

## Computer Vocabulary

### **286**

the 80286 microprocessor was introduced by Intel in 1982. PCs with this kind of microprocessor are normally referred to as 286 computers.

### **486**

the 80486 microprocessor was introduced by Intel in 1989. PCs with this kind of microprocessor are normally referred to as 486 computers.

### **8086**

the 8086 microprocessor was introduced by Intel in 1978.

### **Access time**

a standard measure that indicates the level of performance of the hard disk. The measure is the actual time that it takes for a piece of data to be located on the hard disk.

### **ActiveX**

Microsoft technology used on the Internet. There are ActiveX controls, which allow you to view Microsoft word documents via the Web browser, play animated graphical effects, or display interactive maps. An ActiveX control is roughly equivalent to a Java Applet.

### **ADC**

analogue to digital converter. A device which converts analogue information to digital.

### **ADSL(asymmetric digital subscriber line)**

a mechanism by which data can be transmitted across conventional telephone lines.

### **AGP (advanced or accelerated graphics port)**

special interface designed to speed up 3d graphics processing by the computer. Video cards must be specifically designed to plug into the agp connector.

### **Alpha-based CPU**

a CPU technology developed by Digital Equipment Corporation. It supports a number of different operating systems.

### **Analogue**

analogue systems refer to the use of variable voltage in electrical signals to represent any kind of data.

### **Animated GIF file**

a special type of GIF file, giving the impression of a video.

### **Anonymous FTP (anonymous file transfer protocol)**

the procedure of connecting to a remote computer as an anonymous or guest user in order to transfer public files back to your local computer.

### **ANSI (American National Standards Institute)**

the American body responsible for setting telecommunications standards in the U.S.A.

### **Anti-virus software**

a program written to locate and remove harmful viruses from a PC.

### **Applet**

a small program written in the Java programming language that can only be used as part of a Web page.

### **Application software**

programs written to serve a particular function for the user of a computer. Typical examples are word processors, spreadsheets, and games.

### **Archie**

a program which enables you to find files on the Internet which you can transfer to your own PC.

### **Artificial intelligence**

a computer science that involves making a computer imitate human intelligence.

### **ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange)**

a standard way of representing ordinary text as a stream of binary numbers, with a code set of 128 characters.

### **ASCII text file**

the most common file format found on PCs. Text files contain no formatting information at all. They do not require special programs to access them.

### **ATM (asynchronous transfer mode)**

a dedicated-connection switching technology that organises digital data into 53-byte cells or

packets and transmits them over a medium using digital signal technology.

**Autoexec.bat**

one of the two special batch files which automatically execute when the PC is started up. (The other is config.sys). This file is normally located in the root directory.

**Backup**

a duplicate copy of some data or a disk or some software that is made by the user as a safeguard against the loss of the original information.

**Bandwidth**

the amount of data, measured usually in bits per second, which can be sent through a dedicated (leased) transmission circuit. The bandwidth is basically the maximum speed at which data can be transmitted between computers in a network.

**Basic**

Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code. A popular programming language developed by John Kemeny and Thomas Kurtz at Dartmouth College in the 1960's. Microsoft developed a version of Basic known as Visual Basic (VB). VB uses the same ideas for programming that Basic uses, but also adds many new commands specifically designed for programming windows applications.

**Batch file**

set of DOS commands contained within a single text file. If this text file has a file suffix of .bat, then by entering the file name at the DOS prompt, the DOS commands will be executed one after the other.

**Baud**

a measure of data transfer rate: one bit per second. Thus, data transferred at the rate of 9,600 bits every second is equivalent to 9,600 baud, or about 120 words per second.

**BBS (bulletin board system)**

a computer which allows the people who subscribe to it to copy files to it from their own PCs, or send messages to other users of the bulletin board.

**Beta version**

a version of an application program which is available for use but is not the definitive version that the company will be releasing as the final product.

