Glossary of Technology terms

A

Access
The term refers to the ability of any person or group to be able to have full use of a product or device, or full access to a service or environment. With full access to technology and services, people with varying abilities are able to participate successfully in school, at home, in the workplace, and in the community.

Accessibility Features
These are options that allow a user to adjust a technology tool's settings to their personal needs. Common accessibility settings adjust for an individual's visual, mobility, hearing, language, and learning needs. On electronic print materials, font size and color may be changed, along with background color. Other print materials may be produced in large font or in Braille. A computer keyboard may be set to respond to levels of touch. Software can translate difficult words into easier ones or provide definitions throughout the text.

Adaptive Technologies
Adaptive technologies are a type of assistive technology that include customized systems to help individuals move, communicate, and control their environments. These are designed specifically for persons with disabilities and include augmentative and alternative communication devices, powered wheelchairs, and environmental control systems.

Amazon
Amazon is a popular online shopping website where you can buy a wide range of new and second-hand items, from books and music to computers and cars.

Android
Android is an operating system (OS) for smartphones developed by Google, similar to the way in which Windows is an OS for PCs. It's the software that constantly runs on the phone, managing its more basic functions and supporting any apps (applications) that are run on top of it.

Anti-virus
Computer viruses are malicious programs that are designed to damage your computer or compromise your security. Before using the internet, it's important to make sure that your computer is protected by antivirus software. Without it, it's quite easy to download a virus unintentionally.

Antivirus software will protect your computer by preventing an attack by or detecting and removing any viruses. Some antivirus software can be downloaded for free from the internet – for instance, AVG and Windows Internet Security. Other types, such as Norton or McAfee antivirus software, have to be paid for with an annual subscription.

App (Application)
The term app refers to an application, which is a program created to be used on a computer or mobile device. Apps cover a wide range of categories including learning activities, productivity tools, games, calendars, and organizational tools, many of which can serve as assistive technology.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)
The theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages.

Assistive Technology (AT)
The term is used to describe a wide range of equipment that promotes your independence. It can help you or the person you care for to carry out difficult tasks or tasks that weren't possible before.

The products often use a phone line or internet connection to work (this isn't always the case). Example products include medication reminders, GPS safer walking devices and wearable devices that monitor your physical activity.

B

Bandwidth
'Bandwidth' describes the rate at which data can be transferred to your computer from a website or internet service within a specific time. Therefore the amount of bandwidth you have (the bandwidth 'strength') determines the efficiency and speed of your internet activity – that is, when you open web pages, download files and so on.

A useful analogy is a pipe with water running through it – the wider the pipe, the greater the volume of water that can flow through it. The same applies to bandwidth strength and the flow of the volume of data.
Bandwidth is generally measured in 'bits per second' or sometimes 'bytes per second'.

Blog
'Blog' is short for 'web log' – basically an online diary or journal created by someone to record in writing their thoughts, feelings or views on a specific subject or on life in general.
Usually appearing in chronological order, with the most recent post at the top, a blog can be informative, amusing and often contentious (and sometimes quite tedious). It can contain photographs, cartoons or just text.

It can also have links to other websites or blogs – either ones on similar subjects or ones that are just liked by the blogger and recommended to anyone interested.

Bring your own device (BYOD)
refers to employees who bring their own computing devices - such as smartphones, laptops and tablet PCs - to work with them and use them in addition to or instead of company-supplied devices. The popularity of BYOD is growing as people increasingly own their own high-end mobile computing devices and become more attached to a particular type of device or mobile operating system. BYOD may occur under the radar, or become part of a specific corporate policy in which an organization agrees to support personal mobile devices or even provides a stipend to employees to purchase a device.
Bring your own device may also be referred to as bring your own technology (BYOT).

Broadband
Broadband internet access is a high-speed connection to the internet that has generally superseded the use of dial-up connections. It is provided over your phone line (or 'landline') via satellite or cable. It gives constant internet access, usually for a monthly flat fee, although limits on downloads and other conditions can sometimes apply.

