Archive Internet Glossary

This glossary has been created on the basis that someone may read a word or a technical term or an abbreviation within the pages of Archive magazine and think, "What does XXXX mean?". If you think that about a word, look it up in this glossary and then, if it does not appear, please ring, write, fax or email and tell us what it was that you wanted to know.

This is an 'honest' glossary in the sense that, where we don't know, there are some question marks. If you have any ideas, on any of them, please let us know. Thank you.

Some of the definitions will be specific to Acorn computers whereas others are also more generally applicable.

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Abbreviations -- There are a number of standard abbreviations used to save time and space in emails and postings. Here are a few:

AFAIK -- As far as I know

BCNU -- Be seeing you (get it?)

BRB -- Be right back

BTW -- By the way

FTF -- Face to face, as opposed to screen-to-screen interaction

FWIW -- For what it's worth

FYI -- For your information

IIRC -- If I remember correctly

IMHO -- In my humble opinion

IMO -- In my opinion

IRL -- In real life (as opposed to Net.life)

ISR -- I seem to recall

LOL -- Laughing out loud -- an expression of humour, surpassed only by ROTFL

OTOH -- On the other hand

POV -- Point of view

ROTFL -- Rolling on the floor laughing

RTFM -- Read the flipping manual!

RSN -- Real soon now

TIA -- Thanks in anticipation

TLA -- Three-letter acronym

WRT -- With regard to

YMMV -- Your mileage may vary

Address -- On the Net, this is an electronic mail address. Addresses are often structured person@[subsite.]domain.type.country, e.g. fred@arcade.demon.co.uk. The type indicates the nature of the organisation running the site, ORGanisation, COmpany, GOVernment, ACademic. Not all addresses adhere to this structure.

ANSI -- Computers use several different methods for deciding how to put information on your screen and how your keyboard interacts with the screen. ANSI is one of these "terminal emulation" methods. Although most popular on PC-based bulletin-board systems, it can also be found on some Net sites. To use it properly, you will first have to turn it on, or enable it, in your communications software.

Archie -- An index of FTP servers. The best known Archie server in the UK is at Imperial College, London and has indexes to hundreds of FTP sites around the world. If there's a program you're having trouble in locating, Archie can probably help.

Archive -- A file or group of files and/or directories that have been joined together into a single file and, often, are compressed. This reduces the time taken to transfer the information and also makes it simpler to handle as a single file.

ArcWeb -- A RISCOS web browser.

ARM Linux -- See under RiscBSD.

ARP -- Address Resolution Protocol -- The protocol used to map an Internet address to an MAC address (like Ethernet).

ARPANet -- A predecessor of the Internet. Started in 1969 with funds from the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency.

Anonymous ftp -- This enables a user to retrieve files from an ftp site on the Internet without having to establish a user-id and password on the system. When you log in, type 'anonymous' (or just 'ftp') as your user-id and give your email address as the password if one is required.

Article -- A message which appears on one or more Usenet newsgroups. Each article has a unique message identifier, which is sometimes quoted in a followup article. Some news servers also assign article numbers. These are unique only to that server, and are meaningless to users at other sites.

ASCII -- American Standard Code for Information Interchange -- This is the most commonly used code for representing text using 8-bit binary numbers -- although strictly, it is only a 7-bit code. ASCII also refers to a method, or protocol, for copying files from one computer to another over a network, in which neither computer checks for any errors that might have been caused by static or other problems.

ASCII graphics -- It is possible, using ASCII characters to draw rudimentary picture although it only works if the text is viewed using mono-spaced type.

AUP -- Acceptable Use Policy -- A statement by an ISP of the allowable uses of an account with them.

ATM -- Asynchronous Transfer Mode -- This is an aproach to network design characterised by a number of features. Firstly, data to be transmitted is broken into a sequence of FIXED size packets, each of which contain enough information to allow the packet to be routed to its destination. Secondly, ATM uses 'virtual circuits' whereby, before any data can be moved from one node to another, a circuit must be established, much like a telephone call across the telephone network. The third major feature is that, with ATM, the endpoints must agree in advance (during the setup of the circuit) the maximum bandwidth of data that will be transmitted. Multiple streams of packets can be interleaved onto the physical network hardware without any data getting lost by virtue of the fact

that the system knows the maximum data rate of each virtual circuit and the data rate of the physical network.

The stream nature of ATM, coupled with the guarantee of bandwidth, makes ATM ideal for real-time communications such as audio and video. Indeed, the analogy with a telephone network is no coincidence; these days most digital telephone networks use ATM in their underlying layers. It is a common misconception that ATM metworks mean fast networks. The simplicity of ATM, and the very low level, does mean that it can be made to go very fast but the data to the endpoints of a telephone network tend to go at only 64Kb/s.

BABT -- British Approvals Board for Telecomunications – the standard for telecoms equipment that can be used in UK.

Backbone -- A high-speed interconnection carrying large volumes of data traffic to more local, slower speed interconnections. In the U.S., the backbone of the Internet is often considered the NSFNet, a government funded link between a handful of supercomputer sites across the country.

Bandwidth -- The rate at which data can be sent through any given data connection -- usually expressed in Mbit/s (megabits per second).

Baud -- This is a unit of speed for serial data transmission. (Rough definition...)1 baud = 1 binary bit per second. 1 Kilobaud (Kbaud) is 1024 bits/second = 128 bytes/sec (assuming 8 bits per byte). However, over a telephone line, because each byte tends to have associated 'start' and 'stop' bits, 1 Kilobaud is more like 100 bytes/sec or 6Kbytes/minute. On this basis, a high speed modem at 28.8 Kbaud can transmit about 3Kbytes/sec or 200Kbytes/minute, however, using compression techniques, this can be increased somewhat. The more expensive modems use systems, such as Microcom Network Protocol (MNP), which can correct for errors and which compress data to speed up transmission.

