Microsoft Definitions

Note: Some of the terms included in this glossary are not exclusive to Microsoft and have origins in the greater high-tech community. The Microsoft Museum's role is to document Microsoft culture as it exists and not to shape or interpret the information we receive. There have been occasions when content has been excluded, but terms are usually added without substantial editing or filtering.

.non: (pronounced "dot-non" a.k.a: "dot-crap"): A dot-com company who looks like they do e-commerce but is really just a product catalog with a phone number at the bottom.

3-Dub: A shorthand pronunciation of WWW.

3D Help: Printed help manuals. As opposed to 2D Help, which appears on a computer monitor as online help.

404: Someone who's clueless. From the World Wide Web message "404, URL Not Found," meaning that the document you've tried to access can't be located. "Don't bother asking him...he's 404."

ABM: Anything But Microsoft. The attitude taken by hard-core UNIX and Java people who only run non-Microsoft software, no matter how bad or expensive it is.

ADK: Acronym used to describe Microsoft's hiring strategy. Stands for Attract, Develop, and Keep employees.

Adminisphere: The rarified organizational layers beginning just above the rank and file. Decisions that fall from the adminisphere are often profoundly inappropriate or irrelevant to the problems they were designed to solve.

Alias: E-mail name for individual or group, mostly used for the latter. E-mail names for Microsoft employees generally combine their given name with the first letter of their surname and are often used in conversation to save time. "I sent mail to BillG today, but he hasn't replied."

Alpha: The first complete build of an application. Alphas are generally so fragile and buggy that they rarely work, but they are announced to give the impression that progress is being made.

Alpha Geek: The most knowledgeable, technically proficient person in an office or work group. "Ask Larry, he's the alpha geek around here."

App: Shortened form of application and synonym for program. Applications are a set of instructions encoded in software that instructs the computer hardware to manipulate or display data. "I heard a rumor that Mango is a killer app."

Argot: Sometimes considered the specialized language of the underworld, argot also refers to any subcultural language that is known only to insiders, whether they're Microsoft employees, rappers, surfers, or teenagers. When a number of different subcultures begin using a particular word, it becomes slang.

Author: Person who assembles various multimedia components—text, audio, graphics. Not to be confused with a traditional author in fiber media, who is known in cybermedia as a content provider. Tr. v. -thored, -thoring, -thors. "You'll need to wait; Sue is authoring that story."
**Bandwidth:** Amount of time or brain cells available for handling a task.

**BEC:** Bill and the Executive Committee (the name that replaced BOOP in 1996).

**Beepilepsy:** The brief seizure people sometimes suffer when their beepers go off, especially in vibrator mode. Characterized by physical spasms, goofy facial expressions, and stopping speech in mid-sentence.

**BENOFTMUE:** (ben-ofta-moo) noun: Big event no one foresaw that messes up everything. (Usage: Due to the recent BENOFTMUE, our group had to reorg again.)

**Beta:** First step beyond Alpha. An application released to Testing so it can find and fix as many bugs as possible. As more and more bugs are fixed, updated Beta builds—called Release Candidates (RC1, RC2, etc.)—are created.

**Big R/Little r:** This is a legacy from the days of Xenix Mail, where the letter R was used to Reply to e-mail. An upper-case R represented a reply all, while a lower-case r sent a reply just to the sender. To this day, you'll see many old-timers still include this reference in e-mail, e.g., "Get back to me on this issue by COB tomorrow - little r please."

**Binary Problem:** A method of paring down an often-complex issue to a two-possible-solutions scenario (yes or no, 1 or 0, stop or go, etc.).

**Bio Break:** Recess in a meeting for biological purposes such as restroom or smokes.

**Black Hole:** A project requiring infinite amounts of effort, time, and resources. In other words, most Microsoft projects.

**Blamestorming:** Sitting around in a group discussing why a deadline was missed or a project failed and who was responsible.

**Blibbet:** The name of the O-like symbol in the original Microsoft logo. Memorialized in the "Save the Blibbet" campaign and honored by the "Blibbet Burger."

**Blowing a Buffer:** Losing one's train of thought. Occurs when the person you are speaking with won't let you get a word in edgewise or has just said something so astonishing that your train gets derailed. "Damn, I just blew my buffer!"

