

IT and Internet Terminology - The Jargon De-Mystified

Applet - an applet is a small program that can be sent along with a Web page to a user. Java applets can perform interactive animations, immediate calculations, or other simple tasks without having to send a user request back to the server.

ASP - (Application Service Provider) - these offer on-line real-time access to standard packages. Users pay a metered charge to log on and perform tasks using standard accounting, spreadsheet and word processing packages.

.ASP - (Active Server Pages) – A dynamic web page.

Attachment - an attachment is a file which is appended to an e-mail. The file may be a word-processing document, or a spreadsheet, for example. The significance of an attachment is related to the security risks associated with opening attachments, as any program code stored in an attachment is executed. The code can contain a virus which can potentially damage a PC or network (see macro virus and virus below).

Authentication - a process which is used to confirm the identity of a person, or the integrity of a transaction.

Bandwidth - the capacity of a system to deal with network traffic.

Broadband - high speed internet access.

Blog - Blog (originally weblog) is a diary or history. Blogs are used by all types of entity from corporate to personal users. Most personal blogs are anonymous and typically refer to issues in daily life – usually centred around the working environment.

Bot - (from Robot) A piece of software which runs automated and repetitive tasks exceptionally quickly. On the internet the most common types of bots are called Spiders which perform typical search operations.

Browser - a program which enables web access.

Cable-modems - a service provided by cable TV companies to allow internet access. TV cable is used to send and receive data, and not the telephone line. The service relies on the provision of cable in the area.

Cookie - bookmarks which remember details about a site visited. They have evolved to become fairly intelligent robots. They store details about a site, what log on preferences have been set, passwords and specific buying patterns.

Digital signature/certificate - a method using encryption techniques and a public/private key to verify the authenticity of a person or transaction.

DSL - is an abbreviation for Digital Subscriber Services. It is a method of transferring data over traditional BT copper wire lines. The data is transferred at higher speeds than normal.

Dot com - an expression referring to the internet industry. Frequently used in the context of 'a dot com company' and 'a dot com millionaire'.

Download - to transfer data from one computer to another. Typically, implies transferring data from a larger network or host system, to a PC or laptop. (also see Upload)

DRM - Digital Rights Management – a method of securing access to software, videos or music files, to prevent illegal copying.

e commerce - conducting business over the internet and therefore by electronic rather than by paper-based methods.

EDI - (Electronic Data Interchange) - is a standard method of exchanging documents, such as invoices, between companies who may have incompatible hardware and/or software. Electronic form filling and transmission is far quicker than manually completing a form and then posting it. A further extension of EDI is the processing of electronic funds. Standards have emerged for different types of funds transfers – for example the SET standard (see below) for credit card transactions.

Extranet - a network, but only for 'invited' business partners. These are set up mainly to cope with B2B (business to business) transactions. One company may have access to a number of different extranets.

Firewall - a hardware and/or software based security system to prevent unauthorised access to a network or server.

Gateway - a device or devices which enable two or more different types of network to communicate with each other. Sometimes described as a bridge.

HTML - (Hyper Text Markup Language) - a programming language used to create web pages.

Host - a computer or network which holds information such as a web site on behalf of a number of different companies. Also see ISP below.

Hub - a device connected to several other devices.

Hyperlink - a link which can be created in a document, for example, which can then branch to another document, or web site.

Intranet - an internal network based on the internet, but containing material for company employees only.

ISP - an Internet Service Provider. An ISP acts as a host (see above) providing e-mail services, web site services and access to information channels.

JAVA - a programming language which can be run across a variety of platforms. Its interoperability means that applets can easily be downloaded to any computer, when required.

Local loop - the last kilometre or so of cable from a telephone exchange to a house or business is known as the local loop.

Macro virus - a macro virus is a program written within a standard application, which executes a malicious payload when the document or spreadsheet is opened. A macro virus can perform a variety of unwanted side effects from putting up strange messages to completely destroying data on a network. (Also see Virus/Worm below).

Mbps - A rate of data transfer that is typically quoted, by ISP's, (see above) as a measure of download speed from the internet. Mbps is a transfer rate of a megabit (a million bits) per second (not to be confused with the much faster MBps - see below).

MBps - A rate of data transfer that is typically quoted, by ISP's, (see above) as a measure of download speed from the internet. MBps is a transfer rate of a megabyte (a million bytes) per second (not to be confused by the much slower Mbps - see above)

Non-repudiation - provides proof of the origin of a transaction. It protects the recipient against the sender denying that the transaction was originated by him (the sender).

.PDF - (Portable Document Format) – this is a read-only version of an existing document or spreadsheet. As the information is compressed, PDF files tend to be relatively small.

Phishing - this refers to the stealing of personal identifiers such as Pin numbers, Credit card numbers and passwords via a spoof web site or email.

Podcast - a Podcast is an audio, and sometimes video, recording made available online.

PKI - (Public Key Infrastructure) - the framework in which digital certificates are created and used, based on a public/private key.

Router - A device which forwards data from one network to another.

SaaS - (Software as a Service) - a model of web-based software delivery, where a software vendor provides maintenance, operation and support for their software.

SET - (Secure Electronic Transaction) - is one of several standards for ensuring credit card payments are secure over the internet.

Spam - unsolicited bulk e-mail.

TCP/IP - a protocol designed to allow different computers to communicate with each other regardless of the hardware or operating system platform.

Upload - to transfer data from one computer to another. Typically implies transferring data from a PC or laptop to a larger network or host system. (Also see Download)

URL - (Uniform Resource Locator) - a standard method of identifying web resources, such as web sites and web addresses.

USB - (Universal serial bus) A standard method of communicating to an external computer device such as a printer, USB pen or network hub for example. Most computers now come with a number of USB connections as standard.

Virus/Worm - a generic term for a rogue piece of software. Generally a virus is introduced to a computer by stealth – often hiding in an innocent attachment (see attachment above). Once activated it can carry out a wide range of unwanted side effects from changing the behaviour of a computer, to infiltrating and disabling a whole network. (also see Macro virus above). Worms tend to propagate themselves over a network or networks.

Wireless - The ability of a computer to access external devices without being physically connected by cable.

XBRL - (extensible business reporting language) – This uses XML (see below) data tags to transmit financial data. HMRC, for example use XBRL for e-filing of CT returns.

XML - (extensible mark-up language) – this allows designers to create customized tags to enable information to be transmitted from one system into another (completely different) system.

How We Can Help

If you would like information as to how we can assist you with your IT and e commerce activities we will be more than happy to provide you with help.