(To be more technically correct... Baud is not the same as bits per second but is 'the number of discrete conditions or signal elements transmitted per second'. For example, V.22bis is transmitted at 600 baud, but 2400 bps. This is because it is using what is called PSK (Phase Shift Keying). Here you can have each baud in four different phases: 0°, 90°, 180°, and 270°. So, for each baud you can have four different states, and this means you can transmit 4 bits per second per baud.

BBS -- (Bulletin Board Service/System) A bulletin board is an application run on a computer which stores information and messages that can be accessed by other computers, usually via the telephone line using a modem. Many bulletin boards allow a number of other computers to connect to the host computer at the same time by using a number of different modems and phone lines.

Big Eight, The -- (was The Big Seven) The main Usenet hierarchies: comp, humanities, misc, news, rec, sci, soc and talk. (Humanities was added in 1995, so you may see references to the Big Seven.

Binary -- The number system (base 2) used as the basis of most computer systems.

Binary data (file) -- Data that consists of more than just textual information. Alphanumeric text can be represented using a limited range of ASCII codes from 32 to 127 with some of the numbers below 32 used as control codes such as 10 for linefeed and 12 for formfeed/clear screen. Binary data, by contrast, uses all the codes 0 to 255 and, if it were transmitted as if it were a text file, the control codes could have all sorts of undesired effects. Other techniques therefore have to be used for its transmission, e.g. uuencoding.

Bitnet -- Because It's Time Network -- The Amercian academic network -- the equivalent of Janet in the UK. It is based on IBM mainframes, and therefore uses EBCDIC character codes.

Bot -- An artificial intelligence usually found masquerading as a human user, carrying out repetitive

or tedious tasks like responding to email. (Presumably an abbreviation for robot.)

Bounce -- An item of email is said to have bounced when it fails to find its recipient and is returned to the sender, sometimes with a message explaining why it was unable to be delivered.

bps -- bits per second -- See Baud.

Browser -- A program that allows you to access the worldwide web (WWW).

Bridge -- A computer or other dedicated hardware that links two networks of the same type together and does some filtering of packets from one network to the other and vice versa.

Bulletin board -- See BBS.

Carrier -- The tone generated by a modem, on which data is carried.

CCITT -- International body that ratifies recommendations for telecoms standards.

CERT -- Computer Emergency Response Team -- A group dedicated to raising awareness of computer security issues and responding to security insidents.

CIX -- (Commercial Internet Exchange) -- An agreement among Internet service providers on the commercial use of the Internet. Not to be confused with Compulink Information Exchange which is a major UK BBS.

ClariNet -- A hierarchy of newsgroups on Usenet that carries commercial information from official sources. Access to ClariNet is chargeable.

Client -- A program on a computer attached to the Internet which is used to access certain services, e.g. a Web client is a program by which you can access the Worldwide Web. The term client refers to the idea that the program provides an easy-to-use access to another more basic program.

Client -- A computer receiving information from a server is also referred to as a client.

Command line -- A way of accessing a service by typing in textual commands.

Compuserve -- A large international BBS with limited Internet access.

Compression/decompression -- There are various mathematical techniques which can be used to store (and transmit) computer data using a smaller amount of memory than the uncompressed data represents. Some of these techniques are completely reversible so that the decompressed data is identical to the original data. However, in the case of images, it may be acceptable to allow a degree of degradation of the data in order to increase the amount by which the data is compressed.

CPS -- Cycles per second or characters per second.

CRC -- Cyclic redundancy check -- A method of detecting errors in the transmission of data.

Cross-posting -- Sending the samearticle to more than one Usenet newsgroup at a time.

CSLIP -- Compressed SLIP.

Cyberspace -- The virtual world that exists within computer networks.

Daemon -- Disc And Execution Monitor -- An otherwise harmless Unix program that normally works out of sight of the user. On the Internet, you'll most likely encounter it only when your e-mail is not delivered to your recipient -- you'll get back your original message plus an ugly message from a "mailer daemon".

Datagram -- Information is passed around the Internet in blocks of data, each block carrying the IP address of the sender and of the destination. At the destination, the datagrams have to be joined together in the correct order to recreate the original data.

Data encryption key (DEK) -- Used for the encryption of message text and for the computation of message integrity checks (signatures).

Data encryption standard (DES) -- A popular standard encryption scheme.

Decompression -- See compression/decompression.

Demon -- Demon Information Services Ltd -- A commercial UK service that provides access to the Internet via the telephone lines using a modem.

Device driver -- Software which drives the actual hardware that communicates from the computer to the serial port, parallel port or network. Device drivers can also be used for non-physical devices like pseudo-terminals (rlogin in Unix).

DCI -- (Acorn‘s) Driver Control Interface -- This is simply a standard set by Acorn for writing device drivers.

Dialup -- A temporary connection to a computer or server via a telephone line rather than through a fixed connection.

Digest -- Some mail servers give you a compilation of the day‘s (or week‘s or month‘s) messages.

Direct account -- An Internet account where you can connect directly with the Internet.

Distribution -- A way to limit where your Usenet postings go. Handy for such things as "for sale" messages or discussions of regional politics. However, the distribution field is not normally used on Usenet, as the distribution nowadays is based upon not feeding groups that are local to the world etc. Most NNTP-servers ignore this field.

