

BASIC COMPUTER TERMS

ALIGN

When used to describe text, the arrangement of text or graphics relative to a margin. *Flush left alignment* means that text is lined up along the left margin. *Flush right alignment* lines up text along the right margin. *Centered alignment* means that text is aligned around a midpoint. *Justified alignment* means that text lines up along both margins.

APPLICATION

applications software (also called *end-user programs*) includes database programs, word processors, and spreadsheets. Figuratively speaking, applications software sits on top of systems software because it is unable to run without the operating system and system utilities.

BACKSPACE

A key that moves the cursor or insertion point backward one character space. In addition to moving the cursor backward, the Backspace key usually deletes the character to the left of the cursor or insertion point.

BULLET

A bullet is a symbol appearing at the beginning of an item on a list: This would be a bulleted list.

- Ex. 1
- Ex. 2
- Ex. 3

COPY/CUT/PASTE

Text can be moved around easily in Word. To move a sentence or section of text to a different location in a document, highlight the text and select Edit/Cut, then go to the new location and select Edit/Paste. To copy a selection, select Edit/Copy instead of Edit/Cut.

DATABASE

Often abbreviated *DB*. A collection of information organized in such a way that a computer program can quickly select desired pieces of data. You can think of a database as an electronic filing system.

DELETE

Delete is computer terminology for remove or erase. You can delete text from a document or delete entire files or folders from your hard drive. When typing a document, you can remove characters behind the cursor by pressing the delete key. If you want to remove characters in front of the cursor, you can press the smaller delete key near the home and end buttons on the keyboard. You can also remove entire sections of text by selecting the text you wish to delete and pressing either delete button on the keyboard.

DESKTOP

The desktop is the primary user interface of a computer. When you boot up your computer, the desktop is displayed once the startup process is complete. It includes the desktop background (or wallpaper) and icons of files and folders you may have saved to the desktop.

DOCUMENT

The term *document* is used more and more to describe any file produced by an application. Interestingly, the term has always been used this way in Macintosh environments.

DRAG/DROP

Describes applications that allow you to drag objects to specific locations on the screen to perform actions on them. For example, in the Macintosh environment, you can drag a document to the trashcan icon to delete it. This is a classic case of drag-and-drop functionality.

DROP DOWN MENU

Also called a *drop-down menu*, a menu of commands or options that appears when you select an item with a mouse. The item you select is generally at the top of the display screen, and the menu appears just below it, as if you had pulled it down.

FILE

A collection of data or information that has a name, called the *filename*. Almost all information stored in a computer must be in a file. There are many different types of files: *data files*, *text files*, *program files*, *directory files*, and so on. Different types of files store different types of information. For example, program files store programs, whereas text files store text.

FOLDER

In graphical user interfaces such as Windows and the Macintosh environment, a folder is an object that can contain multiple documents. Folders are used to organize information.

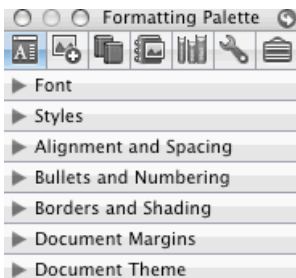
FONT

A design for a set of characters. A font is the combination of typeface and other qualities, such as size, pitch, and spacing. For example, Times Roman is a typeface that defines the shape of each character.

FORMATTING PALETTE

The *Formatting Palette* allows you to format your document in areas of font, styles, alignment, spelling, bullets and numbering, borders and shadowing, document margins, and document theme. This document describes each of the main sections of this palette.

Picture of the Palette



GRAPHIC

Refers to any computer device or program that makes a computer capable of displaying and manipulating pictures. The term also refers to the images themselves.

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

Computer instructions or data. Anything that can be stored electronically is software. The storage devices and display devices are hardware. The terms *software* and *hardware* are used as both nouns and adjectives. For example, you can say: "The problem lies in the software," meaning that there is a problem with the program or data, not with the computer itself. You can also say: "It's a software problem."

HIGHLIGHT TEXT/SELECT

To choose an object so that you can manipulate it in some way. In graphical user interfaces, you usually need to select an object -- an icon, file, folder, and so on -- before you can do anything with it. To select an object, you move the pointer to the object and click a mouse button. In many applications, you can select blocks of text by positioning the pointer at an end-point of the block and then dragging the pointer over the block.

