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Glossary of Tech Terminology

Compiled by Webbmedia Group for Journalism and Communications

This glossary is frequently updated and also available at <http://www.webbmediagroup.com/research.htm>.

Basic Web Terms

Ajax (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML)

Pronunciation: \ 'ā- jaks \

Ajax is the name of a code that allows programming of a Web site so visitors to the site can grab content little by little as they access it. Using Ajax can greatly increase the utility of your site for users and decrease the load on servers. It can also make it harder to realize advertising dollars or measure certain types of user behavior than "flat" sites.

Architecture

Pronunciation: \ 'ār-kə- tek-chər \

The way a site has been developed and configured - all of the code, the commands, the backend structure - is referred to as the "architecture."

Backend

Pronunciation: \ 'bak- end \

A Web site's "backend" is literally everything that happens behind the graphic interface. It is the architecture, the databases, the archive, the content management system and the other elements that power the Web site.

Blog or Web log

Pronunciation: \ 'blōg, 'bläg \

A blog (short for Web log) is a simple way for you to publish content. Blog software gives you the ability to deliver new content to the Web and to archive all of your old content. New stories are typically called "entries" or "posts," and they are usually categorized (or "tagged") by a particular theme or keyword. Blogs are updated frequently and have been used as personal spaces that reflect the specific ideology or beliefs of the author. Blogs usually have RSS feeds (see below), allowing others to subscribe to the content and receive alerts about new posts.

Breadcrumb navigation

Pronunciation: \ 'bred 'krəm na-və- 'gā-shən \

Some Web sites offer navigation on each page, to show the path the user took to get there. For example, HOME > FEATURE > TODAY'S STORY. This is usually displayed beneath the top navigation but above the story content.

Cache

Pronunciation: \ 'kash \

Typically, when you visit a Web site, your browser will keep a copy of the pages you visit. It's faster to retrieve a document you've already viewed than to go back to the server to get a new one. Sometimes, you'll want to clear your cache for privacy, speed or other reasons.



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CSS (Cascading Style Sheet)

Pronunciation: \ 'sē 'es 'es\

CSS is used with HTML to set global colors, fonts, sizes and other elements of a site within the templates used as the shells within which all content is written or coded.

Cyberspace

Pronunciation: \ 'sī-bər- spās\

William Gibson in his novel *Neuromancer* coined the word “cyberspace” to mean the information flowing through and the culture associated with computer networks.

Domain name

Pronunciation: \dō- 'mān 'nām\

This is the name that represents IP addresses and individual Web pages. For example, microsoft.com is a domain name, while there are literally hundreds of pages associated with that domain. There are a limited number of suffixes that are associated with domain names. Those are .gov, .com, .edu and so forth.

Feed Reader (also called “aggregator”)

Pronunciation: \ 'fēd 'rē-dər\

A piece of software that collects the RSS feeds you subscribe to and displays them in a readable format. MyYahoo, Google Reader, NetNewsWire and Bloglines are popular feed readers.

FTP -- (File Transfer Protocol)

Pronunciation: \ ef-(.)tē- 'pē\

This protocol allows you to log into an Internet site to send or retrieve files of any kind. Web sites are populated using FTP.

Internet

Pronunciation: \ 'in-tər- net\

All of the computers that connect to networks that connect to each other make up the Internet. It evolved from the U.S. Defense Department’s ARPANET, developed in the 1960s and '70s. The Internet is not necessarily the same thing as the World Wide Web (see below).

Intranet

Pronunciation: \ 'in-trə- net\

An “intranet” refers to a private network of computers inside a company. Typically, user names and passwords are required to access intranets.

Java

Pronunciation: \ 'ja-və\

Java was developed by Sun Microsystems and is a programming language that enables users to download something from the Internet that will run as soon as the download begins. Calculators, animations and other small tools on Web sites are typically programmed using Java.

Javascript

Pronunciation: \ 'ja-və skript\

Javascript was developed by Netscape and is similar to Java. It enables dynamic content and interactivity in Web sites and interacts with HTML.



