machines. Once contrasted with the DOS command line, it is now the standard.

**Homepage:** The main page on a website.

**Host:** A computer that stores web files and sends them to the browser.

**Hyperlink:** A piece of text or image that, when clicked with a mouse, will connect a reader to a different place, file, or website.

**HTML:** HyperText Markup Language. The format for web files which is interpreted by the web browser.

**HTTP:** HyperText Transfer Protocol. The standard governing how hyperlinks will be transmitted on the net.

**ICQ:** "I Seek You"— a program that can detect if a specific individual is online and connect to him or her. Both people need to be using the software.

**Information superhighway:** An overused metaphor.

**Internet:** The whole network of interconnected computers that transfer e-mail, files, and web pages. The Web is only part of the Internet.

**TCP/IP:** Transmission Control Protocol/ Internet Protocol— the set of standards for transmitting any information on the net.

**IRC:** Internet Relay Chat. One form of chat room. Participants using IRC software log on to an IRC server and can then converse with each other.

**ISDN:** Integrated Services Digital Network. A high-speed online connection through conventional telephone lines.

**ISP:** Internet Service Provider

**Java; Java Script:** A programming language that extends what web pages can do.

**JPEG or JPG:** Joint Photographic Experts Group. A graphics format readable by web browsers.

**KBPS:** Kilobytes per second (see Baud)

**LAN:** Local Area Network.

**Login; Logoff:** Connect to a network or the Internet. One usually has a login name and a password.

**LOL:** Laughing Out Loud. Chat abbreviation.

**Maillist: Majordomo; Listproc; Listserv.** An automated system for distributing e-mail to a list of addresses. Majordomo, Listproc and Listserv are three software programs that provide this function.

**MIDI:** Musical Instrument Digital Interface. A format for digitizing music.

**MIME:** Multi-Purpose Mail Extensions. Rules that allow for the transmission of digital files (audio/visual, formatted documents) via e-mail.

**Modem** Modulator-demodulator. The hardware that enables a computer to connect to the Internet through a telephone line.

**MP3** A high-fidelity format for music files.

**Multimedia:** Combining text, audio, video, animations and graphics in various ways.

**Online (offline)** Connected (or not connected) to the net.

**OTOH:** On the other hand. Chat room abbreviation.

**Packet:** Information transmitted on the Internet is broken up into small pieces called packets. Each packet contains addressing information and sequencing that allows the file to be reassembled at the destination. Different packets in the same file may not travel to their destination via the same route.

**Password:** A word that must be entered to gain access to some resource. Passwords should not be easily recognizable words and should contain characters other than numbers and letters (e.g. @ & ! %)

**PDF:** Portable Document Format. The format used by Adobe Acrobat, which incorporates all fonts, graphics and formatting information necessary to reproduce a document exactly.

**PGP:** Pretty Good Privacy. An Internet security program that allows people to encode and decode messages.

**Plug-in:** a small computer program designed to work with a browser to handle special kinds of files. Some common plug ins include the Quick Time audio/video player, Real Audio and Adobe Acrobat.

**POP:** PostOffice Protocol or Point of Presence. The former is a set of instructions for e-mail, the latter refers to a temporary net connection.

**Portal:** An entry point to the Internet. Many commercial companies position themselves as portals, with homepages that offer search capabilities, news and information.

**RealAudio:** A plug in for sound files.

**ROTFL:** Rolling on the floor laughing. Chat room abbreviation.

**Quick Time:** A plug in for audio and video files.

**Search Engine:** Software that allows one to search the net for specific files or information

**Shareware:** Software that is free for trial, but for which the user is asked to pay if they intend to use it regularly.

**Shockwave:** A plug in for graphics and animation

**Sig file:** Signature file. A file which contains a couple of lines of information that is attached to e-mail messages.

**SSL:** Secure Socket Layer. A security system that scrambles internet transmissions to avoid their being intercepted. (For example, online transactions using a credit card.)

**T1/T3** Trunk lines. These are the huge telephone lines that form the backbone of Internet communications. They transmit digital information at very high speed and bandwidth.

**Telecommuting:** Doing one's work by connecting with the office through a network, rather than being physically present.

**Telnet:** A program that allows a computer to log on to another computer as if it were directly connected.

**Under construction:** An overused notation on websites. The web is always under construction; it doesn't help to say so.

**UNIX:** The operating system used by many of the mainframe computers that form the nodes of the Internet.

**URL:** Universal Resource Locator. The web address of a file.

**Virus:** A program or part of a program that replicates itself when run on a computer and does varying levels of damage.

**WAV:** A format for audio files.

**Web crawler:** An automated program that connects with sites all over the net. Often used to compile search indexes.

**Web server:** A computer that is running a program that allows it to send files to web browsers that connect to it.

**Web site:** A collection of interconnected web pages. A single web server may host many web sites.

**Webmaster:** The person in charge of creating and/or maintaining a website.

**World Wide Web:** The full name of the web. The “WWW” in [www.whatever.org](http://www.whatever.org).

**WYSIWYG:** What You See Is What You Get. A program that displays on the screen what will come out in the printer or the web browser.

**YAHOO:** One of the early web indexing sites. Now a portal that offers a variety of services.

**YMMV:** Your Mileage May Vary. That is, your experience may be different. Chat room abbreviation.

**Zip File:** A file that has been compressed to allow it to download more quickly. It requires a program to decompress it so that it can be read.

An excellent source for definitions of computer-related terms can be found online at **[www.whatis.com](http://www.whatis.com)**

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