Useful Technology Terms

t is easy to misinterpret some of the tech terms floating around web these days -- but now more than ever, everyone needs to be familiar with this terminology as it becomes more useful when reading and talking about technology!

BLOG

I am often asked about how to change an email address. Short for weblog, a blog is a regularly updated website or web page, typically one run by an individual or small group, that is written in an informal or conversational style. Blogs are defined by their format: a series of entries posted to a single page, usually in reverse-chronological order. Blogs generally represent the personality of the author or reflect the purpose of the Web site that hosts the blog. Topics sometimes include brief philosophical musings, commentary on Internet and other social issues, and links to other sites the author favors, especially those that support a point being made on a post.

BOOKMARK

A bookmark (or a "favorite") is a placeholder that you can use for web pages. You would bookmark something because:

1. You want to return to the page or file later
2. You want to recommend the page or file to someone else

Bookmarks/Favorites can be made using your right mouse click menu, or using the menus/toolbars at the top of your web browser. Bookmarks/Favorites can also be made on your Mac or Windows computer files.

COOKIES

Cookies can be used for many things, but the simplest case is just remembering who you are. A cookie is nothing more than some information a website can save on your computer that your browser provides back to that same website the next time you return. Ever made a return visit to a website like Amazon and seen content tailored to your user preferences? That's because on your first visit, a cookie was installed. When you came back, the website server read your cookie and recognized you.

DNS

"Domain name server." Servers that translates web addresses into one or more IP addresses. This is why you can enter Google.com instead of having to remember that the IP address is 74.125.224.72.

DOWNLOAD

Downloading is a broad term that describes when you make a personal copy of something you find on the Internet or World Wide Web. Commonly, downloading is associated with songs, music, and software files (e.g. "I want to download a new musical ringtone for my cell phone", or "I want to download the new version of iTunes"). The larger the file you are copying, the longer the download may take to transfer to your computer.

HTML

"Hyper-text markup language." The language used to direct the architecture of any website, landing pages, and emails. HTML lays out the structure of a website, from the title and first header, to a bulleted list, to the footer.

IP ADDRESS

"Internet Protocol address." A numerical label assigned to each device participating in a computer network that uses the Internet Protocol for communication.

ISP

"Internet service provider." An organization (commercial, community-owned, nonprofit, or otherwise privately owned) that provides internet services.

MALWARE

Malware is a term for any software that gets installed on your machine and performs unwanted tasks, often for some third party's benefit. Malware programs can range from being simple annoyances (pop-up advertising) to causing serious computer invasion and damage (e.g., stealing passwords and data or infecting other machines on the network). Additionally, some malware programs are designed to transmit information about your Web-browsing habits to advertisers or other third party interests, unbeknownst to you.

PHISHING

Phishing is very much like fishing, except that you're the fish, and that threatening email is the bait. If you bite, you run the very real risk of account or identity theft and all the hassle that entails. Phishing is, essentially, an email message that tries to trick you into taking some action by fooling you

into thinking that the message comes from someone official when it does not. Phishing is the use of convincing-looking emails and web pages to lure you into typing your account numbers and passwords/PINs. Often in the form of fake eBay web pages, fake PayPal warning messages, and fake bank login screens, phishing attacks can be very convincing to anyone who is not trained to watch for the subtle clues. As a rule, smart users distrust any email link that says "you should login and confirm this". Are you concerned that an email may be a phishing attempt? If so, just delete it! Or, go to the site in question manually. Use your own bookmark, or type what you know to be the correct URL into your browser, and log in to your account as you normally would. If there's something you need to do or verify, then you'll probably see it then. And if you're still not sure, then give the institution a call or contact their support line or search their support site. Trust me, they'd much rather have you ask than have to deal with the possibility of identity or account theft.

PLUGIN/PLUG-IN

A software extension that adds a specific feature to an existing software application. You've probably heard of plugins in the context of web browsers to add new features like watching online videos, for example. Have you ever enabled Adobe Flash Player, Microsoft Silverlight or QuickTime Player on your internet browser? Those are plugins.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is the broad term for any online tool that enables users to interact with thousands of other users. Instant messaging and chatting are common forms of social media, as are blogs with comments, discussion forums, video-sharing and photo-sharing websites. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are all social media sites.

TABBED BROWSING

Take full advantage of tabbed browsing using any Internet browser. While reading an article or browsing a website, you may come across a link that interests you. Any link to another page can be opened in a new tab so it does not interrupt your reading. To perform this action, hold down the Ctrl key and left-click the link.

URL

"Uniform resource locator." Also known as a web address, a URL is a specific character string that refers to a resource. It's displayed on the top of a web browser inside an "address" bar, such as http://naplesmachelp.com/about/

Jeff Bohr
Naples Mac Help
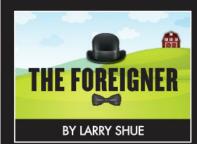239.595.0482 | jeff@jeffbohr.com