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A B S T R A C T

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COMPUTER VOCABULARY

application noun a program dedicated to a specific task [eg: word processing, graphics etc]

Bandwidth The range of frequencies, expressed in Kilobits per second, that can pass over a given data transmission channel within a frame relay network. The bandwidth determines the rate at which information can be sent through a channel - the greater the bandwidth, the more information that can be sent in a given amount of time. Usually measured in bits-per-second. A full page of English text is about 16,000 bits. A 56Kbs modem can easily move 16,000 bits in less than one second.

Beta Software Beta versions of commercial software are work-in-progress test copies released prior to the full version. They're used to put the product through real-world tests and to ferret out bugs before the finished software hits the shelves. Betas often expire after a period of time, usually when the full version or the next beta is released.

Bluetooth Chip technology enabling seamless voice and data connections between a wide range of devices through short-range digital two-way radio. It is an open specification for short-range communications of data and voice between both mobile and stationary devices. For instance, it specifies how mobile phones, WIDs, computers and PDAs interconnect with each other, with computers, and with office or home phones.

Bookmark 1) When you "bookmark" a page, you tell your Web browser to remember that page's address (URL), so that you can go back to it easily, without having to type in the URL again. Bookmarks are called "favorites" in Microsoft Internet Explorer. It keeps your place, much like a bookmark in a book does. Most browsers have an easy method of saving the URL to create a bookmark. 2)

Microsoft Web editors use the term bookmark to refer to a location within a hyperlink destination within a Web page, referred to elsewhere as an anchor.

Broadband A transmission facility having a bandwidth sufficient to carry multiple voice, video or data channels simultaneously. Each channel occupies (is modulated to) a different frequency bandwidth on the transmission medium and is demodulated to its original frequency at the receiving end. Channels are separated by guardbands (empty spaces) to ensure that each channel won't interfere with its neighboring channels. This technique is used to provide 50 CATV channels on one coaxial cable.

Browser A program that allows a user to find, view, hear, and interact with material on the World Wide Web. Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer are examples of popular browsers.

Burn To write data or files onto a recordable CD using a hardware device called a CD Burner. Generally, you create either an audio or a data disc when you burn a CD. If you create an audio disc, you will be able to play that CD in any standard audio CD player. A data disc contains computer files and can only be read on computers. If you want to create an audio CD you must use software such as our RipEditBurn - simply copying wave (.wav) audio files onto a CD will produce a data CD, not an audio CD. On this site, "burn" refers to recording audio CDs that will be playable in your stereo.

Blog A blog is basically a journal that is available on the web. The activity of updating a blog is "blogging" and someone who keeps a blog is a "blogger." Blogs are typically updated daily using software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain the blog. Postings on a blog are almost always arranged in chronological order with the most recent additions featured most prominently.

bit noun binary digit, the basic binary unit for storing data, either 0 or 1 - see byte

buffer noun an area in memory used for temporary storage [eg: rapid input from keyboard]

byte noun 8 bits - kilobyte (approx. 1,000 bytes), megabyte (1 million), gigabyte (1 billion)

Chipset The chipset controls the system and its capabilities. All components communicate with the processor through the chipset - it is the hub of all data transfer. The chipset uses the DMA controller and the bus controller to organize the steady flow of data that it controls. The chipset is a series of chips attached directly to the motherboard, and is usually second in size only to the processor. Chipsets are integrated (soldered onto the motherboard) and are not upgradeable without a new motherboard.

Codec Short for compressor/decompressor, a codec is any technology for compressing and decompressing data. Codecs can be implemented in software, hardware, or a combination of both. Some popular codecs for computer video include MPEG, Indeo and Cinepak. In telecommunications, (short for coder/decoder) a device that encodes or decodes a signal. For example, telephone companies use codecs to convert binary signals transmitted on their digital networks to analog signals converted on their analog networks. The translation of a binary value into a voltage that can be transmitted over a wire.

Configuration This is a general-purpose computer term that can refer to the way you have your computer set up. It is also used to describe the total combination of hardware components that make up a computer system and the software settings that allow various hardware components of a computer system to communicate with one another.

Cookie A piece of information sent by a Web server to a user's browser. (A Web server is the computer that "hosts" a Web site, and responds to requests from a user's browser.) Cookies may include information such as login or registration identification, user preferences, online "shopping cart" information, etc. The browser saves the information, and sends it back to the Web server whenever the browser returns to the Web site. The Web server may use the cookie to customize the display it sends to the user, or it may keep track of the different pages within the site that the user accesses. Browsers may be configured to alert the user when a cookie is being sent, or to refuse to accept cookies. Some sites, however, cannot be accessed unless the browser accepts cookies.

