

Have you ever been confused by technical terms and jargon...and wished someone could explain things more simply? This page aims to clarify a few.

## basic terminology

**.asp** - is a [file extension](#) for an active server page (a web page dynamically created with information from a database)

**Accessibility** - a special set of design principles that assist the web page design ([GUI](#)) to be experienced more easily by people with disabilities...

**Attachment** - generally means an attached document file that is not a regular [HTML](#) web page on the site. This can also be in formats such as a Portable Document File (pdf), word (.doc) and excel worksheet (.xls).

Usually a user is provided with a text hyper link and the attachment opens in a new browser window. To open any attachments the user needs to have a software application which allows them to open the file e.g. Adobe Acrobat Reader. Attachments are a great means for provided users with formatted files suitable for printing.

**Browser** - a FREE software application/program that allows you to view pages on the web (most computers are purchased with this software installed). Commonly known browsers are: Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE), Netscape (NS) and Mozilla Firefox.

Browsers like any other software program are constantly under development, refinement and general improvement. As such we recommend you check for latest upgrades. The following links will take you to the most recent upgrades. If you have an older version you may not be viewing the internet a beautifully as you could! - simply download the latest program by following the instructions.

Internet Explorer: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/default.mspx>

Mozilla: <http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/>

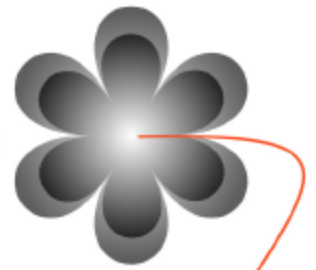
**Back-end** - refers to the 'behind the scenes' space (on a server) of the website such as how [dynamic content](#) interacts with the front-end (viewable to the public) part of the site. The part of the computer that changes source code into object code (machine read code). (2) The part of the program that runs on a server in a client/server application - e.g. a calculator application used on banking websites.

**Broadband** - A term for high-speed, high-capacity Internet and data connections.

**.cfm** - is a [file extension](#) for a ColdFusion web page (a web page dynamically created with information from a database)

**CFML** (ColdFusion Markup Language) - a programming language used to build dynamic web pages that outputs dynamic content from a database.

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**Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)** - styles define how HTML elements are displayed in the same way styles format a word document. Style sheets enable you to globally change the appearance of all the pages on your site by simply editing a single CSS document.

**Cascading Navigation** - like our website, navigation that pops out revealing sub-navigation (secondary) links to pages.

**CGI (Common Gateway Interface)** - a set of defined rules that describes how a CGI Program script communicates with a Web Server and relays information. Often used to relay information collected via a form.

**Choosing a Domain Name** - domain names end in various global extensions such as .com, .org, .edu, .net, .gov, .us, etc.

To choose a domain name you need to conduct a 'global' search to check if the name is available – you can do this through special sites such as [www.idhighway.com](http://www.idhighway.com) (for global names e.g. .com .net .org) and [www.idhighway.com.au](http://www.idhighway.com.au) (for pacific domains e.g. .com.au .co.nz)

Don't be disheartened if your preferred name is not available – options will be recommended and or it may also be that the name is registered but not 'active'. If this is the case see if your domain name register can help you contact the owner – they 'may' be willing to relinquish!

**Content Management System (CMS)** - allows web site owners to publish and manage web site content without any HTML or web scripting knowledge. Most CMS solutions employ 'browser based' (Internet Explorer and Mozilla etc) editing of web content and template management allowing updates from anywhere, anytime.

**Cookie** - data sent by a Web server to a Web client, to be stored locally by the client and sent back to the server on subsequent requests.

For example; When the Web site of an online retail store is accessed for the first time by a particular client, a unique hashcode is sent back to the client to be stored locally. On subsequent visits the cookie recalls your particular preferences and history.

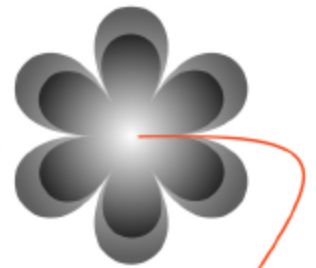
**Dial-up** – 'Dialup' access is a way of connecting a computer to the Internet using a modem and the telephone line to transfer information.

**Domain Name (address)** - is the unique address that is associated with a site. e.g. our name [www.brittambrosedesign.com](http://www.brittambrosedesign.com) is the name we have registered...and the name we promote to clients to find us. Think of this as the sign on the door to your office space.

Behind the scenes of the actual address of a site is its IP address, is a series of numbers that appear in a format similar to 123.456.7.890. Remembering a set of numbers like this for every website would be extremely challenging, so Domain Name Servers (DNS) servers exist to associate an easy-to-remember domain name with a hidden IP address.

**Download** - transferring a file from a computer on the Internet to your own computer. For example we most commonly refer to this term to download a printable document, or a software update such as Microsoft updates.

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Things you might download include software, images, email, MIDI files, etc.

**Dynamic content** – documents and databases that are being drawn into (fed) to the front end (viewable to the public) of the site.

**e-commerce** - the process of selling, buying, trading, and conducting transactions via the internet. e-commerce websites typically utilize shopping cart technology, real-time transaction gateways or more simplistic secure encrypted email transaction.

**File Transfer Protocol (FTP)** - is a protocol that allows the transfer of files from one computer to another, or a server - e.g. we use FTP to publish web pages to the web.

**File Extension** - the part of a file name that indicates the type of file, usually this is three to four letters, such as in MS Word (.doc)

**Front-end** - Refers to the 'viewable to the public' space on the website. This incorporates the design, layout and site architecture (structure) of a website.

