Students may use this alphabetized list of 37 basic computer and Internet terms as a reference.
Glossary of Computer and Internet Terms for Older Adults

This glossary for older adults was prepared by the National Institute on Aging.

COMPUTER AND INTERNET TERMS

1 Address Box

A narrow, rectangular box in the browser window where you can type in a web address. Typing in the web address in the address box and hitting Enter on the keyboard will take you to a website.

Address Box

2 Back Arrow

This arrow, often green, is found at the top of most browsers. When you click on the back arrow, it takes you back – in order – through all of the web pages you’ve seen. (Sometimes called the back button.)
3 Browse
To explore a website or a number of websites by scanning and reading information.

4 Browser
Software, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, used to find information on the Web. The most visible part of a browser sits at the top of the computer screen, above the web page.

5 Button
Small box that looks like it’s being depressed when you select it. Buttons can turn on (and turn off) many types of functions on the Internet.

6 Clicking
Pressing and releasing a button on a mouse to select or activate the area on the screen where the cursor is pointing. Usually, you click on the left side of the mouse (called a left click). For more advanced functions, you click on the right side of the mouse (called a right click).
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7 Computer or CPU (central processing unit)
The main part, or “brains” of a computer. The CPU interprets and carries out program instructions.

8 Cursor
A small image on the screen indicating where you are pointing; the mouse controls the movements of the cursor. The cursor can appear in different forms, including:

- An arrow, which indicates where you are positioned on the screen.
- An I-beam, often blinking, which marks a place on the screen where you can enter or select text.
- A pointing hand, which indicates that you are hovering over a link. (See Link.)
- An hourglass, which indicates that the computer is doing a task. You must wait until it disappears before you can proceed.
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**9 Desktop**
The information that appears on the computer soon after the computer is turned on. The desktop contains a number of icons, or images, that you can click on to start programs. (See *icon*.)

**10 Dialog Box**
A special box that appears when the computer needs additional information in order to carry out a task. This dialog box appears in a quiz on the NIHSeniorHealth website whenever you try to advance to the next quiz question without answering the current one. (You must click on “ok” to have a dialog box disappear.)
11 **Drop Down List**

A list of items from which you can make selections.

A. When you first see a box containing a drop down list, the box will be empty or may display only a single item.

B. To see a list of choices, left click on the arrow in the box and hold. The list of choices will display above or below the box.

C. Keeping your left index finger pressed on the mouse, move the cursor to the desired choice (In this case, a quantity of 3 booklets).

D. Release your left index finger from the mouse, and your selection will appear in the box. The full list of choices will disappear.

12 **FAQs**

Stands for Frequently Asked Questions. These are commonly asked questions and answers that appear on many websites.
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13 **Forward Arrow**
This arrow is present at the top of most browsers. When you click on the forward arrow, it takes you forward to a page you just left and is opposite in direction from pages the back arrow takes you through. When the arrow is gray, the forward function is inactive.

14 **Go Online**
To go on the Internet.

15 **Hardware**
The physical parts of a computer system.

16 **Home Page**
The first thing you see when you come to a website, or the opening page of a website. It provides information about the site and directs you to other pages on the site.
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17 **Icon**
A small picture or image representing a command (such as print), a file, or a program. When you click on an icon, you start a command, open a file, or launch a program.

18 **The Internet**
A vast, international collection of computer networks that transfers information. A combination of the words international and network. Websites and e-mail are part of the Internet.

19 **Keyboard**
The keys that operate the computer, very much like a typewriter, with extra keys for special functions.

20 **Link (or hyperlink)**
A highlighted or underlined feature on a web page that, when clicked, will take you to another web page. A link most often appears as underlined words or an image.

One sure way to tell if something is a link or not: Whenever your cursor turns into a pointing hand, the image or word you are pointing to is a link.
21 **Log On**
To gain access to a computer system or to a page on a website by entering a password or user ID.

22 **Menu**
A list of options, or topics, on a website that users can choose from.

23 **Monitor**
The part of a computer system that contains the computer screen, where information is displayed.
**24 Mouse**
A small hand-held device that controls the position of the cursor on the computer screen. Movements of the mouse correspond to movements of the cursor. (See **Cursor**.)

**25 Mouse Pad**
The pad on which you move the mouse.

**26 Navigate**
To move through a website or through various websites.

**27 Scroll**
To move text or other information on a computer screen up, down, or sideways, with new information appearing as the old disappears.
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**28 Scroll Bar**

A narrow, rectangular bar on the right edge and bottom edge of a web page that lets you move the page to see more of the information it contains. The scroll bar on the right moves the web page up and down, and the scroll bar on the bottom moves the web page right and left.

**29 Search Box**

A small rectangular blank space on a web page where you can type in a word or phrase to look for information. Clicking on the button next to the search box (or hitting the Enter key on the keyboard) will take you to a page where that information is located.
Site Map
A list of the contents on a website, similar to an index in a book. A link to the site map is usually found at the top or bottom of the home page.

Software
The instructions that tell the computer and computer networks what to do. Software is installed inside the computer.

Speakers
Devices that allow you to hear sound from the computer.
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Window
A framed area of a computer screen that appears in front of the web page. Sometimes the appearance of a window means that you have entered another website. At other times, it means you may still be on the same website.

The World Wide Web
Also known as the Web, it is a system that lets you access information on the Internet. People often use the term Web to refer to the Internet, but they are not exactly the same thing. The World Wide Web operates over the Internet, and it is the most widely used part of the Internet.