CAPTCHA
You may have noticed a box of gibberish, a maths sum or a series of words to copy and type when filling in forms on websites. This is called 'CAPTCHA' and is a way to make sure that a real person is filling in the form, rather than a spam 'robot'. CAPTCHA stands for 'Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart'.

Chat room
A chat room is an online venue or 'virtual room' where people with a shared interest can communicate with each other 'interactively' in real time, as opposed to a 'forum' where people communicate and carry on discussions more slowly by posting messages. When a registered chat room user types a message into a text box, it will be visible to other users almost immediately.

Chromebook
A Chromebook is a basic, less-expensive laptop that is used to connect to the internet. It does not use a Windows operating system, but runs on Google's Chrome OS.

Cloud-based
The term cloud-based refers to applications, services or resources that are stored in the cloud network and accessed via the internet. The cloud is a network of servers that store data that is then accessible from various platforms and devices. Common examples of cloud-based computing are Dropbox, Google Drive, and iCloud.

Computer
Basically, a computer is an electronic machine that can carry out calculations and is able to store information.

In order to do these things, a computer uses different programs for specific tasks. For example, it has a word processing program for typing letters and a program called a Web Browser for searching and browsing the internet. Computers also come in different shapes and sizes e.g. laptops, desktops and tablets but they are all able to perform the same or similar tasks.

Computer literate
A term used to describe individuals who have the knowledge and skills to use a computer and other related technology. This term is usually used to describe the most basic knowledge and skills needed to operate software products such as an operating system, a software application, or an automated Web design tool. Computer literacy is becoming an increasingly essential skill.

Connectivity
The ability of a computing device to connect to other computers or to the internet.

Cookies
Sadly not of the chocolate chip variety, a 'cookie' in a web context is a small data file of letters and numbers that is downloaded from a website by your computer. For example, Digital Unite use these cookies to help give you a good experience: the information they provide helps us to improve our website.

Cursor
A cursor is a moveable icon (generally moved with the mouse) that shows the user where any input into the computer will be placed or where an action will occur. For example, if the

cursor is moved on the screen to a button in a program or application and the mouse left button is clicked, it will action.

D

Data
Facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.

Dial up
'Dial-up' is a way accessing the internet on a computer via the public telephone network, using a device known as a modem. Technically a dial-up connection works in much the same way as a normal phone call, except that it connects computers at either end instead of two people. It's only accessed when that 'phone call' is made, and each time you access it, you're charged, which makes it quite expensive. In addition, because dial-up uses normal phones lines, its speed and efficiency can be compromised. 'Dial-up' has been almost completely abandoned in favour of broadband.

Descriptive Videos
Descriptive videos have been enhanced with narration for people with visual impairments. The narration describes visual elements of action, characters, and locations. Examples would include the color of clothing, the movement of characters across a room, or an item being held by a character. These descriptions are inserted into natural pauses in the program's dialogue.

Digital Inclusion
Refers to the activities needed to make sure people have access, skills, motivation and confidence to go online and use technology.

Digital Talking Book (DTB)
A digital talking book is a book that is encoded with recorded audio in human speech. The audio is synchronized with the text and may be accessed by a person with disabilities to increase the quality and availability of information.

Digital Text
Digital text is any text that can be retrieved and read by a computer or other electronic devices.

Downloading
'Downloading' is essentially copying data – music, text, images or other information – from a source on the internet and saving it to your computer. It usually involves a process as simple as clicking on a link and following instructions.

E

e-book
An e-book is an electronic book that can be accessed and read via a computer or other device. E-books serve as assistive technology when they are used by individuals who could not access their content in other formats, such as print.

Email
Email is short for 'electronic mail'. Similar to a letter, it is sent via the internet to a recipient. An email address is required to receive email, and that address is unique to the user. Some people use internet-based applications and some use programs on their computer to access and store emails.

