

'10 Point Active Jargon Buster'



1: Byte

A basic unit of measurement for pieces of information; the space required to store one character.

2: Megabyte

Unit of measurement for pieces of information: approximately 1 million bytes or a thousand kilobytes. Often shortened to Meg or M.

3: Gigabyte

Unit of measurement for pieces of information: approximately 1 billion bytes, 1 million kilobytes, or 1000 megabytes. Hard disk sizes are usually measured in gigabytes. This is often shortened to "GB", "Gig" or just G.

4: Processor

The nerve centre of the computer: everything flows through it. It is also called the CPU. The best known are Intel's Pentium and AMD's Athlon. The most important single specification on any PC is the speed of its processor, usually measured in megahertz (MHz), or gigahertz (GHz).

5: RAM: (Random Access Memory; pr. "ram")

The computer's main memory, which it uses to hold whatever you are currently working on. The contents of RAM are lost when the computer is switched off. Adding more RAM is often the most cost-effective upgrade for an ageing computer.

6: IP address (Internet Protocol address)

A unique number assigned to any computer connected to the internet, including yours, in the format 255.255.255.255. Each of the four blocks of numbers can be any value from 0 to 255. They can either be assigned permanently ("static IP") or per session ("dynamic IP"). Most ISPs assign them dynamically, i.e. when you connect to the internet.

7: ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line)

A method of connecting a computer to the internet over an ordinary phone line using Ethernet office networking technology instead of an ordinary modem, which produces a much faster (broadband) connection. It is described as Asymmetric because it is faster from internet to PC than the other way (also true of a 56K modem).

8: Modem: (Modulator/Demodulator)

A device for allowing computers to communicate over a phone line. This may be an expansion card or an external device plugged into one of the serial ports.

9: Firewall

Originally a dedicated computer between you and the internet, preventing hackers, spammers and similar undesirables from taking over your PC. This is now often just a program running on your PC, performing the same task. This is absolutely essential if you have an always-on internet connection such as ADSL or cable.

10: Phishing

An internet scam in which a forged message from a bank provides a link for you to go to their website and "confirm your details" - but the website is a fake, and if you do enter your details they will be used to steal all your money. Note that a legitimate email from your bank should be addressed to you personally rather than "Dear customer" etc, and will never ask you to enter your PIN.

Hopefully this helps though if you are still unsure of any of the terminology then please ask. We are also happy to explain any other terms and also provide a free report of your IT systems. Please contact Active on 01403 740400 for any help with your IT systems.