DNS -- Domain name system -- A machine that translates the domain name of the Internet addresses from the textual form (e.g. ftp.demon.co.uk) into the numeric form (e.g. 158.53.8.13) that is actually used to send messages. There will usually be at least one name server in each domain. Having more than one is a useful redundancy since you don‘t want the network to grind to a halt whenever your one and only name server crashes. DNS will also handle the translation from IP adresses to names if used the other way around. DNS is hierarchical in that each server only knows about a certain domain, and uses other DNS servers to find the rest of the computers on the Net.

Domain -- A group of computers sharing the same set of services, usually a company wide address. A domain is the list of hosts in one specific part of the Net, and can be as little as one host or as much as the complete Net.

Domain name -- The textual form of the Internet address. For example, if you have an account with Paston, and your address is Paul.NCS@paston.co.uk, your domain name is paston.co.uk. (i.e. it‘s the bit after the @ sign.)

Dot file -- A file on a Unix public-access system that alters the way you or your messages interact with that system. For example, your .login file contains various parameters for such things as the text editor you get when you send a message. When you do an ls command, these files do not appear in the directory listing; do ls -a to list them.

Down -- When a public-access site runs into technical trouble, and you can no longer gain access to it, it‘s ‘down‘.

Download -- Transfer files or messages from a distant computer to your own computer. There are several different methods, or protocols, for downloading files, most of which periodically check the file as it is being copied to ensure no information is inadvertently destroyed or damaged during the process. Some, such as XMODEM, only let you download one file at a time. Others, such as batch-YMODEM and ZMODEM, let you type in the names of several files at once, which are then

automatically downloaded.

EBCDIC -- Extended Binary Coded Decimal Interchange Code -- The character set used on IBM mainframes.

EFF -- Electronic Frontier Foundation -- An organisation concerned with the social and legal issues surrounding the use of computers.

Email -- electronic mail -- sending messages by using any interconnection of computers, either locally or over a wide area network.

EMACS -- Editor Macros -- A text editor often used on Unix systems -- not easy for beginners to use.

Email address -- A unique description of the 'place' to which messages are sent if they are for a particular person or group, e.g. Paul.NCS@paston.co.uk.

Emoticon -- See smiley.

Encryption -- The manipulation of a packet's data in order to prevent any but the intended recipient reading that data.

Error correction -- Used with some modern modems (V42) to check that data transmission does not contain errors.

Ethernet -- A type of high speed (10Mb/s) LAN. It was developed by Xerox Corporation in the late '70s.

EUNet -- The European part of Usenet.

Ezine -- The Internet equivalent of a magazine. These can either be mail to your Internet account or you can access them on-line.

F2F -- Face to Face. When you actually meet those people you been corresponding with/flaming.

FAQ -- Frequently Asked Questions. Many FAQs can be found on the Internet. They provide a list of answers to the most common questions to help out new users (newbies). You should always try to find and read any FAQs on a subject before sending out queries as experienced users get fed up repeatedly answering the same questions. FAQs can be found on:
ftp://rtfm.mit.edu/pub/news.answers

Fetcher -- A sub-program of ArcWeb that is used to actually get the pages. ArcWeb is purely a display program and knows nothing about how to get the pages. It just sends out a message and any fetcher that is loaded and supports the required protocol gets the page and returns it to ArcWeb for display. this it is possible to use FTP and Gopher through ArcWeb as well as the more obvious HTTP. There is also the special Local fetcher for getting pages stored on your hard disc.

Fidonet -- A network of BBSs used to transfer files and messages both nationally and internationally. It is slow because transfers only (usually) take place at night so messages can take days to get from source to destination, especially when going from country to country.

Finger -- A simple form of interrogation of a remote machine or user. The response may be details of who is currently logged onto the system or other informatiom as decided by the system operator. If an individual is 'fingered', they may respond with a 'plan' file giving witty and/or useful information about the user.

Firewall -- A security system to restrict access to certain computers, areas or information. A firewall is normally a computer or router that is put between a local network and an external network such as the Internet. It will normally enable all users on the inside to connect to the outside, but not the other

way around.

Flame -- An offensive or abusive message.

Flamebait -- A provocative posting to Usenet that deliberately tries to elicit flames.

Flame-war -- A discussion consisting of a series of offensive or abusive messages.

Followup -- An article posted to a newsgroup in response to an earlier posting.

Foo/foobar -- A sort of online algebraic place holder. For example: "If you want to know when another site is run by a for-profit company, look for an address in the form of foo@foobar.com." i.e. it's a techical term for 'thingi', 'whatsit' or 'doodah'.

Fortune cookie -- An inane/witty/profund comment that can be found around the net.

FQDN -- Fully qualified domain name -- the complete address of a site on the Internet.

Freeware -- Software that doesn't cost anything.

ftp -- File Transfer Protocol or File Transfer Program (depending on context). In its most general form, it allows users to exchange files with a remote Internet host. This requires an account on the FTP server and a valid password. However, a large number of sites provide an anonymous FTP service which allows anyone to log in with restricted access. There is a huge wealth of information and programs available via anonymous ftp.

ftp site -- A computer were files are available for downloading.

Gateway -- A computer which links together two or more separate networks.

Get a life -- What to say to somebody who has, perhaps, been spending a wee bit too much time in front of a computer.

GIF -- (Graphics Interchange Format) A standard format for storing and transferring bit-mapped graphics in compressed format.

Gopher -- Essentially a text-only precursor of the World Wide Web. The user explores a Gopher server using a menu-driven interface. Pages of textual information are often available, and also search interfaces to databases. Largely died the death since the World Wide Web stole its thunder.

Gopherspace -- The facilities and information linked together by Gopher servers.

Graphically rich online documents -- Text with added pictures!

Group id (GID) -- A number used to identify a group of users in the Unix operating system(s).