Environmental Control Unit (ECU)
An ECU enables an individual to control electronic devices in their environment through alternative access methods, such as switch or voice access. ECUs can control things such as lights, televisions, telephones, music players, door openers, security systems, and kitchen appliances. These systems are also referred to as Electronic Aids to Daily Living (EADL).

F

Facebook
Facebook is probably the best known of the social networking sites. Created in 2004, originally as a way for students at Harvard University to get to know each other, it now has almost two billion monthly users with FIVE new profiles being created every second!

Anyone over the age of 13 can use the site and it currently boasts its oldest user at 107 years old. Many parents and grandparents use the site to keep in contact with grandchildren and family around the world.

Users create a free account which is a profile of them in which they share as much or as little information about themselves as they wish. Profiles can be created using a real name (and can include a nickname) and are often accompanied by a photograph.

Firewall
A firewall is a barrier between your computer and others on the internet. Its purpose is to block attempts by malicious people to gain access to or destroy the information on your computer.

If you have broadband, it's especially important to have a firewall because your computer is permanently online, giving people (or their destructive or prying computer programs) plenty of time to try to attack it.

A firewall can consist of software – that is, a computer program – or hardware. A software firewall is the most important one to have. However, if your computer's operating system is Windows XP, Vista or 7, it will already have the built-in Windows firewall. And these days, most broadband routers incorporate a hardware firewall.

G

Geofencing
This is a technology that defines a virtual boundary around a real-world geographical area. In doing so, a radius of interest is established that can trigger an action in a geo-enabled phone or other portable electronic device.

Google
Google is a search engine that can be employed to find a variety of information such as websites, pictures, maps or even just the answer to the crossword clue that's been driving you mad all morning!

Google uses a computer program called a 'web crawler' that looks at the billions of websites available on the World Wide Web and examines their content to find 'keywords'. Then it

indexes these to make the websites easier for the search engine to find. So if you type the word 'holidays' in the search box, for instance, Google will then show you all the websites with holiday information.

GPS Trackers
GPS (Global Positioning System) trackers are products that can be used to locate individuals to approximately 10 metres. Only authorised individuals such as family or carers can access this information.

H

Home page
A home page is the initial page of a website, the 'point of entry' to all the information stored within. It's similar to the front page of a newspaper, but a home page contains links to a selection (or, in some cases, all) of the available content.

The term 'home page' is also used to refer to the page you encounter first when connecting to the internet. This is often the main page of your search engine, but you can 'customise' this home page to link directly to your preferred webpage, whether that be BBC News or Digital Unite. You can even arrange to have a blank page as your home page.

HTML
HTML stands for 'Hyper Text Markup Language', a computer language that's used to build websites. It is essentially the 'glue' that holds all of the elements of a webpage together. Using a series of coded 'tags' or 'commands' – for instance, '<p>' to start a paragraph and '</p>' to end a paragraph – a website designer is able to determine exactly how your browser will translate the programmed code and present the information to you on a webpage. HTML is essentially the 'interpreter' between the computer's own language and codes and the end result that you see on your screen.

Hyper link
A hyperlink – more commonly known as a 'link' – allows you to navigate your way around a website. It's a graphic or piece of text that literally links you directly to another web page or related information source. Hyperlinks are usually underlined, highlighted or coloured in some way to distinguish them from the rest of the text displayed, allowing you to click on them with your mouse to access this new page or additional information.

I

Identity theft
Criminals commit identity theft by stealing your personal information – that is, your name, address, date of birth, bank account numbers, passwords and so on – and then pretending to be you. This is fraud.

It's usually done for financial gain – for example, your bank account can be accessed and your money stolen or someone can make purchases or apply for credit in your name.
When using the internet, it's very important to take precautions to protect your identity details.

Instant messaging
Instant messaging, or IM, is a form of text communication between two or more people in 'real time' while online. It's similar to email but with the speed and immediacy of a phone

conversation. It's also similar to a chat room, but with greater privacy as you can select those involved in the text conversation. You do this by creating a list of contacts or 'buddies' – you'll be alerted when they're online at the same time as you.

