

COMPUTER TERMS

GENERAL:

Boot up: to turn on a computer.

Backup: to make a spare copy of data that can be removed from the computer.

WWW: (**World Wide Web**) a community of computers interconnected by telephone lines, cables and satellites.

Online: to be connected to the Internet (WWW or Web).

Load: to transfer data to a hard drive from a removable source.

Download: to transfer data to a hard drive from the Internet.

Upload: to transfer data from a hard drive to the Internet, usually for viewing on a web page.

Burn: to transfer data to a rewritable CD.

Rip: to transfer data from a CD to a hard drive.

Network: when more than one computer is connected together, commonly for sharing a printer or Web access.

HARDWARE – The separate, physical parts that make up a computer including:

Tower: the case that holds the various boards and drives that makes up a computer.

Hard drive: the main storage device in a computer that holds a large amount of information (data).

Floppy disk drive: the “A” drive; it allows the transfer of a small amount of data to or from the hard drive.

CD Rom drive: allows the transfer of a moderate amount of data to or from the hard drive.

Zip drive: allows the transfer of a large amount of data to or from the hard drive.

External drives: a drive that is not inside the computer, but is attached to it by a cable.

Media: Material that holds data, such as a CD (**Compact Disk**), including rewritable CD's & DVD's (**Digital Video Disk**), a “floppy” diskette (for the “A” drive), a “zip” disk (for a zip drive), a digital camera “memory stick” or “card”, etc.

CPU (Central Processing Unit): a small memory “chip” that processes information (the brains of the computer), usually made by Intel (Pentium), Celeron or AMD (Athlon); it's speed is measured in MHZ (megahertz) or GHZ (gigahertz); Pentium II (P2) computers run at about 200 MHZ and Pentium 4 (P4) computers now exceed 1 GHZ.

Motherboard: the main circuit board in a computer where the CPU chip is mounted.

RAM: additional memory chips that are clipped onto the motherboard & increase the CPU's processing speed. It is a relatively inexpensive, easy & helpful upgrade to make.

Video card: a circuit board with the software to run the monitor.

Sound card: a board with software for the speakers. It also can be part of the motherboard.

Modem: an internal (or external) device with software to connect a computer to the Internet. Dial-up, or 56k modems are the most common, and convert digital data into analog data used by telephone lines. Cable, Satellite, “fixed-wireless” (similar to cellular), and DLS (**Digital Subscriber Line**) modems are much faster and are “always on”.

SOFTWARE – The programs that are written to run on a computer including:

BIOS (Basic Input Output System): software that is programmed into a CPU to make it run.

OS (Operating System): the program you use to operate a computer such as DOS, Windows, Linux, or Mac.

Updates: these are program “fixes”, “patches” and “upgrades” (free or fee based) that are offered at the product websites, for downloading to a computer.

Firmware: software that is built into a device to make it run. Websites often offer firmware updates to download to a computer.

Drivers: software that must be loaded onto a computer to make a purchased device run, and are found on diskette(s), a CD, or at the product’s website for downloading.

Applications: these include word processing programs (Word, WordPerfect), “spreadsheets” for use with numbers & columns, graphics, music, & email programs, and web browsers (Internet Explorer, Netscape) used for surfing the web.

OCR (Optical Character Recognition): software converts a picture of printed words into “text” that can then be edited in a word processing program.

Utilities: programs that fix or prevent computer problems & include “antivirus” programs that find and destroy viruses, “firewalls” that block access by outsiders to your computer files, file management programs, & “System” repair programs that fix OS problems.

Games: small ones can be loaded entirely on the hard drive or played right off the web, larger games require the simultaneous use of a CD, and many of these can also be played online with other players.

Shareware: free software to try, and then a small payment is to be made on the honor system.

Freeware: software that is distributed wholly without charge.

PERIPHERALS – Miscellaneous electronic devices which are attached to a computer including:

Monitor: analog (CRT – **C**athode **R**ay **T**ube) or digital (flat panel) monitors.

Printer: inkjet, photo inkjet (which includes extra colored inks), and laser printers.

Scanner: converts a paper document to a digital photo. Some scanners can also copy and fax. Some come with software that will convert the written word to editable text.

Other: digital projectors, digital cameras, PDA’s (**P**ersonal **D**igital **A**ssistant), hubs, routers, etc.

SOME TIPS:

If the system hangs (freezes) try these: 1) press “Ctrl” plus “Tab” on the keyboard, to switch between all “open” programs; or, 2) press Ctrl, Alt & Delete simultaneously to see which program isn’t responding, close that program by clicking on it & then click “End Task”; 3) repeat #2 again; 4) repeat #2 but click “Shut Down”; 5) press the “reset” button on the tower; if all else fails, 6) cut the main power to the computer & wait 10 seconds before turning it back on, to allow the hard drive to completely stop spinning.

If the system fails to shut down properly: first click on “restart” before using “shut down”.

When downloading off the web: “Save to disk” means to save either to a floppy diskette, CD Rom, zip drive or hard drive. Click on “Browse” to help find a good place to save it to.

Maintenance tips: back up data daily; weekly to monthly run: “Registry Checker”, “Scan Disk” & “Disk Defragmenter” in that order, which are found in “Accessories” under “System Tools”.