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Mashup

Pronunciation: \ 'mash 'əp \

Content that can be automatically created by combining content from two or more sources. Usually, mashups take advantage of syndicated content, such as a podcast or RSS feed, to do this. Right now, lots of people are creating map mashups using Google Maps.

Navigation

Pronunciation: \ 'na-və- 'gā-shən \

"Navigation" refers to the way the menus, buttons and toolbars work on a Web site.

Permalink

Pronunciation: \ 'pərmä 'lɪŋk \

Blogs have several posts within a single page with a general URL. Once that content is archived, the URL changes. Each blog post has a "permanent link."

RSS or RSS feeds

Pronunciation: \ 'är, 'es, 'es \

RSS stands for "really simple syndication." Blogs and podcasts use this format in order to deliver their content to Web sites outside the one they're hosted on. Any Web site can have RSS enabled. RSS is what differentiates an mp3 (audio file) from a podcast.

Podcast, Podcasting

Pronunciation: \ 'päd- ,kast \

A "podcast" is basically an audio or video file attached to an RSS feed. It is a way of distributing audio or video content using the Internet. You do not need an iPod to create or listen to a podcast.

Portal

Pronunciation: \ 'pör-təl \

A "portal" is a Web site that offers multiple areas of content. In the late 1990s, search engines such as Yahoo offered a portal – you could browse or "surf" certain subjects for content. Portal sites are making a comeback, as news organizations are offering their newspaper content as only one part of their main site, with other areas including citizen journalism Web sites, search engines, digital applications, personalized calendars, etc.

Script

Pronunciation: \skript \

In simple terms, a "script" is an instruction that commands a Web page to do something. It is a programming language that is used to create all or part of a Web page. Scripts tell Web crawlers and search engines what to do.

Spider

Pronunciation: \ 'spī-dər \

A "spider" is a program that is used by a search engine to roam the Internet. Spiders collect information on Web sites and databases along the way, and they report that information (a site is dead, site updates, etc.) back to the search engines.

SQL (Structured Query Language)

Pronunciation: \ 'es 'kyü 'eɪ \

SQL is a programming language that sends queries to databases to crunch data. Lots of sites and applications use SQL behind the scenes: blogs, widgets, Web sites.



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Taxonomy

Pronunciation: \tak-'sā-nə-mē\

This refers to the way a broad set of material has been classified. A good taxonomy will help to ensure that search engines are able to find and index content on a Web site. Taxonomy includes keywords, HTML code and text used on the site.

Toolbar

Pronunciation: \tül-'bār\

A toolbar lives within the browser window. It collects and displays the URL to various Web site addresses, documents, mp3s and any other content available online. Toolbars can be customized for content areas.

URL

Pronunciation: \yü-(.)är-'el, 'ər(-ə)\

URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator or Universal Resource Locator. The URL is the address of a document, file or Web site on the Internet. A URL is not the same thing as the domain (see above), though the domain is part of the URL.

Vlog or Video Blog

Pronunciation: \v 'lög\

A “vlog” is a blog that has been created using only video, or video with some text. It is updated regularly and is syndicated by RSS (see above). Vlogs can be published to Web sites, iTunes or via other tools such as YouTube.

Widget

Pronunciation: \wi-jət\

A “widget” refers to a stand-alone mini-application that lives on a Web site. Widgets can do just about anything: they can display advertisements, list other Web sites, display photos and applications like the weather or email or maps, and more.

Wiki

Pronunciation: \wi-kē\

A “wiki” is used for members of a group to create, develop, edit and modify a Web page collaboratively. They tend to be open in nature. Wikipedia is a famous wiki.

New Web Terms

Geospatial Web

Pronunciation: \geo-'spā-shəl\

This is a relatively new term. The “geospatial Web” merges geographical information with other data available on the Internet. It was likely introduced by Dr. Charles Herring, of the U.S. Department of Defense.