Internet
The internet is a telecommunications network that uses telephone lines, cables, satellites and wireless connections to connect computers and other devices to the World Wide Web. All modern computers can connect to the internet, as can many mobile phones and some televisions, video game consoles and other devices.

Internet connection
Internet connection to your home or devices can be delivered in two ways, fixed line broadband or mobile broadband. Fixed lined broadband or broadband is delivered via the phone line to a router in the home. The majority of homes that have an internet connection will have a fixed line broadband installed.

Mobile broadband works by connecting to a wireless mobile network using a SIM card. Some devices have a SIM card built in and their own internet capabilities. Therefore devices that have mobile internet do not require fixed line broadband.

Internet of Things (IoT)
This term refers to the smart devices that are interconnected via the Internet. This offers great potential for automating many daily living activities which can reduce strain for those with disabilities. One example is the Amazon Echo which operates via voice commands.

Interoperability
This term refers to the ability of a technology device or computer system to connect and function with other types of systems or hardware.

iOS
iOS is Apple's operating system for mobile devices, such as the iPhone, iPad and iPod.

IP Address
An IP address is an 'Internet Protocol address'. Each computer linked to the internet has a unique number, or address, assigned to it. In the same way that a person needs your address to send you a letter, a computer needs one to send and receive data across the internet to and from a specific computer.

iPad
An iPad is Apple's touch screen tablet that is used with a wide range of apps.

iPhone
An iPhone is Apple's smartphone that operates as a cell phone, camera, mobile web browsing device, and GPS device.

ISP
ISP stands for 'internet service provider' – a company that provides access to the internet for both business and individual subscribers. A service provider maintains network services so that those who pay it a subscription can access web content. Essentially it's a company that provides 'mainstream' internet connections – dial-up or broadband – to both home and business users.

J

Java

Java is a computer programming language, developed by Sun Microsystems in 1995, that can be used on any type of computing device. As long as the recipient has Java installed, a document or application created in this language can be opened on a Mac, a PC or other operating system. And it's likely that the recipient will have Java installed as it's one of the most popular computer programs in the world, much liked by web developers and designers.

This is good as the complications involved in opening documents that have been created using software different from your own can be very frustrating.

K

Kindle

A Kindle is a small hand-held electronic device for reading books, which has been developed by online retailer Amazon. Rather as you download an iPod or MP3 player with music, you download books (via wireless technology) on to a Kindle and read them on it.

M

Mac

The nickname 'Mac' refers to the series of Macintosh computers made by Apple Inc. since 1984. With its very first model, Apple is largely credited with starting the trend of making computers that are easy for ordinary people to use and promoting the idea that anyone can find a computer useful. Macs are particularly popular with graphic and web designers.

Macs' main rivals are PCs running the Microsoft Windows operating system (i.e. the background software that runs everything else).

Malware

Malware is short for 'malicious software', and similarly to 'spyware', is a term to describe unauthorised programs that are downloaded to your computer and cause disruption or damage to software or hardware. Sometimes, malware is designed to use your computer's 'resources' (such as memory) and other times it is simply designed to create an unpleasant experience. Malware can be accidentally downloaded through spam emails, or when downloading files from untrustworthy websites, such as file-sharing websites.

Mobile broadband

Mobile broadband works by connecting to a wireless mobile network using a SIM card.
Some devices have a SIM card built in and their own internet capabilities. Therefore devices that have mobile internet do not require fixed line broadband.

Mobile Device

A mobile device is a computing device that is small enough to carry with you, often with a touchscreen and wireless access to the Internet, such as a smartphone or tablet.

Modem

A modem (or, to use its full name, a 'modulator-demodulator') turns digital information from a computer into electrical signals that can be transmitted over telephone lines and then decoded by another modem, at the receiver end, back into readable information.

Mouse

A computer mouse is a pointing device moved by the hand to navigate to items on a computer screen. The buttons on a mouse are used to click on items. A wide variety of adaptations or alternative mice have been developed to address a range of access needs.

