

# Glossary

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

- A -

## **Access Privileges**

The privilege to access and make changes to folders.

## **address**

Code by which the Internet identifies you. The format is *username@hostname*, where *username* is your user name, login name, or account number, and *hostname* is the name of the computer or Internet provider you use. The host name may be a few words strung together with periods.

## **America Online**

A public Internet provider. If you have an account on America Online, *username@aol.com* is your Internet address, where *username* is your America Online account name.

## **anonymous FTP**

A way to use the FTP program to log on to another computer to copy files when you don't have an account on that computer. When you log on, enter *anonymous* as the user name and your address as the password. This gives you access to publicly available files.

## **ANS (Advanced Network Services)**

ANS runs one of the largest high-speed networks on the Internet. Run by IBM, MCI, and Merit.

## **Archie**

A system that helps you find files located anywhere on the Internet. After Archie locates the file, you can use FTP to get it. Archie is both a program and a system of server computers that contain indexes of files.

## **authentication**

Verifying the identity of a person or computer process.

- B -

## **backbone**

A high-speed line or series of connections that form a major pathway within a network. The term is relative, because a backbone in a small network will likely be much smaller than many nonbackbone lines in a large network.

## **bandwidth**

How much "stuff" you can send through a connection. Usually measured in bits per second (bps). A full page of English text is about 16,000 bits. A fast modem can move about 15,000 bits in one second. Full-motion, full-screen video would require roughly 10,000,000 bps, depending on compression.

## **Baud (older term being replaced by bps - bits per second)**

The number of signaling elements that can be transmitted per second on a circuit.

## **BBS (Bulletin Board System)**

A computerized meeting and announcement system that allows people to carry on discussions, upload and download files, and make announcements without being connected to the computer at the same time. There are at least several thousand BBSs around the world. Most BBSs are very small and run on a single IBM-PC compatible with one or two telephone lines.

## **Bit**

The smallest amount of information that can be transmitted. A combination of bits can indicate an alphabetic character, a numeric digit, or perform signaling, switching or other functions.

## **BOT**

"bot" is the colloquial term for programs that listen and respond on an IRC channel to conversation.

## **Bottleneck**

A system capacity constraint that may reduce traffic during peak load conditions.

**BPS (bits per second)**

The measure of a modems speed.

**Broadband**

A high-capacity communications circuit/path. It usually implies a speed greater than 1.544Mbps.

**browser**

A client program (software) that is used to search through information provided by a specific type of server. (See also [client](#), [URL](#), [WWW](#).)

- C -

**Capacity**

The highest possible (reliable) transmission speed that can be carried on a channel, circuit or piece of equipment. Capacity may be expressed as raw speed or net throughput.

**Carrier**

A telecommunications provider which owns network switch equipment.

**CATV**

Cable Television - Community Antenna Television. A community television system, served by cable and connected to a common (set of) antenna(s). 1994 Federal legislation may allow CATV providers to compete for telephone service (on the Information Superhighway).

**CERN**

The European Laboratory for Particle Physics, site of the first World Wide Web conference and considered the birthplace of WWW technology. Work on WWW technology and setting standards has moved to the World Wide Web Organization (W3O, at w3.org). <http://www.cern.ch/>

**CGI**

The Common Gateway Interface is an interface for programmers who build scripts or applications which run behind-the-scenes on a web server. These scripts can generate text or other types of data on the fly, perhaps in response to input from the user or from mining information from a database.

**Channel**

A telecommunications path (pipe) of a specific capacity (speed) between two locations in a network.

**chatting**

Talking in real time to other network users from any and all parts of the world.

**client**

A computer or program that uses the services of another computer (the server). With respect to the Internet, a client would be a computer running a browser, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer.

**client program**

A software program that is used to contact and obtain data from a server software program on another computer, often across a great distance. Each client program is designed to work with one or more types of server programs.