ICON

Ever since the Macintosh was introduced in 1984, icons have been the way we view files on computers. An icon on your computer screen represents an object or a program on your hard drive. For example, the folders you see on your desktop or in open windows are icons. The files that you see in those folders are also icons. The trashcan on the Macintosh and the recycle bin on Windows are both icons as well.

INTERNET

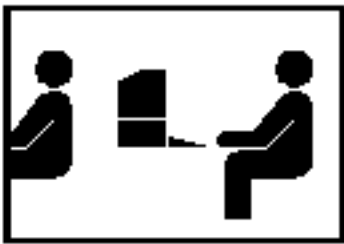
A global network connecting millions of computers. More than 100 countries are linked into exchanges of data, news and opinions.

KEYBOARD

The set of typewriter-like keys that enables you to enter data into a computer.

LANDSCAPE/PORTRAIT

The terms *portrait* and *landscape* refer to different orientations of the paper -- whether it is oriented vertically or horizontally. A page with portrait orientation, typical for letters, memos, and other text documents, is taller than it is wide.



Landscape



Portrait

LAUNCH

To start a program.

LOGIN/OUT

To enter into an account or computer by inputting information. To end a session at the computer. For personal computers, you can log out simply by exiting applications and turning the machine off. On larger computers and networks, where you share computer resources with other users, there is generally an operating system command that lets you log off.

MAXIMIZE/MINIMIZE

In graphical user interfaces, to enlarge a window to its maximum size. A feature of a graphics-based [operating system](#) that hides the application currently on screen.

MENU

A list of commands or options from which you can choose. Most applications now have a menu-driven component. You can choose an item from the menu by highlighting it and then pressing the Enter or Return key, or by simply pointing to the item with a mouse and clicking one of the mouse buttons.

MENU BAR

A menu arranged horizontally. Each menu option is generally associated with another pull-down menu that appears when you make a selection

MONITOR

A device that displays signals on a computer screen.

MOUSE

A device that controls the movement of the cursor or pointer on a display screen. A mouse is a small object you can roll along a hard, flat surface. Its name is derived from its shape

MOUSE CLICK

Depression of a button on a computer mouse; "a click on the right button for example".

NETWORK

A network is a group of two or more computer systems linked together. There are many types of computer networks, including:

- [**local-area networks \(LANs\)**](#) : The computers are geographically close together (that is, in the same building).
- [**wide-area networks \(WANs\)**](#): The computers are farther apart and are connected by telephone lines or radio waves.
- [**campus-area networks \(CANs\)**](#): The computers are within a limited geographic area, such as a campus or military base.
- [**metropolitan-area networks \(MANs\)**](#): A data network designed for a town or city.
- [**home-area networks \(HANs\)**](#): A network contained within a user's home that connects a person's digital devices.

PAGE SETUP

The parameters defined by the user that help determine how a printed page will appear. Those parameters can include everything from the size, margins, page orientation, or quality of print. A **page setup** dialog box is usually available from the File drop down menu.

POINTER/CURSOR

A special symbol, usually a solid rectangle or a blinking underline character, that signifies where the next character will be displayed on the screen. If you are running a graphics-based program, the cursor may appear as a small arrow, called a *pointer*.

PRESENTATION

A type of business software that enables users to create highly stylized images for slide shows and reports. The software includes functions for creating various types of charts and graphs and for inserting text in a variety of fonts.

PRINT

A device that prints text or illustrations on paper.

PRINT PREVIEW

In word processing, print preview refers to formatting a document for the printer, but then displaying it on the display screen instead of printing it.

PROGRAM

Programs also known as applications allow the end user to open up specific programs to do specific jobs. Examples would be Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Photoshop, Filemaker, Pages, and Numbers.

RESTART

To restart a computer. In DOS, you can reboot by pressing the Alt, Control and Delete keys simultaneously. This is called a warm boot. You can also perform a cold boot by turning the computer off and then on again. In LINUX or Mac you can reboot by holding down the power key until it powers off.

SAVE/SAVE AS

To copy data from a temporary area to a more permanent storage medium is a save. Save as is a command in the File menu of most applications that causes a copy of the current document or image to be created. It differs from the regular Save command, which stores the [data](#) back to the file and folder it originally came from. "Save As" lets the user make a copy of the file in a different folder or make a copy with a different name.

