Computer Vocabulary

anti-virus software – a program that finds and removes viruses from a computer

app – a self-contained program or piece of software; an application, especially when downloadable to a mobile device.

application – a self-contained program or piece of software

backup – a copy of files from a computer's hard disk, usually made on some external medium such as CD-ROM or flash drive. A backup is made in case the hard disk file(s) are erased or damaged.

bit, bytes – a bit is the smallest piece of information that computers use. For simplicity, a PC uses bits in groups of 8 called bytes (8 bits = 1 byte).

Bluetooth – a way of communicating wirelessly over short distances between electronic devices (for example computer and mobile telephone)

boot, boot up, boot disk – You boot (or boot up) your computer when you switch it on and wait while it prepares itself. Instructions for startup are given to the computer from the boot disk, which is usually the hard disk.

browser, to browse – A browser is a program like Firefox or Internet Explorer. You use it to view or browse the Internet.

bug – a (small) defect or fault in a program

cache – a kind of memory used to make a computer work faster

CD–ROM – a disk for storing computer information. It looks like an audio CD.

CPU – Central Processing Unit. This is a PC's heart or "brains".

data – Usually means the information (text, pictures, audio etc) that you create or share on a computer, as opposed to the programs that manipulate the data.

DOS – Disk Operating System. The original system used for PCs, where you typed in commands instead of pointing and clicking.

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