N

Network
A network (or computer network) is a collection of computers and devices in a home or business or within a larger area that are linked and governed by a 'server' – either a special computer program or such a program on a dedicated computer. The server allows the computers in a network to share information and resources such as printers, software and internet connections. In addition, a server enables users within a network to communicate via email without using the internet.

Networks can also interconnect with each other. They are usually defined – in terms of geographical distance – as local area networks (LANs), metropolitan area networks (MANs) and wide area networks (WANs).

O

Online
Being 'online' simply means that your computer or hand-held device is connected to a network, usually the internet. The opposite is 'offline', which means that a computer is disconnected from the internet or other network.

Online Community
Online community includes websites, listservs, and other online ways for people to communicate with each other about a topic of mutual interest. An online community can offer both information and support to people who may not able to get together in person, such as people with mobility challenges or busy parents of children with special needs. Some examples include Facebook, Twitter, and blogs.

Onscreen Keyboard
Onscreen keyboards are software-generated interactive images of a standard or modified keyboard viewed on the computer screen. The keys are selected by a mouse, touch screen, or other electronic pointing device.

P

PayPal
PayPal is an online tool for safely storing your card and bank account details so you don't have to type them into a website to shop or sell online. It acts as an intermediary, so you don't have to share your bank details with any third parties

PC
The letters 'PC' stand for 'personal computer' – that is, a computer that can fit on a single desk for use by ordinary people, as opposed to a huge mainframe or supercomputer.

Although the acronym technically refers to any such computer, it has come to mean the multi-purpose machines that usually run the Microsoft Windows operating system, as opposed to the Macintosh machines made by Apple.

PDF
'PDF' stands for 'portable document format'. Developed by Adobe Systems, it's a way of creating a document that allows it to be sent to another computer while ensuring that the information it contains and its format and layout appear to the recipient just as the sender

intended and can't be changed. To view a PDF, you need an application like Adobe Reader, which can be downloaded and used for free.

Phishing

Phishing is a fraudulent attempt to secure sensitive information, such as personal identity and credit card details, while masquerading as a legitimate operation or individual. Websites that have been 'hijacked' for this purpose include PayPal, eBay, MSN and Yahoo!, to mention just a few. However, hackers can also 'hijack' personal email accounts to attempt to trick the recipient into opening the content.

The term 'phishing' is derived from the concept of sending mass email to 'bait', assuming some will 'bite'.

Pop-ups

A 'pop-up' or 'pop-up window' is a small screen that literally pops up, or opens automatically, over the top of your browser. This can happen when you're on a website and mouse over something, or the website may simply detect that you're present and open the pop-up. It can usually be closed by clicking on a small cross found in the top right-hand corner of the window.

Pop-ups are often a form of online advertising. Sometimes they're issued by legitimate companies, but they're also frequently part of 'phishing' expeditions, fraudulent schemes to obtain your personal or financial details, so it's important to exercise caution. That said, not all pop-ups are bad. They can sometimes be an important feature of a website, providing you with further information or instruction.

R

Router

A router is a device that directs data traffic along specific routes. A router sends information, such as email and the content of web pages, between your computer and the network server. It also connects networks and acts as a filter at a 'gateway' between them, channeling information to the correct IP address, unique to each computer. A router is also the device that keeps single computers, or entire networks, connected to the internet.

A router can be connected to your computer by wires (or cables). However, more commonly these days, routers are 'wireless', allowing several wireless-enabled devices to access the internet at any one time and enabling users to use the devices in various locations within range of the router.

S

Scan and Read Program

A scan and read program is software that converts scanned documents into text that can be read aloud and edited. Often additional study tools and supports are provided in this kind of software. This software uses optical character recognition (OCR) technology.

Scanning

Scanning is an electronic selection technique often used with switch access to choose an item from a group of items. The program highlights the options available to the user, who then selects the desired action or item.

Screen Enlargement Programs

Screen enlargement programs magnify an electronic screen, increasing visibility for users with a visual impairment. Most programs have variable magnification levels and some offer text-to-speech options.

