

Basic Computer Terms

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)	AUP: A set of rules and guidelines that are set up to regulate Internet use and to protect the user
Active Cell	In a spreadsheet, the cell you are working in. The cell is identified by a thick dark border.
Alignment	The way in which text lines up across a page. The text can be right-aligned, centered, left-aligned, or fully-aligned (justified).
Animated Clip Art	A moving clip art graphic
Anti- Virus	An application or program designed to scan or search disks or hard drives for viruses and repair files that it finds
Application or Software	Computer program -- Software that allows you to perform a task or solve a specific problem. Programs that allow you to accomplish certain tasks such as write letters, analyze numbers, sort files, manage finances, draw pictures, and play games.
Arrow Keys	The keys on the keyboard used to move the cursor up, down, left, or right.
Ascending Order	One of two ways to sort a database. Numbers are arranged from smallest to largest. Text is arranged in alphabetical order (A to Z) (See Descending)
Attachments	A file you add to an email when you send it to someone else
Backup system	A way of storing data in more than one location.
Baud Rate	The speed at which data signals are sent and received by a modem. The higher the baud rate the faster data is transferred
Bold	A style of text that makes a letter or word darker and thicker to stand out in a document.
Bomb	A type of virus designed to activate at a specific date and time on your computer
Browser	Software needed to be able to view information on the internet (See Internet Browser)
Button Bar or Toolbar	A horizontal strip of buttons near the top of a window which provides shortcuts for common commands. Some programs allow the user to hide or display the bar, and customize the buttons.
Buttons	A hot spot used in multimedia applications to navigate from one place to another or to activate elements such as sound and animation.
Byte	A unit of storage usually made up of eight bits. It represents one character - a letter, digit, or symbol.
Cell	The intersection of each row and column in a spreadsheet. Example: Cell B5, Cell A202
Cell range	A continuous group of connected cells in a spreadsheet
Center align	Placement of text OR graphics in the center of a Word processing page or cell of a spreadsheet or table
Central Processing Unit (CPU)	Electronic circuits that interpret and execute instructions and communicates with the input, output, and storage devices.
Clip art	Drawings you can add to your documents, including cartoons, maps, symbols, and flags. Clip art comes with some programs or can be purchased separately.
Communication Software	Provides the tools for connecting one computer with another to enable sending and receiving information and sharing files and resources.
Compact Disc	A disc on which a laser has digitally recorded information such as audio, video, or computer data.
Computer	An electronic device that operates under the control of a set of instructions that is stored in its memory unit. It accepts data from an input device and processes it into useful information, which it makes available on its output device.
Copy	To make an exact duplicate of information in your document, so you can place the copy in another location of your document.
Copyright Laws	Law that exist to protect those who create a new idea or product
CPU (Central Processing Unit)	The brain of the computer or central processing unit. The main chip that allows computers to do millions of calculations per second and makes it possible for users to write letters and balance your checkbook.
Cursor	The flashing vertical line on the screen that indicates where the next character will be typed.
Data	Raw unprocessed facts to be processed by the computer.
Database file	A collection of individual records in a database
Delete	To erase a letters, word paragraph or cell contents. Use either the BACKSPACE key (erases to the left) or the DELETE key (Erases to the right)
Delete key	A key used to erase characters to the right of the cursor.
Descending Order	One of two ways to sort a database. Numbers are arranged from largest to smallest. Text is arranged in reverse alphabetical order (Z to A) (See Ascending Order)
Desktop	The background on the windows, menus, and dialog boxes on a PC. It is designed to represent a desk.

