

Appendix E  
Glossary of Computer Terms

## ***Glossary of Terms and Acronyms***

**active** Refers to the state of the window that you are using that is currently selected.

**application** A software program used for a particular task, such as word processing or database management. This term is used interchangeably with program.

**application icon** A small graphic that represents an application.

**arrow keys** On your computer keyboard, the keys you use to navigate around your screen. Each key is marked with an arrow and is referred to by the direction in which the arrow points. There is an UP ARROW, DOWN ARROW, LEFT ARROW and RIGHT ARROW key.

**boot** The process of turning the computer on and getting the operating system running. This term comes from the concept of a computer pulling itself up by its own bootstraps.

**browser** A program to find, read, edit and print information from the World Wide Web.

**button** A graphic element resembling a button that, when activated, performs a specified command (for example, open or print). The user activates a button by clicking on it with a mouse or, if the button is the focus, by pressing the Enter key.

**character** Any letter, number, or symbol such as a punctuation mark. Computers are very literal. They will “read” each character, including letters, punctuation and even the spaces between them.

**click** To press and immediately release the mouse button. To click on something means to position the pointer on it and press and release the mouse button.

**clipboard** A temporary storage location used to transfer data between documents and between applications. Typically, you transfer data to the clipboard by using an application's Copy or Cut command and you insert data from the clipboard by using the application's Paste command.

**close** To deactivate a program or document. Remove the program or document from temporary storage memory (RAM).

**command** A word or phrase, usually found in a menu, that you click on or select in order to carry out an action.

**default** The setting that are applied to your computer before you configure them to your preferences are the default settings.

**desktop** The main screen for Windows on which the taskbar and icons appear.

**disk drive** A device used for storing and retrieving information on disks.

**document** The data you create using an application, including information you type, edit, view or save. A document may be a business report, a spreadsheet, a picture or a letter. It is stored as a file on a disk.

**email** (verb) To exchange electronic messages and computer files over a communications network, such as the Internet.

**email** (noun) An electronic message.

**exit** To terminate operation of a program, application or function.

**file** A collection of saved information or data (e.g., a document), or a collection of commands or instructions (e.g., a program).

**folder** Folders can be created to contain files in logical groupings.

**graphics** Pictures or images created using a computer program.

**home page** The main page for a web site, usually seen first when the web site is accessed. Also, the page you select as the opening page for your browser.

**HTML** Hypertext Mark-up Language, the programming language used to create web pages.

**hyperlink** (link) A highlighted, colored, or underlined word, phrase or other object on a web page that when clicked will cause a new page to be displayed.

**icon** A small image displayed on the screen to represent some item (such as a folder or software program), action or command (such as print or copy) that can be activated by the user. Icons allow the user to control computer actions without having to remember and type commands.

**insert** To add new information between existing information. Example: insert a word in a sentence, or insert a row in a spreadsheet.

**keyboard** Used to enter instructions and information into your computer. Your keyboard is very similar to a standard typewriter with several significant additions. While some keyboard skills are necessary to operate your

computer, you need not be a typing expert. Following is a description of the function of some keyboard keys.

- **Backspace key** - Use the Backspace key to erase characters (letters, numbers, punctuation etc.) that are located to the left of the insertion point on the monitor.
- **Control key** - This key, labeled with Ctrl is used in conjunction with other keys to cause the computer to perform some action.
- **Delete key** - Delete allows you to erase characters on the right of the insertion point.
- **Enter key** - When you type text, this key acts like a carriage return key on a typewriter or “line down” key to start a new line of text. The Enter key also is used to signal to the computer that you have finished entering data and want the computer to act on that data. Pressing Enter is like saying “Yes” or “OK” to your computer.
- **Esc(ape) key** - This key, on the upper left corner of the keyboard, is the “When All Else Fails” key. If you have taken some action that you realize was not a correct one, and you don’t see any command on the screen that will let you correct it, try pressing Esc. Often the program will go back to your previous action and give you a chance to correct the mistake.

**menu** A list of command options displayed on the software window.

**menu bar** A rectangular bar at the top of the application’s window that displays available menus. Clicking on the menu name displays a list of options.

**mouse** A pointing device. It is also a selecting device. When you move the mouse around on your mouse pad, you cause a pointer on your monitor to move in the same direction. When the pointer rests on an item on the screen, you can select (highlight) that item by clicking a button on the mouse.

- **Mouse pointer** - The mouse pointer takes on different shapes depending on the software program you are using and where you position the pointer on the computer screen. Some of the shapes are:
  - **Arrow** - is the most common pointer shape and is the standard. Some programs use a hand with the index finger extended. The arrow is used to point to or to click on items.
  - **Two-directional arrow** - When the pointer crosses any margin or border of a window it changes to the two-directional arrow. It is used to change the size of a window or an object.
  - **Busy (hourglass)** - An hourglass appears when the computer is busy doing something like opening or saving a large document. The computer will not respond to any commands while this symbol is present on the screen.
  - **I-bar** - When the pointer moves within the an area where text can be typed or edited, it appears in the shape of an I-bar. When you click the mouse button, an insertion point appears where you begin to type or edit text.

**program** (noun) A sequence of instructions for a computer to follow.

**program** (verb) To create a sequence of instructions for a computer to follow.

**radio button** A small circle similar in appearance to the buttons on an old-fashioned radio. Clicking a radio button activates or deactivates a function.

**save** To copy a file from temporary storage (RAM) to permanent storage (a floppy or hard disk). If a file with the same name already exists in the same location, it will be replaced with the current one.

**scroll** To move through text or graphics (up, down, left or right) in a window in order to see parts of a document or list that cannot fit on the screen.

**software** The set of instructions that make computer hardware perform tasks.

**toolbar** A row, column or block of on-screen buttons or icons. When the user clicks on these buttons or icons, certain functions of the application are activated. The toolbars can sometimes be customized by adding or deleting buttons.

**URL** (Uniform Resource Locator) The address of a Web page on the Internet.

**Web** (World Wide Web) Part of the Internet.

**web page** A file containing text and graphic data displayed on a web site.

**web site** A group of related web pages.

**window** A rectangular area on the screen in which an application or document is viewed. A window can be

opened, closed, moved and the size can be changed. Several windows may be open at one time.

**Windows** The operating system made by the Microsoft Corporation and used by a majority of personal computers

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