

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 "Internet" 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!

- Archie: A software tool for finding files stored on anonymous FTP sites. You need to know the exact file name or a substring of it. (Can you tell that computer aficionados are also big comic strip fans? "Veronica" is defined below.....)
- Backbone (1): A feature sorely lacking among members of federal, state, and local government.
- Backbone (2): A high-speed line or series of connections that forms a major pathway within a network. The term is relative, in that a small network's backbone will often be smaller than many non-backbone lines in a large network.
- BPS: Bits per second. A measurement of how fast data is moved from one place to another. There are 8 bits in a byte, so 8 bps moves 1 byte of data per second. A 28.8 modem can move 28,800 bits per second (equivalent to 3,600 bytes, also known as 3.6 kilobytes or 3.6k). This converts to 216 kilobytes per minute (3.6 times 60 seconds). Thus, at a speed of 28,800 bps, it will take approximately 6 minutes and 29 seconds to transfer that 1.4 megabyte file you need to send.
- Browser (1): A person in a state of confusion, weighing the issues of "what I want" and "what I can afford".
- Browser (2): A software program that is used for looking at various kinds of Internet resources.
- Finger: An Internet software tool for locating people at other Internet sites.

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- Flame War: When an online discussion degenerates into a series of personal attacks against the debaters, rather than a discussion of their positions.
- Gopher: A widely successful way of making menus of material available over the Internet. Although Gopher spread rapidly in just a few years, it has largely been supplanted by Hypertext, also known as www (World Wide Web).
- HTTP: A group of hypertext servers that permit text, graphics, sound files, etc. To be mixed together.
- Hypertext: Generally, any text that contains links to other documents – words or phrases in a document that can be chosen by a reader and which cause another document to be retrieved and displayed.
- Intranet: A private network inside an organization that uses the same kinds of software you would find on the public Internet, but that is only for internal use.
- IP Number: Sometimes called a “dotted quad”. This is a unique number consisting of four parts separated by dots; e.g., 165.113.245.2 Every machine on the Internet has a unique IP number.
- Java: A programming language invented by Sun Microsystems that is specifically designed for writing programs that can be safely downloaded to your computer from the Internet and immediately run without fear of viruses or other harm to your computer.
- Modem: Most everyone knows what a modem is, but did you know the name came from “MOdulator/DEModulator”?
- Netizen: A citizen of the Internet.
- Netscape: A www browser and the name of a company.
- Packet Switching: The method used for moving data around on the Internet. All the data coming from a machine is broken into chunks, and each chunk has the address of where it came from and where it is going. This enables chunks of data from many different sources to co-mingle on the same lines without any data getting lost.
- Router (1): A multipurpose woodworking tool. Most experienced woodworkers will tell you that you’re not getting the most out of your router unless you are using it upside down (preferably attached firmly to a router table).
- Router (2): A special-purpose computer (or software package) that spends all of its time looking at the addresses of packets passing through, deciding which route to send them on.

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- Spam: Not only a breakfast menu item, this is an inappropriate attempt to use a mailing list or other networked facility as if it were a broadcast medium (which it is not) by sending the same message to a large number of people who did not ask for it.
- TCP/IP: Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol. This is the suite of protocols that defines the Internet. Originally designed for the UNIX operating system, TCP/IP software is now available for every major kind of computer operating system. To be truly on the Internet, your computer must have TCP/IP software.
- Telnet: The command and program used to login from one Internet site to another. It gets you to the login prompt of another host.
- Veronica: Very Easy Rodent Oriented Net-wide Index to Computerized Archives. A constantly updated database of the names of almost every menu item on thousands of gopher servers.

What if Dr. Seuss Wrote Computer Manuals?

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port,
and the bus is interrupted as a very last resort,
and the address of the memory makes your floppy disk abort,
Then the socket packet pocket has an error to report.

If your cursor finds a menu item followed by a dash,
and the double-clicking icons put your window in the trash,
and your data is corrupted 'cause the index doesn't hash,
Then your situation's hopeless, and your system's gonna crash.

If the label on your cable on the gable at your house,
says the network is connected to the button on your mouse,
But your packets want to tunnel to another protocol,
That's repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall,
And your screen is all distorted by the side effects of Gauss,
so your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse,
Then you may as well reboot it now and go out with a bang,
Cause as sure as I'm a poet, the sucker's gonna hang.

When the copy of your floppy's getting sloppy on the disk,
And the microcode instructions cause unnecessary RISC,
then you have to flash your memory and you want to RAM your ROM,
Quickly turn off your computer and be sure to tell your mom!

In the next issue of the Newsletter, we'll dive into "New Technologies on Campus" and talk a little about Interactive Voice Response Technology and Document Imaging. Be sure to check it out!

Another thing to look for: The Handbook has a really nifty (and detailed) history of the Internet, dating back to its beginning in the 1960's. It is very interesting reading.