**Binary**

the base 2 numbering system which is the basis of PC technology. Ten in binary is equivalent to two in decimal.

**BIOS (basic input / output system)**

the program a PC's microprocessor uses to get the computer system started after you turn it on. It also manages data flow between the computer's operating system and attached devices such as the hard disk, video card, keyboard, mouse and printer.

**Bit**

the primary unit of digital data. Written in binary language as a "1" or "0."

**Bitmap**

scanned photos and "painted" images created in programs such as Adobe PhotoShop and Corel PhotoPaint. Unlike vector art (line drawings), which uses mathematical expressions to represent lines and curves, a bitmap is a graphic image formed by a matrix of dots.

**Board**

a unit on which various electronic components are mounted.

**Bookmark**

a link set up by the user to a particular Web page.

**Booting up**

the procedure your computer goes through when you turn it on. The expression means that your computer must gather itself together before you can use it. When you boot up your computer, the circuitry on the motherboard activates the programs stored in the BIOS chips.

**BPS (bits per second)**

a measure of the speed at which data is transmitted between computers. A 28.8 modem transmits data at speeds of up to 28,800 bits per second.

**Browser**

a program that you use to navigate the World Wide Web. The two most common browsers are Netscape Navigator, produced by Netscape, and Microsoft Internet Explorer, which is produced by Microsoft.

**Bug**

an error in a computer program.

**Bus network**

a system of two or more PCs connected by a single cable and able to communicate with one another.

**Bus**

a computer's bus is for transportation of computer data. Inside your computer, binary data flows from your processor to other components via a data bus. This type of bus is called an external bus. The internal bus is the path on which the data flows inside the processor.

**Byte**

the basic storage unit needed to store a single character: 8 bits.

**C and C++**

advanced computer programming languages. The programmer can create applications for almost any computer system.

**Cache memory**

random access memory (RAM) that a computer microprocessor can access more quickly than it can access regular RAM. As the microprocessor processes data, it looks first in the cache memory, and if it finds the data there (from a previous reading of data), it does not have to do the more time-consuming reading of data from larger memory.

**CD-ROM and DVD**

a compact disc that has computer data stored on it. A CD-ROM can hold 650 megabytes of data. New technology has brought us the DVD, or digital versatile disc.

**Central processing unit**

the microprocessor and the memory of the PC.

**CGI (common gateway interface)**

scripts are used by Internet programmers to perform basic functions such as counting the number of times a Web page is accessed.

**Chip**

an integrated circuit commonly used for the microprocessor and memory of a microcomputer.

**Circuit**

a logical stream of data set up to flow through two or more network nodes. A single physical link between these nodes may have several virtual circuits flowing through it.

**Client**

a computer program which is capable of accessing information in a computer server.

**Client-server interface**

a program that provides an interface to remote programs (called clients), most commonly across a network, so these clients can access some service such as databases, printing, etc. In general, the clients act (indirectly) on behalf of a human end-user.

**Clock speed**

the rate at which the CPU clock operates, usually measured in megahertz (MHz). In theory, the faster the clock speed, the faster the CPU will perform its operations.

**Clone**

a copy of a more expensive make of PC. It runs the same software, operating systems etc.

**CMOS (complimentary metal-oxide semiconductor)**

a special RAM chip which stores vital settings about your PC, such as the size of the hard disk and the amount and type of memory.

**COM port**

one of up to four serial ports on a PC, normally used for a mouse or a modem.

**Command interpreter**

a DOS program that executes commands entered at the DOS prompt.

**Compression**

a technique used to reduce the size of a file without losing any of the original information.

**Computer**

an electronic device capable of receiving instructions and data, performing the indicated logic and arithmetic operations at high speed and issuing the result.

**Config.sys**

one of the two special batch files which automatically execute when the PC is started up. (The other is the autoexec.bat).

**Controller**

a circuit board which links the hard disk and the motherboard.

**Conventional memory**

the first 640 kilobytes of memory. All DOS programs run in conventional memory.