Screen Reader
A screen reader is an application that uses synthesized speech to "speak" graphics and text aloud. This type of application is used by people with a print disability, such as blindness or low vision.

Self Care Apps
A mobile application (App) is a type of application software designed to run on a mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet computer to help care for oneself

Search engine
A search engine enables you to find specific information within the huge mass of data that's stored on the internet. It's usually a dedicated website, but it can take the form of an 'app' on a hand-held device or simply be a 'search window' on a website that can be about almost anything.

By typing words into the box on the home page of a search engine such as Google and clicking **Search**, a page will be displayed containing results – that is, links to web pages – related to the search terms (also known as 'key words') you've entered. These results, commonly known as 'hits', will usually be listed in order of relevance to the exact terms entered. Some search engines even display results that are tailored to your previous search activity.

Site
A website, or 'site', is simply a collection of web pages that relate to each other and sit within the same internet domain – for instance, digitalunite.com. The main, or initial, page is known as the 'home page' and here you'll find hyperlinks (or 'links') to all the other 'subpages' contained within the website. These links are usually highlighted or made distinctive in some way, allowing you to find them easily so that you can click on them to get to another part of the site.

Skype
Skype is a computer program that offers a VoIP ('Voice over Internet Protocol') service. This lets you make calls to people all over the world via your computers or telephone and have text chats. Calls between computers are usually free, and other Skype calls are generally inexpensive.

Smart Device
A smart device is an electronic device that is linked to other devices or the Internet through wireless systems such as Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or 4G/3G. Smart devices are used to control or monitor activities, often paired with a mobile app. Examples include smartphones, fitness trackers, biofeedback devices, home automation devices that control outlets or appliances, and voice-activated devices such as the Amazon Echo.

Smart Technology
Self-Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Technology, basically monitors and analyses hard drives, then checks the health of your hard drive and lets you know if there are any problems.

Smartphone
Smartphones are the new breed of mobile phones that have multiple functions similar to those you might expect from a regular computer. Apple's iPhone is the most popular

example, with over 100 million handsets sold by 2011, but competitors like Samsung and Google Nexus are catching up fast. Almost every mobile phone you can buy now will have some sort of smartphone capability.

Social networking
Social networking refers to the use of online social networks such as Facebook to communicate with other people. A social network can include blogs and other ways to share text and ideas, groups that you can join, private messaging, a chat facility and file- or photo-sharing functions.

Online social networking sites such as Facebook allow individuals to communicate with one another wherever they are in the world. They also let you connect with people with similar interests or relationships and share things, including websites, photos, likes and dislikes.

Software
Is a term for various kinds of programs used to operate computers and related devices.

Spam
Spam is any unsolicited communication on the internet. Predominantly generated via email, when it is known as 'junk email', you can also receive other types via different media – for example, text message spam, instant message spam (sometimes known as 'spim') and social networking spam through Facebook messages.

Spam is essentially advertising for services or products through bulk-messaging, and is mainly harmless. But it can also be of a more malicious nature as part of an identity theft scam commonly known as phishing.

Spyware
'Spyware' is a generic term used to describe unauthorised programs that monitor activities on a computer – such as internet surfing habits and browser activity – through the installation of software without the knowledge or consent of the user. Although sometimes innocuous, spyware is predominantly malicious. Beyond monitoring computer activity, spyware programs can also collect various types of personal information and can interfere with user control or alter computer settings.

Streaming
'Streaming' is the display of a form of multimedia – text, images, audio, video or animation – to a viewer via the internet. The process is different to downloading and podcasts in that what is being streamed can be watched or listened to as it arrives on a computer or other device and is not saved there. Watching television or listening to a radio programme on the internet are common examples of 'streamed media'.

'Live streaming' means broadcasting the media in real time over the internet. Live streaming would, for example, enable a person who wasn't able to attend a friend's wedding in Australia to watch it live on their computer screen. These days everything from fashion shows to political events are streamed.