GNU -- Gnu's Not Unix. A project of the Free Software Foundation to write a free version of the Unix operating system.

GZIP -- Gnu Zip -- A popular compressed file format.

Handshake -- (1) Two modems trying to connect, first do this to agree on how to transfer data. (2) A series of signals sent back and forth between sending modem and receiving modem to ensure that data is not lost through overflow, i.e. if the data is arriving faster than the computer is storing it. (3) At a computer level, it is the process of agreeing about a protocol and also the process of exchanging protocol information.

Header -- The top of an email or Usenet message containing the details of the sender, date, time, routing and other technical information. Much of the header is of limited interest to the average user, and is therefore sometimes filtered out by an email or newsreader package.

Holy war -- Arguments that involve certain basic tenets of faith, about which one cannot disagree

without setting one of these off. For example: IBM PCs are inherently superior to Macintoshes.

Host -- From a user's point of view, a host is a computer or service which allows you access to the Internet. More technically, it is a computer running a protocol stack which is connected to a network. Each host has a numeric address which is unique to the network, and ususally a host name as well. In this context, the protocol stack will probably be the Internet Protocol Suite, the network will be the Internet and the numeric address will be an IP address.

Host Name -- The name given to an individual computer, e.g. the machine that handles mail at Demon is called "post", and combining this with its domain gives its full Internet address of post.demon.co.uk. You can invent your own hostname when joining Demon.

HTTP -- Hyper Text Transport Protocol -- For fetching linked Web pages.

HTML -- Hyper Text Markup Language -- Program for creating Web pages.

Hypertext -- A system enabling a reader to move between related pieces of information by clicking on linking keywords or pictures.

ICMP -- Internet Control Message Protocol. A protocol used on the Internet to send control information, e.g. ping uses this to send an "Echo_Request".

IMAP -- Internet Mail Access Protocol -- This is a networking protocol which allows users to manipulate and read the contents of mail folders held on a remote server. Unlike with the POP protocol, the mail continues to reside on the remote machine. This approach has advantages in an environment where users move from machine to machine so that transferring an individual's mail to a particular client machine would not be appropriate. The protocol is formally specified by Internet RFC 1176. There is a good document which describes these which you can get from ftp://ftp.cac.washington.edu/mail/imap.vs.pop.

Internet -- An interconnected network of networks. The Internet exists purely as a large group of machines that pass messages to each other, sites linking themselves in because they found it useful. Remember when using the Internet that you are piggy backing on other peoples efforts and paying nothing for it, so be polite because they could easily decide to stop passing your messages through. There is no one organising it and hence no one to complain to if you don't like it. The Internet is probably the worlds most successful anarchy!

Internet address -- See IP address.

Internet Protocol Suite -- The set of protocols which includes TCP, UDP and IP. It is also often (misleadingly) referred to as TCP/IP. Originally developed in the 1970s and early 1980s by the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency for the Arpanet, precursor of the Internet.

IP -- Internet Protocol -- The network protocol responsible for passing data packets from one host to another. Each packet contains the IP address of both the source and destination hosts. IP is regarded as unreliable because individual packets may get lost as they wander around the Internet. Hence TCP is usually to control it if reliability is important.

IP -- Information Provider -- A company that provides Internet access on a commercial basis.

IP Address -- A unique 32-bit address assigned to a host connected to the Internet. (Usually this is a static allocation, but some dial-up Internet providers assign IP addresses dynamically when you log on.) The IP address is usually presented in dotted-decimal format (e.g. 123.45.67.89), where each number represents eight bits of the address. The first part of the address is assigned exclusively to an organisation by the Network Information Center (NIC) in the United States. The use of the individual addresses within this address space is then devolved to the organisation itself.

IRC -- Internet Relay Chat -- A service operated on certain hosts which allows multi-party online conversations. It allows users to 'chat', by typing text, in real time. It is the Internet equivalent of CB radio. The user runs an IRC client and connects to an IRC server using a command such as /server stork.doc.ic.ac.uk. He then selects a particular channel with /join #channel or similar.

ISDN -- Integrated Services Digital Network -- A high speed network available in most European countries and the USA/Canada. It combines voice and data transfer through a single medium.

ISP -- Internet Service Provider.

Janet -- Joint Academic Network -- the network linking UK academic institutions. (Super Janet, allowing higher speed communication and other extra facilities, is currently being tested.)

(Hot) JAVA -- An object-orientated programming language developed by Sun Microsystems, to be used across distributed systems. It allows executable 'objects' to be sent across the Internet, rather than the more traditional text. For example, you could have a graph on your screen of some data. There could be an update to that data, which JAVA would 'transmit' to your machine, and update the graph, all without any user intervention. It is rather like hot-links within documents, hence the term 'Hot' often being applied to it. Apparently Java is american slang for coffee, so you will see lots of mention of hot java and animated icons of steaming cups of coffee if you visit any of the java pages. More infomation on JAVA can be found at http://java.sun.com.

JPEG -- Joint Photographic Experts Group -- A body set up in the USA to produce an industry standard for still picture compression and storage. The theory is that, with an agreed file format, one company's decompression program can read the files produced by someone else's compression program.

JPEG -- A file (image) that has been compressed using JPEG compression techniques.

Jughead -- A search system for finding files in gopher sites, similar to Veronica.

KA9Q -- Another name for !TCPIP. It was originally written on a PC for use with packet radio and KA9Q was the author's call sign.

Kermit -- A set of file transfer protocols, and a terminal emulator that is widely used on PC's and Unix computers.

Kill file -- A list of people whose messages you don't want to read, i.e. their messages just get deleted immediately. Also used to ignore topics not of interest to you.

Kilostream -- A line leased from BT that provides 64Kbits/s data transfer rates.

