ReadyNetGo .... News

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TIP OF THE MONTH

Have you ever come across a document and not known how to open it? If you have, you're not alone. With the seemingly endless numbers of programs available, file extensions can get quite confusing so we've put together a handy list for reference:

.asp	Webpage document
.dat	System update file
.dbf	Database file
.dll	System file
.doc	MS Word document
.exe	Executable program
.gif	Graphic image
.hlp	Help file
.htm	Webpage file
.ini	System file
.jpg	Graphic image
.mdb	MS Access Database
.p65	Adobe Pagemaker 6.5
.pdf	Adobe Acrobat file
.ppt	MS Powerpoint file
.psd	Adobe Photoshop file
.pst	MS Outlook file (email)
.pub	MS Publisher document
.sys	System File
.tif	Image document
.tmp	Temporary file
.txt	Text file
.vbs	MS Visual Basic Script (program code)
.wav	Wave Sound file
.xls	MS Excel document
.zip	Winzip (compressed file)

Computer Lingo Explained Simply
(Terms You've Heard but Couldn't Explain)

Computers are becoming an inherent part of life showing up not just at work anymore but in our homes, our cars, and even in our recreational lives. For this reason, it's a good idea to keep up with the key terms and concepts associated with computer systems. Below are some common terms & definitions to know:

MEASUREMENT STANDARDS

Data Storage sizes   ("how much can I remember")

1 bit = 1 or 0 ; the smallest unit of data
8 bits = 1 Byte ; typically one character of information
1 kilobyte (KB, kb) = 1,024 Bytes ; computer file sizes
1 megabyte (MB,mb) = 1,024 KB ; 600 page paperback = 1 MB
1 gigabyte (GB) = 1,024 MB ; or 1,024 paperbacks (2 Encyclopedia Britannica sets, or the entire No. American phone directory)
1 terabyte (TB) = 1,024 GB or 1,099,511,627,776 Bytes – (the entire Library of Congress is estimated at 64 Terabytes)

Operation speed   ("how fast can I do things/think")

1 Hz = 1 operation per second
1 KHz = 1,024 operations per second
1 MHz = 1,048,576 operations per second – used to describe the processing speed of most modern PC's Ex: 600 MHz
1 GHz = 1,073,741,824 operations per second – The very latest PC's are GHz machines

Data transfer speed/ "bandwidth"   ("how fast can I communicate information to others")

1 bps ("bits per second") – used in the early days to describe modems
1 Kbps = 1,024 bps (used in describing "slow" connections like modems or printers)
1 Mbps = 1,048,576 bps – used in describing network speeds or the internal speed of a machine. A typical network is rated at 100 Mbps these days
1 Gbps = 1,024 Mbps – Cutting-edge networking, or high-speed fiber backbones.

INTERNET TERMS

Bandwidth – how fast you can send data through a network or modem connection. The higher the bandwidth, the more info can be transmitted. Ex: how much time it takes for a webpage to fully load. Pages with large graphics will download much slower over a low-bandwidth connection.

Browser – a program used to access information on the world wide web. Ex: Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer.

Cache – pronounced like "cash" ; your cache stores recently used information so you can access it quickly. Ex: the Temporary Internet Files folder is a cache for recently viewed webpages. If you visit a webpage and then return later in the day, the page will load much faster because you're accessing the page off your hard drive rather than the sites' server.

Cookies – information stored on your hard drive that can be accessed by outside individuals/companies. Cookies are useful for keeping info (like usernames and passwords) stored so you don't have to type it in each time you access that page. On the downside, cookies can be used by companies to track information about you when you click on an ad or access a certain page. Companies see the benefit of this practice in being able to target specific information to you but opponents flag privacy issues as a major concern.

Modems – A device used to talk to other computers using standard phone lines. Most people have 56K (i.e. 56Kbps) modems, and in theory, it should transmit at 57344 bps. However, due to FTC limits, no 56K modem can transfer faster than 53300 bps. Further, transfer speeds may not even attain level this due to imperfect line conditions and will more likely fall in the range of 40000-51000 bps.

NETWORK TERMS

Firewall – a device that protects a private network from the public network. Firewalls are used to prevent outsiders from tampering with your internal systems and documents.

Hub/Switch – external device that allows computers to communicate with each other. Each hub/switch has a maximum of 48 ports; multiple hubs can be linked together to provide additional ports if needed.

Router – a device that forwards packets of information between networks in the most efficient manner. Routers use a set of rules called a "routing table" to determine whether the information is going to a local machine or should be sent out to another LAN. Good routers can provide reports on network activity. Generally, the better the router, the more efficient the transport of information will be.

WAN (Wide Area Network) – a collection of LAN's connected by routers.

PC INTERFACES

IDE/ATA (Integrated Device Electronics/ AT Attachment) – Interface that transfers data between the hard disk and the rest of the system. Widely used in home or small office PCs with less than 4 devices needed (such as a hard disk and cd-rom). Less expensive than SCSI interface. Both IDE and SCSI can be used in the same machine.

SCSI (Small Computer System Interface) – pronounced "skuzzy" ; computer interface or connection module that allows you to attach up to 15 devices (like external hard drives or scanners) to your computer. There are currently 9 types of SCSI interfaces. Alternative to an IDE. Most often used in high end business or server machines. SCSI offers more flexibility and better performance in multi-tasking environments.

USB (Universal Serial Bus) – a port on your computer that can support up to 127 peripherals all at once. Simply daisy chain them all together. Widely accepted for its cross platform (Mac & PC) capabilities.