

What Are We Talking About?

A Partial Glossary of Mac/Apple Terminology

- active window The window in front, with the glossy red, yellow, and green buttons glowing, where anything you type will show up or any action you take will occur. Click on any part of a window to make it active.
- AIFF Audio Interchange File Format, used to save a sound sampled at specified intervals. Larger (and perhaps more accurate sound reproduction) than MP3 files.
- Airport Apple's wireless networking of Macs with each other or the Internet.
- alert box A box that appears on the screen with a message from your Mac. It won't go away, and you can't do anything else, until you click OK.
- alias A copy of a file's icon that you can double-click to open the parent file. Handy to open applications that need to be kept with their helper files in an inconvenient location. The items in the Dock and in the left column of Finder windows are similar.
- antialiased Smoothed out.
- Apple menu The menu that rolls down when you click-and-hold on the black apple at the left end of your *menu bar* (which see). Its items, like those in the Dock (which see) are always available to you, regardless of what program you are using.
- AppleTalk The language older Macs used to connect to and direct operation of certain attached equipment.
- application Program (or *software*), such as TextEdit, that you use to perform tasks on the Mac.
- ASCII Pronounced *AS-key*, it indicates a basic text file without formatting. If you are sending a file to someone whose equipment is older or PC, he will probably be able to open a document in this format but might not be able to open a document saved in your word processor's usual format. In TextEdit and most other word processors you can choose which format to save your document in (see also *text* and *RTF*).
- background A program can be running, and working, in the background on your Mac while you are actually working on something else.

backing up	Making a copy of a document, or the contents of your hard drive, so that you won't lose your data if your Mac or its hard drive fails (see also <i>Time Machine</i>).
baud rate (bps)	How fast your modem is transferring information to and from your Internet Service Provider (ISP). 56 kbps (thousand bits per second) is tops for standard phone hookups (even if your modem could do better, the phone line can't); 1.5 Mbps (million!) is a low rate for downloading on DSL or cable, which for some users now reaches 45 Mbps.
BBS	(Electronic) Bulletin Board System. DVMUG's runs on FirstClass software.
beta, beta test	Not-quite-ready-for-prime-time software and sometimes hardware tested by people who are willing to risk the occasional crash to find the bugs that caused them.
bit	Bits are the basic, tiny components of computer programs, documents, etc. They aggregate to become bytes (each containing 8 bits), kilobytes, megabytes, gigabytes...
bitmap	A collection of dots that makes a picture, or a letter...a way for your computer to remember how a drawing or photo looks.
Bluetooth	Short-range radio connection to communicate between your computer and, say, a wireless printer or other peripheral. Good up to about 30 feet.
boot	To start up your computer.
bps	Bits per second; see <i>baud rate</i> .
browser	Internet browser—the program that allows your computer to explore the Internet. The major browsers for the Mac are Safari, which comes with OS X; and Google's Chrome and Mozilla's Firefox, which are free for the download. Chrome sometimes works for sites that don't behave properly in Safari.
bug	A software programming error that makes your computer crash or otherwise misbehave.
bus	Wiring connecting components inside your computer.
button	Apart from the physical buttons your computer has, like the one on the mouse and the power button, your screen will occasionally show buttons in a box on the screen where you have to click to make choices (<i>Don't Save</i> , <i>Cancel</i> , or <i>Save</i> , for

example). Typically the box the buttons are in won't go away until you click *something*.

byte	See <i>bit</i>
cable	If not a physical wire, one of the two fast Internet services available to consumers. The signal is carried by your television cable connection to a cable modem, and is an extra-cost service. The other fast connection is DSL (which see).
cache	A spot where the Mac keeps stuff it thinks it will need again. Using a cache speeds up your Mac since it doesn't have to keep going back to the hard disk or the Internet for bits of information it needs to operate.
CAD	Computer-aided design.
Caps Lock	Makes all the letters capitals; it's easy to hit by mistake when reaching for the Shift or Tab key. Pressing it again turns it off, or you can disable it in System Preferences > Keyboard.
card	A printed circuit board that adds a capability to your computer.
CD-R	A CD on which you can record your own material with a "burner" to make a CD-ROM. See also <i>DVD</i> . Apple feels that these technologies are on the way out, as availability of content over the Internet improves.
CD-RW	Like a CD-R except that you can overwrite old material; not as reliable.
channel	Individual sound source.
click	Press and release the mouse button.
clip art	Drawings and photos available on CDs or from the Web, or within some programs such as <i>Word</i> that you can use to illustrate your own documents.
Clipboard	When you cut or copy something, it is kept on the Clipboard until you cut or copy something else, or turn off your computer.
Cloud	Web-based services, software, and heaven-knows-what that you get from the Internet, through free download or subscription. Apple's iCloud is our very own. It will sync your Mac, iPhone, and iPad.