LAN -- Local area network -- A group of computers linked together for data transfer, usually on a single site.

Leased line -- Any circuit or combination of circuits designated to be at the exclusive disposal of a given user.

Login -- Connecting to a computer involves typing a user name and a password before access is given. You can log into remote computers on the Internet using Telnet or FTP.

Log off -- Disconnect from a host system.

Lurker -- Someone who reads Usenet articles but makes no contribution and is therefore transparent to other users. Sometimes used as a derogatory term but there are, by contrast, those who just HAVE to say something about every topic, whether it adds anything or not!

Mailbomb -- Large amounts of data being emailed to one person, repeatedly, until it kills their mail system or at least renders it unusable. Usually the result of seriously breaching netiquette.

Mail exchanger -- A computer that handles mail for other computers.

Mail gateway -- A computer or service that links up two or more email systems.

Mailing list -- A group of people who send and receive communal email messages on a specific topic.

Mail server -- Machines to which you connect to send and receive mail.

Metapage -- A web page that contains links to other web pages.

MIME -- Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions -- Internet mail was originally designed to carry text messages composed of 7-bit US ASCII characters. MIME extends the format of Internet mail messages to include information about the type of data in the message (e.g. "this message is a PostScript document", "This message is a GIF image", etc) and provides methods for encoding 8-bit data with arbitrary line lengths into 7 bit printable characters with restricted line lengths, which will be carried safely through all mail systems, no matter how antiquated or restrictive they may be. MIME makes multimedia mail possible, while retaining compatibility with the existing Internet Mail distribution system. MIME is formally specified by Internet RFCs 1521 and 1522.

Mirror site -- An FTP server which contains the same, or similar, information as another somewhere else in the world. Mirrors are often set up to lessen transcontinental downloading.

MNP -- Microcom Network Protocol -- A system used by modems to provide data compression and error correction for high speed data transmission over phone lines. There are various standards of increasing speed and complexity, e.g. MNP4 and MNP5.

Modem -- (Abbreviation for modulator-demodulator) A device which takes a serial stream of computer data and converts it into audible tones that can be transmitted down a telephone line that was originally design for carrying voice information. It enables two computers to exchange data at a distance via the telephone system.

Moderator -- The person who runs a conference or newsgroup. They have the responsibility of selecting which postings are used and which not.

Mosaic -- A PC browser for the Web.

MPEG -- Motion Picture Experts Group -- A group of technologists who are establishing an international standard for the compression of moving video and its associated audio. MPEG compression uses information from preceding and subsequent frames to allow further compression than would otherwise be achievable.

MPEG -- A video that has been compressed using MPEG techniques.

MUD -- Multi-user Dimension (or Multi User Dungeons [and Dragons]) -- A form of IRC where the participants take on a persona and do role play activities.

MUG -- Multi-user Game.

MUSE -- Multi-user Simulated Environment. Place where you can interact with other users.

Name Server -- See Domain Name Server.

Net -- Another name for the Internet.

Net. -- A way of referring to a person on the net, e.g. Net.god -- One who has been online since the beginning, who knows all and who has done it all. Net.personality -- Somebody sufficiently opinionated/flaky/with plenty of time on his hands to regularly post in dozens of different Usenet newsgroups, whose presence is known to thousands of people. Net.police -- Derogatory term for those who would impose their standards on other users of the Net. Often used in vigorous flame

wars (in which it occasionally mutates to net.nazis).

Netiquette -- The "rules" of the Internet. When you first get connected to the Internet don't immediately leap in and start posting messages, wait a few weeks (at least) to get the feel of the place and the people.

Don't use all capital letters because it will be read as SHOUTING.

Don't post a mailshot to users without their permission.

Don't post methods of 'getting rich quick'.

Don't post confidential information.

Don't ask FAQs. Ask instead where to find the group's FAQ.

Don't use very long signatures. It costs people to load them.

Don't quote large amounts of other people's messages as this ia also a waste of time and money.

NetNews -- aka News -- News transferred using the NNTP protocol.

Network -- A group of computers that are linked together to enable the transmission of information between them.

Netscape -- A World Wide Web browser program. Currently (late 1995) the most used browser on the Web. Its attractions include its cross-platform support (the program is available for PCs, Macs and a number of different types of Unix workstation), and its speed (it shows you the text and graphics of a Web page as they arrive at your computer, rather than waiting for the whole page to be downloaded). It is free to educational establishments and charities, and can be downloaded free for evaluation by others. One problem is that Netscape introduces various non-standard 'extensions' to the Web authoring language, HTML, which are not supported by other browsers. Acorn users of the Internet are most likely to encounter the influence of Netscape in the form of oddly laid out or unreadable Web pages, possibly bearing messages such as "this page looks best in Netscape" or "the page only works with Netscape". The latest version (v2.0) also supports JAVA.

Newbie -- A new user of the Internet or of a particular service. This is not a pejorative term.

News -- Often referred to as the Usenet News Groups. Discussion areas where anyone can post messages for others to read and reply to. There are over 10,000 newsgroups for discussion on just about any subject area. The Newsbase setup window lets you decide which groups you want to join/subscribe to, ie which ones it should fetch.

NewsFeed -- aka News server.

Newsgroup -- A forum for discussing a subject, the title of the newsgroup (hopefully) giving the subject area. You can start a new discussion, known as a thread, or reply to existing postings. See also News.

Newsreader -- A program that allows you access to articles on a Usenet server.

News server -- Machines to which you connect to send and receive news.

NFS -- Network File System -- A protocol developed by Sun and defined in RFC 1094 which allows a computer to access files over a network as if they were on its local disc.