Location Aware Services

Pronunciation: \lō-'kā-shən ə-'wer 'sər-vəs\

ere

Push vs. Pull (email)

Pronunciation: \pūsh\ \púl\

On a mobile device that can receive email, the service is described either as “push” or “pull.” If email is automatically sent to and synched with a mobile device, it is “pushed.” If the user must manually check for his/her email, it is being “pulled.”



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Semantic Web

Pronunciation: \si-'man-tik\

This is the next iteration of the World Wide Web. Some refer to it as “Web 3.0,” while others define it as the “natural language Web.” The semantic Web makes it possible for machines to make connections without explicit human involvement. In 1999, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, one of the Internet’s inventors, described the semantic Web as follows: “I have a dream for the Web [in which computers] become capable of analyzing all the data on the Web – the content, links, and transactions between people and computers. A ‘Semantic Web’, which should make this possible, has yet to emerge, but when it does, the day-to-day mechanisms of trade, bureaucracy and our daily lives will be handled by machines talking to machines. The ‘intelligent agents’ people have touted for ages will finally materialize.”

SSL

Pronunciation: \es, 'es, 'el \

“SSL” stands for Secure Sockets Layer. It is now referred to as “TLS,” or “Transport Layer Security.” Both are protocols that insure the integrity and safety of data on the Internet.

UI

Pronunciation: \yü'ī\

“UI” stands for “user interface,” or what the user sees and interacts with on his/her screen.

Social Web Terms

Crowdsourcing

Pronunciation: \kraúdsórsin\

This refers to relying on the wisdom of a crowd to help answer a question or learn more about a particular topic. Typically, a user of a social network will “crowdsource” a subject by asking all of his/her friends and then responding to replies.

Delicious

Pronunciation: \di-'li-shəs\

Delicious.com is a Web site that enables users to save Web pages or sites as bookmarks, and then share those bookmarks with others.

Digg

Pronunciation: \dig\

Digg.com is a social network enabling users to post links to stories they find on the Web, and then allowing others to post comments or react to those stories. If a user likes a story, s/he can “digg it,” by giving it a high rating. The more a story is “dug” the higher it rises in the overall rankings for other users to discover and share.

DM (Direct Message)

Pronunciation: \dē,'em\

Various social networks allow users to send a direct message, or to “DM,” their friends/ followers. A user can only send and receive a DM to someone who both he follows and who follows him.

IM (Instant Message)

Pronunciation: \ī,'em\

Instant messaging preceded social networks. Using a client, such as iChat, Google Talk, ICQ or many others, a user can send a quick message to a friend and continue a conversation in real time. Today, it is possible to use text, audio and video via IM.



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Ping

Pronunciation: \ˈpiŋ\

Ping is a tool that tests whether another computer is reachable across a network. It is possible to test the speed of a computer, the safety of a computer and even the IP to determine the health of a network or computer connection. Because sending a ping takes seconds, people now use “ping” as a shorthand way to mean “get in touch with” or “contact.” For example, *Fred: “Are you available for lunch tomorrow?” Mary: “I’m not sure. Why don’t you ping me around noon to see if I’m free?”*

RT (or Retweet)

Pronunciation: \rēˈtwēt\

Using Twitter, a popular social networking service, someone’s post can be sent again. A user “retweets,” or sending out someone’s post throughout your own network.

Tweet

Pronunciation: \twēt\

A post on Twitter is referred to as a “tweet.”

Mobile

2G

Pronunciation: \ˈtū ˈjə\

This refers to the second generation of wireless technology standards that were developed.

3G

Pronunciation: \ˈthrē ˈjə\

This refers to the third generation of wireless technology standards that were developed. 3G networks are faster than 2G for data (Web, email).

Accelerometer

Pronunciation: \ik-ˌse-lə-ˈrā-mə-tər\

If a mobile phone has an accelerometer, it can detect movements, direction and speed. iPhones are built with accelerometers, so that when the phone is shaken it controls the direction of mapping, gaming and other applications.