**com**

When these letters appear at the end of an address (*info@microsoft.com*), they indicate that the host computer is run by a company rather than a university or government agency. It also means that the host computer is most likely located in the United States.

**Common Carrier**

A carrier that holds itself out as serving the public (or a segment thereof) indifferently (i.e., without regard to the identity of the customer and without undue discrimination).

**Communication Link**

A system of hardware and software connecting two end users.

**Compression / Decompression**

A method of encoding/decoding signals that allows transmission (or storage) of more information than the media would otherwise be able to support.

**CompuServe**

An online information provider (sometimes abbreviated CIS) that gives some Internet access. If your CompuServe account number is 7123,456 your Internet address will be *7123.456@compuserve.com*. Notice that the comma in the CompuServe address becomes a period in the Internet address.

**Connection**

A point-to-point dedicated or switched communication path.

**cookies**

A mechanism for server-side connections to store and retrieve information on the client side.

**cyberspace**

A virtual universe of computers, programs, and data.

**- D -****Database**

A multiuser collection of information. Often supports random access selectivity and multiple "views" or levels of abstraction of the underlying data.

**Dedicated Line**

A private line leased from a telecommunications carrier.

**Digital**

A device or method that uses discrete variations in voltage, frequency, amplitude, location, etc. to encode, process, or carry binary (zero or one) signals for sound, video, computer data or other information.

**Delphi**

An online information provider that includes access to Internet services. If you have an account on Delphi, your Internet address is *username@delphi.com*, where *username* is your Delphi account name.

**DNS (Domain Name System)**

A system for translating computer names into numeric Internet addresses.

**domain name**

The unique name that identifies an Internet site.

A given machine may have more than one domain name, but a given domain name points to only one machine. It is also possible for a domain name to exist but not be connected to an actual machine. This is often done so that a group or business can have an Internet e-mail address without having to establish a real Internet site. In these cases, an Internet service provider's machine must handle the mail on behalf of the listed domain name. (See also [IP number](#).)

**Download**

To transfer programs or data from a computer to a connected device, usually from a server to a personal computer

**Drag and Drop**

A GUI (Graphic User Interface) concept that allows one screen object to be selected and passed as input to another screen object (icon).

**- E -****edu**

When these letters appear at the end of an address (*info@mit.edu*), they indicate that the host computer is run by an educational institution. It also means that the host computer is most likely located in the United States.

**e-mail (electronic mail)**

Messages, usually text, sent from one person to another via computer. E-mail can also be sent automatically to a large number of addresses by using a mailing list. (See also [listserv](#).)

**- F -****FAQ**

Frequently Asked Question.

**File Server**

A computer that provides access to files for remote users (clients).

**finger**

A program that displays information about someone on the net. On most UNIX systems, this command tells you who is logged on right now. On most Internet hosts, it tells you the name (and possibly some other information based on the person's Internet address) and the last time that person logged on.

**firewall**

A filter for messages. If an organization wants to exchange mail with the Internet, but does not want other Internet members "Telnetting in" and reading those files, its connection to the Internet can be protected by using a firewall.

**FTP (File Transfer Protocol)**

A method of transferring one or more files from one computer to another over a network or telephone line.

**- G -****gateway**

A computer that connects one network with another when the two networks use different protocols. The UUNET computer connects the UUCP network with the Internet, providing a way for mail messages to move between the two networks.

**GEnie**

An online service run by General Electric. If you have an account on GEnie and your mail name is ABC, your Internet address is *ABC@genie.gies.com*.

**GIF (Graphic Interchange Format)**

The file format commonly used to distribute graphics files on the Internet.

**Gopher**

A system that lets you find information by using menus. To use Gopher, you usually Telnet to a Gopher server and begin browsing through the menus.

**GUI**

Graphical User Interface.

**- H -****Home**

The startup page of a site, containing identity and index information.

**host**

A computer on the Internet you may be able to log on to. You can use FTP to get files from a host computer and use other programs (such as Telnet) to make use of the host computer.