CPU Central Processing Unit. The main processing chip of a computer.

DNS (Domain Name Server) – Used to map names to IP addresses and vice versa. Domain Name Servers maintain central lists of domain name/IP addresses and map the domain names in your Internet requests to other servers on the Internet until the specified web site is found.

Domain Name The unique name that identifies an Internet site. Domain Names always have 2 or more parts, separated by dots. The part on the left is the most specific, and the part on the right is the most general. A given machine may have more than one Domain Name but a given Domain Name points to only one machine. For example, the domain names: matisse.net mail.matisse.net workshop.matisse.net can all refer to the same machine, but each domain name can refer to no more than one machine. Usually, all of the machines on a given Network will have the same thing as the right-hand portion of their Domain Names (matisse.net in the examples above). It is also possible for a Domain Name to exist but not be connected to an actual machine. This is often done so that a group or business can have an Internet e-mail address without having to establish a

real Internet site. In these cases, some real Internet machine must handle the mail on behalf of the listed Domain Name.

Driver A piece of software that tells the computer how to operate an external device, such as a printer, hard disk, CD-ROM drive, or scanner. For instance, you can't print unless you have a printer driver. Hard disk drivers are invisible files that are loaded into memory when you start the computer, while scanner drivers are usually plug-ins accessed from within a particular application.

DSL A method for moving data over regular phone lines. A DSL circuit is much faster than a regular phone connection, and the wires coming into the subscriber's premises are the same (copper) wires used for regular phone service. A DSL circuit must be configured to connect two specific locations, similar to a leased line (however a DSL circuit is not a leased line. A common configuration of DSL allows downloads at speeds of up to 1.544 megabits (not megabytes) per second, and uploads at speeds of 128 kilobits per second. This arrangement is called ADSL: Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line. Another common configuration is symmetrical: 384 Kilobits per second in both directions. In theory ADSL allows download speeds of up to 9 megabits per second and upload speeds of up to 640 kilobits per second. DSL is now a popular alternative to Leased Lines and ISDN, being faster than ISDN and less costly than traditional Leased Lines.

DVDD Digital video disk; a type of compact disc that holds far more information than the CD-ROMs that are used for storing music files. A DVD can hold a minimum of 4.7 GB, enough for a full-length movie. MPEG-2 is used to compress video data for storage on a DVD. DVD drives are backward-compatible and can play CD-ROMs.

Database A collection of information organized and presented to serve a specific purpose. (A telephone book is a common database.) A computerized database is an

updated, organized file of machine readable information that is rapidly searched and retrieved by computer.

Email noun electronic mail; system of sending messages through the internet;
e-mail

Firewall A firewall is a set of related programs, located at a network gateway server, that protects the resources of a private network from users from other networks. Basically, a firewall, working closely with a router program, filters all network packets to determine whether to forward them toward their destination. A firewall is often installed away from the rest of the network so that no incoming request can get directly at private network resources. There are a number of firewall screening methods. A simple one is to screen requests to make sure they come from acceptable (previously identified) domain names and IP addresses. For mobile users, firewalls allow remote access in to the private network by the use of secure logon procedures and authentication certificates.

Fire wire a type of cabling technology for transferring data to and from digital devices at high speed. Some professional digital cameras and memory card readers connect to the computer over FireWire. FireWire card readers are typically faster than those that connect via USB. Also known as IEEE 1394, FireWire was invented by Apple Computer but is now commonly used with Windows-based PCs as well.

Flash Flash is an application published by the Macromedia company. Think of Flash as a 'window' that is displayed within the HTML environment. You have complete control of the window. You can display animations. You can make the animations clickable. You can make text move and change. Flash is very fast because it draws graphics on the fly, rather than storing text or graphics as complete images. (Although Flash can also display photographic images and illustrations). Flash gives you much more creative room than HTML, but it

requires a 'plug-in', a piece of code on your computer that runs Flash. The newer browsers automatically come with Flash. If your user has an older browser, and they don't already have Flash, they will be asked to download it. If they agree to download Flash, they will be sent to the Macromedia site where they will need to click on a few things to receive Flash. If they haven't already downloaded Flash, you might lose them at this point. It is a tradeoff.

Flash Memory A special form of non-volatile EEPROM that can be erased at signal levels normally found inside the PC, so that you can reprogram the contents with whatever you like without pulling the chips out of your computer. Also, once a flash memory has been programmed, you can remove the expansion board it is mounted on and plug it into another computer if you wish.