clock rate or speed	The gigahertz (GHz) of a computer's processor gives a rough idea of the relative speed compared to other computers; more is, of course, better, all other things being equal (which they never are). Apple's GHz is often lower than that of competing Windows machines, but Macs can accomplish some tasks far faster nevertheless. Go figure!
clone	An exact copy of a graphic, document, or hard drive.
Codec	Software that determines how an audio or video file is c oded and d ecoded.
command	You give them to your Mac by pressing the Command key and, while holding it down, another key or two—for example, Command-P for printing a document, Command-S for saving it, etc. (A selection of key commands shows in program menus.)
Control key	Displays contextual menus that can help speed up your work. In some programs, lets you give instructions or commands.
copy	When you use this command (in the Edit menu in virtually all Mac applications), you can place a copy of the selected text or graphic on the <i>Clipboard</i> (which see) and then can <i>paste</i> (which see) it into another location or document.
CPU	Central processing unit—your Mac's "brains." This is the heart of your computer.
crash	A program unexpectedly quits, or your mouse freezes and will not respond to your clicks or movements. Sometimes it's a bug, an imperfection in the program. Sometimes it's something you did, such as issuing commands faster than your Mac could digest them. In OS X, all you have to do is force-quit the program (from the Apple menu, or use the key command Command-option-escape)— and reboot it, and all you've lost is unsaved changes (this is why you should save early and often). If crashes happen consistently when you are doing a particular operation, check the software vendor's Web site to see if there's an upgrade to the program to fix your problem, or post the problem on the DVMUG BBS for assistance.
CRT	Old monitor, pretty much replaced by flat-panel screens. Basically, it's a TV set being operated by your computer. The letters stand for Cathode Ray Tube.
cursor	The pointer on the screen. You control it by moving your mouse or trackball. It's confusing in some programs because you get TWO cursors—the pointer plus an I-beam, which shows you

where your next typing is going to appear. The I-beam can be moved by the little arrows on your keyboard as well as by clicking somewhere else with your mouse.

- cut
(Command-X) By using this command (in the Edit menu in virtually all Mac applications), you can remove the selected copy or graphic. It will be saved to the *Clipboard* (which see) so that you can *paste* (which see) it into another location or another document. On the other hand, if you use the Delete key to remove the selected item, it's gone for good (unless you use the Undo command right away).
- daisy chain A collection of additional equipment (scanner, extra hard drive, CD burner, etc.) plugged into each other, with one plugged into your Mac. You can daisy-chain FireWire or Thunderbolt devices; to use multiple USB devices, you need a *hub* (which see).
- data Any information on your hard disks (or CDs, DVDs, iCloud or other online account). You create new data when you type, draw, or make your Mac calculate, etc.
- database An electronic collection of information that can be manipulated in a variety of ways.
- data transfer rate How fast data moves from one point to another, inside your computer or to and from peripheral equipment. Also called *throughput*.
- default The settings that the factory or software manufacturer installed in your computer. Often they can be changed or supplemented to make your Mac work better or help it perform specific tasks.
- defragment To place all the bits of a file in one spot so your computer can access it more quickly. Your hard drive may speed up if you use a utility to defragment it; sometimes this helps in projects such as editing movies, which involve large files. See *fragment*.
- Delete key Similar to the backspace key on a typewriter, but "disappears" the letter rather than just going back over it. Some keyboards also have a "forward delete" key or keystroke combination so the next letter, rather than the previous letter, disappears.
- deselect See *select*
- desktop What you see when your computer starts up—the screen, icons, Dock, etc. Also the gray, colored, or photo background on your

