

Chapter **10**

Glossary

ADSL

Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line: New broadband, consumer-focused data delivery technology utilising existing telephone systems (e.g. for use with connecting to the Internet).

Bandwidth

In computing and networking, “bandwidth” is used to indicate the digital capacity of a particular link per second – typical measures being bits per second, kilobits per second, megabits per second, etc.

Bluetooth

A wireless technology for connecting multiple devices (e.g. PCs and mobile phones). Speed of connection is up to 1Mb/sec (Megabits per second) and has a range of up to 100m. Best used for ad hoc connection between devices in a PAN (Personal Area Network).

Broadband

Broadband refers to higher bandwidths, generally referring to data transmission speeds in excess of 1 Mb/sec. The higher capacity of broadband is seen by many as essential for sending video, etc, over networks and for coping with large amounts of electronic traffic.

Call Centre

A Call Centre is a place where telephony activities are centralised, with the aim of cutting costs and improving marketing and/or customer services. It needn't be one physical place: many organisations now have distributed call centres based in several locations.

Centrex

Centrex services are offered by telecoms companies and provide similar functionality to small PBXs but directly from the local exchange. Features can include – internal numbering plan, free internal calls, call diversion, call pick-up and return, call transfer, three-way calling, etc.

Convergence

Convergence refers to the integration of computers, telephones, recording and broadcast technologies in all-digital environments. This enables novel uses of data, new services and products as well as faster and more flexible communications.

Cyber café

Cyber cafés are cafés that provide a service to allow patrons to use computers and access the Internet. As well as being found in high streets they are increasingly found in companies as an alternative to providing access to the Internet from every desktop, and/or as training facilities.

ECATT

Electronic Commerce and Telework Trends: a continuing project funded by the European Commission to monitor the development of Information Age working and business practices.

Extranet

An extranet is a kind of halfway house between the Internet and an intranet. In essence an extranet is a secure shared network using Internet technologies. So it extends an information network beyond an organisation's boundaries but only to agreed partners and within agreed parameters. There are numerous models for achieving this.

GPRS

General Packet Radio Service – a non-voice service that allows data to be transferred over the (GSM) mobile phone network at reasonable speeds. Seen by many as a halfway house towards Third Generation mobile communications.

GSM

Global System for Mobile (or Groupe Système Mobile): The European standard for the current generation of digital cellular phones.

Hot-desking

More productive use of office space often involves, to a greater or lesser extent, eliminating personal ownership of desks. It is a method of sharing desks, with workers who are usually working elsewhere booking space to work.

ICT

Information and Communications Technologies: a key phrase to indicate the dynamism that can be achieved with the convergence of computing and telecommunications. Putting the "C" in the middle of the IT is important to emphasise that it is not just about "techie" matters but is relevant to everyone whose job involves communications.

Intranet

An intranet is a network using Internet technologies for internal communication and work processes within an organisation. The great advantage, apart from dynamically sharing information, is that the browser can provide a common interface to all applications, allowing the linking together of many different systems.

IP

Internet Protocol: a network communications protocol which enables connection to the Internet, company intranet, etc.

ISDN

Integrated Services Digital Network: a dial-up service provided by telecoms operators providing end-to-end digital links – giving users greater bandwidth and faster call set-up times. The faster transmission is particularly useful for applications requiring high bandwidth, e.g. transmission of detailed graphics, video conferencing, etc.

ISP

Internet Service Provider: an organisation that provides a user with access to the Internet, in return for a monthly fee or at no charge, and hosts web sites for other users to access.

Metadata

Structured data that describes the characteristics of a resource, e.g. using key words, classification conventions, etc.

Modem

Short for "modulator-demodulator", which fails to trip off the tongue: this is a device that connects the computer to telephone networks, to access remote computers and on-line services. It can be external to the computer but most modern computers have a modem built in.

PBX

Private Branch Exchange: the term refers to private switchboards, providing internal telephony services to an organisation, and the interface with external telephone lines. PBXs often provide extra features, not available on a standard telephone, connected directly to the public telephone exchange.

SMS

Short Messaging System: this allows the sending of small messages, e.g. text messages on mobile phones.

SOHO

Small Office-Home Office: describing a real market in North America and a putative market elsewhere of small (home-based) offices for location-independent teleworkers.

Telecommuting

Despite some academic distinctions, this term is used pretty much interchangeably with teleworking, and is the more common term in the US. The conceptual emphasis is on replacing the commute journey through electronic access to the workplace.

Telematics

A word much favoured in the EC and academic circles, covering the whole field of performing actions at a distance using the new digital technologies; teleworking, telelearning, telemedicine, home shopping, home banking, etc.

Telework

A catch-all term describing any way of working at a distance using a combination of computers and telecommunications. It is often associated with home-based working but includes site-to-site electronic working, mobile working, etc.

Third Generation (3G)

3G is a term applied to the next generation of mobile telephony, which will offer much higher bandwidth and allow video, gaming and other multimedia applications. Scheduled for start in 2001-2.

VPN

Virtual Private Network: A private network link, which is carried securely over a public network (e.g. the Internet) through the use of tunnelling and encryption methods.

WiFi™

Wireless Fidelity: is the branding given by the Wireless Ethernet Compatibility Alliance to the IEEE 802.11b standard for wireless interoperability. WiFi-enabled devices link together without cables to form wireless local area networks. This has great significance for flexible work and the office of the future. Speed of connection is from 2Mb/sec to 11Mb/sec and has a range of 300m.