Stylus
A stylus is a pen-shaped tool designed to be used with a touchscreen, such as with a tablet. A stylus can offer greater accuracy than using a finger.

Switches and Switch Software
Switches offer an alternative method of providing input to a device or computer when it is not possible to use a standard button, keyboard or mouse. Switches come in various sizes, shapes, and methods of activation. Examples of switches include a large button pressure

switch, a lever switch, a squeeze switch, and a proximity switch. Switches can be used to control many devices including adapted toys, communication devices, and computers.

Synthesized Speech
Synthesized speech, also known as computerized speech, is a computer programmed voice that attempts to simulate the human voice. There are a variety of different synthetic voice options. Synthesized speech is commonly used in text-to-speech programs, communication devices, and automated speaking systems.

T

Tablet
Tablets are small, flat computers with touchscreens that are between a book and a magazine in size. They're like large versions of a smartphone.
The most popular tablet computers at the time of writing are the Apple iPad and the Samsung Galaxy Tab.

Technology Enabled Care
Technology Enabled Care (TEC) is an umbrella term for Telecare, Telehealth, Telemedicine and Self-care apps. They can put you in control of your own health, wellbeing and support.

Telecare
Telecare is support and assistance provided at a distance using information and communication technology. It is the continuous, automatic and remote monitoring of users by means of sensors to enable them to continue living in their own home

Telehealth
Telehealth is the remote exchange of data between a patient at home and their clinician(s) to assist in diagnosis and monitoring.

Telemedicine
Telemedicine allows health care professionals to evaluate, diagnose and treat patients in remote locations using telecommunications technology.

Text Expansion
This program feature automatically expands abbreviated words or phrases based on pre-programmed commands entered by the user. The abbreviation expansion allows the user to minimize the number of keystrokes necessary in order to write more efficiently. It can be combined with word prediction programs to aid in the writing process. For example, the key combination "AT" could become "assistive technology".

Text-to-Speech
Text-to-speech applications speak aloud digital text, including documents, web pages, PDF files, and emails. Developed for individuals with low vision or blindness, text-to-speech can also be useful for people with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia.

Touch Screens
A touch screen is built into an electronic device, such as a mobile device or computer monitor, and allows direct selection and interaction through a touch or gesture on the screen.

Trackball Mouse
A trackball is an alternative mouse with a sphere or ball that is rotated by the fingers to move the cursor on the screen. A trackball can have ergonomic benefits or be more accessible as it is controlled by finger movement rather than hand and arm movement.

Trackpad
A trackpad or touchpad is an electronic pointing device with a flat area that senses touch and is used to interact with a computer screen. It is often used as an alternative to a mouse, especially on laptops.

TTY (TeleTYpe) / TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf)
This is a telecommunications device for people who are deaf. TTY/TTD is a device with a keyboard that sends and receives typed messages over a telephone line.

Twitter
Twitter is a social networking site that allows people all over the world to comment on news, events and things that are happening to them as they occur. Known as 'microblogging', these comments – 'tweets' – have to be very short.

U

Uploading
Uploading is the process of moving digital files such as photographs or documents from your computer and placing them on to a central server so that someone else can retrieve them or to a website so others can see them. For example, you might save photographs from your digital camera on to your computer and upload them on to a social network such as Facebook, where you can allow friends and family to see them.

URL
A URL is the acronym for a 'uniform resource locator', which is essentially a website address. URLs are also occasionally known as URIs, short for 'uniform resource identifier'.

USB Flash Drive: (aka USB stick, thumb drive, jump drive, or USB memory)
A USB flash drive is a small portable memory device that stores files and can be accessed by inserting the device into a USB port on a computer or other device.

V

Video Conferencing
Video conferencing allows multiple people to participate in a meeting with shared audio and video. This remote method of communicating with others can be helpful for people with disabilities that may not be able to physically attend a meeting.

Video Phone
A video phone has a screen that permits users to conduct real- time audio and visual conversations. It is useful for those who use sign language to communicate and for individuals who do not have access to medical and diagnostic personnel.

