



Glossary of Terms

Western Sullivan Public Library
Public Computer Center

Computer Terms

The following terms are used throughout the Public Computer Center curriculum to provide an overview of basic computer terminology. This handout may be updated occasionally and is available at the PCC of each branch.

Terms	Definition
<i>Address Bar</i>	A location at the top of Window's Explorer that displays the location (or address) of information, also known as a Breadcrumb Trail.
<i>Breadcrumb Trail</i>	A listing of the User's current location which shows every Folder and Sub-Folder they have Clicked through. For example: This Breadcrumb Trail depicts that the User is navigating through the "Computer" Folder and currently looking at the "OS (C:) Hard Drive" Folder within it.
<i>CD/DVD Drive</i>	Allows computer to read from and possibly write to a CD (Compact Disc) or DVD (Digital Video Disc).
<i>Click</i>	Pushing the primary mouse button once.
<i>CPU</i>	Central Processing Unit – the computer's main element, performs the basic operations of the system.
<i>Desktop</i>	The customizable display area you see when Windows starts.
<i>Double-Click</i>	Pushing the primary mouse button twice quickly.
<i>Drag and Drop</i>	Moving an item by selecting it, dragging it, and dropping it into the location you wish to move it.
<i>Folder</i>	A virtual container that imitates a real-life Folder. It is not an actual program, and opening it will only open a Windows Explorer screen showing the contents of the Folder. Folders can be created by the User to organize their own documents or favorite programs.
<i>Hard Drive</i>	Where information is stored in a computer long term.
<i>Icon</i>	An image representing a computer component or program.
<i>Memory</i>	Accumulates CPU information to allow for complex calculations.
<i>Minimize</i>	Hides the Window with only its Icon visible in the Taskbar.
<i>Maximize</i>	Enlarges the Window to fill the screen.
<i>Monitor</i>	Displays computer output generated by video card.
<i>Motherboard</i>	Circuit board that connects the computer's components to allow them to communicate with one another.
<i>Mouse</i>	A pointing device that detects two-dimensional movement.
<i>Operating System</i>	The underlying computer program that runs the computer and provides the environment in which a user is able to perform tasks. The most common Operating System (OS) is Microsoft Windows, of which XP, Vista, & Windows 7 are all examples.
<i>Recycle Bin</i>	Location in Windows where deleted items are stored until permanently deleted.
<i>Restore</i>	Reduces from Maximized to only take up part of the screen.
<i>Right-Click</i>	Pushing the secondary mouse button.



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<i>Screen Tips</i>	Small boxes that appear with a description of any buttons or Icons when the cursor is held over them for one or more seconds.
<i>Scroll Bar</i>	A narrow vertical or horizontal bar that allows you to view additional items in a list that do not fit in the space of a window.
<i>Shortcut</i>	A combination of key strokes that allow for a commonly-used action to be performed quickly. Typically involves holding down the Control "Ctrl" Key while pushing another button. Represented by [Ctrl + (Letter)].
<i>Start Button</i>	A button in the lower, left corner of the screen that opens the Start Menu.
<i>Start Menu</i>	A menu of programs that can be launched. It is also where you turn the computer on and off.
<i>Sound card</i>	Translated digital information into sound.
<i>Sub-Folder</i>	Any Folder that is located within another Folder.
<i>Taskbar</i>	The customizable bar at the bottom of the computer screen that contains a button for each open program, as well as the Start button and the Tray / Status Area.
<i>Title Bar</i>	The upper most portion of a Window.
<i>Touchpad</i>	Type of mouse that moves the cursor based on touching the users fingers to the pad.
<i>Track Stick</i>	A type of mouse that operates more like a joy stick. It sits in between the G, H, and B keys on the keyboard which allows cursor movement without moving the hands from the typing position.
<i>Tray / Status Area</i>	Area on the right side of the taskbar which shows various system information, such as time, battery power, and volume.
<i>User Accounts</i>	Individual, customized settings for different people on one computer. Can include different Desktop appearances, permissions, files, and more.
<i>Video card</i>	Converts digital information into images.
<i>Wallpaper</i>	Images or themes that can be chosen as the background for your Desktop.
<i>Webcam</i>	A video capture device connected to a computer.
<i>Window</i>	A program's container, which can be moved anywhere on the Desktop, or changed in size by the User. Multiple Windows can be open at the same time.
<i>Windows Explorer</i>	Microsoft Windows' default navigation system, which serves as a map, allowing users to search for programs and files anywhere in the computer's system.