Glossary – Some Internet Terms Explained

CYBER-SPEAK
A quick guide to the "language" of the Internet and some of the more common terms:

Browser:
Special software inside your computer that allows navigation around the Internet and the ability to view websites.

Bookmark:
Just like a bookmark marks your place in a book, an Internet bookmark allows you to bookmark favourite website for easy accessibility.

Bulletin Board/Newsgroup:
Places where you can leave messages for other users, research for ideas or information or share general news (don't forget to keep your email address as private as possible).

Chat Room:
A place where people from all over the world can converge and talk by typing messages back and forth. Parents can choose to restrict access to these.

Chatting:
A way for people to connect to each other on the Internet.

Cookie:
When you visit a site, a file known as a "cookie" is stored inside your computer for future reference. If you revisit the same site, the "cookie" file allows the site to identify you as a 'return' guest, and offer you products tailored to your interests and tastes. Online preferences can be set to limit "cookies" on your computer.

Cyberspace:
Another name for the Internet.

Download:
The ability to transfer files off the Internet and onto your own computer.

Email:
A popular form of communication through electronic messages sent back and forth between computers.

Filter:
Software that can be purchased to help limit access to certain websites and hinder questionable content from appearing on-screen.

Handle:
A handle is a nickname a person uses on the Internet and used to identify people in places such as chat rooms and instant messaging programs.

Internet:
The global network that allows access to an abundance of information and ideas.

ISP:
An abbreviation for Internet Service Provider, or your host server. This is how you hook up to the Internet.

Junk Email:
Unsolicited commercial email, known as "spam".

Keyword: A word you enter into a search engine to begin the search for specific information you are requesting.

Links:
Highlighted URLs which allow connection to other parts of the Internet.

ListServ:
An online mailing list which allows individuals or groups to send email to a group of people at the same time.

Modem:
An internal or external device that connects your computer to a phone line and to a company that can link you to the Internet.

Netique:
"Netiquette" is network etiquette, the do's and don'ts of online communication. Netiquette covers both common courtesy online and the informal "rules of the road" of cyberspace.

Online Service:
An ISP with added information, entertainment and shopping features.

Password:
A personal code word that you use to access your account.

Privacy Policy:
A statement on a website describing what information about you is collected by the site, and how it is used. This policy should be prominently displayed and you have the choice to "opt-in" or "opt-out" – an opt-in choice means the site won't use your information unless you say it's OK, whereas an opt-out choice means the site can use your information unless you tell it not to.

Screen Name:
The name you call yourself when you communicate with others online.

Search Engine:
A function that allows you to search for information and websites, similar to a card catalogue at the library but much easier to use.

URL:
Stands for Uniform Resource Locator – the address that allows you to locate a particular site.

Virus:
A file planted in your computer that can damage files and disrupt your system. These can come through an email with an attached file, or picked up while you surf the Net. Virus Checkers are a must if you are a regular user of the Internet.

Website:
A destination on the Internet where you can look up and record data. All the websites in the world, linked together, constitute the "World Wide Web".