**Blue Badge:** An official Microsoft employee, not a contractor. The security badge for Microsoft employees features a blue border, whereas the badge for contractors is bright orange.

**Blues-and-Whites:** Generic CD-R disks, preprinted in blue and white with a Microsoft logo. Program managers have been heard saying, "Let's not let this external beta go out on blue-and-whites. I want it to look good!"

**Boat Anchor:** Unused, obsolete CPU kept around to leverage acquisition of a new machine at the beginning of the fiscal year. "Fred's office floor was cluttered with boat anchors." See also doorstop.

**Body Nazis:** Hard-core exercise and weight-lifting fanatics who look down on anyone who doesn't work out obsessively.

**Bogosity:** Attribute of things bogus.

**Bookmark:** To take note of a person for future reference (a metaphor borrowed from Web browsers). "I bookmarked him after seeing his cool demo at Siggraph."

**BOOP:** Acronym for "Bill and the Office of the President," the most senior management team at the
company. As of 12/3/96, it has been replaced with the Executive Committee.

**Brain Fart:** A by-product of a bloated mind producing information effortlessly. A burst of useful information. "I know you’re busy on the Microsoft story, but can you give us a brain fart on the Mitnik bust?" Variation of old hacker slang that had more negative connotations.

**Breadcrumbs:** The trail of where you are going within a Web site; similar to a file path.

**BRS:** Big Red Switch. A noun used to describe the process to fix a software problem when all else has failed by shutting off the power. "We're toast…time to BRS".

**Bucket:** A virtual container in which tasks can be dumped. "Stick that interface issue in Ed’s bucket." Sometimes, a container in which low-priority concepts can be consigned. "Toss that simple exit function in the feature bucket; we don’t have the bandwidth to do it this build."

**Bug:** Any problem (valid or not) reported against a product and entered into our Raid database. This is different from industry standard usage, in which only valid problems (ones that are actually fixed) are counted as bugs. This difference in usage can cause significant confusion when discussing metrics with outside folks and can lead to an impression that Microsoft products have more bugs than they actually do.

**Bug:** All-purpose term for mistake, error, glitch. Standard usage for the industry; now fairly widespread throughout the computer-literate world.

**Burning Cycles:** Wasting time and effort.

**Buttoned Down:** Tight, clean, well thought through. A high compliment.

**Cant:** Often used as a synonym for argot. The specialized language of the underworld. Once known as "thieves’ Latin," it’s a conversational idiom that’s usually understood only by members of a particular subgroup, in this case criminals.

**Career-Limiting Move (CLM):** Any action taken that would most likely get you fired or seriously demoted. Trashing your boss while he or she is within earshot is a serious CLM.

**CGI Joe:** A hard-core CGI script programmer with all the social skills and charisma of a plastic action figure.

**Chainsaw Consultant:** An outside expert brought in to reduce the employee headcount, leaving the top brass with clean hands.

**Chair Trap:** When you trap yourself in your office chair by accidentally hitting the pneumatic seat adjustment causing it to drop suddenly, therefore locking your legs under your chair.

**Chip Jewelry:** A euphemism for old computers destined to be scrapped or turned into decorative ornaments. "I paid three grand for that Mac SE, and now it's nothing but chip jewelry."

**Chips and Salsa:** Chips = hardware, salsa = software. "Well, first we gotta figure out if the problem's in your chips or your salsa."

**Cobweb Site:** A World Wide Web site that hasn't been updated for a long time. A dead Web page.

**Code Bloat:** The resultant growth of systems resource requirements such as processor speed and disk and memory space, caused by the addition of features and functionality in software. See also useless fluff.

**Code Warrior:** A developer; a writer of code; the building block of traditional Microsoft success.
**COM-plicate:** To simplify code design by heavy use of COM (Common Object Model).

**Content Provider:** A fancy name for a writer.

**Context Switch:** As in a meeting. "Let's context switch to the next issue."

**Cool:** Basically employed in the same mildly hip way as in general slang, but overused vastly out of proportion to its applicability. Origin of this practice is unknown, but it is all-pervasive, up to the loftiest levels.