SCROLL

A bar that appears on the side or bottom of a window to control which part of a list or document is currently in the window 's frame. The scroll bar makes it easy to move to any part of a file.

SHUT-DOWN

To turn the power off.

SPREADSHEET

A table of values arranged in rows and columns. Each value can have a predefined relationship to the other values. If you change one value, therefore, you may need to change other values as well. Excel & Numbers would be an example of a spreadsheet programs.

TAB

A key on computer keyboards that inserts a tab character or moves the insertion point to the next tab stop.

TOOLBAR

A series of selectable buttons in a GUI that give the user an easy way to select desktop, application or Web browser functions. Toolbars are typically displayed as either a horizontal row or a vertical column around the edges of the GUI where they are visible while the application is in use. Most applications use toolbars as they give the user another option aside from pull-down menus.

WINDOW

An enclosed, rectangular area on a display screen. Most modern operating systems and applications have graphical user interfaces (GUIs) that let you divide your display into several windows. Within each window, you can run a different program or display different data.

WORD PROCESSING

Using a computer to create, edit, and print documents. Of all computer applications, word processing is the most common.

BACK BUTTON

A button on a Web browser's toolbar for returning to the previously visited Web page, which sometimes can be accessed through a programmed keyboard or mouse button

BOOKMARK

Similar to a real-life bookmark, an Internet bookmark acts as a marker for a Web site. When using a Web browser, you can simply select a bookmark from the browser's Bookmarks menu to go to a certain site. This way, you don't have to go through the redundant process of typing in the Internet address each time you visit one of your favorite sites.

BOOLEAN

Boolean, or Boolean logic, is a subset of algebra used for creating true/false statements. Boolean expressions use the operators AND, OR, XOR, and NOT to compare values and return a true or false result. These Boolean operators are described in the following four examples:

BROWSER

A Web browser, often just called a "browser," is the program people use to access the World Wide Web. It interprets HTML code including text, images, hypertext links, JavaScript, and Java applets. After rendering the HTML code, the browser displays a nicely formatted page. Some common browsers are Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape Communicator, and Apple Safari.

DOWNLOAD

This is the process in which data is sent to your computer. Whenever you receive information from the Internet, you are downloading it to your computer. The opposite of this process, sending information to another computer, is called uploading.

EMAIL

E-mail is part of the standard TCP/IP set of protocols. Sending messages is typically done by SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) and receiving messages is handled by POP3 (Post Office Protocol 3), or IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol). IMAP is the newer protocol, allowing you to view and sort messages on the mail server, without downloading them to your hard drive.

Though e-mail was originally developed for sending simple text messages, it has become more robust in the last few years. Now, HTML-based e-mail can use the same code as Web pages to incorporate formatted text, colors, and images into the message. Also, documents can be attached to e-mail messages, allowing files to be transferred via the e-mail protocol. However, since e-mail was not originally designed to handle large file transfers, transferring large documents (over 3 MB, for example) is not allowed by most mail servers.

HISTORY

Pertaining to Web Browser History. This allows an individual to track or trace their footsteps for a time period they have been on the internet.

HOMEPAGE

This is the starting point or front page of a Web site. This page usually has some sort of table of contents on it and often describes the purpose of the site. When you type in a basic URL, such as "http://www.cnet.com," you are typically directed to the home page of the Web site. Many people have a "personal home page," which is another way the term "home page" can be used.

HYPERLINK

A hyperlink is a word, phrase, or image that you can click on to jump to a new document or a new section within the current document. Hyperlinks are found in nearly all Web pages, allowing users to click their way from page to page. Text hyperlinks are often blue and underlined, but don't have to be. When you move the cursor over a hyperlink, whether it is text or an image, the arrow should change to a small hand pointing at the link. When you click it, a new page or place in the current page will open. Hyperlinks, often referred to as just "links," are common in Web pages, but can be found in other hypertext documents.

HTML

Short for *HyperText Markup Language*, the authoring language used to create documents on the World Wide Web.

HTTP:

Set of rules that your computer needs to follow when you are using the World Wide Web. Any time your computer sees these letters, it knows that it will be looking for something on the web.

