Computer Terminology: Basic

8-bit, 16-bit, 32-bit addressing: These are the specifications about the computer's internal word size, which is the amount of data the processor can hold in its registers and work on at the same time. The higher the number, the faster the computer performance.

Application Menu: The top-right-hand menu item on a Macintosh computer shows all the currently loaded program items.

Authoring: Using certain computer packages such as HyperCard, Hyperstudio, or Toolbook to produce interactive applications without getting into serious programming.

Bandwidth: The amount of data that can be transferred over a communications line in a certain amount of time.

Bits: Binary digits. Eight bits constitute one Byte

Boolean Search: The logical search using “AND”, “OR”, and “NOT”.

Byte: Eight bits. A letter, a space, or a punctuation mark is taking a byte.

Cache: Cache is a type of memory that store information temporarily to speed up the reloading time of a program.

CD-R: CD-Recordable. A compact disc technology which allows users to write their own information on the discs using a CD-R drive and disc.

CD-ROM: Compact Disc, Read-Only Memory. A form of data storage that uses laser optics rather than magnetic means for reading data.

CD-ROM: CD-ROM is short for compact disk read-only memory. A CD-ROM contains data and programs can be used on a computer. A CD-ROM has the capacity of about 650 megabyte.

CMC: Computer-dediated communications, an electronic method for sending and receiving textual and graphical information via computers.

Com Port: Communication port which transfer data in the series approach. Com port is usually used for mouse or modem.

Computer System: A computer system include input device, output device, central processing unit (CPU), and storage device. Sometimes computer vendors refer the computer system only to the CPU.

Computer Viruses: Hidden or sometimes undetectable programs that hides within another program or system for the purpose of altering or destroying programs or data.

CPU: Central Processing Unit (CPU) is the brain of a computer. See also Microprocessor.

Default Printer: The printer where documents are automatically sent when they are printed.

Desktop Publishing: A process of creating professionally typeset documents on the microcomputer, which are printed on a laser printer.

Device Driver: Software that is designed to control a particular hardware device, such as a modem, a monitor, or a printer.

DPI: Dots Per Inch (DPI) is a measurement of the resolution of printed images.

DVD: Digital Video Disc (DVD) is a new type of storage technology for high density discs than can hold from 4.7 gigabyte (GB) to 17 GB of information.
**File Extension:** In the older DOS world, files can have up to 8 characters long plus an optional 3-letter extension. Some programs use the extension to decide the file formats. For example, ".WPG" is for WordPerfect graphics, ".TXT" is for common text files, and ".BMP" is for bitmap graphics files.

**GB:** GB is short for Gigabyte, a unit of computer storage equaling approximately one billion bytes.

**GIF:** GIF stands for Graphic Interchange Format. This graphics format was developed by Compuserv using a patented compression licensed by Unisys. Though GIF is referred to as "lossless" compression, this format stores only up to 256 colors.

**GUI:** Graphical User Interface. This is the interface used in most newer programs in contrast with the old-fashion command-driven applications. In most cases, the GUI exists in the mouse-driven computer environments in which users are guided through screen displays by icons which represents functions or features within a program.

**Hard Drive:** The hard drive is the mechanism inside the computer for storing and retrieving data and programs.

**Internet:** A network of all inter-related network computers in the world.

**ISDN:** Integrated Services Digital Network.

**JPEG:** JPEG is a highly compressing graphics format developed by the Joint Photographic Experts Group. The compression rate can be as much as 100:1 and result in a very small image file size.

**LAN:** LAN is short for the local area network where many client computers are connected to one or more servers. Computers connected to the LAN can share resources such as the same programs, data files, and printers.

**LocalTalk:** LocalTalk is a networking system that allows two or more Macintosh to connect and to share resources.

**LPT Port:** Line printer port which use parallel method to transfer data and is faster than the Com port. LPT port is usually used for printer connection.

**MB:** MB is short for Megabyte, a unit of computer storage equaling about one million bytes.

**MHz (Megahertz):** MHz is the speed of a computer measured in millions of cycles (tasks) per second. The higher the number, the faster the performance.

**Microprocessor:** It is an integrated circuit containing all the central processing functions of a computer. It is also called a central processing unit.

**Modem:** Modem is a device to connect a computer to another computer via the phone line.

**Multitasking:** Multitasking means to run two or more programs at the same time. The number of the programs that can be effectively multitasked depends on the amount of memory available, CPU speed, capacity and speeds of peripheral resources, and the efficiency of the operating system.

**Operating System:** An operating system is a program that regulates the computer operations such as job management, task management, and data management. Popular Operating systems include DOS (IBM or Microsoft Disk Operating System), Microsoft Windows, Windows 95, Macintosh OS, Unix, etc.

**RAM (Random access memory):** The RAM is the silicon chips that allow computer to temporarily store information and run programs. Once the power is off, the RAM is cleaned up. Long term storage is accomplished with the hard disk.
RAM: Random Access Memory (RAM) is the temporary memory storage area used to load program instructions and store files currently in use.

Resolution: Resolution is the number of pixels distributed over a given distance. It is typically measured in inches. The higher the resolution, the clearer the image, and the bigger the file size.

ROM (Read-only memory): ROM is the memory chip that permanently stores instructions and data on the computer. The information on ROM is burned onto the computer at manufacture and cannot be modified.

ROM: Read-Only memory (ROM) is used to store a permanent information for a computer. The information for a computer’s ROM is permanently burned onto the microprocessing chips.

SCSI Port: SCSI is short for small computer system interface which provides faster data transmission than the Com port and the LPT port. Usually the CD-ROM, Zip drives are connected with the SCSI port.

SCSI: Small Computer System Interface (SCSI) is used to connect a computer to the peripheral devices such CD-ROM drives or printers or JAZ drives.

SIMM: Single In-Line Memory Module (SIMM) is the memory chips for the older computers.

Virtual Memory: Virtual memory is a system that breaks up a program into segments when loading the programs into memory. This allows the computer to run several programs concurrently regardless of their size.

VRAM: VRAM is the video random access memory used for the monitor. With bigger VRAM installed, the computer can display more colors or to attach to a larger monitor.

WYSIWYG: What you see is what you get (WYSIWYG pronounced as "wizzy-wig") is typical for GUI-based applications which refers to the graphics-based screens that show graphics and text on screen the way the printer will print them.

Graphics terminology:

- AVI movie
- Background
- Bit-map
- Compression
- Digital video
- Digitizer
- Distort effect
- GIF
- JPEG
- MPEG
- Perspective effect
- QuickTime
Raster
Resolution
Scanner
Shear effect
Sweeping effect
Vector