TECH TALK
IT Jargon Buster

Our comprehensive A–Z guide to the terminology commonly used in conversations with IT professionals.

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Even a few words of a foreign language can prove to be immensely useful in an unfamiliar place.

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We recognise that many individuals find IT jargon to be an unfamiliar language, and therefore, we strive to limit our usage of technical terms when collaborating with our clients.

Furthermore, you may already be dealing with a considerable amount of office jargon, and it is understandable if you do not wish to be burdened with additional industry-specific terminology.

In today's world that heavily relies on technology, IT terms are becoming more common in everyday conversations. While we strive to minimise technical jargon when working with clients, having some familiarity with IT lingo can save time when seeking IT support or asking questions about your business technology.

That's where our new guide comes in handy. It's an easy-to-use A-Z reference of some of the most frequently used IT terms you might encounter when talking to an IT expert. While it may not cover everything, it's a great starting point to get up to speed with the language of technology.

First things first...

A

Adware
Software that automatically downloads adverts when you're online, such as banner ads and pop-ups

AI (Artificial Intelligence)
Systems and devices that simulate human behaviours and decisions. This can include creating systems, language processing, speech recognition, writing text and machine vision

Antivirus
Software that identifies and removes viruses from your device. Also known as anti-malware

API (Application Programming Interface)
Software that allows two or more applications or programs to communicate with each other and share information

B

Backdoor
A vulnerability in a security system that allows unwanted access to files and data

Bandwidth
The maximum amount of data you can send and receive in a given amount of time, over an internet connection. Imagine a big pipe compared with a small pipe

Botnet
A network of private computers infected with malware and controlled as a group to spread the virus further

C

Cache
A temporary file that stores information on your device to speed things up. For instance a web cache might remember the last thing you were doing so it can reload a page where you left off

(The) Cloud
Data storage and computing power that lives on remote servers, which are accessed via the internet

Corrupted
An unstable data file

Cybersecurity
Any and all security measures put in place to protect your devices, systems and network from cyber attack

D

Darkweb
A hidden part of the internet, accessed using special software. It's rife with criminal activity. This is where stolen data, such as credit card details, is often sold

Data breach
A security incident where private data is viewed or stolen by unauthorised persons

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DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service)
A type of cyber attack that harms or stops a network by flooding it with data from numerous other devices

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Downtime
The period of time a network or systems are offline (or 'down'), preventing the normal running of a business

E

Encryption
The process of encoding data to make it unreadable without the right access information - usually a password, passkey or authentication app

F

Firewall
A security measure that controls what data can come in and out of your network

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FTP (File Transfer Protocol
Protocol used for transferring files from a server to a computer across a network. This is usually authenticated with usernames and passwords

G

GIF (Graphic Interchange Format)
A type of image file than can be either animated or static

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Gigabyte (GB)
Unit of data equal to one thousand million bytes. A typical movie download might be between 1 and 4 GB

H

Hardware
The physical devices in your IT world – computers, printers, phones, tablets

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Hotspot (Wi-Fi)
A physical location where you can gain internet access via Wi-Fi

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HTML (Hypertext Markup Language)
The universal language of the internet, used to structure web pages, tell your web browser how to display them and create links between them

I

Infrastructure
Your entire system – your network, servers, and all your devices

iOS
Operating system manufactured by Apple and used exclusively on its hardware

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IP (Internet Protocol) address
A unique number that identifies a device connected to the internet

J

Java
A widely used programming language used in millions of applications and devices around the world

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Javascript
Unrelated to Java, Javascript is used everywhere on the internet. It's a programming language used within all web browsers to perform a whole range of functions

K

Keylogger
Software used by cybercriminals to record the keys pressed on a keyboard. This information can be used to access login credentials and other sensitive information

L

LAN (Local Area Network)
A network of connected devices that spans a small area, such as your office or home

M

Malware
Malicious software, a type of virus, designed to infect your system and disrupt, damage, or gain access to your device, server or network. This can lead to the unauthorised access or theft of data and private information

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Megabyte
Unit of data equal to one million forty-eight thousand, five hundred and seventy bytes

N

NOS (Network Operating System)
A specialised operating system for a network device, like a router or firewall

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NTFS (Network Transfer File System)
A file system used by Windows for storing and retrieving files on a hard disk

O

OS (Operating System)
Software that manages a computer's basic functions, and provides common services for computer programs

P

Phishing
Scam emails that pretend to be from a credible source and aim to steal personal information and/or login credentials

Protocol
The set of rules that allows different devices to communicate with each other

Proxy Server
A server that sits between a device requesting information, and the server providing that information. For example, it could be a gateway between your laptop and the internet, that stops hackers from reaching your network

R

RAM (Random Access Memory)
A form of temporary computer memory that's usually used to store working data

Ransomware
Malware that encrypts sensitive data and demands a ransom for its release (ransoms should never be paid – data is often never properly released, or is only partially returned)

Router
A device that directs data to the right places in a network

S

Server
A computer or program that manages access to a network and holds data in one location for multiple users to access

Software
Programs and apps that make devices work

Spyware
Malware that spies on the actions you take on your device. This can be used to steal data or passwords, or listen in to conversations

T

Trojan
A form of malware that looks harmless but conceals a virus

Troubleshoot
To analyse a problem with a view to solving it (something we do a lot of!)

U

UAC (User Account Control)
A feature that only allows authorised users to make changes to a system or device

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USB
A type of widely used cable that connects or charges devices. This could be a keyboard connecting to a computer, or a flash drive transferring data

V

Virus
A malicious computer program or code that can copy itself and spread throughout a network, corrupting or damaging data and systems

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VPN (Virtual Private Network)
A more secure way of connecting to a company's network remotely, or using the internet over a public Wi-Fi connection

W

WAN (Wide Area Network)
A network of devices that are connected across a wider area than a LAN, and allows you to connect to smaller networks

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WLAN (Wireless Local Area Network)
A wireless network that connects two or more devices, creating a LAN

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Worm
A type of malware that replicates itself to spread to other devices across a network without human activation

Z

Zip File
A file that compresses its contents to create a smaller file that's easier to share or store

We hope this has helped.

Yes, we operate in a technical world with some jargon that can be off-putting if it's not something you're used to talking about.

But your business IT is there to make your life easier and more efficient. We take a lot of pride in our ability to work with our clients, helping them to understand their systems without sending their heads into a spin.

So if your current IT support provider can't do that – or you don't have support you can call on for help and advice whenever you need them – we'd love to have a chat to find out how we can help you.

Get in touch anytime to arrange a no obligation conversation. You're guaranteed it will be jargon-free.

This is how you can get in touch with us:
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We make IT easy