**Cookie**

a file that is written to your hard disk when you access certain Web pages. The file contains certain information, often information that you entered when you displayed the page.

**CPS**

characters per second. The measure of how fast a printer can print a document or how fast a communications device can send information.

**CPU (central processing unit)**

the part of the computer that controls and performs all processing activities.

**Cursor**

a flashing rectangle or line on the screen that shows exactly where the user is working.

**Cyberspace**

a term first used by William Gibson in the novel *Neuromancer* to refer to a futuristic computer network into which people plugged their brains and interacted with it. The term has come to refer to the increasing interaction of humans with computers.

**Data**

the content of a file, e.g. the information contained within a spreadsheet or the contents of the records on a database.

**Data transfer rate**

the speed at which data can be read from the hard disk and delivered to the processor.

**Database**

a collection of data organised and designed for easy access. A collection of customer names and addresses may form the content of a database.

**Default value**

a number of programs will require the user to provide information. In some cases if the user chooses not to enter a value a "default value" will be taken.

**DES (data encryption standard)**

a standard method for encrypting and decrypting data.

**Desktop publishing**

using a PC to produce professional publications that can be used to market products or present useful information to customers.

**Device driver**

software that allows the PC to communicate with hardware devices such as the printer and the mouse.

**Dialog box**

a box displayed on the PC screen by a program, including a message normally indicating that something is about to happen or has just happened.

**Digital camera**

a camera that produces photographs that can be saved as files on a PC.

**Digital video disk**

a disk that can hold over 4 gigabytes of information.

**DIMMS (dual in-line memorymodules)**

memory chips which are soldered onto plugs, which slot into sockets on the motherboard. They have 168 pins in two rows.

**Directory**

a catalogue for files stored on the hard disk of a PC.

**Disk**

a flat, circular, metal or plastic platter coated with a thin layer of magnetic material on which data may be recorded as a series of magnetic signals arranged in circular patterns (called tracks).

**Diskette**

another name for a 3.5 inch floppy disk.

**DLL (dynamic link library)**

a library of program subroutines which can be shared among several different application programs.

**Domain name system (DNS)**

the Internet naming scheme, which consists of a hierarchical sequence of names from the most specific to the most general (left to right), separated by dots.

**DOS**

IBM's disk operating system.

**Downloading**

the electronic transfer of information from one computer to another, generally from a larger computer to a smaller one, such as a microcomputer.

**DPI (dots per inch)**

the resolution for page printers, image-setters and graphics screens.

**Driver**

a software program that tells a device how to communicate with the computer's processor.

**DSL (digital subscriber line)**

technology for bringing high-bandwidth information to homes and small businesses over ordinary copper telephone lines.

**E-mail**

electronically distributed mail. A widely used facility on the Internet that sends addressed messages over a network.

**EDI (electronic data interchange)**

a set of standards that allows corporations to order from and send invoices to other corporations, by means of data networks. Also referred to as electronic commerce.

**Electronic bulletin board**

a shared file where users can enter information for other users to read or download.

**Encryption**

the process of converting data into "unreadable code." Valuable and sensitive information is often sent from one computer to another.

**Ethernet**

the most widely installed local area network technology.

**Expansion card**

a printed circuit card such as a video card that plugs into an expansion slot and adds functionality to the PC.

**Extranet**

similar to an intranet with the added feature that the information contained can be accessed externally by business partners.

**FAQ (frequently asked question)**

a file which new users can refer to when using a new service or piece of Internet software.

**FAT (file allocation table)**

a table stored on a hard disk, identifying the physical location of each file on the disk.

**Fibre or fibre optic cable**

contains about two dozen threads of pure glass. Lasers attached to the end of such cable can send digital patterns of light pulses.

**Field**

records are comprised of fields. Each field is set aside for a particular piece of information. For example, a company database may contain a record for each customer. Each of these records may contain a field containing the customer's telephone number.