Format Formatting a disk organizes the magnetic surfaces into tracks and sectors. In word processing, format refers to the physical appearance of a document, and includes such items as margins, line spacing, etc. In Excel, format refers to how numbers are shown (length, decimal points, etc.)

Freeware A form of software distribution where the author retains copyright of the software, but makes the program available to others at no cost. Freeware is often distributed on bulletin boards, or through user groups. The program may not be resold or distributed by others for profit.

floppy disk noun small, removable magnetic disc for (permanent) storing of data; diskette

Gateway The technical meaning is a hardware or software set-up that translates between two dissimilar protocols, for example America Online has a gateway that translates between its internal, proprietary e-mail format and Internet e-mail format. Another, sloppier meaning of gateway is to describe any mechanism for

providing access to another system, e.g. AOL might be called a gateway to the Internet.

GUI Graphical User Interface. The most commonly used computer interface, exemplified by Microsoft Windows and MacOS. Typical elements of a GUI are a mouse interface and a system of visual directories that look like file folders.

hard disk noun fixed, magnetic disc inside a PC for (permanent) storing of data

Hacker A slang term for a computer enthusiast. Among professional programmers, the term hacker implies an amateur or a programmer who lacks formal training. Depending on how it is used, the term can be either complimentary or derogatory, although it is developing an increasingly derogatory connotation. The pejorative sense of hacker is becoming more prominent largely because the popular press has co-opted the term to refer to individuals who gain unauthorized access to computer systems for the purpose of stealing and corrupting data. Hackers, themselves, maintain that the proper term for such individuals is cracker.

Handle A value that uniquely identifies something such as a file or data structure. Handles are meaningful only to the software that creates and uses them but are passed by other software to identify things. ODBC defines handles for environments, connections, statements, and descriptors. An unsigned long (32-bit) integer assigned by Windows NT or Windows 95 to uniquely identify an instance (occurrence) of an object, such as a file or a window.

Hard Drive A permanent data storage device built into all desktop PCs that permits you to save and retrieve information, and that stores the computer's operating system and other software. The size of a hard drive is usually expressed in gigabytes.

Host Any computer on a network that is a repository for services available to other computers on the network. It is quite common to have one host machine provide several services, such as SMTP (email) and HTTP (web).

HTML (HyperText Markup Language) -- The coding language used to create Hypertext documents for use on the World Wide Web. HTML looks a lot like old-fashioned typesetting code, where you surround a block of text with codes that indicate how it should appear, additionally, in HTML you can specify that a block of text, or a word, is linked to another file on the Internet. HTML files are meant to be viewed using a World Wide Web Client Program, such as Netscape or Mosaic.

Hypertext Generally, any text that contains links to other documents. Words or phrases in the document that can be chosen by a reader and which cause another document (usually a Web page) to be retrieved and displayed. A link doesn't just have to be text, however--pictures and icons can also be "clickable."

hardware noun the mechanical and electronic parts of a computer, not the software

Icon On a system like Windows or Macintosh that uses a graphical user interface (GUI), a small picture or symbol that represents some object or function. Examples: a file folder for a directory; a rectangle with a bent corner for a file; or a miniature illustration for a program.

Intranet A private network inside a company or organization, which uses software like that used on the Internet, but is for internal use only, and is not accessible to the public. Companies use Intranets to manage projects, provide employee information, distribute data and information, etc.

input noun data entered into a computer (by keyboard, floppy disk etc.) - also verb

keyboard noun the alphanumeric keys or buttons used to input data [QWERTY = 1st 5 keys]

Mainframe A very large computer capable of supporting hundreds of users running a variety of different programs simultaneously. Often the distinction between small mainframes and minicomputers is vague and may depend on how the machine is marketed. Example of a mainframe: the OIT-administered IBM computer that supports TSO and WYLBUR

Mirror An FTP server that copies the same files from another server, and provides another site to download the files. The mirrored site is independent of the original. Some FTP servers get so many people downloading the same files that other servers have to be set up to mirror them and spread the load to more than one site. A mirror site is an exact replica of the original site, and is usually updated frequently to ensure that it reflects the same content as the original site. They are used to make access to the files faster when the original site may be farther away, or running on a smaller server. Typically, the site that is the mirror will be in a better location to where more people can access the information quickly, and it will run faster as well, especially during high traffic times. Mirrored sites can give access to products such as pictures or simply have daily mail on them. They can be used for a wide variety.