	screen. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with the Finder.
Desktop file	A housekeeping file where your Mac stores information about your icons, where your files are located, which programs open them, etc. If it becomes corrupted—you can sometimes tell, because your desktop icons turn into generic pieces of “paper,” rather than the little individual pictures you’re used to—you can rebuild it by holding down the Command and Option keys at startup, but this seldom happens in OS X.
desktop publishing	Creating newsletters, magazines, and books on your computer.
dialog box	A box that pops up when you need to specify how many copies to print, what to name the document you are saving, etc.
digital zoom	The digital camera estimates what the subject would look like if it were bigger. Inferior, in digital camera specifications, to “optical zoom.”
digitize	Making sound or pictures into files that your Mac can work with; converting from an analog (vinyl records or audio tapes, or film) to a digital format.
dimmed	See <i>grayed out</i>
disk cache	A chunk of memory set aside for things that your Mac uses a lot, so it won't have to keep getting them from the hard drive. Can speed up processing.
disk drive	The gadget that reads what's on your disk. For a hard drive, the magnetic medium and the disk drive are one unit; you insert the disk into a CD disk, or optical, drive.
document	A file that you create using an application (or <i>program</i> or <i>software</i>).
documentation	User's guide or manual. Most are now on screen rather than on paper, but O'Reilly Press, which gives user group members a 35% discount, has been publishing a series of Missing Manuals; they and Peachpit Press produce a variety of “how-to” books for users at all levels; Fry's in Concord carries a fair number of them.
Dock	The new-in-OS X combination of the old Application Menu, Control Strip, Apple Menu, and Launcher. Shows what applications are open, lets you access or change applications quickly, and has a Way Cool Genie Effect when windows slide

into it. Icons of open applications will always appear in the Dock, but you can also put your favorites there for easy access.

DOS	Disk Operating System used by older non-Macintosh computers.
dot matrix	Apple's old Imagewriter and similar printers that created letters and images using small pins striking a typewriter-like ribbon, technology now completely outmoded by inkjet and laser printers.
dots per inch	AKA dpi. The more on your screen or document, the clearer the picture. Old Macs screen probably had 72 dpi; current screens may have 2560-by-1600 resolution or better; inkjet and laser printers can print 300 or 600 or even more.
dot pitch	The distance between pixels on your screen. The further, the granier the picture.
double-click	Depress and release your mouse button twice in quick succession <i>without</i> moving your mouse. The speed at which your Mac accepts your clicks can be adjusted in System Preferences > Mouse or Trackpad. Ordinarily, single-clicking on an item or icon selects it and double-clicking opens it, but single-clicking a <i>button</i> will make something happen, and single-clicking an item in your Dock will open it.
download	A file transferred from one computer to another. The receiving computer is downloading; the sending computer is uploading. When you download something from the Internet, the material is coming over your telephone or cable line from the remote computer, usually a server.
dpi	See <i>dots per inch</i>
drag	To position the cursor on an object on your computer screen and move the mouse while holding down the mouse button. Some programs support "drag and drop"—you can drag selected text or objects from one part of a document to another, from one document to another, or to your desktop.
drawing program	A program that saves the circles, lines, and rectangles that you create in it as objects, rather than as a collection of screen dots, so that it prints out more smoothly than objects created in paint programs or as <i>bitmaps</i> (which see).
driver	Software that tells the Mac how to operate a piece of added equipment, such as a scanner or printer.

drop-down program	When you click on an item in the menu bar (which see) a list of commands drops down. The ones that you may choose are black; the ones that don't apply to what you're doing are gray. Remember that you must select the icon or item that you want to modify before you can click on the command to modify it.
DSL	Digital Subscriber Line, a way of "splitting" your telephone line to carry voice messages and your computer's data at the same time. A DSL connection is much faster than the conventional telephone modem connection but also more expensive. DSL connections are generally only available within about three miles of the telephone switching office or a "booster" switch.
DVD	Digital Versatile (or Video) Disk, the favored format for making disks containing videos but also usable for large amounts of data. A video burned on to such a disk can, usually, be read by an ordinary DVD player. DVD disks are more expensive than CD disks but hold much more.
e-mail or email	The "e" is for electronic; messages that you send with your computer over the Internet to somebody else's computer.
Enter key	Hitting it usually does the same thing as hitting the Return key except in word processing documents.
EPS	Encapsulated Postscript. A type of graphics file that gives sharp, well defined details when printed on a PostScript™ laser printer
Ethernet	A way of connecting Macs to each other or to the Internet via a DSL or cable modem. Older versions allowed 10 Mbps to be transferred; newer ones are up to 1000 Mbps. Now essentially passé, replaced by USB and Thunderbolt.
expansion slot	Socket for adding a circuit board inside the Mac (or on the edges of some laptops) to add functions such as networking, accelerators, etc.
fax	You can send and receive faxes on your Mac if it's hooked up to a phone line; you can buy a modem for Intel Macs, which don't include one. Outgoing faxes can be documents created on the Mac or scanned in; incoming faxes are <i>PICT</i> or <i>TIFF</i> (which see) files and cannot be opened in a word processor. It's probably more trouble than it's worth in these days of easy attachments to emails, and current Macs don't readily support it.