**Copy Protection:** Spaying or neutering, such as, "Janet just had her cat copy-protected."

**Cost Beast:** Refers to cost-cutting strategy. For example, "taming the cost beast."

**Crank Hoarder:** One who keeps a supply of the cranks that are used to adjust the height of ergo desks. During an office move, these cranks are often in short supply.

**Cranking Against Deliverables:** Busting hump to keep up with the schedule that the manager promised. "For the next month, we'll really be cranking against deliverables."

**Crapplet:** A badly written or profoundly useless Java applet. "I just wasted 30 minutes downloading this stinkin' crapplet!"

**Crisp:** Clear, concise, and compelling (the opposite of "random."). "Our marketing message has to be totally crisp."

**Cube Farm:** An office filled with cubicles.

**Cubs:** Playful, smart young Microsofties who are somewhat bashful with the opposite sex and haven’t quite grown into their paws.

**Cycles:** 1) Time, resource, and effort that ought not to be wasted. "Let's not waste any cycles on something that doesn't matter." 2) A portion of one's capacity to perform work. "Do you have any cycles to burn on the Gizmo driver?" Cycles, as applied to humans, do not necessarily correspond to scheduled portions of the work day, but rather an expenditure of brain effort that may well be interleaved with other activities.

**Dancing Baloney:** Little animated GIFs and other Web F/X that are useless and serve simply to impress clients. "This page is kinda dull. Maybe a little dancing baloney will help."

**Dead Tree Edition:** The paper version of a publication available in both paper and electronic forms, as in: "The dead tree edition of the San Francisco Chronicle..."

**Death March:** The final phase of product development in which people commit long days and weekends, sleep on couches, and eat catered meals (for example, Windows 95 had a six-month death march).

**Dependency:** A necessity; something that has to work right or come through for a larger project to be accomplished. Variants: Zero-Dependency (does not affect the project in question); Key Dependency (a really necessary necessity).

**Dilberted:** To be exploited and oppressed by your boss. Derived from the experiences of Dilbert, the geek-in-hell comic strip character. "I've been dilberted again. My boss just revised the specs for the fourth time this week."

**Doc:** Casual, widespread abbreviation of "document." "Did you read that doc I sent out in mail?"

**Dogfood:** Software code not fit for public consumption but good enough for internal purposes, very
unrefined and buggy (that is, full of bugs), but containing the basic nutrients. "It’s time for us to eat our own dogfood."

**Door Dorks:** People who stand in your doorway to talk with you, rather than entering your office. Perhaps they are too shy to come in, or they know the doorway is the safest place in the event of an earthquake.

**Doorstop:** A computer that is no longer considered fast enough or contains insufficient storage, etc., for use in normal work. All 286s and 386s are doorstops. Most 486s are now doorstops. Soon we'll see Pentium doorstops.

**Doortag Browsing:** The act of browsing nametags on doors while in a different building, in the hopes of spotting someone famous (or maybe just somebody you've conversed with frequently via e-mail, but never met).

**Dorito Syndrome:** Feelings of emptiness and dissatisfaction triggered by addictive substances that lack nutritional content. "I just spent six hours surfing the Web, and now I've got a bad case of Dorito Syndrome."

**Dot Never:** A feature that is put off indefinitely. As in, "Let’s put that off to a dot never release."

**Downlevel Story:** The anticipated effect of a new code release on existing versions of the application. Used in reference to Web pages optimized for the latest browser when viewed on legacy browsers.

**Drill Down:** To delve deeply into the core of an issue, rather than deal with it in a superficial manner; to analyze the details. To learn more about a subject.

**Drinking from a Fire Hose:** To get overwhelmed with the amount of information being presented.

**Drive:** To push; to captain the initiative on a particular issue or project. "Who’s driving this meeting?"

**Drop:** A release of a product or documentation set. "We will roll out a beta drop of the authoring tool next month."

**Drop Point:** The share to which the release files are copied when completed.

**Early Retirement Plan:** Making a direct connection between the Microsoft Corpnet and the open Internet, negating all those expensive firewalls. Originated by Ed Miller in the original DSL trial team where some of us had sockets for both networks in our offices.

