

Glossary of Web terms

Avatar - This term refers to an interactive representation of a human in a virtual reality environment; term was popularized by Neal Stephenson's novel "Snow Crash."

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 not to be confused with "comments" posted to articles or blogs.

Browse - To browse through a page, exploring what's there and seeing where the links take you, is a bit like window shopping. When you browse, you have to guess which words and links on the page pertain to your interests. The opposite of browsing is searching.

Browser - A type of software that allows you to navigate information databases; examples are Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Cache - In browsers, "cache" is used to identify a space where web pages you have visited are stored in your computer. A copy of documents you retrieve is stored in cache. When you use GO, BACK, or any other means to revisit a document, the browser first checks to see if it is in cache and will retrieve it from there because it is much faster than retrieving it from the server.

Cookie - A message from a WEB SERVER computer, sent to and stored by your browser on your computer. When your computer consults the originating server computer, the cookie is sent back to the server, allowing it to respond to you according to the cookie's contents. The main use for cookies is to provide customized Web pages according to a profile of your interests. When you log onto a "customize" type of invitation on a Web page and fill in your name and other information, this may result in a cookie on your computer which that Web page will access to appear to "know" you and provide what you want. If you fill out these forms, you may also receive e-mail and other solicitation independent of cookies.

Comments – Are messages posted to items created by someone on a Web site. These items can include articles, blog entries, photos, videos and discussion board threads.

Cyberspace - A term coined by William Gibson in his novel "Neuromancer" to refer to a near-future computer network where users mentally travel through matrices of data. The term is now used to describe the Internet and the other computer networks.

Domain name - Refers to the initial part of a URL, down to the first /, where the domain and name of the host or SERVER computer are listed (most often in reversed order, name first, then domain). The domain name gives you who "published" a page, made it public by putting it on the Web.

Flame war – This occurs when discussion on a message board, discussion forum, chat room, or comment section turns to people posting insults about each other. Civil conversation ceases as insults take over.

Groups - Discussion forums one can participate in, share ideas with, and form community. Most are free and some are open to new members. Yahoo Groups and Google Groups are both popular. Google Groups includes the former Usenet Newsgroups.

Home Page - The document displayed when you first open your Web browser. Home Page can also refer to the first document you come to at a Web site.

HTML - An acronym for HyperText Markup Language, HTML is the language used to tag various parts of a Web document so browsing software will know how to display that document's links, text, graphics and attached media.

Javascript - A simple programming language developed by Netscape to enable greater interactivity in Web pages. It shares some characteristics with JAVA but is independent. It interacts with HTML, enabling dynamic content and motion.

Keyword - A word searched for in a search command. Keywords are searched in any order. Use spaces to separate keywords in simple keyword searching.

Links - These are the hypertext connections between Web pages. This is a synonym for hotlinks or hyperlinks.

RSS or RSS feeds - Short for "Really Simple Syndication" (a.k.a. Rich Site Summary or RDF Site Summary), refers to a group of XML based web-content distribution and republication (Web syndication) formats primarily used by news sites and weblogs (blogs). By subscribing to an RSS feed, you are alerted to new additions to the feed since you last read it. In order to read RSS feeds, you must use a "feed reader," which formats the XML code into an easily readable format (feed readers are to XML and RSS feeds as web browsers are to HTML and web pages).

Search Engine - This term refers to a program that helps users find information in text-oriented databases.

Spam – Refers to the flooding of the Internet with copies of the same message. Spam can come in the form of unsolicited e-mail, comments or messages posted on discussion forums and chat rooms.

Troll – Person who tries to disrupt conversation or communication online. Some trolls will post inflammatory or rude remarks in order to stir up controversy on message boards, discussion forums or chat rooms.

URL - This is the abbreviation for Uniform Resource Locator, the addressing system used in the World Wide Web and other Internet resources. The URL contains information about the method of access, the server to be accessed and the path of any file to be accessed.

USENET - Bulletin board-like network featuring thousands of "newsgroups." Google incorporates the historic file of Usenet Newsgroups (back to 1981) into its Google Groups. Yahoo Groups offers a similar service, but does not include the old "Usenet Newsgroups." Blogs are replacing some of the need for this type of community sharing and information exchange.

Web Page - An HTML document that is accessible on the Web.

World Wide Web - Also known as WWW or W3, the World Wide Web is a hypertext-based Internet service used for browsing Internet resources.

Sources:

Case Western Reserve University - <http://www.case.edu/help/webglossary.html>

UC Berkely - <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Glossary.html>