**HTML (Hypertext Markup Language)**

A system used for writing pages for the World Wide Web. HTML allows text to include codes that define fonts, layout, embedded graphics, and hypertext links.

**HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)**

The method by which World Wide Web pages are transferred over the network.

**Hyperlink**

Connections between one piece of information and another.

**Hypermedia**

A method of presenting information in discrete units, or nodes, that are connected by links. The information may be presented using a variety of media such as text, graphics, audio, video, animation, image or executable documentation.

**hypertext**

A system of writing and displaying text that enables the text to be linked in multiple ways, available at several levels of detail. Hypertext documents can also contain links to related documents, such as those referred to in footnotes. Hypermedia can also contain pictures, sounds, and /or video.

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### **IETF**

The protocol engineering and development arm of the Internet. The IETF is a large, open, international community of network designers, operators, vendors, and researchers concerned with the evolution of the Internet architecture and the smooth operation of the Internet. It is open to any interested individual.

### **Internet**

The vast collection of interconnected networks that all use TCP/IP and that evolved from ARPANET of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Internet connects roughly 60,000 independent networks into a vast, global network.

### **IP (Internet Protocol)**

The transport layer protocol used as a basis of the Internet. IP enables information to be routed from one network to another in packets and then reassembled when they reach their destination.

### **IP Address**

The Internet protocol address which is a 32-bit address assigned to a host. The IP address has a host component and a network component.

### **IP number**

A four-part number separated by periods (for example, 165.113.245.2) that uniquely identifies a machine on the Internet. Every machine on the Internet has a unique IP number; if a machine does not have an IP number, it is not really on the Internet. Most machines also have one or more domain names that are easier for people to remember.

### **IRC (Internet Relay Chat)**

A system that enables Internet users to talk with each other in real time over the Internet rather than in person.

### **ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network)**

A way to move more data over existing regular telephone lines. ISDN is only slowly becoming available in the USA. ISDN can provide speeds of 64,000 bits per second over a regular telephone line at almost the same cost as a normal telephone call.

- J -

### **JPEG**

Joint Photographic Experts Group. JPEG is a popular method used to compress photographic images. Many web browsers accept JPEG images as a standard file format for viewing.

### **Jughead**

A program that helps you find specified information in Gopher directories. Similar to Veronica, but more focused.

- K -

- L -

### **LAN (Local Area Network)**

A group of connected computers, usually located close to one another (such as the same building or floor of the building) so that data can be passed among them.

### **leased line**

Refers to a telephone line that is rented for exclusive 24-hour, 7-days-a-week access between your location and another location. The highest speed data connections require a leased line.

### **listserv**

A family of programs that manages mailing lists by distributing messages posted to the list, adding and deleting members automatically.

### **Login**

A noun or a verb. Noun: The account name used to gain access to a computer system. Unlike a password, the login name is not a secret. Verb: The act of entering into a computer system; for example, "Login to the WELL and then go to the GBN conference."

## - M -

### **Media**

Information storage and distribution format (e.g. video tape, floppy disk, optical disc, print, etc.) The extensions of mankind's ability to communicate. This is the message.

### **message**

A piece of e-mail or a posting to a newsgroup.

### **mirror**

An FTP server that provides copies of the same files as another server. Some FTP servers are so popular that other servers have been set up to mirror them and spread the FTP load to more than one site.

### **Modem (MODulator + DEModulator)**

A device that you connect to your computer and to a telephone line to allow the computer to talk to other computers through the system. Modems convert the computer's digital signals into analog waves that can be transmitted over standard voice telephone lines. Modem speeds are measured in bits per second (bps)--also sometimes expressed as kilobits (thousands of bits) per second (Kbps). For example, 28.8 Kbps and 28,800 bps are the same thing--28,800 bits per second.