**Eat Your Own Dogfood:** Use the product you're developing in your day-to-day operations.

**Egosurfing:** Scanning the Net, databases, print media, or research papers looking for the mention of your name.

**Elvis Year:** The peak year of something's popularity. "Barney the dinosaur's Elvis year was 1993."

**EOD:** (Sometimes lowercased.) Endemic TLA meaning "end of day." "I need your take-away from the off-site by EOD tomorrow."

**EOM:** (Often lowercased.) "End of message." Appended to subject line of e-mail to indicate that no further communication is forthcoming and that the recipient has no need to read any further. With the auto preview feature, this is anachronistic for some new users. "Out Sick Today. eom"

**eWorld:** Electronic world, including computers, email, Internet, etc.

**Exposure:** The responsibilities of a person or group related to a specific project. "Our exposure is the
client-side documentation." By implication, vulnerable, unprotected areas that management could attack if given the opportunity; those areas for which one's ass is not covered.

**Eyeballs:** Users of a Web site (a vague equivalent of listeners to a radio station).

**Facemail:** Technologically backward means of communication, clearly inferior to voicemail or e-mail. Involves actually walking to someone's office and speaking to him or her face-to-face.

**Fiber Media:** Material printed on archaic paper. Used disparagingly. "Yeah, I used to be a writer in fiber media, but now I'm a content provider in cybermedia."

**Fire Drill:** A crisis (usually imagined) that requires immediate and sustained attention. "Sorry I'm late, honey, but we had another one of Pat's fire drills."

**Fish Bowl:** Unused, obsolete monitor kept around to leverage acquisition of a new monitor at the beginning of the fiscal year. See also boat anchor, doorstop.

**Fish Tank:** (Historical, not in current usage.) When IBM was getting ready to ship its 286 versions of the PC, Microsoft had to keep the prerelease versions of those machines in a locked windowless room. IBM gave every company that was working with those machines a unique codename to use when talking about it, in an effort to trace press leaks. Our codename for the machines was Salmon. When someone needed to work with these machines for debugging, they would say "I'm going to the fish tank" or "I'll be in the fish tank."

**Flame Mail:** Slang term for rude electronic mail. Bill Gates is said to be famous for the flame mail he sends to employees who don't perform according to his liking. Mr. Gates is famous for flame mail sent by him between midnight and 2:00 AM.

**Flight Risk:** Used to describe employees who are suspected of planning to leave a company or department soon.

**FlopNet:** To transfer data between two computers using a floppy disk. Usage started in the early days of MS-Net (the forerunner of LanManager), when the network software was not all that reliable. "The server crashed again! Looks like I'll have to use the FlopNet!"

**Forget You, I'm Vested! (FYIV!):** The Microsoft version of "Take this job and shove it!" "You want me to work 25 hours a day fixing your mess? FYIV, buddy!" Additional note: This is the polite and rarely used translation of this acronym.

**Freeze:** Point in a project's timespan after which no more changes can be permitted. Or, the point in product development after which the answer to all great new ideas is "no."

**FUBAR:** F***ed Up Beyond All Recognition. Used when someone really screws up, as in "Ever since John took over this project, it's been FUBAR."

**Generate Content:** Write. "We'll need to hire some content providers to generate content by Milestone 1."

**Glazing:** Corporate-speak for sleeping with your eyes open. A popular pastime at conferences and early-morning meetings. "Didn't he notice that half the room was glazing by the second session?"

**Going Ballistic:** Losing control, blowing up, venting one's anger and frustration in a fairly violent manner.

**Going Forward:** Synonymous with "moving on"; phrase used to express impatience with comments deemed irrelevant or distracting. "Going forward, what kind of dev resources do we need to go live with this?"
Going/Gone/In the Dark: 1) Prolonged lack of communication with fellow teammates about progress on a project. "Ben's gone dark." (meaning: We haven't heard from Ben in a while.) 2) Not "in the know." "I'm in the dark." (meaning: I don't have a clue.)

Golden: As an adjective, describes a state of perfection, especially of software. When software is ready to be shipped, you frequently hear Microsoft people say, "Everything is golden!" From this usage, we started to call the master disks for a product that is ready to go to manufacturing the "Golden Masters." We call the process of approval for sending disks to manufacturing "going golden."