field	A blank space in a database to be filled in. Your Address Book/Contacts is a simple database, Filemaker Pro a fancier one.
file	A program or document on your computer; represented by an <i>icon</i> (which see)
file compression	Squishing a file with with the Finder's Compress command so that it doesn't take up as much room; often done to send files more quickly over the Internet. Compressed files that you receive will usually open with a double-click, assuming you have the same software.
file sharing	You can make your files and other items available to others on your network and vice versa in System Preferences > Sharing. When you're done sharing, turn it off to increase your Mac's security.
Finder	The program that manages the <i>Desktop</i> (which see).
firewall	A security device, software and/or hardware, that prevents "outsiders" from accessing your Mac network over the Internet. You can turn on the OS X firewall in your Mac's Sharing System Preference pane.
FireWire	Apple's name for a fast connection for older external hard drives, CD burners, digital cameras and camcorders, etc. Being replaced by Thunderbolt and USB connections.
firmware	A modification to your computer's ROM (read-only memory). Formerly ROM was hard-wired into your computer; on newer Macs it can be modified by new software.
Fkey	Function keys, the row of keys above the numbers at the top your keyboard.
flash drive	A small drive that fits in a USB port; also called a thumb drive.
folder	Just like the manila variety: You keep stuff in it—documents, applications, other folders. To put something in one, just drag the item's icon into its window or on top of the folder's own icon. The Mac's hierarchal folder system is one of its beauties...and one of its most confusing aspects for beginners. But once you "get it," you'll love it!
font	In common computer usage (though not that of publishing pros), a typeface family: for example, Helvetica plain, italic, and bold in various sizes.

footers	See <i>headers</i>
footprint	The amount of space your Mac, or a peripheral, takes up on the top of your desk.
FPS	Frames per second; the more, the more lifelike your movie will look.
fragmentation	When you save a file, your Mac uses whatever disk space it finds first; if the first space it finds can't hold the whole thing, the Mac dumps into it whatever it WILL hold and goes on looking for a home for the rest of it. Eventually, after you've saved hundreds and hundreds of documents, your hard disk will take longer to find all the pieces of any given file and open it. See <i>defragmentation</i> .
freeze	Your cursor won't move, nothing happens when you type, and your Mac is locked up. Time to press Command-Option-Escape! If that fails, hold the Power button down until your Mac turns off. Probably everything will be fine when you restart.
function key	Or <i>Fkey</i> , which see.
Get Info	A Finder > File menu command that tells you a file's size, type, etc.
GHz	Gigahertz. Essentially indicates how fast your Mac is, though other factors such as the amount of RAM installed also come into play. The more, the better. Find yours in "About this Mac" in the Apple menu.
GIF	Graphics Interchange Format. A format for saving photo/graphics files. Usually you run across it in a file somebody sent you over the Internet; use Graphic Converter (an inexpensive program from Lemke Software) to open it if your browser or Preview (a versatile reader that comes with OS X) won't.
gig	Or gigabyte: 1,024 megabytes, or lots and <i>lots</i> of bytes.
grayed out	In a menu, only the commands that you can actually use at that moment appear in firm black type; the others are grayed out. For example, if you haven't selected anything to cut or copy, those commands would be grayed out in the Edit menu.
grayscale	All of the colors are rendered as different shades of gray. If you have a cheap laser printer, this is what you'll get as output instead of color.

hang	See <i>freeze</i> .
hard copy	Printed copy.
hard disk or drive	Spinning platters—remember the old vinyl records? Somewhat similar, except that hard drives are magnetic rather than grooved; your hard drive is where your Mac stores your documents, applications, everything. They can be internal or external, in which case they will be attached via a USB or FireWire port (which see). New Macs may (also) have SSDs, which see.
hardware	The parts of your Mac that you can see when it isn't turned on: monitor, keyboard, circuit boards (if you take it apart), etc. Contrast with software, the instructions that are loaded into RAM when your Mac starts up to make it run.
header	A page number, title, or other information that appears at the top of each page of a document. Most word processing programs allow you to set a header giving whatever information you like, with page numbers set according to your instructions. Footers perform the same functions but go at the bottoms of the pages.
highlighting	To select, by double-clicking or dragging the cursor over the text or graphic. A highlighted item will be indicated by a box or colored area; color depends on what you select in the Appearance System Preference.
http	Hypertext Transfer Protocol, describing how Web data is to be transferred between the Web page server and your Mac. "Https" means that a Secure protocol will be used so the information can't be read in transit—you should always see this ahead of the web page's URL before you send a credit card number or any personal/financial information.
hub	A device that lets you plug several pieces of equipment (printer, scanner, camera...) into just one outlet on your Mac. USB hubs come <i>powered</i> and <i>unpowered</i> ; choose powered since many devices draw their operating juice from the USB connection, and your Mac only has so much to spread around. FireWire hubs work the same way.
I-beam	In a text document, shows where anything you type will appear, or where your selection will start if you click or drag. See <i>insertion point</i>

