

FROM THE PASFAA TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

TIPS (Technical Info for the Puzzled and Stupefied)

Also Known As....

Tasty TidBits and TidBytes of Techy, Baudy, Binary, Sometimes Hexadecimal, RAMmed-Down-Your-Throat-Daily, Mouse-Moving, Web-Site-Surfing, Disk-Driving, Mainframe-Mashing Stuff Relished Most Especially By Those Who Peddle Pocket Protectors and Speak in Sentences of Algorithms, But Commonly Abhorred and Otherwise Often Found to Be Distasteful By Normal, Don't-Wear-Horn-Rims, Don't-Do-Windows, Don't-Unzip-Files-in-Public Financial Aid Administrators

The TIPS listed below are taken from the PASFAA Technology Handbook's "Technical Glossary" section. The Handbook is a resource created by financial aid administrators for financial aid administrators, and it is one of the many benefits that accrue to members of PASFAA. Refer to the Handbook anytime you're feeling technically puzzled or stupefied!

- Ever heard anyone talk about an "ASCII" (pronounced "askee") file? ASCII is the American Standard Code for Information Interchange, and it is one of the standard formats for representing computer characters. It is useful for moving files from one place to another.
- What's a "baud"? This is a technical term related to the speed at which data can be sent between modems, across telephone lines. A baud is one carrier pulse per second. The higher the baud-rate, the faster the data can move. Anyone who has waited a half-hour or more for a data transfer to take place can easily understand the benefit of a faster baud-rate! Remember that the speed of a data transmission is dependent not only on the speed of the SENDING modem, but also on the speed of the RECEIVING modem. Your brand new, super fast modem can only send data as fast as the modem at the other end can receive it...
- Does your computer take small bytes or BIG bytes....
 - A "bit" is the smallest unit of info in the binary system, represented by a 0 or a 1
 - A byte is one computer character and is equal to 8 bits.
 - 1,024 bytes is a KILOBYTE ("K")

- 1,024 kilobytes is a MEGABYTE (“Megs”) -- roughly a million bytes
- 1,024 megabytes is a GIGABYTE (“Gigs”) -- roughly a billion bytes
- 1,024 gigabytes is a TERABYTE -- roughly a trillion bytes
- FTP -- “File Transfer Protocol” -- A standardized format for transferring data.
- FIFO -- “First-In, First-Out” -- The order in which elements are stored and retrieved.
- GIGO -- Abbreviation for “Garbage In -- Garbage Out”, a phrase to bring home the point that computer output is highly dependent upon the quality of the input.
- GUI (Pronounced “Gooley”) -- Graphical User Interface. Hardware and software that enable users to see information in easy-to-read graphic form.
- RAM (Random Access Memory) -- This is the memory used to load and execute programs. The amount of RAM your computer has determines the number and size of programs that can be loaded and executed simultaneously.
- CD-ROM (Compact Disk Read-Only Memory) -- unalterable data stored on a compact disk.
- WAN -- Wide-Area Network -- A set of widely separated computers electronically connected together. (Contrast a Local Area Network (LAN), which connects several computers located in closer proximity to one another.)
- WYSIWYG (Pronounced “Wizzy-Wig”) -- This is an abbreviation for “What You See Is What You Get”, a combination of hardware and software that makes it possible for users to view info on a computer screen exactly as it will appear when printed.
- Zipped Files -- Large electronic files can be zipped, or compressed, to maximize storage space. The party receiving the zipped files must possess the ability to unzip them in order to use the data.

In the next edition of the Newsletter, we’ll include some TIPS about “Net”iquette.....