Desktop Publishing	Using features of word processing to format and produce more sophisticated documents with graphics and text, such as flyer, brochures, or newsletters.
Edit	To make changes in a document or presentation and therefore make it better.
e-mail	The ability to send and receive messages with a computer
Enter/Return	The key used to begin a new line in a word processor, or to enter information into a spreadsheet or database. It is the same as clicking OK in the dialog box.
Entry bar	Where the contents of the active cell in a spreadsheet are displayed
Filter/query	A way to do a simple or complex search in a database to find record based on specific criteria.
Firewall	Technology that prevents users from inappropriate websites and protects the network from unauthorized users
Floppy Disk	A portable magnetic storage medium for computer data that allows users to randomly access information.
Font	The shape and style of text. Examples: Verdana, Arial, and Times New Roman.
Format	To set margins, tabs, font, or line spacing in layout of a document. The way a document or piece of a document will look.
Formulas	A set of instructions or directions in a particular spreadsheet cell that tells the computer exactly what mathematical operations to do
Freeware	Software written and then donated to the public, so anyone is free to copy it and share it with their friends. This is not the same as shareware or commercial software, because those are supposed to be paid for.
Gif (Graphic Interchange Format)	Pronounced "GIF". A simple file format for pictures and photographs that are compressed so they can be sent quickly. Widely used on electronic bulletin boards and the Internet, but cannot be used for high-end desktop publishing. (See JPG)
Gigabyte	Approximately a billion bytes (or 1,000 megabytes).
Gigahertz (GHZ)	A billion machine cycles per second.
Graphic	Images/pictures created, edited, and/or published using a computer
Graphical User Interface	The use of graphical symbols instead of text commands to control common computer functions such as copying programs and disks.
Hacker	An unauthorized person who secretly gains access to computer files
Hard Copy	A printed copy of computer output.
Hard disk	An internal disk, a metal platter coated with magnetic oxide that can be magnetized to hold documents, applications, or software. A fixed, large-capacity magnetic storage medium for computer data.
Hardcopy	Output produced by a printer. Output from a computer that is "hard"... you can touch
Hardware	The physical components of the computer and any equipment connected to it. Pieces of the computer that you can touch.
Highlight or Select	To choose part of a document by clicking and dragging over it with the mouse to highlight the text; text must be selected to make changes in formatting.
Hoax	A computer virus that is intended to scare users into thinking they really do have a virus
Home Page	An introductory screen on a web site, used to welcome visitors. A home page can include special text or graphics on which you click to jump to related information on other pages on the Web
Home Row	Keys on the keyboard from which all keystrokes are made. Fingers of the left hand are on ASDF and fingers on the right hand are on JKL;
Host	Host computers are associated with computer networks, online services, or bulletin board systems. They are usually name given to a computer that directly connects the rest of a network to the Internet.
Hyperlink or Hypertext	Special text when clicked jumps the user from their current location to another page or topic.
Icon	A small picture or symbol representing a computer hardware function or component.
Illustration	Clip art, graphics or drawings on a computer
Indent	To set the first line of a paragraph in from the margin about 5 spaces. (USE THE TAB key!!!)
Ink-jet Printer	A type of printer that forms letters on the page by shooting tiny electrically charged droplets of ink.
Input	To send data, text, documents to your computer's CPU. You can use ANY input device to do this
Input Device	The hardware that is used to pass information into the computer. Any hardware device that lets you send data to your computer (i.e. keyboard, mouse, scanner)
Internet	A network of computers that provides information world-wide; also known as the information superhighway.
Internet Browser	Provides access to the Internet through a service provider by using a graphical interface.

Jpeg (Joint Photographic Experts Group)	A standard for shrinking graphics so they can be sent faster between modems and take up less space on your hard drive. These graphics can be reduced to 5 percent of their original compressing graphics to 30 or 40 percent of their original size results in minimal loss of quality
Keyboard	The hardware device used to enter letters into the computer (input device).
Keyword	A word or reference point to describe content on a web page that search engines use to properly index the page
Label	One of the three types of data you can put in a spreadsheet cell. A label is words or text that the user need to read to understanding the meaning of the numbers.
Landscape	The page setup the permits a document to be printed in a horizontal position. (See portrait)
Laptop	A portable computer that can be taken with your where ever you to.
Laser Printer	A printer that uses both laser and photographic technology to produce high quality output.
Licenses	Special agreements in copyrighted programs that spell out what you can and cannot to with the software you purchased, and how many computer(s) you may put the software on.
Line spacing	The span between lines of text (i.e.: Double Space, single space 1.5 spaces)
Linear	Moving in a straight line or path; a multimedia presentation that moves in a straight line from image to image (i.e. PowerPoint presentations) See NON-linear
Links	Connections that bridge one image, page, or word to another by clicking on a highlighted word or phrase
Mainframes	Classified by size, the second largest classification of computers. Much larger than desktops or laptop computers
Megabyte (Mb)	Approximately a million bytes.
Megahertz (MHz)	One million machine cycles per second.
Memory	Primary storage that works with the CPU to hold instructions and data in order to be processed.
Microcomputers	Personal computers or desktop computers.
Modem	The device that allows your computer to talk to other computers over a telephone line.
Monitor	An output device with a screen used to show computer images. A video or computer display device.
Mouse	A tool used to move the cursor and pointer on the screen (input device).
Multimedia	To use a combination of text, pictures, sounds, movies, and/or animation.
Network	A system of connected computers that allows a sharing of files and equipment. There are two types of networks: local area network (LAN) and wide area network (WAN)
Non-linear	Not moving in a straight line or path; a multimedia presentation that transitions from one image to another in an order that is preset, but not necessarily in a straight path. - Example: a non-linear presentation can transition from image 1 to image 3 and back to image 1 using menus and branching to move around the pages
Notebook	A personal computer that can fit into a briefcase.
Numeric Keypad	The portion of the keyboard, usually on the right hand side of a full keyboard, used to enter numbers and basic math functions (+ - * /) quickly.
Online Resources	Internet information available to a computer user
Online Safety	Precautions taken to protect personal information and images from being misused by others.
Operating systems software (OS)	The set of programs that must be on your computer for the computer to boot properly. It controls all the overall activity of a computer and the way other program and your desktop work.
Output	Central processing unit executes computer instructions. Memory holds data and programs temporarily.
Output Device	The hardware that receives and displays information coming from the computer.
Page Setup	The term in reference to the way a document is formatted to print
Password	A code for the security protection to allow access to a computer or programs.
Paste	To insert the last information to be cut or copied into a document; can be used to move information in or between documents
PDA (Personal digital assistant)	Classified by size, the smallest classification of computers. It is a handheld computer. Usually performing on one or two specific functions.
Portrait	The default page setup that prints the document vertically. (See landscape)
Presentation Graphics	Provides the tools for creating graphics that represent data in a visual, easily understood format.
Print	To create a paper copy (or hard copy) of the information on the computer screen.
Printer	A hardware device used to make a copy on paper (output device).
Processing	Output devices make processed data available to the user.
Public Domain	Software written and then donated to the public. Anyone can use and copy public domain software free of charge, but it is not always the same quality as commercial software
RAM	Random access memory. Memory that the computer user can access. It can be changed if necessary (resaving a word processing document). The computer's working memory