icon	A tiny picture on your screen that represents a file, program, folder, or disk.
initializing	Erasing a disk, to solve problems or install new software.
inkjet	Printers that spray tiny droplets of ink to form images.
insertion point	If you move your pointer into a text document, it becomes "I"-shaped. When you click, it creates a flashing vertical line. That's where your text will appear when you type. Or disappear, if you hit "Delete."
Internet	A worldwide network of computers connected by telephone and cable lines, it allows us to have Web pages, e-mail, and dot.coms.
ISP	Internet Service Provider. This is a company that acts as a conduit between your computer and the Internet. Some examples are Internet Frontier, ATT, Comcast, America Online (AOL), and Earthlink, and the connection can be DSL, cable, or dialup (rare now). Providing the conduit does not necessarily mean that you have an email account with these folks (though you generally do), and you can also have a Gmail or other account that uses the connection. Even if you have a Gmail account, you should set up an account with your ISP as an emergency backup.
iToy	iPhone, iPad, iPod. The iPhone has morphed into a pretty multifunctional computer with a phone. If you have teeny fingers, you can use it to send and receive email, edit Pages documents, and do a variety of on-the-go computing tasks. Originally designed as a music player, the iPod is essentially the iPhone without a phone bill; the iPad is a larger-screen version of the iPod. They all run on Apple's iOS operating system.
jaggies	Ragged edges in onscreen letters or graphics.
jpeg	Joint Photographic Experts Group. A graphics-file format, very common, especially on PC-generated documents. Opens in many graphics and browser programs as well as many word processors. Sometimes abbreviated as <i>jpg</i> .
k	Short for kilobyte, 1024 bytes. A (small) unit of size for computer files; a typical business letter might be as little as 2-4k.
kern	To move letters in words closer together or farther apart to improve the appearance of the sentence/paragraph.

key commands	The Command (or apple) key plus any of several letter keys can do amazing things without your fingers having to leave the keyboard.
landscape	When you set your printer to “landscape,” your paper will come out sideways. This is good for some spreadsheets, artwork, etc., but usually bad for letters and similar documents. See <i>portrait</i> .
laptop	Portable computer that can run on batteries.
laser printer	Similar to a copier, these printers produce sharp copies quickly. They are more expensive than the inkjets, but may save money in the long run since their cartridges are cheaper per copy than inkjet cartridges.
launch	To start up a program.
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display, used in laptops and Apple’s flat screens.
leading	Pronounced <i>ledding</i> ; the space between the lines of a document. For example, a document that is double-spaced has the same leading as the size of the type; most books and magazines have leading of about one point larger than the type size so that the descenders (the letters such as y, g, p that have a foot descending below the base line) don’t hit the ascenders (h, l, d, etc) that reach upwards.
LocalTalk	Pre-OS X Macintosh network connections and protocol that allow several Macs to share printers, etc.
lock	You can restrict permissions on a file so it cannot be changed by mistake.
logic board	Your Mac’s main circuit board. If it fails, your Mac won’t work.
Mac OS	The operating system software that makes your Mac a Mac. The corresponding concept for PCs is Windows, now Windows 10.
macro	In some programs you can record a series of actions so that they will repeat with the press of a single key.
mail merge	This is how you get “personal” letters from huge corporations: they have your name and address “merged” into a form letter.
MB, megs	See <i>megabyte</i> .
Mbps	Millions of bits per second

megabyte	A unit of storage space or memory that equals 1024 kilobytes. More is better.
memory	Refers to the capacity that your Mac has to handle large files, or more than one program at once. Also called RAM (random access memory). You'll be happier if your Mac has at least 4 gigabytes of RAM, and more is better, especially if you work with large files or photographs.
menu	A list of commands that drops down when you click on one of the words on the Menu Bar (the stripe bar at the top of your screen).
MIDI	Musical Instrument Digital Interface. Play your music on your Mac!
MP3	Motion Pictures Expert Group One, Audio Layer 3, a format that allows digitized music (on CDs, for example) to be saved in much smaller space than the original, making sharing of music files over the Internet more practical. MP4 is a standard for movies.
modem	A gadget that allows your Mac to connect to other computers or the Internet over the telephone line. Stands for mod ulate (translating your Mac's output into something the telephone line can handle)/ dem odulate (translating the translation back into something your Mac can handle). They were built into most Macs prior to the introduction of Intel Macs. Term has been extended to cover DSL- and cable-connecting devices.
modifier keys	Keys that change what the letter keys do. For example, a p is just a p, but hit the shift and it's P; combined with the Command (or apple) key it turns into the Print command. Learning how the modifier keys work (learning key commands) can speed up your Mac use considerably.
monitor	Your computer's screen. Nowadays they're generally built in; in older models, the monitor was sold separately.
motherboard	See <i>logic board</i> .
mouse	It comes with every desktop Mac to control the location of the cursor and to issue commands (click, double-click). Alternatives include <i>trackballs</i> (which see), joysticks (nice for games), and tablets (nice for artists). And of course laptops have trackpads that perform the same functions.