NIC -- Network Information Center. As close as an Internet- style network gets to a hub; it's usually where you'll find information about that particular network.

NNTP -- Network News Transfer Protocol -- The application protocol (defined in RFC 997) used to transfer Usenet articles between news servers.

NTP -- Network Time Protocol -- A protocol that ensures accurate local timekeeping with reference to radio and atomic clocks located on the Internet. This protocol is capable of synchronising distributed clocks within lilliseconds over long time periods (see RFC 1119).

Node -- A computer or server attached to the network.

NSA line eater -- The more aware/paranoid Net users believe that the National Security Agency has a super-powerful computer assigned to reading everything posted on the Net. They will jokingly (?) refer to this line eater in their postings.

NSF -- National Science Foundation -- This funds the NSFNet, the backbone of the Internet in the US.

Offline -- When your computer is not connected to a host system or the Net, you are offline.

OLR -- Off-line reader -- Software used for reading email or USenet news off-line.

Online -- When your computer is connected to an online service, bulletin-board system or public-access site.

Packet switching -- The technique in which a stream of data is broken into standardised units called 'packets', each of which contains address, sequence, control, size and error-checking information in addition to the user data.

Password -- When accessing a remote site, especially where certain services are only accessible to registered individuals, the system my require you to type in a code word or words to prove that you are who you say you are, and that password is necessary in order to grant you access.

PD -- Public Domain -- There are a number of organisations and enthusiasts who produce programs and clipart which they make freely available for other people to use -- rather than trying to make money by selling them. The material is distributed at cost by various individuals and agencies.

PEM -- Privacy enhanced mail -- Internet email which provides confidentiality, authentication and message integrity using various encryption methods.

PGP -- Pretty Good Privacy -- Secure encryption using a public key system.

Ping -- Packet Internet Groper -- About the simplest Internet program. It simply sends an "Are you there?" type message and reports back how long it took. Can be useful to see if you can make contact with another machine, e.g. ping gate.demon.co.uk.

Pipex -- A commercial UK service that provides access to the Internet via the telephone lines using a modem.

.plan file -- A file that lists anything you want others on the Net to know about you. You place it in your home directory on your public-access site. Then, anybody who fingers you, will get to see this file.

PoP -- Point of Presence -- A local phone number for access to Pipex, Demon or other Internet providers.

POP/POP3 -- Post Office Protocol -- POP is a networking protocol which allows users to download mail messages from a central mail server or "Post Office". It is used in situations where the machine belonging to a user is not always available (e.g. a machine which is switched off when not in use, or one which only connects to the Internet occasionally via a dial-up link). Internet mail for the user is delivered to the Post Office machine and held there, awaiting collection by POP.   There are several versions of the protocol, the most recent (and widely used) being version 3 which is described in Internet RFC 1725 and commonly referred to as "POP3". "POP", without any qualifying version number, normally refers to version 2 which is described in Internet RFC 937.

Comparing POP3 with SMTP, the other main e-mail transfer protocols, the major difference is the decision as to which party is in the driver's seat. With SMTP, the server is in charge of delivery, the client has to wait passively for the server to send the messages to it. With POP3, the client is in charge. It interrogates the server to determine what messages are available, and then requests them individually.

Post(ing) -- To put an article/message onto a newsgroup.

Postmaster -- The person who deals with mail and answers mail-related questions on an Internet site. On a BBS, the postmaster is usually the sysop.

PPP (a.k.a. P3) -- Point to Point Protocol -- A standard for transmitting Internet Protocol (IP) data packets over phone lines. This is a newer and more robust protocol than SLIP. N.B. this is NOT for transfer of mail. It just transfers data, which could, of course, contain mail, but the protocol knows nothing about this.

Prompt -- When the host system asks you to do something and waits for you to respond. For example, if you see "login:" it means type your user name.

Protocol -- An agreed set of procedures which allows for the orderly transfer of data between two hosts via a communications network. It is essentially a common language which enables hosts to interwork. Examples are TCP, IP, FTP, HTTP, etc.

Protocol stack -- A set of protocols which, together, form a hierarchy. The protocols at the top of the stack use the protocols lower down to do their work. For example, consider a mail server on host A, delivering a message to a mail server on host B. The two servers communicate using the SMTP application protocol, but do this via a TCP connection. The TCP connection is achieved by firing IP packets into the network. The IP packets are sent over a serial link using SLIP. The individual binary digits of the SLIP packet are encoded as a series of electrical impulses on a copper twisted pair. Inside host B, the reverse process occurs to reconstitute the IP packet, which is sent up through the TCP layer to the application protocol.

Proxy server -- A web server that fetches pages at your request and stores them in its own memory. This is usually used in conjunction with a cache so that if you fetch the same page again, it will come from the cache rather than having to be refetched. If you have a number of users who are all looking at a similar set of documents (e.g. a class of students looking at the same site) a proxy server on your local net can speed up access because a given page only needs to be fetched from the 'outside world' once and from then on it is returned from the cache.

Public Key Cryptography -- A method of encryption whereby a public key is made available by someone to those people who want to send messages to that person. The public key is used to encrypt the data, but only the private key held by the owner can decrypt the data.

RARP -- Reverse ARP -- The protocol used to map a MAC address (like Ethernet) to an Internet address.

Readme files -- Files found on FTP sites that explain what is in a given FTP directory or which provide other useful information (such as how to use FTP).

Real Soon Now -- A vague term used to describe when something will actually happen.

Remote login -- Operating on a remote computer, using a protocol over a computer network, as though locally attached.

Reply -- To send a private email to someone, either in reponse to an email or to a news article.

Resolve -- Translate a numeric IP address into a textual domain name, e.g. 158.152.18.44 = risc.demon.co.uk.

