

Glossary – Computing Terminology

Algorithm, computer networks, control, data, debug, digital content, information, input, internet, logical reasoning, output, program, repetition, search, selection, sequence, services, simulation, software, variables, World Wide Web

algorithm – an unambiguous procedure or precise step-by-step guide to solve a problem or achieve a particular objective.

computer networks – the computers and the connecting hardware (wifi access points, cables, fibres, switches and routers) that make it possible to transfer data using an agreed method ('protocol').

control – using computers to move or otherwise change 'physical' systems. The computer can be hidden inside the system or connected to it.

data – a structured set of numbers, representing digitised text, images, sound or video, which can be processed or transmitted by a computer.

debug – to detect and correct the errors in a computer program.

input – data provided to a computer system, such as via a keyboard, mouse, microphone, camera or physical sensors.

internet – the global collection of computer networks and their connections, all using shared protocols (TCP/IP) to communicate.

logical reasoning – a systematic approach to solving problems or deducing information using a set of universally applicable and totally reliable rules.

output – the information produced by a computer system for its user, typically on a screen, through speakers or on a printer, but possibly through the control of motors in physical systems.

program – a stored set of instructions encoded in a language understood by the computer that does some form of computation, processing input and/or stored data to generate output.

repetition – a programming construct in which one or more instructions are repeated, perhaps a certain number of times, until a condition is satisfied or until the program is stopped.

selection – a programming construct in which the instructions that are executed are determined by whether a particular condition is met.

sequence – to place programming instructions in order, with each executed one after the other.

simulation – using a computer to model the state and behaviour of real-world (or imaginary) systems, including physical and social systems; an integral part of most computer games.

software – computer programs, including both application software (such as office programs, web browsers, media editors and games) and the computer operating system. The term also applies to ‘apps’ running on mobile devices and to web-based services.

variables – a way in which computer programs can store, retrieve or change simple data, such as a score, the time left, or the user’s name.

World Wide Web – a service provided by computers connected to the internet (web servers), in which pages of hypertext (web pages) are transmitted to users; the pages typically include links to other web pages and may be generated by programs automatically.