**File**

data is stored in the form of a file. Files can be program files, containing instructions that allow the PC to perform various tasks under the control of the user, or data files that contain information only.

**File extension**

in DOS or Windows, computer files have to be named using a standard consisting of a name, a point and a file extension. For example, the file “autoexec.bat” has a file extension of “bat.”

**File server**

a computer that stores files which can be accessed by a number of different users and provides network access to those files.

**Firewall**

a set of related programs, located at a network gateway server that protects the resources of a private network from users from other networks. A combination of specialised hardware and software designed to keep unauthorised users from accessing information.

**Flame**

a strong message containing some form of criticism directed at another users —comments normally within e-mail.

**Floating point calculation**

a mathematical method which the processor uses to perform calculations which need a high degree of accuracy.

**Floppy disk**

a magnetic disk that is used to store data.

**Floppy drive**

a computer device that reads and writes data from and to a magnetic disk. The disk that is used for this type of storage is called a floppy disk because the disk is flexible, not rigid.

**Flowchart**

a diagram produced to show the steps in a particular process. Flowcharts are used to show diagrammatically what processes certain computer programs perform.

**Font**

a typeface enhancement such as bold or script. Although it is not precisely correct, the term is often used to refer to a typeface style such as Bookface, Courier, or Sans Serif.

**Format**

a process that prepares either a hard disk or a floppy disk for initial use. Format of a disk will completely erase the contents.

**FTP (file transmission protocol)**

a standard for moving files from one computer to another. Predominantly used on the Internet.

**Gateway**

a network point that acts as an entrance to another network. In a company network, a proxy server acts as a gateway between the internal network and the Internet. A gateway may also be any device that passes packets from one network to another in their trip across the Internet.

**GIF file**

the most common type of image file used on the Internet. These files are compressed so they take up the minimum amount of space and can therefore be downloaded more quickly than other graphics files.

**Gigabyte**

one billion bytes.

**Gopher**

an application that locates, retrieves, and records information from the Internet. Like FTP, Gopher has become part of the World Wide Web.

**Graphic**

a picture or non-text item within a document. Most Web pages contain a number of graphics.

**Graphics card**

a piece of hardware that is linked to the monitor and enables the screen based output of a program to be visible to the user.

**GUI (graphical user interface)**

designed so that the user can perform tasks by using a mouse to point and click on an icon.

The user can perform any task with either the mouse or the keyboard.

**Hacker**

a non-professional computer expert, or one who tries to gain unlawful access to a computer system.

**Hard drive**

a computer device that reads and writes data from and to one or more magnetic disks. These disks are permanently housed inside the hard drive.

**Hardware**

the physical components of a PC.

**Head**

the part of the hard-disk mechanism that actually reads and writes data to the disk.

**Hexadecimal**

the base-16 numbering system, widely used in PC technology.

**Home page**

the page by which a user normally enters a Web site.

**Host computer**

in the context of networks, a computer that directly provides service to a user. In contrast, a network server provides services to a user through an intermediary host computer.

**HotJava**

a Web browser which can display “executable content” written in the Java programming language.

**Hotspot**

a position on the screen that will result in a particular event occurring if the mouse is clicked. For example, clicking on a particular city shown on a map might give information about that city.

**HTML (HyperText Mark-up Language)**

used to format information so that it can be structured and made accessible to the WWW.

**HTTP (HyperText Transfer Protocol)**

the set of rules for exchanging files (text, graphic images, sound, video, and other multimedia files) on the World Wide Web.

**Hub**

a device to which several others are attached, providing a common point of connection to all other devices in the network.

**Hypertext links**

make it possible to connect or link a passage in a document to another document on the same Web site or a document on another Web site.

**IBM-compatible**

a computer that can run software written for an IBM computer.

**Icon**

a small picture that is displayed on the screen. It is intended to show a task. Clicking the icon with the mouse will begin the task.