GOOD Job: A "Get-Out-Of-Debt" job. A well-paying job people take in order to pay off their debts, one that they will quit as soon as they are solvent again.

Granular: Generally, and rather peculiarly, used in tandem with the verb "to get," as in "We need to get granular on this issue," meaning to examine the fine details. To get granular, one needs, it goes without saying, to drill down.

Granularity: Getting down fine enough that nothing superfluous gets in your way. A granular analysis of a problem breaks it down into fine-enough parts that each can be handled on its own.

Gray Matter: Older, experienced businesspeople hired by young entrepreneurial firms looking to appear more reputable and established.

Graybar Land: The place you go while you're staring at a computer that's processing something very slowly (while you watch the gray bar creep across the screen). "I was in graybar land for what seemed like hours, thanks to that CAD rendering."

Grok: To understand. Forms...grokable, groking, groked. Additional note: Grok originally came from Robert Heinlein's sci-fi book Stranger in a Strange Land. This was a word that the hero (who was raised by Martians) would use to indicate that he understood something completely and deeply.

GUI: (pronounced gooey) Acronym for Graphical User Interface. GUIs allow people to navigate through applications and documents on computers using graphical icons and buttons. Popularized in the 1980s, GUIs allow users to open applications by clicking on icons with a mouse rather than typing commands on a keyboard.

Handoff: Upon conclusion of one's contributions to a project, giving up control and authority over that project to another person. "In case you're tempted, absolutely do not get into your files after handoff without discussing with editors first."

Hard-core: To be totally committed, totally focused, totally resolved to meet a goal. Hard-core about that approach.

Hash out/Flesh out: To work out the details of a plan. "Let's hash out the details later." "She's busy fleshing out the spec."

Heads Up: A warning. "A heads up for UE: The spec is changing again."

Heads-down: A person or team that is totally engrossed in their project, causing them often to be oblivious to the world around them. "The test team is totally heads-down right now."

Hell Call: A telephone support call to a PSS support engineer from an irate customer who requires immediate de-escalation.

Hit: A negative impact; an overloading of resources, especially manpower. "Tweaking the SLM structure would be a big hit on the Trolls."
**Hosed:** Totally screwed or technically disabled. Usually used in reference to a malfunctioning computer app or program. Generally personalized--"I'm hosed" rather than "This is hosed."

**Hungarian or Hungarian Notation:** A notational method for naming data types, data structures, and fields and procedures, invented by Charles Simonyi. Simonyi was lead developer for the application groups from 1980 through 1988 and introduced the usage of this notation in Microsoft application-development groups during this whole period. The notation was called Hungarian since Charles was a native of Hungary. Virtually every application that started development within Microsoft (not purchased and brought in-house) uses this notation. To request the name of some kind of programming object, programmers using the notation typically say, "Can you give me the hungarian for that? Note: Hungarian tags were typically two, three, or four character sequences that were pronounced if possible and spelled out if not.

**IAYF:** Acronym for Information At Your Fingertips, a famous phrase first spoken by BillG at COMDEX.

**ID10T Error:** If a technical support issue turns out to be a user competency problem instead of a hardware or software problem, it is referred to as an "ID Ten T" error. Basically, this describes the user as an ID10T in a way they would never understand, and can be helpful when trying to describe the issue to another support person while the user is in hearing range.

**Idea Hamsters:** People who always seem to have their idea generators running.

**Irritainment:** Entertainment and media spectacles that are annoying, but you find yourself unable to stop watching them.

**It Boots, Let's Ship It!**: No software bugs prevented the computer from starting up, so maybe we’re done!

**It's a Feature:** From the adage "It's not a bug, it's a feature." Used sarcastically to describe an unpleasant experience that you wish to gloss over.

**Iteration:** Version, generation, refinement, etc. Conforms to standard dictionary definition but still strikes a singularly unpleasant and jarring note when used in common parlance. "That issue will come up in future iterations."

**Jargon:** Synonym for "shop talk." The technical or specialized language of specific occupations and professions. At its purest level, jargon is inscrutable except to those individuals who work in that particular field, like most of the terms in this doc.

