

Basic Technology Terms

Cookies -- Small data files stored in a computer's memory by some websites a user visits. These data files may contain information the site can use to track things such as user names and passwords, contents of virtual shopping carts, lists of pages visited, and the date a user last looked at a page. Many cookies contain solely a unique number corresponding to an entry in the website's database containing that information.

Cyber bullying -- The use of e-mail, websites, instant messaging, chat rooms, cell phone text messaging and digital cameras to antagonize and intimidate others.

Cyber shorthand -- A shorthand used in electronic communications (for example, e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, cell phone text messaging) made up of keyboard hieroglyphics, alphanumeric combinations, few vowels, little punctuation and virtually no upper case letters. Some examples:

ur -- you are
j/k -- just kidding
brb -- be right back
pa -- parental alert
k -- okay
bf -- boyfriend
bff -- best friends forever
pos -- parent over shoulder
ttyl -- talk to you later
asl -- age, sex, location

E-mail -- electronic mail.

Encryption -- Various methods of scrambling data so that information is secure as it is transmitted over the Internet.

Firewall -- Part of a computer system or network designed to block unauthorized access while permitting authorized communications based based upon a set of rules and other criteria. Firewalls can be implemented in either hardware or software, or a combination of both.

Hacker -- a person who uses the Internet to access computers without permission.

Hotspot -- a public venue that provides a wireless Internet connection, either for a fee or free of charge.

Instant Messaging -- The continuous immediate exchange of electronic messages. A user who is instant messaging can ascertain whether a pre-designated individual is connected to the Internet at a given time and, if they are, exchange messages with them in real time.

Internet Service Provider -- A company that provides access to the Internet. Commonly abbreviated as "ISP."

Pharming -- A scam in which malicious code is installed on a personal computer or server, misdirecting users to fraudulent websites and without their knowledge or consent. Unlike Phishing, see below, a user does not need to click on a link to fall victim.

Phishing -- In phishing, a scam artist sends out legitimate-looking e-mails appearing to come from trustworthy sites, generally financial in nature, in an effort to obtain personal and financial information from an individual by getting him/her to click on a link to a fake website, which appears identical to the real website. Any information transmitted via the link goes to the scammer.

Social Networking Site -- These sites generally allow a member to connect with other members through various means of communication (chat rooms, e-mail, blogging, instant messaging) and to provide information about himself/herself. On some sites, a member can browse for other members based upon criteria, such as a specific interest or subject matter, while other sites require that a member be introduced to others through a shared connection.

Spammer -- someone who sends mass amounts of unsolicited commercial e-mail.

Spyware -- Software installed without your knowledge or consent that adversely affects your ability to use your computer, sometimes by monitoring or controlling your use.

Virus -- software that spreads from computer to computer and damages or disrupts your system.

Weblog -- Generally a personal website that uses a log format which is updated on a daily or frequent basis with new information on a subject or range of subjects. A weblog is characterized by a journalistic, informal style, is intended to represent the author's personality or reflects the purpose of the host website. Frequently shortened to "blog."