RFC -- Request for comment. A series of documents that describe various technical aspects of the Internet.

RiscBSD -- One of two public domain Unix clones currently being converted from PCs to run on Acorn machines.　The other is ARM Linux. RiscBSD is derived from FreeBSD and ARM Linux from Linux.

ROT13 -- A method of trivially encrypting text so that it cannot be read accidentally. This is used to prevent the punchline of jokes being revealed before the user has read the joke, or for prventing users reading about the ending of books or films.

Route -- The path (through gateways or servers) that mail or other information takes to get from source to destination.

Router -- (1) Software, usually invisible to the user, which automatically chooses the easiest pathways (on a network) for data to be transmitted. (2) A router is normally a computer or other dedicated hardware that is set up to transmit packets from one network to others. The difference between a router and a gateway is that a router will normally be connected to several networks, whereas a gateway is only connected to two networks.

Search engine -- A facility that allows you to search for keywords in databases, archives or web pages.

Serial -- A device or communication channel is said to be serial if the data is sent sequentially, one bit at a time, as opposed to being sent several bits at a time down a number of parallel wires.

Server -- A computer or system that provides resources to a number of other computers or clients on a computer network. It shares (some of) its files and/or peripherals with other computers on the same network.

Shareware -- Software which you can try out for free before buying it.

Signal-to-noise ratio -- The amount of useful information to be found in a given Usenet newsgroup. Often used derogatorily, for example: "the signal-to-noise ratio in this newsgroup is pretty low."

Signature -- This is a small area of text at the bottom of a message which is configured by the user. Whenever he or she posts a message or Usenet article, the signature is attached automatically by the mailing software. It may take the form of a set of words and/or ASCII graphics.

Site -- A computer system holding information that can be accessed by other computers.

SLIP -- Serial Line Internet Protocol -- A link protocol which enables IP packets to be transmitted down a serial line by adding a simple header. Used extensively by dial-up Internet Providers since RS232 signals can be modulated and sent along a telephone wire using a modem. However, more complex protocols, such as CSLIP (compressed SLIP) and PPP (point-to-point protocol) are gaining popularity since they allow better data throughput.

Smileys :-) -- Sideways on, it looks like a little smiling :-) face, or a sad :-(face, or even an amazed :-o face. Often used in newsgroups to indicate sarcastic or silly comments because no one can see your expression on the Internet. Other faces include ;-) winking, :-* oops!, :-> sarcastic remark and >:-> devilish remark.

SMTP -- Simple Mail Transfer Protocol -- A method of passing email messages from one machine to another. The other popular mail protocol is POP.

Snailmail -- A pejorative term referring to the conventional (physical) mail system.

Spam -- (1) To post an article to multiple, inappropriate newsgroups, rather like illegal bill posters. This is often unwanted advertising and "Get rich quick" type schemes. Do NOT do it! It is very heavily frowned upon, and will result in mailbombs and most likely the killing of your access.

(2) To flood someone else's screen with useless 'noise'. On IRC, this usually translates into annoying beeps or unprintable characters. Spamming is considered a punishment for behaviour that runs against the grain of the net culture, typically corporate advertising.

Spammer -- A person who generates spams!

Spoiler -- A Usenet posting that reveals the ending or important facts of a plot. Do not read unless you want to know in advance what happens.

Subscribe -- To join a newsgroup for the purpose of reading articles posted to it. The subscription is recorded by the NNTP client program (such as Newsbase) and simply tells it which articles to download from the news server. No record of subscriptions is kept at the server itself.

Stacks -- You will often hear the TCP/IP protocols referred to as "stacks". This comes from the way the protocols build up, each new one sitting on top of the others to provide more services. FTP uses TCP which uses IP which uses SLIP. See Protcol Stack.

TCP -- Transmission Control Protocol -- The protocol which sits above IP and implements a reliable connection between two hosts using the unreliable packet transmission capabilities of IP. Data is passed down to TCP from the application protocols above. It is TCP's job to fragment each message into chunks which will conveniently fill an IP packet, labelling each chunk appropriately. At the other end of the connection, the remote host's TCP must reassemble the original message from the packets it receives from IP below and pass it up to the correct application protocol. If any of the chunks is missing, it must ask the other end to resend the lost ones. In this way, TCP simulates a direct connection between two hosts because messages sent in at one end will eventually pop out at the other end, in the same order.

TCP/IP -- A combination of TCP and IP! (Misnomer for the Internet Protocol Suite)

Telnet -- Logs on to a remote machine, giving two-way communication so you can type commands and get the screen output back.

Telnet port -- If a machine has several different tasks or services accessible on Telnet, each will be accessed through a port. Each port is identified by a four-digit number.

Terminal emulator -- A program that allows your computer to pretend that it is an unintelligent box capable of sending and receiving textual information. Telnet is accessed by a terminal emulator.

Thread -- A series of linked messages forming a discussion within a newsgroup that is all on the same subject. Normally, a followup article will have the Subject line preceded with "Re:". For example, in the newsgroup comp.sys.acorn.hardware, there might be a thread with the subject line "Re: Acorn's new machines".

TPoP -- Traditional PoP -- Demon only have a few of these left. They have there own set of modems and computers to log you in.

Trojan horse -- A program that pretends to do, or does, something useful, but which contains code that does something else. This can range from printing silly messages on your screen to trashing your hard drive. It's the network equivalent of a virus.

UDP -- User Datagram Protocol -- An alternative to TCP, used in cases where reliabilty is considered unimportant, or where a connection-oriented dialogue is not required. Each datagram is fired into the network as a single IP packet, and if it gets lost before reaching its destination, then

tough luck.