Bluetooth

Pronunciation: \ˈblü ˈtūth\

Bluetooth is short-range wireless technology that connects devices, such as a mobile phone and headset, together.

EDGE

Pronunciation: \ˈej\

The EDGE network is an upgrade to the GSM/ GPRS network. It is not as fast as 3G technology. EDGE literally stands for “Enhanced Data for Global Evolution.”

GSM

Pronunciation: \jē ˈes ˈem\

GSM stands for “Global System for Mobile Communication,” and is the 2G mobile phone standard used around the world.



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Mobile WiMax

Pronunciation: \ 'mō-bəl 'wī 'maks\

WiMax is a long range, high speed wireless network. Mobile WiMax enables that network for mobile phones. It is emerging throughout the world as a new technical standard.

OLED

Pronunciation: \ 'ō 'el 'ē 'dē\

OLED stands for "Organic Light-Emitting Diode," and is the next-generation of display technology. It is currently being used in Japanese handsets, making screens thinner, lighter, brighter and easier to read.

Packet

Pronunciation: \ 'pa-kæt\

A packet is binary digits, data and other information that is transmitted during a mobile phone call.

SIM (Card)

Pronunciation: \sim\

SIM stands for "subscriber identity module." Mobile phones often contain SIM cards, which enclose tiny microchips that store address book, personal and other data for that phone's user. SIM cards also encrypt calls so that others may not easily listen in. On many phones, SIM cards can be easily removed and changed.

SMS

Pronunciation: \ 'es 'em 'es\

SMS stands for "short messaging service," and it allows users to send and receive very short (160 characters or less) text messages via their mobile phones.

Tethering

Pronunciation: \ 'te-thər\

"Tethering" refers to pairing the data connection in a mobile phone with a computer to enable the computer to go online.

VoIP

Pronunciation: \ 'vōip\

VoIP, or "voice over Internet protocol," is a technology to transmit voice via the Internet. It can be an inexpensive method of making long-distance phone calls.

WAP

Pronunciation: \ 'wap\

WAP stands for "Wireless Access Protocol" and is a technology that enables mobile phones to access the Internet.



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Analytics – Measuring a Site’s Use and Effectiveness

Hit

Pronunciation: \ 'hit\

A “hit” means a single request from a Web browser for a single item on a Web page. If a newspaper homepage has 20 graphics, it will record 21 “hits” every time someone visits: 20 for the graphics and one for the HTML page containing text and other elements. *“Hit” is not common terminology in today’s digital media discussions.*

Pageviews

Pronunciation: \ 'pāj'vyūs\

The number of times you load a particular page on a Web site is called the “pageview.” This includes all the graphics, links, and everything else on the page under a single URL.

Unique

Pronunciation: \yū-'nēk\

Each time you visit a site and your cache is empty, you are counted as a “unique” visitor. If you visit a Web site multiple times within the same day, you will only count once as a “unique” for that day, or multiple times in a month if monthly uniques are being measured, and so on.

SEO -- (Search Engine Optimization)

Pronunciation: \ 'es 'ē 'ō\

Sites are “optimized” to ensure that they rank as high as possible in search results.

Traffic

Pronunciation: \ 'tra-fik\

Traffic refers to the amount of people visiting a Web site and with what frequency.

Socialitics – What’s Happening to Your Content

Engagement

Pronunciation: \in-'gāj-mənt\

The measurement of what users are clicking on, how long they stay, how they forward content and in general how they interact with a Web site is called “engagement.”

Socialitics

Pronunciation: \ 'sō-shəl'li-tiks\

“Socialitics” is a term coined by Webbmedia Group and is a measurement of how content is being used, shared and absorbed throughout social networks.

Anatomy of a URL:

http://www. google.com/ resource.pdf
(1) (2) (3)

- (1) type of file (FTP, secure HTTP, etc.)
- (2) Domain Name (the location of the file on the Internet)
- (3) Name of the file and its extension (often has .html at the end)