mouse pad	Makes the old-style mechanical mouse a happier mover. Less needed for optical mice and unneeded for mouse alternatives such as trackballs.
multimedia	Sound and pictures! Sound and <i>moving</i> pictures! The current Big Thing.
nanosecond	One billionth of a second.
network	Connect two or more Macs and you've got a network. Offices and schools use them; if you have two or more Macs at home that want to share a printer or modem, you may want to set one up too. Now you can do it wirelessly.
OCR	Optical Character Recognition. When you scan a document, a good OCR program enables your word processing program to recognize it as text rather than an elaborate picture, so you will be able to edit it. Nowadays, of course, the document was probably created on a computer anyway.
online	Hooked up to the Internet (or the DVMUG BBS!)
open	To make a document appear in a window on the screen or start up an application. To do it, double-click on its name or icon, hit Command-O, or go to the File menu. You must select—highlight—what you want to open first!
optical resolution	The resolution that your hardware (digital camera, camcorder, or scanner) can achieve on its own. More important than the digital resolution, which is just the device's guess as to how the subject would look if it were bigger.
paint program	A program that creates artwork based on individual dots on the screen.
partitioning	Fooling a large hard drive into thinking it is two or more smaller ones. Helpful for using video editing programs, which like to have disk space to themselves.
paste (Edit menu)	After you <i>cut</i> (which see) or <i>copy</i> (which see) a piece of text or a graphic, you can paste it into another location or document.
PC	Personal Computer (though other definitions, such as "Pretty Crummy" and "Poor Choice" have been heard); used to refer to that host of Other Computers that run with Microsoft's operating system.

PCI	Peripheral Component Interconnect, hardware to add connection and other capabilities to your Mac.
.pdf	Portable Document Format, invented by Adobe so PCs and Macs could read each other's stuff. Apple's Preview is used on newer Macs rather than Adobe's Reader.
peripheral	An added piece of equipment: scanner, printer, CD burner, etc.
PICT	Picture file; based on individual dots on the screen, so it can have jagged edges.
pixel	A single dot on the screen; supposedly stands for picture element.
plugin	A "programlet" that adds an ability to a program. Sherlock plugins, for example, allow it to search additional Web sites; other plugins enable additional functions for Safari, Firefox, and other browsers.
png	Portable Network Graphics. Another format for pictures, like .jpg and .gif (which see).
pop-up menu	Usually indicated by upward and/or downward pointing arrows, or a tab at the edge of a window, it gives you more choices.
port	A connection jack where you can attach additional equipment (<i>peripherals</i> , which see) to your Mac. Current Macs have USB (Universal Serial Bus) ports, FireWire or Thunderbolt ports, as well as speaker, microphone, and video ports. And sometimes others!
portrait	The way you would expect your letter to print on the paper, with the shorter sides of the paper at the top and bottom. The alternative is <i>landscape</i> (which see).
POP	Post Office Protocol—the software your ISP uses to pick up and send you your email.
PostScript	Adobe invented this to smooth (eliminate jagged edges on) printed type fonts and graphics, as well as screen displays.
PowerBook	Older Mac laptop computer. Current Mac laptops are the MacBooks and MacBook Pros.
Power Macintosh	Line of Macs using the PowerPC chip, made starting in 1994 or thereabouts. Now totally outdated and defunct.