**Input and output**

input is data that is moving into a computer device, and output is data that is moving out of a computer device. For example, you use the keyboard to input letters and numbers, and then you tell the word processor to output your data to a floppy disk or a printer.

**Interface**

a connector of one computer component to another, such as a hard drive to the motherboard.

**Internet**

the hundreds of thousands of computers that are connected by a “net” of wires and satellites all over the world. Networks on the Internet use the same telecommunications protocol (TCP/IP) and provide electronic mail, remote log-in, and file-transfer services.

**Intranet**

a network of networks that is contained within an enterprise. The main purpose of an intranet is to share company information and computing resources among employees.

**IP (Internet protocol)**

the Internet standard protocol that provides a common layer over dissimilar networks and is used to move packets among host computers and through gateways if necessary.

**ISDN (integrated services digital network)**

a technology that gives a user up to 56 kilobits of data bandwidth on a phone line that is also used for voice, or up to 128,000 bits per second if there is no voice use of the ISDN line.

**ISP (Internet service provider)**

a company that provides Internet service.

**Java**

a modern programming language. It is used to bring Web pages to life. Java programs are referred to as applets. Java is an interpreted, object-orientated program language with a syntax and structure similar to C++, designed specifically for the Internet..

**JavaScript**

a programming language for developing client Internet applications. The Web browser interprets JavaScript statements embedded in an HTML page.

**Joystick**

a pointing device mostly used for playing computer games.

**JPEG**

type of image file used on the Internet. Like GIF files, JPEG files are compressed.

**Kermit**

a program developed at Columbia University to transfer files between computers.

**Keyboard**

the main device used for entering data into a PC or giving it an instruction to do something specific.

**Kilobyte (Kb)**

unit of measure for data storage. One kilobyte is equivalent to 1024 bytes or 8192 bits.

**LAN (local area network)**

a network of interconnected workstations sharing the resources of a single processor or server within a relatively small geographic area.

**Laptop**

portable PC. The term laptop has been superseded by notebook.

**LCD (liquid crystal display)**

the dark-on-light display seen on most calculators and digital watches.

**Listserv (list server)**

a program that allows you to subscribe to a mailing list which distributes e-mail to the members on a particular subject. No human intervention is needed.

**Log off**

the process of ending your access to a particular computer.

**Log in**

the process of gaining access to the resources on a particular computer. Normally this is done by entering a user identification-number and a password.

**Macro**

a series of commands carried out at the request of the user. For example, if you repeatedly perform the same tasks every time you open a spreadsheet, you can record your keystrokes — you save this as a macro. The next time you open the spreadsheet, these keystrokes can be performed by simply running the macro.

**Mailbox**

the file or directory where incoming e-mail messages are stored on the computer of the Internet service provider.

**Megabyte**

a unit of measure for data storage. One megabyte is equivalent to 1048 kilobytes.

**Megahertz**

the measure of how fast a chip can work.

**Memory chips**

hold information that the PC needs to use. These chips are connected directly to the microprocessor.

**Menu bar**

in Windows, a bar across the top of the current window which contains the headings of a number of available menus.

**Microprocessor**

the microprocessor is built onto a single piece of silicon, known as a wafer or chip. It can be programmed to perform a great number of information-handling tasks.

**MIDI (musical instrument digital interface)**

a standard for connecting computers and musical instruments.

**MIME (multipurpose Internet mail extensions)**

a standard by which people can send each other e-mail messages that contain pictures, videos or sounds.

**Modem**

takes digital data from a computer and converts it into electrical pulses that can be sent over a telephone line, where they can be received by a second modem and converted back into digital data.

**Monitor**

a device used to display the images that are generated by a PC's video adapter.

**Motherboard**

the main circuit board, containing the vital components of a PC, such as the processor and the RAM.

**Mouse**

a device that allows the user to communicate with the computer without using the keyboard. A mouse is usually palm-sized, with two to three buttons for the fingers.