Motherboard The main circuit board of a microcomputer. The motherboard contains the connectors for attaching additional boards. Typically, the motherboard contains the CPU, BIOS, memory, mass storage interfaces, serial and parallel ports, expansion slots, and all the controllers required to control standard peripheral devices, such as the display screen, keyboard, and disk drive. Collectively, all these chips that reside on the motherboard are known as the motherboard's chipset. On most PCs, it is possible to add memory chips directly to the motherboard. You may also be able to upgrade to a faster CP by replacing the

CPU chip. To add additional core features, you may need to replace the motherboard entirely.

MP3 A compressed audio format that is popular for downloading across the internet and for use with memory-based audio players. Files may be recorded on CD-R or CD-RW media for playback in compatible DVD players, audio CD players, and CD-ROM drives. Files are usually named as "*.mp3". Sound quality varies as a function of the recording/encoding bit rate. In our opinion, anything recorded with less than 128 kbps data rate will sound degraded. For a high fidelity home audio system, we would recommend MP3s encoded at no less than 256 kbps data rate. Anything less would mean too much compression was used at the cost of sound fidelity.

Multimedia The delivery of information, usually to a personal computer, in a combination of different formats including text, graphics, animation, audio, and video.

memory noun part of a computer for (temporary) storing of data - see ram

modem noun device that converts data to a form that can be transmitted by telephone etc.

operating system noun software that communicates with hardware, enabling applications to run

output noun data delivered by a computer (by printer, screen etc) - also verb

Perl Practical Extraction and Reporting Language, a robust programming language frequently used for creating CGI programs on Web servers because it is faster than UNIX shell script programs, it can read and write binary files, and it can process very large files.

Plug-in A small piece of software that enriches a larger piece of software by adding features or functions. Plug-ins enable browsers to play audio and video. You can expand the capability of your browser by "plugging in" various tools to let you see and hear certain things, such as audio or video files. When your browser needs a plug-in you don't have yet, it will tell you it's encountered an "unknown file type." SBC Yahoo! already provides the most popular plug-ins, including Shockwave (for audio and video), RealAudio (audio that broadcasts to your computer like a radio station), and MPEG play (more video). Plug-ins are very similar to another kind of Web tool called helper apps.

Portal Usually used as a marketing term to describe a web site that is or is intended to be the first place people see when using the web. Typically, a portal site has a catalog of web sites, a search engine, or both. A portal site also may offer e-mail and other service to entice people to use that site as their main "point of entry" (hence "portal" to the web).

peripheral noun equipment linked to a computer [e.g.: printer, scanner, modem, mouse etc.]

program noun software that contains coded instructions to control a computer – also verb

Root (1) An administrative account with special privileges. For example, only the root account can load kernel extensions. (2) In graph theory, the base of a tree. (3) root directory: The base of a file system tree. (4) root file system: The primary file system off which a computer boots, so named because it includes the root node of the file system tree.

Router A device that determines the next network point to which a data packet should be forwarded enroute toward its destination. The router is connected to at least two networks and determines which way to send each data packet based on

its current understanding of the state of the networks it is connected to. Routers create or maintain a table of the available routes and use this information to determine the best route for a given data packet.

RAM abbreviation for random access memory [it goes away when one switches off]

Search Engine A tool that enables users to locate information on the World Wide Web. Search engines use keywords entered by users to find Web sites which contain the information sought. Some search engines are specifically designed to find Web sites intended for children.

Shareware Copyrighted software available for downloading on a free, limited trial basis; if you decide to use the software, you're expected to register and pay a small fee. By doing this, you become eligible for assistance and updates from the author. Contrast to public domain software which is not copyrighted or to freeware which is copyrighted but requires no usage fee.

Spam Unsolicited "junk" e-mail sent to large numbers of people to promote products or services. Sexually explicit unsolicited e-mail is called "porn spam." Also refers to inappropriate promotional or commercial postings to discussion groups or bulletin boards.

Streaming A technology for transmitting electronic information in a stream, rather than in a complete package. This technology has enabled more accessible Internet audio and video. Audio, and especially video, files tend to be large, which makes downloading and accessing them as a complete package a very time-consuming operation. With streaming technology, however, the files can be downloaded and accessed at the same time, which makes using them much faster and easier. Streaming is the technology behind RealPlayer and TiVO.

screen noun the surface area of the visual display unit on which the image is formed

software noun the programs, routines etc for a computer, not the hardware

Template Refers to a web page template that applies to all ClassWeb pages on our (or your) server. ClassWeb generates web pages for individual files that are based upon a common template, and thus are exactly alike in terms of layout, style, etc. The differences between ClassWeb sites are due to the course specific information that the page "calls" from our (or your) database.