ISP (Internet Service Provider)

An organization (company) that provides direct Internet access. A company that helps you get your computer hooked up to the Internet.

KEYWORD

In text editing and database management systems, a *keyword* is an index entry that identifies a specific record or document.

REFRESH

Generally, to update something with new data. For example, some Web browsers include a refresh button that updates the currently displayed Web pages. This feature is also called *reload*.

SEARCH ENGINE

A service on the Web designed to help users locate Web sites. The service collects and indexes data (it is a very large database). Google would be an example.

SIDEBAR

A [feature](#) in the Firefox Web browser that displays history, bookmarks or any bookmarked page in a scrolling window. IE has similar [capabilities](#) in its Favorites Center, but does not refer to the window as a sidebar.

STATUS BAR

A status bar is a small area at the bottom of a [window](#). It is used by some [applications](#) to display helpful information for the user. For example, an open folder window on the [desktop](#) may display the number of items in the folder and how many items are selected. Photoshop uses the status bar to display the size of the current image, the zoom percentage, and other information. [Web browsers](#) use the status bar to display the Web address of a [link](#) when the user moves the cursor over it. It also shows the status of loading pages, and displays error messages.

If you don't see the status bar in your Web browser or another program, you may be able to enable it by selecting "Show Status Bar" from the application's View menu. If this option is not available in the View menu, the program may not use a status bar. Some programs use a "status window" instead to show the current activity in the application. The option for displaying this window is usually found in the "Window" menu.

TRUNCATION

To cut off the end of something. Usually, the term is used to describe a type of rounding of floating-point numbers. For example, if there are too few spaces for a long floating-point number, a program may truncate the number by lopping off the decimal digits that do not fit: 3.14126 might be truncated to 3.14.

URL

The “address” of a Web page on the World Wide Web.

SPREADSHEET TERMS

AUTOSUM

A function in a spreadsheet program that inserts a formula in the selected cell that adds the numbers in the column above it. It sets the range of cells by looking for numeric data above the selected cell.

AXIS

A line bordering the chart plot area used as a frame of reference for measurement. The y-axis is usually the vertical axis and contains data. The x-axis is usually the horizontal axis and contains categories.

CELL

Each space where a column and row intersect.

CHART/GRAPH

Charts are what we call graphs in math class.

Charts are visual representations of worksheet data. Charts often make it easier to understand the data in a worksheet because users can easily pick out patterns and trends illustrated in the chart that are otherwise difficult to see. Examples of charts would be pie, bar, line and column.

COLUMN

The vertical spaces of a spreadsheet that are labeled with letters of the alphabet.

DATA

Data is information that is stored in a spreadsheet program. Data is stored in the individual cells of a worksheet. Only one piece of data is stored in each cell. In addition to being stored in the spreadsheet, the data can be used in calculations, displayed in graphs, or sorted and filtered to find specific information. There are three types of data in Excel: values, labels, and dates/times.

DATA SERIES

A data series is a group of related data entries. In a worksheet an individual data series is located in a column or row under a common heading such as *Month* or *Average Temperature*.

Individual data series are often plotted in charts and graphs. In charts or graphs where multiple data series are plotted each data series is identified by a unique color or pattern.

FORMULA

A spreadsheet formula is a mathematical equation that will calculate a result.

Examples of simple formulas: = A3 - C6 / D2 or = (B4 + B5) * E7

In Excel, formulas begin with an equal (=) sign.

IMPORT/EXPORT

Importing data to MS Excel is the process of transferring data from other database sources and converting it into .xlm or .xls format. This process eliminates the need to manually enter every item into a new Excel worksheet. Importing data therefore saves the user a lot of time and reduces human error.

LABELS

A label most often refers to a text entry such as a heading used to identify a column of data. In versions of Excel up to Excel 2011, labels could also be used in formulas to identify a range of data.

LEGENDS

Boxes that identify the patterns or color that are assigned to the data series or categories in a chart.

PRINT AREA

By default, Excel prints the entire worksheet. One way to stop this is to set a print area, which specifies the exact range of cells to print.

ROW

The horizontal spaces of a spreadsheet that are labeled with numbers.

SORT

Sorting in Excel lets you easily reorder your data based on the type of sorting that you choose. Examples would be alphabetically or numerically. You can sort A-Z or vice versa. You can sort numbers ascending or descending.