

Article: [COMPUTERS BEHAVING BADLY](#)

Topic: Geek Speak

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This month I have decided to write about computer terminology. For those of you, who know this stuff, bear with me. It's surprising how many computer owners are blissfully ignorant of the TLA's (three letter acronyms) that rule the IT (information technology) highway but given their popularity, they are important to recognise.

Probably the first place to start is the computer screen. Ring up any IT Support Centre and they will ask you to go to your *desktop* and tell them what is running in the *taskbar*. The *desktop* is where all your *icons* (pictures that when double clicked start a program) live. It's not the top of your computer desk like my wife originally thought!. For example My Computer, Recycle Bin and My Documents are icons on the desktop. The taskbar is the bar on the bottom of your screen that shows currently running tasks that you have started. The *system tray* is on the same line as the *taskbar* on the right hand side and shows running tasks that the computer has started. These tasks are running in the background and are actively performing tasks for you, like, monitoring for viruses.

What about your monitor, do you have a *CRT* or a *LCD*?. *CRT* stands for Cathode Ray Tube and is the traditional, bulky monitors, like your TV. *LCD* is Liquid Crystal Display and is the newer, slim, flat screens as seen on laptops.

When buying a PC you are bombarded with TLA's. Here is a breakdown of the common ones. *HDD* (hard disk drive) - internal, fast storage, where all your data is kept. *FDD* (floppy disk drive) - removable storage. *RAM* (random access memory) - area where the computer temporarily stores information. *OS* (operating system) - like Windows 98 or XP. *CD-RW* (rewriteable CD drive) - used for playing and making CD's (compact disks). *Meg* and *Gig* - size of the hard drive or speed of the PC, the larger these figures, the faster your machine and more storage capacity it will have.

Of course the Internet is rampant with geek-speak. *ISP* (Internet Service Provider) like Bigpond or Optus. *ADSL* (asynchronous digital subscriber line), in other words, broadband. *LAN* (local area network) - computers that are linked together in a common area like a room or house. *WAN* (wide area network) - computers that are linked across a larger area like outside the building, interstate or globally. *POP* (point of presence) is the dial-in location for your ISP. *POP3* is your incoming email server and *SMTP* (simple mail transfer protocol) is your outgoing email server.

Of course, like any profession, there is no end to the terminology. This is merely the more general, common terms. There is a plethora of more general, specific, even arcane phrases.

So, please! Don't let us geeks, freaks and nerds use what we consider normal words when talking with you. Pull us up and do a 'Please Explain...'. We'll have to rephrase it in words everybody understands.

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