PRAM	Parameter RAM; the memory retained by the Mac's battery that lets it remember the date, printer settings, and such minutiae.
program	See <i>Application</i> .
QuickTime	Animations, sound, movies—QuickTime makes them possible on your Mac.
Quit	This command, in the File menu on every Mac program, gets you out of the current program and back to the previous program or Finder. If it fails, you can Force Quit by holding down the Command and Option keys and pressing the "Esc" key at the top left corner of your keyboard.
radio button	See <i>button</i> .
RAM	Random Access <i>Memory</i> (which see), as opposed to storage space available on your hard drive.
reboot	Shutting down and restarting your Mac.
rebuilding the Desktop	Something to try if your Mac is acting strangely. To do it, hold down the Command and Option keys at startup. Or start in Safe mode by holding down the Shift key at startup until you see "Safe Boot" in red letters.
record	One set of data in a database; for example, one person's name, address, and phone number.
Recovery Mode	Hold down the Command and R keys at startup, or hold down the Option key to show a screen that will let you choose to start up from the Recovery partition on your hard drive
relational database	Your customer database could be linked to a separate database containing your accounts or product listing.
resolution	How many <i>dpi</i> (which see) your monitor displays, or your printer prints, or your scanner delivers. More is sharper but, on monitors, also gives you smaller type, icons, etc. If you have trouble reading the small print on your monitor, change it to a <i>smaller</i> number in your Displays system preference.
ROM	Read-Only Memory; chips that have certain tasks permanently built in, such as how to start up your Mac.
RTF	Rich Text Format. If you are sending a text document to someone who doesn't have the same word processing program,

you can save it in “RTF” and chances are they will be able to open it. This format saves some of the formatting, unlike “text” (which see).

san serif	A font like Helvetica (which this is) that doesn't have any flourishes at the top and bottom of each letter. They work well for titles and such but can make long documents harder to read.
save	A command that copies the document you are working on to your disk or other storage device, so that you can close it and then reopen it to work on it again.
scanner	A machine that takes a document and translates it into bits and bytes that your Mac can “see.”
screen saver	Darkens or puts a moving picture on your screen when you haven't used your Mac for a while to prevent the image on the screen from “burning in” and making excessive wear and tear on your flat-panel screen; just touch a key to get your Desktop back. Newer color monitors aren't particularly prone to burn-in, and an Energy Saver that darkens the screen automatically is now built in, but some people think the flying toasters and other screen-saver images make the Mac more decorative. You can choose screen savers (and alternate Desktops) in System Preferences > Desktop & Screen Savers, others can probably be located online--try Google.
scroll	To use the arrows or <i>scroll bar</i> at the right or bottom of your window (hidden unless you opt to have them shown in System Preferences) to bring a different part of the document you're looking at into view. A button on the scroll bar shows you about where you are in the document; when it's in the middle of the scroll bar, you are viewing the middle of the document.
serif	The little ledges that appear at the top and bottom of these letters (but not in san serif fonts such as Helvetica).
shareware	Programs that are distributed for free or really cheap, but you are honor-bound to pay a fee if you decide to use them on a regular basis. There's also freeware and donationware (<i>please</i> send money) available.
Shut Down	Select it from the Apple menu to turn off your Mac properly, making sure that all files are saved and all programs at rest.
SIG	Special Interest Group. DVMUG has several, including the Internet SIG and the Digimedia SIG.

Skype	This is the more-or-less free “phone” service you can use with your Mac, iPhone, or iPad--because at core it really isn’t a phone; you’re connecting over the Internet. If you connect to somebody else’s computer, it’s free; if you want to call somebody on a landline, there’s a monthly charge. To see if it will work for you, look at http://www.skype.com/en/what-is-skype/ . Note that Apple has entered this game with Facetime, but it’s only good for “calling” other Apple folks with Facetime on their computers, which have to be running OS 10.6.6 (Snow Leopard) or later. Both sides must buy the Facetime app at the App Store (99¢) and have Apple IDs (accounts at the App Store).
Sleep	Save energy (in fact, you control it in the Energy Saver control panel) by putting your monitor and/or CPU into the Sleep mode when you aren’t using it for a while but don’t want to turn it off and go to the bother of rebooting. You can set your Mac to Sleep automatically after a set period, or use the “Sleep” command in the Special menu of the Finder; just touch a key to wake it up and get the picture back.
slot	See <i>expansion slot</i>
SMTP	Simple Mail Transfer Protocol--the software that your ISP uses to send your email.
software	The programs that let you do things on your Mac.
spreadsheet	An automated accounting program that lets you keep track of your finances, stock portfolio, or whatever...can be used to organize text, too. Numbers is Apple’s current almost-spreadsheet offering; more people use Microsoft Windows’ Excel.
SSD	A solid-state drive (SSD), also known as a solid-state disk or electronic disk,[4] though it contains no actual "disk" of any kind, is a data storage device using integrated circuit assemblies as memory. SSDs have no moving mechanical components. Your Mac or iToy can access information on an SSD much faster than it can read a hard drive, so some iMacs and MacBooks are now coming with SSDs only or combined with a conventional drive.
startup disk	Usually your Mac starts up from its internal hard drive, but in times of trouble (for example, if you are having problems with your hard drive) you can start it from the CD that came with it (or that you bought with a utility program) or, in Lion/Mountain Lion, and later, the Recovery section installed in a separate partion of your hard drive; hold down the letter C