Text Editor Any program which will do even the most basic word processing and will save files to standard ASCII text. Check your program's manual if you are unsure of how this would be done, as different programs will do things differently.

Token Authentication token: a hardware device that generates a one-time password to authenticate its owner; also sometimes applied to software programs that generate one-time passwords. E-mail token: a data item in the header of an encrypted e-mail message that holds an encrypted copy of the secret key used to encrypt the message; usually encrypted with the recipient's key so that only the recipient can decrypt it. In a network, a token is a special group of bits that travel around a token ring. If a computer wants to communicate on a network, it gains permission by capturing the token. Only one token at a time may be active on a network, and the token may only travel in one direction around the ring.

Trinitron This is arguably the best consumer CRT (Cathode Ray Tube) in existence. The technology was developed by Sony Corporation, who owns complete rights to it. The Trinitron design has helped the company lead the market in the manufacturing of TVs and monitors for many years. The difference between a Trinitron tube and most other tubes is that the Trinitron uses an aperture grille instead of a shadow mask for creating the image on the screen. Considering you

most likely know exactly what those are, not, I'll explain them. An aperture grille consists of wires stretched vertically down the screen (allowing for a vertically flat screen). A shadow mask is basically a metal plate with holes in it, where light can pass through. Because Trinitron monitors are vertically flat, they have less image distortion and less glare than most other monitors. If you look very closely at a Trinitron screen, you should see one or two very thin dark horizontal lines that span the width of the screen. These lines are small wires that support the aperture grille.

Upload To send a file from one computer to another via modem, network, or serial cable. With a modem-based communications link, the process generally involves the requesting computer instructing the remote computer to prepare to receive the file on its disk and wait for the transmission to begin.

URL Uniform Resource Locator, the global address of documents and other resources on the World Wide Web. The first part of the address indicates what protocol to use, and the second part specifies the IP address or the domain name where the resource is located.

Veronica (Very Easy Rodent Oriented Net-wide Index to Computerized Archives) -- Developed at the University of Nevada, Veronica is a constantly updated database of the names of almost every menu item on thousands of gopher servers. The Veronica database can be searched from most major gopher menus. This is a search utility that helps find information on gopher servers. Veronica allows users to enter keywords to locate the gopher site holding the desired information. The name is an acronym for "Very easy rodent oriented net-wide index of computerized archives."

Virus A program or piece of code that is loaded onto your computer without your knowledge and runs against your wishes. Most viruses can also replicate themselves and spread to other computers. All computer viruses are man made.

Antivirus programs periodically check your computer system for the best-known types of viruses.

Web Ring An arrangement for finding web sites in which a group of people whose web sites all had some interest in common would provide links to a central server. That server would keep track of the web sites in the ring, so that a user could click on a "Next" button on one web site, and be taken to the next web site in the web ring. The theory is that people who are interested in the topic of one web site might also be interested in another web site on the same topic.

Webmaster An individual who manages a Web site. Depending on the size of the site, the Webmaster might be responsible for any of the following: making sure that the Web server hardware and software is running properly, designing the Web site, creating and updating Web pages, replying to user feedback, monitoring traffic through the site.

White Paper A Statement of Policy for the Management of Internet Names and Addresses released by the U.S. Department of Commerce in June 1998 in response to comments received to the Green Paper recommendations published in January 1998. Among other things, the White Paper called for the creation of a global, not-for-profit organization that would eventually assume the responsibility for coordinating four key functions for the Internet: the management of the domain name system, the allocation of IP address space, the assignment of protocol parameters, and the management of the root server system.

Windows A family of operating systems for personal computers, Windows dominates the personal computer world, running, by some estimates, on 90% of all personal computers. Like the Macintosh operating environment, Windows provides a graphical user interface (GUI), virtual memory management, multitasking, and support for many peripheral devices. In addition to Windows 3.x and Windows 95, which run on Intel -based machines, Microsoft also sells

Windows NT, a more advanced operating system that runs on a variety of hardware platforms.

Wizard An interactive utility that leads a user through all of the steps required to complete a complex task. Wizards produce a step by step guide for the user, with each possible alternative displayed. If a condition occurs which prevents a step from being completed, methods for resolving the problem are presented. When the problem is resolved, the user is returned to the next step in the process, until the task has been completed.

WYSIWYG abbreviaton for What You See Is What You Get [data prints out exactly as on the screen]