
Dictionary of Computer and Internet Terms

Fifth Edition

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GATE

1. One of the three parts of a field-effect transistor. *See* FIELD-EFFECT TRANSISTOR.
2. Any of several logic circuits. *See* AND GATE; OR GATE; NOT GATE; NOR GATE; NAND GATE; LOGIC CIRCUITS.

GATEWAY a link between different computer networks.

GB *see* GIGABYTE.

GERMANIUM a chemical element used to make semiconductor devices. (*See* SEMICONDUCTOR.) Germanium semiconductors have now been almost completely replaced by silicon.

GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) a file format developed by CompuServe for storing bitmap images on disk. (*See* BITMAP; COMPUSERVE.) GIF images can have up to $65,536 \times 65,536$ pixels and 256 colors. GIF is the most common format for images on the World Wide Web. *Compare* TIFF; PCX.

GIGABYTE (GB) approximately one billion bytes. With computer memories, one gigabyte is always $2^{30} = 1,073,741,824$ bytes = 1,024 megabytes. With disk drives, a gigabyte is sometimes understood as 1,000 megabytes. *See also* MEGABYTE.

GLITCHES erroneous responses that occur inside a computer because signals that are supposed to be simultaneous actually arrive at slightly different times. Software errors are occasionally called glitches. *See* BUG.

GLOBAL VARIABLE a variable that can be recognized anywhere in a program. *Contrast* LOCAL VARIABLE.

GLYPH any printable character.

GOPHER a computer program, and an accompanying data transfer protocol, for reading information that has been made available to the public on the Internet. Gopher is supported by the University of Minnesota and uses a menu-driven user interface. It is gradually being superseded by HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) and browsers such as Netscape (which can read Gopher information as well as HTTP information). The name "gopher" is a pun on "go for" (i.e., go and get things). *See* WORLD WIDE WEB.

GOV suffix indicating that an EMAIL address or WEB SITE is at a government site in the United States, such as `www.whitehouse.gov`. *See* URL; DOMAIN.

GPF (General Protection Fault) an error that arises in Microsoft Windows when a program tries to access a location in memory that is not allocated to it. GPFs are usually caused by programming errors such as uninitialized pointers. Software that produces them is defective or improperly configured. *See also* ILLEGAL OPERATION.