

## COMPUTER JARGON BUSTER – DEFINITIONS

**Anti-spam** Programs which are designed to minimise spam (eg the scrambled letters you are sometimes asked to decipher when using the internet). See also **Spam**

**Anti-virus software** A suite of programs (eg Norton, Bitdefender) which you can introduce into a computer to protect against and disable viruses and other malicious software.

**Browser** The program (eg Internet Explorer, Mozilla) which enables a computer to interact with the internet.

**Browser navigation window** The long, blank box at the top of the internet browser page which allows you to type in an internet address, ( <http://www....> ) and then find a website (eg [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)).

**Dialog box** A box that pops up on your screen and displays or asks for information.

**Dongle** A small device that plugs into your computer to enable you to get online without being connected to a landline phone. These are supplied by internet providers (eg Orange).

**Dropdown menu** A list of options which appears when you click a menu bar or button, often appearing like this ▼ .

**Download** Transfer a program over the internet to your computer.

**I.E.** Abbreviation for Internet Explorer, which gives you access to the internet and emails.

**Ethernet** A term used to describe computer pieces of computer hardware linked to one another by cables (as opposed to wireless).

**Firewall** A piece of software or hardware that prevents unauthorised access to a computer.

**Font** A set of letters and numbers in a particular style. (Eg This page is set in Arial. ABCD 123 is in Times New Roman.)

**Geek (computer geek)** A slang term used to designate a computer expert or enthusiast.

**Hacker** Someone who breaches, or attempts to breach, computers' security devices to steal data.

**Hard disk** The high capacity disk in the computer used to store programs and data.

**Hardware** The tangible elements of a computer system – eg the physical computer, printer.

**Home page** (a) The first page shown when you visit a website. (b) Also used to mean the page that shows when you open your browser. (You have a choice of (b))

**Hub** Small device which allows you to plug in several pieces of hardware to your computer at the same time – rather like a junction box.

**Icon** Small image that enables you to access a program, as appearing particularly on Desktop.

**ISP (Internet Service Provider)** A company that provides you with an internet connection.(eg Orange, BT)

**Memory stick** Small, plug-in, portable device which allows you to store data (documents, pictures) external to your computer.

**Memory** The computer's storage area that allows you to work with programs. The size of the memory expressed in gigabytes (eg 1GB, 2GB) determines the speed and ability of your computer to process information.

**Offline** Not connected to the internet.

**Online** Connected to the internet.

**Operating system** The programs installed on a computer which make it function (eg Windows).

**Peripheral** Add-on hardware to your computer (eg printer)

**Phishing** Attempt to get you to divulge sensitive information (eg bank account details) with fraudulent intent, usually by email.

**Radio button** A circular button which will accept a mouse click to indicate a choice. Looks like this ☐.

**Router** (sometimes called a **hub**) Electronic device which enables two or more computers to connect to the internet – usually provided by an internet service provider, eg Plusnet, Orange.

**Search engine** An online program (eg Google, Bing) which enables you to search for information on the internet.

**Spam** Junk emails which offer you money-spinning ideas (like junk mail that comes by post.) See also **Anti-spam**.

**Task bar** The horizontal bar at the very bottom of the screen which bears such icons as **Start** and the time (if the clock is turned on).

**Tool bar** The ruler-like list of icons that enable you to choose different functions.

**URL** Unique address of a web page (eg. [www.bbc.co.uk/weather/forecast](http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/forecast))

**USB** A facility (plug) that allows you to connect external equipment to your computer.

**Virus** A malicious program introduced into a computer to damage its operating system.

**Visit** In computer speak, simply means **go to** (a website).

**Wi-fi** Wire-less connections between computer and other equipment (eg printer, router)

**Webcam** A camera linked to a computer (sometimes installed in a modern laptop) to enable the user to transmit moving visual images to other computers.

**Window** (window with a small **w**) the image that you see when you open a program on the computer.

**Windows** (eg Windows XP, Windows 7). (Capital W and in the plural.) The program installed on the computer to enable you to operate it.

**Wizard** A step-by-step guidance program that helps to make choices when setting up a program.

- For a fuller list of jargon busting definitions, visit <http://www.computeractive.co.uk/jargonbuster>