### **Mosaic**

A Windows-based, WinSock-compliant program that lets you access information on the World Wide Web. Microsoft's version of Mosaic is called The Internet Explorer. Another version is Netscape.

### **MPEG**

Moving Pictures Expert Group. MPEG is a standard way to compress full-motion video.

### **Multimedia**

Computer systems that integrate audio, video and data.

## - N -

### **name resolution**

The process of mapping a name into its corresponding address.

### **NCSA**

The National Center for Supercomputing Applications is an educational institute. The Mosaic web browser was created here. <http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/>

### **Netnews**

Another name for Usenet. Often refers to Usenet News when being received via the Internet, via NNTP.

### **Netscape**

A Windows-based, WinSock-compliant program that lets you access information on the World Wide Web. This is an improvement on Mosaic.

### **network**

Any time you connect two or more computers together so that they can share resources, you have a computer network. Connect two or more networks together and you have an internet (small "i").

### **newsgroup**

A distributed bulletin board system about a particular topic. Usenet News (also known as Netnews) is a system that distributes thousands of newsgroups to all parts of the Internet.

### **NNTP (Network News Transfer Protocol)**

A protocol defined for distribution, inquiry, retrieval, and posting of news articles.

### **node**

A computer on the Internet, also called a host. Computers that provide a service, such as FTP sites or places that run Gopher, are also called servers.

## - O -

## - P -

**packet**

A chunk of information sent over a network. Each packet contains the destination address, the sender's address, error-control information, and data.

**page**

A document, or collection of information, available via the World Wide Web. To make information available over the WWW, it is organized into pages. A page may contain text, graphics, video, and/or sound files.

**ping**

A network management tool that checks to see whether you can communicate with another computer on the Internet. It sends a short message to which the other computer automatically responds. If the other computer does not respond to the ping, you usually cannot establish communications.

**Pointer**

An address (URL) embedded in data that specifies the location of data in another record or file. A hyperlink is an example of a pointer.

**Point of Presence (POP)**

A physical site in a geographic area where a network access provider, such as UUNET, has equipment to which users connect. The local telephone company's central office in a particular area is also sometimes referred to as their POP for that area. (As an example, AT&T's POP for the Seattle area is in downtown Seattle.)

**Post Office Protocol (POP)**

A system by which a mail server on the Internet lets you grab your mail and download it to your PC or Macintosh. Most people refer to this protocol with its version number (POP2, POP3, and so on) to avoid confusing it with Point of Presence.

**Point-to-Point Protocol (PPP)**

A scheme for connecting two computers over a telephone line (or a network link that acts like a telephone line). Similar to SLIP.

**Prodigy**

An online system run by IBM and Sears. If you have a Prodigy account, *username@prodigy.com* is your Internet address, where *username* is your Prodigy user name.

- Q -

- R -

**Real Time**

Rapid transmission and processing of event-oriented data and transactions as they occur, in contrast to being stored and re-transmitted or processed as batches.

**Robot**

"Robot"s are usually mentioned in the context of the WWW as programs which traverse the web looking for information, perhaps for indexing into a search engine or to find errors in web sites or some such.

**router**

A special-purpose computer (or software package) that handles the connection between two or more networks. Routers look at the destination addresses of the packets passing through them and decide which route to use to send them.

- S -

**Security**

Control mechanisms that prevent unauthorized use of resources.

**server**

A computer that provides a service to other computers on a network. An Archie server, for example, lets people on the Internet use Archie.

**SGML**

Standard Generalized Markup Language is a language for describing other tag-based structural document languages. For example, HTML is defined using SGML.

**Signal**

An event-oriented change in state (e.g. a tone, frequency shift, binary value, alarm, message, etc.).

**Site**

Address location of a server on the Internet.

**SLIP (Serial Line Interface Protocol)**

A software scheme for connecting a computer to the Internet.

**SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol)**

A protocol used to transfer e-mail messages between computers.