Virtual Reality (VR)
An interactive computer-generated experience taking place within a simulated environment that incorporates mainly auditory and visual, but also other types of sensory feedback.

Vocal Output Communication Aid (VOCA)
A Voice Output Communication Aid (VOCA) is an electronic device that generates spoken language for individuals who are unable to use natural speech to express their needs and to communicate with others during a conversation. As an AAC system, it is used to supplement or replace speaking for those with speech impairments.

VoIP

'VoIP' is the acronym for 'Voice over Internet Protocol'. In plain English, this simply means a phone call conducted over the internet through a microphone and speaker or headset. This can be revolutionary for those who often engage in what can be prohibitively expensive overseas calls – VoIP services such as Skype are usually free to other VoIP users, the only cost being the amount you already pay to access the internet.

W

Wearables

Wearables are clothing and accessories such as watches that incorporate computer technologies that give a user feedback on their actions or allow them to interact with other technologies. Examples include Apple's iWatch, wearable GPS trackers, and a necklace with a personal amplifier.

Web Accessibility

Universal accessibility to the internet means that all people, regardless of their physical or developmental abilities, have access to web-based information and services. Making web pages accessible is accomplished by designing them to work with adaptive technologies, such as screen readers. It also means making color, font size, and page design decisions that make it possible for the widest range of individuals to access the information.

Web browser

A web browser is a program on your computer that allows you to access websites on the internet. There are many browsers available. If you're using a Windows PC, your machine probably came with the browser Internet Explorer. If you are using an Apple Mac, you'll have been supplied with Safari. No matter which browser you're using, you'll find that they all do more or less the same job. The most popular browsers are Internet Explorer (Microsoft), Safari (Apple), and Chrome (Google).

Website

A website, or 'site', is simply a collection of web pages that relate to each other and sit within the same internet domain – for instance, digitalunite.com. The main, or initial, page is known as the 'home page' and here you'll find hyperlinks (or 'links') to all the other 'subpages' contained within the website. These links are usually highlighted or made distinctive in some way, allowing you to find them easily so that you can click on them to get to another part of the site.

Web cam

A webcam – short for 'web camera' – is a digital camera that's connected to a computer. It can send live pictures from wherever it's sited to another location by means of the internet. Many desktop computer screens and laptops come with a built-in camera and microphone, but if yours doesn't, you can add a separate webcam at any time.

Web page

A web page is what you see on your screen when you access the internet via a browser. There are billions of web pages on the internet that are connected by hyperlinks to other relevant pages or information resources. Web pages can be accessed by entering terms into a search engine, which will produce relevant highlighted links for you to click on. When you click on such a link, the page should subsequently be displayed on your computer screen.

Wi-Fi

Wifi, pronounced 'why-fy' enables you to connect to a modem without the use of wires. It uses low powered radio waves in the same way that your radio or television does. This means that you can use your laptop or other internet-enabled device anywhere in a building

without having to install extra cables or phone lines, as long as the radio waves can reach the modem and it allows you to connect to it..

Wifi also allows several computers, laptops, printers and the like to be connected at any one time, essentially creating a network between all the devices in your home or office. Wifi is also increasingly found in public places, such as libraries and cafés, making it easy to access the internet while on the move, often for free.

Wireless
Wireless is an encompassing term that describes numerous communication technologies that rely on a wireless signal to send data rather than using a physical medium (often a wire). In wireless transmission, the medium used is the air, through electromagnetic, radio and microwave signals. The term communication here not only means communication between people but between devices and other technologies as well.

Word Prediction
Word prediction applications allow the user to select a desired word from an on-screen list located in a prediction window. The application generates a list of predicted words based on the letter(s) a user enters; continuously changing the list as new letters are entered. The word may then be selected from the list and inserted into the text by typing a number, clicking the mouse, scanning with a switch, or touching the touchscreen. This feature can be beneficial for students with learning disabilities or fine motor impairments.