**Graphic User Interface (GUI)** - the use of pictures rather than just words to represent the input and output of a program. This term refers to a software front-end meant to provide an attractive and easy to use interface between a user and an application software. As an example Microsoft's Windows operating system is pretty GUI and DOS is not.

In web design we also refer to this as the '[front-end](#)' of the website design – what your viewers see and experience.

**GIF** - the acronym for 'Graphic Interchange Format', One of the two most common image file formats on the Internet today, especially for animated banners. A GIF image consists of a maximum of 256 colours and is typically used for compression of vector art files such as logos for the web.

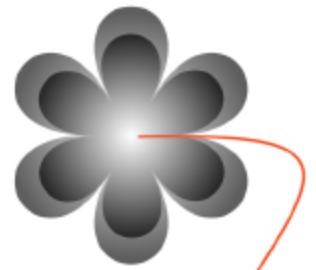
**Home Page** - the first indexed page of a web site, the page that launches when you enter the domain name of a web site - e.g. <http://www.brittambrosedesign.com>

**Hosting** – as an analogy, is the internet equivalent of a business owner renting office space or a store front.

For every site you come across online - there is a server provided by a host that is providing a gateway allowing access to that site to users all around the world.

A hosting provider provides you with storage space on the web. Typically hosting is paid for on a monthly or yearly basis. A basic hosting package should include ample storage, transfer bandwidth rates, type of server, a number of POP email accounts with email management capability.

**HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)** - the method or system by which HTML pages (web pages) are transferred between an http server and a browser.



**HTML** - an acronym for 'Hyper Text Markup Language', HTML is the language used to tag (label) various parts of a Web document so browsing software will know how to display that document's links, text, and graphics and attached media.

**Information Architecture (IA)** - is defining the structure, organization, navigation, labelling and indexing of a Website.

**JPEG** - the acronym for 'Joint Photographic Experts Group', JPEG is an image compression format used to transfer color photographs and images over computer networks. Along with [GIF](#) is the most common way photos are presented over the Web.

**Links** - these are the hypertext connections between Web pages via a single mouse click. Usually seen as highlighted bold, coloured or underlined text with a prompt to [download](#) a file or [click here](#)

**Look and Feel** - the 'look and feel' of a site is referring to the appearance, aesthetics and overall design of the site. A successful design captures the essence of your business and remains in keeping with your business, and its target market.

**MPEG** - the acronym for 'Moving Pictures Expert Group', MPEG is an international standard for video compression and desktop movie presentation. A special viewing application is needed to run MPEG files on your computer such as Windows Media Player or QuickTime Player.

**Online** - loosely refer to the virtual place where content is published and available to internet users. In context we often refer to having an 'online' plan – which simply means a business plan with strategies on how we will take your businesses presence online to the internet community.

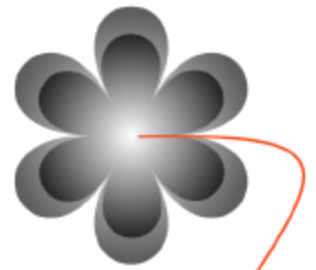
**QuickTime** - this is a digital video standard developed for Apple Macintosh computers. Special viewing applications (Media players) are needed to run QuickTime movies.

**Search Engine** - this term refers to a software tool that assists users to find information on the internet. You'll have heard of websites such as Google or Alta Vista which provides gateway services to extensive text based databases which link to sites all over the world.

By typing in keywords or phrases to a certain topic - SE's comb their databases, returning a collection of pages with brief descriptions with clickable links to various websites. The text content from these sites match your keyword search – the industry often refer to the matches as *hits*.

**SEO (Search Engine Optimization)** - generally refers to how search engines locate and catalogue information from websites. Most of the major search engines comb the web periodically in search of current content and new sites being published to the web.

The more successfully you have optimized your site for search engines, the more accurately your site is listed in their database rankings, and the more qualified traffic you should receive based on the words users input in their searches.



Browser Titles, Meta Descriptions and Meta Keywords are the initial means for optimizing your site, however you may choose to invest in a more aggressive campaign to drive traffic and should consult a specialist – your hosting provider may offer this as an added service.

**SQL (Structured Query Language)** - is the common standard for accessing databases such as SQL Server, Oracle, Sybase, and Access.

**Traffic** - the amount of activity from visitors on a given website. Analysing traffic activity can be very useful in understanding your websites performance.

**URL (Uniform Resource Locator)** - the addressing system used in the World Wide Web and other Internet resources. Our URL [www.brittambrosedesign.com](http://www.brittambrosedesign.com) contains information about the method of access, the server to be accessed and the path of any file to be accessed.

**Web Design** - refers to the front end design and layout of a website, including the "look and feel" as well as the navigation structure and site information architecture.

**Webpage** – a single page on the web usually associated with a group of pages forming a website.

**Website** – think of a website as being like a book with a collection of pages divided into chapters. Instead of printing to paper it's been published to the internet (www) for public viewing and can be read [online](#).

**World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)** - [www.w3.org](http://www.w3.org) - the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) both develops and promotes standard technologies for the Web industry so that a common goal is to provide sites that are viewable to as many viewers as possible.

**XHTML** - is the successor of [HTML](#) - the 'Extensible HyperText Markup Language' (XHTML™) is a family of current and future document types and ultimately is designed to work in conjunction with XML-based user agents.

**XML** – is an acronym for 'Extensible Markup Language' which describes and transfers data from one platform to another. is a data format for structured document interchange on the Web.