**MPEG (moving picture experts group)**

a standard used on the World Wide Web for video and audio files.

**MS-DOS (Microsoft disk operating system)**

Microsoft's version of DOS.

**Multimedia**

the audio and visual capabilities of a computer. Generally, a multimedia-equipped system will come with a sound card, a video board, a CD-ROM drive and a set of speakers.

**Multitasking**

a multitasking operating system is one that allows a PC to perform more than one task at a time.

**Network**

a series of wires and cables that connects a number of computers.

**Newsgroup**

one of the many facilities available on the Internet. Like most of the Internet, newsgroups are run voluntarily and co-operatively. A news group is centered on a particular discussion topic.

**Notebook**

a PC that is about the same size as an ordinary sheet of paper and about 5 cm thick. The term notebook has superseded the term laptop, which generally referred to a portable PC.

**OCR (optical character recognition)**

a means of converting scanned text into digital codes that can be read by a computer program as actual text rather than just as a picture. Most scanners now come with OCR and imageediting software.

**Online**

a case in which two computer devices are connected and ready to communicate with each other.

**Operating system (OS)**

the program that, after being initially loaded into the computer by a bootstrap program, manages all the other programs in a computer. The other programs are called applications.

**OSP (online service provider)**

a company that provides you with online service. The most popular online service provider is America Online.

**Paintbrush**

application programs that enable the user to draw pictures using a variety of different tools or effects similar to those used by an artist when creating a painting or sketch.

**Parity**

provides a way for a computer to check data for errors. The computer does this by counting the bits in a byte (eight-bit block of data). It then assigns the next (ninth) bit a value of either zero or one. This is the parity bit. If the parity bit does not match properly with the data, the computer will assume that the data is corrupt.

**Password**

a code known only by a user to ensure that the individual who is trying to log in to the computer is the actual person who is authorised to do so.

**PC (personal computer)**

a computer designed to be used by one person at a time.

**PCI**

peripheral component interconnect bus. A fast local-bus standard which provides fast data transfer within a PC.

**Pentium**

Intel introduced the Pentium processor in 1993.

**Peripheral**

any device attaching to your computer that is not required for basic operation, e.g., a printer, an external drive or a tape back-up.

**Perl (Practical Extraction and Report Language)**

a programming language, mainly used on the World Wide Web, for files, texts, and reports.

**Picas and points**

the traditional units of measure in printing. There are 12 points to a pica and about 72 points to an inch.

**PIM (personal information manager)**

an application program to help you manage your day-to-day affairs.

**Pixel (picture element)**

the smallest element of information that programs can display or print.

**Plug and play**

the concept of adding new components to a PC (such as an external modem) without having to manually configure anything.

**POP (post office protocol)**

a standard for exchanging e-mail between a PC and the Internet access provider.

**Port**

part of the PC that is used for passing data in and out of a computing device. This is normally located on the back of the PC.

**Postscript**

a page-description language used by high-end desktop publishing programs and output devices (like printers).

**Printer**

hardware that allows you to print information via the software you are using on the computer.

**Program**

a series of instructions that causes the PC to do something.

**Programming language**

an artificial language through which a set of instructions can be performed by a PC. Examples are Basic, C, C++, COBOL, Java, JavaScript, Perl and Visual Basic.

**Protocol**

a standard process, a set of rules and conditions that perform a particular function.

**Push technology**

an Internet technology that sends information to users before they actually request it. Users set up profiles specifying the type of information they require.

**RAM (random access memory)**

temporary storage area that the processor uses to execute programs and hold data.

Information is put into RAM and held there. Once the RAM becomes full, information has to be

removed to make space for the current task being performed.

**ROM (read only memory)**

data may only be retrieved from this type of memory, not written to it. All PCs have ROM chips. When the PC is switched on, the information in the ROM chip is used to test the ram. ROM does not require a constant electric supply to keep the information intact.

**Root directory**

the highest point in the directory structure at which a user can access the files.