Unix -- The operating system used by most of the computers that provide services on the Internet. Unlike a personal computer system like RISC OS, Unix is designed to provide access to many users at once and almost always comes with built-in TCP/IP and so it has become very popular as a network machine. The main thing to watch out for when connected to a computer running Unix is that it allows very long file names that are case sensitive, i.e. Fred, fred and FRED are different. The reason most Internet servers run one of the many varients of Unix is that the Internet Protocol Suite was developed in the academic community which also embraced Unix in the seventies. Unix was not only freeware, but also offered more features than anything else available. Also, because it had its own system programming language ('C'), it was the ultimate 'mix-and-match' operating system and a programmer's paradise.

Upload -- Transfer files or messages from your computer to a distant computer.

URL -- Uniform Resource Locator -- A universal addressing scheme for Internet resources. The idea was introduced at the same time as the World Wide Web, and most web browsers support it fully. The general format is:

protocol://machine.site/directory/filename

For example:

`http://www.acorn.co.uk/acorn/Home`

ftp://ftp.acorn.co.uk/pub/documents/pricelist

The first example is a hypertext page fetched from Acorn's World Wide Web server using HTTP, and the second is a file fetched from Acorn's FTP server, using anonymous FTP. Other protocols supported include 'gopher:' and 'news:'.

Usenet -- The term used to refer to the Internet news network. Usenet is not a real physical network as such (although it was once, apparently). It is a virtual network of news servers which communicate via the Internet. There is no central Usenet site. Instead, news propagates around the world as each server connects to its news feed (another news server) and exchanges new articles with it. Hence, no single server ever holds the entire contents of any given newsgroup.

User-id (UID) -- A name or number used to identify a specific individual user when accessing a remote system. Often has to be followed by a password.

User name -- On most host systems, the first time you connect you are asked to supply a one-word user name. This can be any combination of letters and numbers. It is a unique identifier that is linked to a UID in the Unix operating system(s). This is done so that people don't have to go around and remember their UID.

UUCP -- Unix to Unix Copy Program -- A protocol used on dialup connections to transfer files and execute commands. This can be used to let the server call the clients or vice versa and is extremely efficient on low bandwidth connections. This is the original protocol used to transport NetNews and also the original protocol on Usenet. There are actually two UUCP ports for the RISC OS. One is the port of Taylor UUCP and the other is the port of some other UUCP implementation.

Uuencode -- A coding system by which binary data can be transmitted over a text-only email system. Uuencode takes data using bytes in the range [0-255] and encodes it to a limited ranges of ASCII codes, usually in the range [32-127]. As a result, the encoded data can take up more space than the original binary file.

Uudecode -- A program that takes a uuencoded file and recreates the original binary file(s).

V22 -- CCITT standard for modem communications at 1200 bps.

V22bis -- CCITT standard for modem communications at 2400 bps.

V32 -- CCITT standard for modem communications at 9600 and 4800 bps.

V22bis -- CCITT standard for modem communications at 14.4K, 12K, 2400, 9600 7200 and 4800 bps.

V42 -- CCITT standard for modem communications that incorporates MNP levels 2-4 error correction and MNP level 5 data compression.

V42bis -- CCITT standard for modem communications implementing data compression over V42 links.

Veronica -- Very Easy Rodent-Oriented Netwide Index to Computerised Archives -- A system available on certain gopher sites for searching by keyword for files in gopher sites around the Internet.

VPoP -- Virtual PoP -- New style PoP. Although only to a local phone number all Demon VPoPs connect you through to the Finchley HQ using lines provided by a company called Energis. Thus Demon only need to upgrade the facilities in Finchley for everyone to get the benefit.

VT100 -- Terminal-emulation system. Supported by many communications program, it is the most common one in use on the Net. VT102 is a newer version. Also available are VT52, 220 and 320.

WAIS -- Wide Area Information System -- A set of databases across the Internet which can be searched in a manner very close to questioning in plain English.

WAN -- See Wide area network.

Web crawler -- This is an automatic program (sometimes called a "robot") which explores the World Wide Web, following the links and searching for information or building a database. Such programs are often used to build automated indexes for the Web, allowing users to do keyword searches for Web documents. It is also the name used by one of the most popular publically available keyword searching engines. This can be accessed using the URL "http://www.webcrawler.com/" or http://webcrawler.com/WebCrawler/WebQuery.html.

The WebCrawler is owned by America Online Inc and operated at their Web Studio in San Francisco. It regularly reads all the web pages it possibly can, and stores a huge database of indexing information. If you point your browser at http://WebCrawler.com/ you'll see a form into which you can enter one or more words. Click on the [search] icon and, in a few moments, the WebCrawler will search its database and send you back a list of all the web pages that it knows about which contain those words.

There are many similar search engines, such as:-

OpenText -- http://www.opentext.com:8080/

InfoSeek -- http://www2.infoseek.com/

World Wide Worm -- http://www.cs.colorado.edu/home/mcbryan/WWWW.html

Jumpstation II -- http://js.stir.ac.uk/jsbin/

Web (The) -- See WWW.

Worm -- The Internet equivalent of a virus. It replicates itself and is self propagating.

White pages -- Databases of information about users: email address, telephone number and postal address. The name relates to the fact that it is something akin to Yellow Pages!

Wide area network -- A group of remote computers, i.e. not on one site, connected over telephone lines or specialised data cables.

WWW (or W3) -- Worldwide Web -- This is probably the main reason for the Internet becoming more popular recently. It presents things in the form of pages that can contain text, graphics and sound, and enables you to wander from computer to computer all around the world just by clicking on highlighted links. The pages are stored as files in HTML format and transferred using HTTP.

Zine -- See Ezine.

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