Basic Computer Terms

Hardware- *The physical parts of a computer -*

CPU
> *Central processing unit*; the brain of the computer; controls the other elements of the computer

Disk Drive
> A peripheral device that reads and/or writes information on a disk

Hard Drive
> A device (usually within the computer case) that reads and writes information, including the operating system, program files, and data files

Keyboard
> A peripheral used to input data by pressing keys

Modem
> A peripheral device used to connect one computer to another over a phone line

Monitor
> A device used to display information visually

Mouse
> A peripheral device used to point to items on a monitor

NIC
> *Network interface card*; a board inserted in a computer that provides a physical connection to a network

Printer
> A peripheral device that converts output from a computer into a printed image

Software - *Instructions executed by a computer -*

Applications
> Complete, self-contained programs that perform a specific function (ie. spreadsheets, databases)

Bit
> A computer's most basic unit of information

Boot
> The process of loading or initializing an operating system on a computer; usually occurs as soon as a computer is turned on

Browser
> A program used to view World Wide Web pages, such as Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer

Bug
> A part of a program that usually causes the computer to malfunction; often remedied in patches or updates to the program

Byte
> Small unit of data storage; 8 bits; usually holds one character

Click
> Occurs when a user presses a button on a mouse which in turn, generates a command to the computer

Database
A large structured set of data; a file that contains numerous records that contain numerous fields

Diskette
A small flexible disk used for storing computer data

Double Click
Occurs when a user presses a button on the mouse twice in quick succession; this generates a command to the computer

Download
Transferring data from another computer to your computer

Drag
Occurs when a user points the mouse at an icon or folder, presses the button and without releasing the button, moves the icon or folder to another place on the computer where the button is released

Driver
Software program that controls a piece of hardware or a peripheral

FAQ
Frequently asked question; documents that answer questions common to a particular website or program

File
Namable unit of data storage; an element of data storage; a single sequence of bytes

Folder
A graphical representation used to organize a collection of computer files; as in the concept of a filing cabinet (computer's hard drive) with files (folders)

Freeware
Software provided at no cost to the user

Gigabyte
1,073,741,824 bytes or 1,024 megabytes; generally abbreviated GB

GUI
Graphical user interface; uses pictures and words to represent ideas, choices, functions, etc.

Icon
A small picture used to represent a file or program in a GUI interface

Internet
A network of computer networks encompassing the World Wide Web, FTP, telnet, and many other protocols

IP number
Internet protocol; a computer's unique address or number on the Internet

Kilobyte
1,024 bytes; usually abbreviated KB

Megabyte
1,048,576 bytes or 1,024 kilobytes; enough storage to approximately equal a 600 page paperback book; generally abbreviated Mb

Memory
Any device that holds computer data

Menu
A list of operations available to the user of a program

Network
A collection of computers that are connected

Peripheral
> Any of a number of hardware devices connected to a CPU

RAM
> *Random access memory*; the type of storage that changes; when the computer is turned off, the RAM memory is erased

ROM
> *Read-only memory*; the type of storage that is not changed even when the computer is turned off

Scroll Bar
> Allows the user to control which portion of the document is visible in the window; available either horizontally or vertically or both

Shareware
> Software provided at a minimal cost to users who are on their honor to send in payment to the programmer

Spreadsheet
> A program arranged in rows and columns that manipulates numbers

Tool Bar
> A graphical representation of program activities; a row of icons used to perform tasks in a program

URL
> *Uniform resource locator*; the address of a site on the World Wide Web; a standard way of locating objects on the Internet

Virus
> A deliberately harmful computer program designed to create annoying glitches or destroy data

Window
> A screen in a software program that permits the user to view several programs at one time

Word Processor
> A program that allows the user to create primarily text documents

Mouse practice: http://minimouse.us/