ROM (Read only memory)	Read ONLY Memory. Memory that contains programs and data that are permanently recorded when the computer is built. Information stays in memory even when the computer shuts down.
Save	To store information on a floppy disk, hard drive or CD for later use. Work should be saved often, every 5 or 10 minutes, to make sure the latest changes are safely recorded
Save As	To save a document with a new name or to a new location on your hard drive
Search	To look for specific information on the internet or computer
Search Engines	Software that searches, gathers, and identifies information from a database based on an index, keywords or titles.
Search Strategies	There are 3 basic ways to begin a search: 1. Try to guess the URL; 2. Use Subject directories provided by some search engines; 3. Use a Search engine for large searches using unique keywords or combinations of keywords to narrow a search
Security	Protection of a computer, its files, or a computer network from use without permission of the owner or owners
Server	A special computer used to store programs and files, and then sends it out to other computers one or all at a time
Shareware	A form of free software; however, the author of shareware hopes you will make a voluntary contribution for using the product. Software that can be tried before you purchase
Softcopy	Monitor output. (See hard copy)
Software	A program that consists of instructions used to control hardware and accomplish tasks. The programs or instructions that tell the computer what to do.
Spreadsheets	Provides the tools for working with numbers and allows you to create and edit electronic spreadsheets in managing and analyzing information.
Stand Alone Computer	A computer that does not rely upon any other computer or server to work; it is not networked and does not share resources.
Storyboard	A graphic organizer used for planning and developing a multimedia presentation. The contents, layout, and formatting of each card/slide and the linking together of the cards/slides is storyboarding.
Supercomputers	Classified by size, the largest classification of computers.
Telecommunication	The act of sending and receiving information, such as data, text, pictures, voice, and video electronically. The exchange of information can be within a building or around the globe.
Text	Words on a page, in a spreadsheet or database
Thesaurus	A feature in most word processors used to replace a word in a document with one that is more suitable and adds variety to your writing
URL Address	Website address (Example: http://www.cms.k12.nc.us)
User Name	First part of an e-mail address.
Vandalism	The intentional act of destroying computer files or computer networks.
Virus	A computer program designed to damage computer files
Web address	Universal Resource Locator (URL) Example: www.cms.k12.nc.us
Word Processing	Using keyboarding skills to produce documents such as letters, reports, manuals, and newsletters; used for documents that are largely text-based (words)
Word Processor	Provides the tools for entering and revising text, adding graphical elements, formatting and printing documents.
Word Wrap	When text automatically flows from one line to the beginning of the next line without the user having to press the Enter/Return key. The computer decides where the best place to begin the next new line is.
Workspace	The typing area on your computer screen
Worm	A computer file designed to do damage that goes through a computer and possibly a network
WWW (world wide web)	One small part of the Internet that allows access to text, graphics, sound, and video. Free information can be found on the world wide web.
WYSIWYG [Pronounced: "Wissy wig")	WYSIWYG is an acronym for "What You See Is What You Get" and is pronounced "wizzy wig." WYSIWYG simply means that the text and graphics shown on your screen exactly match your printouts.
Query	See filter