

Gates Library Foundation Technology Inventory Glossary

ADSL: Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line. A method for moving data over regular phone lines, it is faster than a regular phone connection. Similar to a leased line, an ADSL circuit must be configured to connect two specific locations.

Cable: A constant connection to the Internet utilizing cabling equipment and services of a telecommunications provider.

Catalog software vendor: A supplier of automated catalog systems and software, e.g., TLC, Dynix, SIRSI.

Category 5 (CAT-5) Cabling: A relatively expensive cabling method, Category 5 wiring is capable of transmitting data at high speeds and conforms to IEEE standards. By contrast, most telephone lines are Category 1.

Configuration: The way a system is set up, or the assortment of components that make up the system. Configuration refers to either hardware or software, or the combination of both. (e.g., a typical configuration for a PC consists of 32MB main memory, a floppy drive, a hard disk, a modem, a CD-ROM drive, a VGA monitor, and the Windows operating system.)

Dedicated Connection: A permanent connection to the Internet, as opposed to a dial-up connection, which must be established for each session.

Frame Relay: A packet-switching protocol for connecting devices on a Wide Area Network (WAN). Frame Relay networks in the U.S. support data transfer rates at T-1 (1.544 Mbps) and T-3 (45 Mbps) speeds.

Internet Access: Having one or more of the following services available via the library: telnet, gopher, file transfer protocol (ftp), or the World Wide Web. Access to electronic mail only is not considered Internet access.

ISDN: Integrated Services Digital Network. An international communications standard for sending voice, video, and data over digital telephone lines. ISDN requires special metal wires and supports data transfer rates of 64 Kbps (64,000 bits per second).

Internet Service Provider (ISP): A company that provides access to the Internet for other companies and/or individuals. ISP's are NOT commercial services such as Prodigy, America Online, CompuServe, or Microsoft Network.

Kb/s or Kbps: Kilobits per second. A measure of data transfer speed. Modems, for example, are measured in Kbps. Note that one Kbps is 1,000 bits per second, whereas a KB (kilobyte) is 1,024 bytes.

Leased line: A phone line that is rented for exclusive 24-hour, 7-days-a-week use from your location to another location. The highest speed data connections require a leased line.

Local Area Network (LAN): Two or more computers connected with cables and network interface cards. A serial cable terminal network connecting an OPAC to dumb terminals (devices with no internal memory or processing capacity) is not a LAN.

Modem: An external or internal device attached to a computer that translates digital information into analog form and back again. This device enables computers to communicate over telephone lines.

PC: IBM-compatible personal (desktop) computer.

Pentium: A microprocessor or chip manufactured by Intel.

Point-to-Point: A dedicated circuit provided by one or more telecommunications carriers which have a permanent link from each endpoint.

Public Access Computers: Computers and workstations that are available to the public without staff mediation.

RAM: Random access memory. A type of computer memory that can be accessed randomly; that is, any byte of memory can be accessed without touching the preceding bytes. RAM is the most common type of memory found in computers and other devices, such as printers. It is measured in MBs or megabytes.

Satellite Communications: A technique that sends and receives data and voice signals via transmissions on orbiting satellites.

Telephone Line: analog, POTS. The "plain old telephone system" line that is capable of carrying voices via the telephone and data via a modem.

Wide Area Network (WAN): Two or more Local Area Networks (LANs) connected by a bridge or router spanning a telecommunications line

Wireless: Sending data without using physical wiring, i.e., satellite transmission, cellular phone communications

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