**Router**

the device that serves as a “traffic cop” in a connectionless network such as the Internet. Routers are specialised computers that take incoming packets and compare their destination addresses to internal routing tables and, depending on network conditions, send the packets out to the appropriate receiving router.

**Scanner**

an input device that is designed to recognise patterns of printed or drawn markings. Scanners are used to convert printed images into files for processing by various application programs.

**Serial port vs. parallel port**

these ports get their names from the way data flows through them. A serial port can transfer data only one bit at a time. A parallel port is capable of transferring data eight bits (or one byte) at a time; it has several channels for all of the individual bits to pass through at the same time.

**Server**

a computer program that provides services to other computer programs in the same or other computers.

**Software**

the programs that are run on a computer.

**Spam**

unwanted or unsolicited information. Most commonly, this information is in the form of advertisement.

**Spreadsheet**

a program for manipulating numbers and appearing on the screen as a set of rows and columns.

**T-1**

a leased-line Internet connection. The speed at which data can be transmitted is 1.54 megabits per second.

**T-3**

a leased-line Internet connection. The speed at which data can be transmitted is 45 megabits per second.

**Tag**

codes that tell Web browsers and other formatting applications exactly how to display information.

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

the basic communication language or protocol of the Internet. It can also be used as a communications protocol in the private networks called intranets and in extranets.

**Telnet**

a program that is part of the TCP/IP protocol. Its purpose is to allow a user to log on to a computer from a remote location.

**Text file**

ASCII text files.

**TIFF (tagged image file format)**

one of the many different types of file format used on PCs. This particular type is a graphics file.

**Toolbar**

the toolbar sits across the top or down the side of a particular window. It allows the user to perform certain tasks such as opening a file or submitting a print. The toolbar can usually be customised so that the user can add those tasks most regularly performed.

**TSR (terminate and stay resident)**

DOS programs that sit in memory so they can be run from within other application programs.

**TWAIN (technology without an interesting name)**

a standard interface used with devices such as scanners.

**Unix**

a class of computers popular with high-end computer users, academics and the research community.

**URL (uniform resource locator)**

an Internet “address.”

**Veronica**

a tool to find information on a Gopher site via specified keywords supplied by the user.

**VESA (video electronics standards association)**

responsible for graphics and local bus standards.

**Video adapter**

the circuit card that communicates with the monitor and is directly responsible for the quality of the video displayed on the monitor.

**Virtual memory**

hard disk space on a PC, used as if it were actual memory.

**Virus**

a small computer program designed to attach to a “legitimate” program and replicate itself, causing annoyance or damage to the infected system.

**Visual Basic**

a programming language developed and sold by Microsoft. The language enables the user to develop application programs for Windows easily and quickly.

**VRML (Virtual Reality Modelling Language)**

a programming language that has been designed to build 3-D worlds on the World Wide Web.

**WAN (wide area network)**

a linked network of LANs. The WAN has a backbone that can link computers over distances of hundreds or even thousands of miles. T-3 or 45 megabits-per-second has become a minimal WAN backbone capacity.

**Web browser**

an application program which interprets HTML and presents the final Web page. Used to “surf the Web.” Examples include Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer.

**Web page**

an HTML Document which contains information which can be seen on the Internet.

**Web site**

a group of Web pages that collectively represent a company or individual on the WWW.

**Web (WorldWideWeb)**

software that enables digital data that has been “marked up” with HTML to be put into hypertext databases. By clicking on the marked text, the user is automatically logged into the new Web server where the linked data is found. The Web is now the main force behind Internet growth.

**Windows**

Microsoft’s main operating system, introduced in August 1995. It provides a customisable “graphical user interface” (GUI) used to perform tasks with the computer.

**Word processor**

a computer application that helps the user create documents.

**WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get)**

What you can see on the screen is what you will see on paper when you print the screen contents.

**ZIP files**

files that contain large amounts of information that has undergone compression to reduce the amount of space.