**socket**

When your computer is on the Internet via a SLIP connection, a socket is a conversation your computer is having with a computer elsewhere on the Internet. You may have one socket for an FTP session, another socket for a Telnet session, and another socket taking care of getting your mail.

**SSL**

The Secure Socket Layer is a protocol that Netscape uses to provide people with secure transactions over the network. <http://home.netscape.com/newsref/pr/newsrelease17.html/>

- T -

**TCP/IP (Transfer Control Protocol/Internet Protocol)**

The system that networks use to communicate with each other on the Internet.

**Telnet**

The command and program used to login from one Internet site to another. The Telnet command/program gets you to the "login" prompt of another host.

**terminal**

A device that allows you to send commands to another computer. At a minimum, this usually means a keyboard and a display screen and some simple circuitry. Usually you will use terminal software in a personal computer--the software pretends to be ("emulates") a physical terminal and allows you to type commands to another computer.

- U -

**UNIX**

A computer operating system (the basic software running on a computer, underneath things such as word processors and spreadsheets). UNIX is designed to be used by many computer users at the same time (it is "multiuser") and has TCP/IP built in. It is the most common operating system for servers on the Internet.

**UNZIP**

To unzip a file means to decompress, or expand a file that has been made smaller using a compression utility.

**URL (Uniform Resource Locator)**

The standard way to give the address of any resource on the Internet that is part of the World Wide Web.

This is an example of a URL: <http://www.matisse.net/seminars.html>. The most common way to use a URL is to enter into a Web browser program, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator.

**Usenet**

An informal group of systems that exchanges news. Usenet predates the Internet, but today, the Internet is used to transfer much of Usenet's traffic.

**UUCP UNIX-to-UNIX copy**

A file-copying facility between UNIX systems, on which mail and Usenet news services were built. Although UUCP is still used (and is somewhat useful), the Internet provides a better way to do the same job.

**UUNET**

UUNET Technologies, Inc., provides global communication via the Internet. UUNET offered the first commercial-quality service for Usenet and UUCP connectivity, and it was the first to provide officially sanctioned relaying of mail between the Internet and UUCP worlds.

- V -



**Veronica (Very Easy Rodent Oriented Net-wide Index to Computerized Archives)**

A program that uses word searches to locate articles in Gopherspace. Developed at the University of Nevada, Veronica is a constantly updated database of names of almost every menu item on thousands of Gopher servers. (See also [Gopher](#).)

**viewer**

A program used by Gopher, WAIS, or WWW client programs to show files with contents other than text. You would use a viewer to display graphics or video files, or to play sound files.

**Virtual Reality Modeling Language (VRML)**

A "tag" language in which web pages are formatted that can support 3D graphics and interactive spatial navigation.

- W -

**WAIS (Wide Area Information Servers)**

A system that lets you search for documents that contain specific information that you are looking for.

**WAN (Wide Area Network)**

Any internet or network that covers an area larger than a single building or campus. (See also [Internet](#), [LAN](#), [network](#).)

**WAV**

"wav" is the file extension used on some types of audio files.

**Webmaster**

System operator for a web site server.

**Wideband**

A medium-capacity communications circuit/path. It usually implies a speed from 64Kbps to 1.544Mbps.

**Windows Socket (WinSock)**

Windows Sockets is a standard way for Windows-based programs to work with TCP/IP. You can use WinSock if you use SLIP to connect to the Internet.

**WWW (World Wide Web)**

A hypermedia-based system for accessing information on the Internet.

**W3C (World Wide Web Consortium)**

The World Wide Web is the universe of network-accessible information. The World Wide Web Consortium exists to realize the full potential of the Web. W3C works with the global community to produce specifications and reference software. W3C is funded by industrial members, but its products are freely available to all.

- X -

- Y -

- Z -

**ZIP**

When one "compresses" (i.e., makes a smaller but equal copy) a file using "pkzip", the resulting file is called a "zip" file. It usually ends with the file extension ".zip".

