



Computer Glossary

An A-Z glossary of common terms relating to computers, devices and the internet.

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Sometimes you can get bogged down in all the jargon when learning about something new. This glossary will help you understand some of the new words you might come across.

Term	Meaning
Antivirus	Security software that helps protect your computer from viruses spread online.
Attachment	A file which has been sent with an email. This could be almost any type of document.
App/application	App is short for application. These are programs that you can download onto a smartphone or tablet computer to help you do things. For example you could download your bank's app to help you bank online.
Bookmark	Bookmarking a website allows you to easily save it so that you can return to it later, just like using a bookmark in a book.
Broadband	This is usually used to describe a high speed connection to the internet.
Browser	Something that allows you to view websites on the internet. Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge are two examples of internet browsers.
Cursor	The cursor is an arrow or flashing line on the screen that moves when you move the mouse or type something.
Desktop computer	A computer that (unlike a laptop or tablet computer) is not intended to be a portable device, but is intended to be used in a single location, usually on or near a desk. It might have a separate keyboard, monitor and mouse.
Document	If you use a computer to create a letter or , that would be known as a document, just like the offline equivalent.
Download	To get a file onto your computer from a website.
Email	A way of sending messages and files to someone electronically.
Font	The way a piece of text looks. For example: Here's some text in one font. <i>Here's some text in another font.</i>

Term	Meaning
File	A piece of information that is stored on your computer. For example it could be a document just like this one, a video or a photograph.
Hardware	The physical parts of a computer, such as a monitor.
History	A record of all the places you have been on the internet. For example if you have completed courses on the Be Connected site, this will be recorded in your history.
HTTP	These letters form part of a website URL and are added automatically by the computer when the website is displayed. Sometimes these letters are followed by the letter S, for example, https://www.google.com.au . HTTPS is one way of knowing that the website is secure and safe to use.
Hyperlink	A website address that opens when a specific piece of text or an image is selected. Text with a hyperlink is often in a different colour and underlined, for example Facebook
Icon	An icon is a small image that, when selected, opens an app, file or piece of software. The image usually represents the app or software that it will open.
Internet	The internet is a global communication network. It allows all computers and devices with an internet connection (for most household devices this is known as WiFi) to connect with one another and to send and receive information.
Install	Setting up software on your or device so it works as it should do.
Laptop	A small computer which made up of screen and a keyboard which folds in half so that it can be easily carried.
Link	Another name for a hyperlink.
Log on/log in	To sign into a website with your own details.
Memory	Just like your memory, this is where the computer stores all its information.
Memory stick	A small, portable device that you can plug into your computer to save information and take it elsewhere.
Microsoft Office	Software created by the company Microsoft which can be used to create things like text documents, slideshows and spreadsheets.
Mouse	Moving a mouse along a flat surface can move the on-screen cursor to different items on the screen. Items can be moved or selected by pressing the mouse buttons (called clicking).
Notebook computer	A small laptop.
Offline	Working on a device but without an internet connection.

Term	Meaning
Online	Working on a device with an internet connection.
Password	A secret word or phrase to give you access to an account on a computer or a website and keep your information safe.
PC	Personal Computer.
PDF	Portable Document Format. This is a type of document that can be viewed on most computers and devices.
Popup	An extra window or screen that appears when you are on a website.
Processor	The brains of the computer. Processors are available at different speeds, the faster the processor, the more things it can do at once, which means the computer will be faster.
Program	See also software or app / application. A program is something that tells a computer how to carry out a particular task. When computers were first invented you would need to type in a program to make your computer do simple tasks. Now we just download programs for complex tasks in seconds.
Recycle bin	Where documents on your computer go when you delete them. Sending them to the recycle bin doesn't mean they're gone forever. If you made a mistake or change your mind, you can undelete them.
Refresh / reload	If you go to a website that doesn't load properly, refreshing / reloading can help the computer connect to the website again.
Search engine	A website used to find information on the internet. For example, www.google.com.au
Shopping basket	When shopping online, the website will put all the items you want to buy together into a shopping basket ready for you to pay for later.
Social networks	Using websites to talk to people and share things, such as text, images and videos. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are examples of social networks.
Software	Similar to an app/application, software is something that you can download and install onto your computer. Software performs a specific task or function, for example a word processor or a computer game.
Smartphone	A mobile phone that can be used to access the internet. One of the most famous smartphones is the iPhone.
Spam	Unwanted email.
Tab	When viewing a website with a browser, a tab shows you the name of the website you are on. You can move between several different websites quickly by having several tabs open.
Tablet computer	A small portable computer without a physical keyboard. One of the most famous tablet computers is the iPad.
Touchpad/trackpad	A small rectangle surface on a laptop. Touching the pad and moving your finger around can move the cursor in the same way that using a mouse would.

Term	Meaning
Upload	To post something on the internet, for example to post a photo onto Facebook.
URL	The text you type to get to a website, for example www.google.com.au is a URL.
Virus	Just like a virus you might have when you are unwell, computer viruses can spread and affect some of the functions of your computer. Computer viruses also spread and can be transferred from computer to computer by email or downloading things.
Website	A page or collection of pages on the internet that contain specific information.
Wifi	To connect to the internet wirelessly, usually from a laptop, tablet computer or smartphone.
Word processor	A piece of software used to write letters or other documents.

Use the blank table below to note down any new words you come across which aren't in this Glossary:

Term	Meaning