(or R) while you turn the Mac on to start from a CD (or the Recovery partition). Note that the Recovery partition won't work if the problem is that your hard drive has died.

submenu	Sometimes when you select a menu from the Menu Bar, you will see arrows next to some items; they are pointing to submenus that give you even more choices. You need a certain amount of mouse skill to navigate to them successfully.
surge protector	Electrical power is variable; an electric surge (for example, from a lightning strike or power company malfunction) can fry your Mac's innards. A surge protector is sort of like a circuit breaker, and will protect against such disasters. As usual, more (amps or volts or whatever) of protection is better. And of course more expensive!
System	The heart of your Mac. Tells the hardware how to be a Mac.
text	If you save your word processing document as "text," any other word processing program should be able to open it, whether Mac or PC.
TFT	Thin Film Transfer, the newer screen, is also called LCD (liquid crystal display), or just "flat panel." These screens are supposed to be easier on the eyes than the traditional CRTs (which see).
throughput	How fast data moves from one point to another, inside your computer or to and from peripheral equipment. Measured in Mbps (which see).
thumb drive	See <i>flash drive</i> .
Time Machine	Software that can be set to back up your hard drive to an external drive at regular intervals.
TIFF	Tagged Image File Format; the kind of picture file created by a scanner. You can usually save it to a different format if you need to, though.
title bar	The strip at the top of each window where the name of the document or folder appears.
trackball	Basically an upside-down mouse. It looks like a marble or cue ball in a little nest; you manipulate the ball directly with your fingertips.
Trash	When you put something in the Trash, your Mac's programs can't use it anymore; when you empty the Trash, it's gone for

good, short of a pretty difficult and potentially expensive recovery job.

upload	See <i>download</i>
UPS	Not the brown trucks. Stands for Uninterruptible Power Source (or Supply), a constantly charging battery pack that powers your computer. It should have enough juice to power your computer for several minutes in the event of a power failure, so that you can save your work and shut down safely.
URL	Uniform Resource Locator, the “address” of a Web page.
USB ports	Universal Serial Bus, where you plug in your printer, keyboard, mouse, etc.
User Group	Computer club, like RMUG and DVMUG, that serves as a forum to spread information and rumors as well as assist members to get the most out of their machines.
virus	A self-replicating program designed by a jerk to gum up a computer’s working capability. Most, fortunately, are designed to attack PCs, but anti-virus software is still desirable if you download stuff from porn or other dubious sites on the Internet. You can also get them from friends’ emails whose PCs have been hacked, though they will probably find your Mac indigestible.
volume	Any item—disk, hard disk partition, CD—represented by its own icon on your desktop or in your Finder window.
VRAM	Video RAM (which see). RAM dedicated to running your monitor / display. The more you have, the more colors you can set your monitor to see and the faster your games will play.
wav	Waveform, the Windows version of AIFF (which see)
WiFi	Broadcast Internet connection. You get it from your own router (which see) or from a signal in a public place--Starbuck’s, airplane terminal, whatever. Your MacBook (don’t think we’ll see many iMacs doing this!) can reach the Internet via local network signals; private networks will probably be locked. In a hotel or motel, you must usually ask for the network’s password and sometimes (in pricier hotels) pay extra for it.
Wired	As opposed to WiFi, you must have an Ethernet cable to attach to a modem or wall plug (in some hotels / motels) to make an Internet connection. Can be a faster connection than WiFi.

window	The rectangle that pops up on your desktop when you double-click on a Mac icon. It may contain a document, a list of files, a game...it's where you do what you do on your Mac.
word wrap	A word-processing program's ability to figure out whether it can get a word on the same line as the last one or has to go to the next line. Saves hitting the "Return" button; in fact, if you use "Return" for anything but starting a new paragraph, you will find that formatting your word-processing documents is very difficult.
WYSIWYG	The ability of the Mac to display on the screen what your document will look like when printed out. W hat y ou s ee i s w hat y ou g et. In early Mac days, a real contrast to the experience of the Windows folks.
Xfinity	Comcast's name for its lineup of offers of more speed and more channels.
zoom box	The green gel tab on the top left of the title bar that enlarges your window or shrinks it back down. It was a box in OS 9 and earlier.