**Keyboard Plaque:** The disgusting buildup of dirt and crud found on computer keyboards. "Are there any other terminals I can use? This one has a bad case of keyboard plaque."

**Keyboard Vittles:** The food particles that are in the crevasses of your keyboard. A little snack to save for later.

**Kludge:** (other possible spellings: klugey, clugey, klugy, kludgey; pronounced "CLUE-gee"): A hardware solution that has been improvised from various mismatched parts. A slang word meaning makeshift, inefficient, inelegant. A kludge can also be in software. It may not be elegant and is probably only a temporary fix. As in, "That patch to the software is a real kludge."

**Lake Bill:** The majestic body of water between Buildings 1, 2, 3, and 4. A noted snow geese, goldfish, and rooster habitat, this is also the site of boss-dunkings, Ballmer swims, and juggling practice.

**Let's Take This Off-Line:** Let’s talk about this later, after the meeting.

**Leverage:** To take advantage of; capitalize on. "Let’s leverage the publicity hit we got from the Wired article into the marketing strategy for the Web site."
**Link Rot**: The process by which links on a Web page became as obsolete as the sites they're connected to change location or die.

**Liveware**: Slang for people. Also called wetware or jellyware, as opposed to hardware, software, and firmware.

**Loop**: To repeat an argument, discussion, or analysis, reaching no new conclusion. "We’ve been round this loop before".

**Low Hanging Fruit**: Management expression for the most available and easy-to-accomplish objectives. "We don't need original sample code. Go for the low hanging fruit."

**Mail Thread**: A sequence of e-mail messages dealing with a single issue, in which a question is asked or a situation is posed and a handful or dozens or hundreds of people who have been included in the mail can throw in their electronic two cents’ worth.

**Meeting Seconds**: Compressed minutes, such as, 1. Bob is going to Taiwan. 2. No new showstopper bugs. 3. Pizza was late. See "Net."


**Microserf**: Someone who works long hours at Microsoft. Not to be confused with bachelors.

**MicroSnooze**: An affectionate term for MicroNews. "Can you believe the letters in this week's MicroSnooze?!"

**Migrating**: Moving; usually applied to movement to new systems or programs. "This process will be migrating from Merismus to Mango next week."

**Milestone**: Semi-technical term for a predetermined point in the product build at which certain goals have been met. Numbered, as in Milestone 1, Milestone 2, etc. Often in reality more like millstones.

**Mode**: Frame of mind, usually denoting intense concentration. "Ed’s in crunch mode; they’re in danger of slipping."

**Monkey Testing**: Giving a product to a novice without any intro/docs. From the old American Tourister ads, where they "monkey-tested" their luggage by giving it to a gorilla to play with.

**Mouse Potato**: The online, wired generation's answer to the couch potato.

**Mousification**: Term coined in 1988 to describe the adaptation of product documentation to reflect that a user might use mouse clicks instead of keystrokes to enter commands. "I've finished the mousification of Part 1, but Part 2 is still keyboard only."

**MSFTomania**: A persistent neurotic impulse to check the current Microsoft stock price.

**Multi Threaded**: Able to do more than one thing at a time. This term is a compliment and is the opposite of single threaded.

**Munge Data**: 1) To process content through some sort of syntax verification cycle (such as word doc to sgml into a database and then into MediaView Ready RTF). 2) Unfocused processing of data.

**mWorld**: Mobile world. Technology associated with mobile devices such as cellular phones, GSM, WAP, and PDAs.
Myte: 6 minutes (= 0.10 hours). Used by CSG for tracking hours worked.

Nav: Netscape Navigator, the competition to Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Net: To summarize. "I was really impressed by Jon's ability to net the entire meeting down to four key points."

Net It Out: Give me the bottom line, or, get to the point. As in "Net it out for me."

Net Storm: Unexplainable multiple network failures in a specific building or region. Usually transient, but rarely fixed through human intervention. "No one was able to get onto corpnet due to the net storm."

New Paradigm: Pompous way of essentially saying "unique." "This Web site establishes a new paradigm on the Net."

Nimble: Agile, responsive, quick to react. Generally used to describe small software companies, which tend to be able to make decisions and maneuver quickly.

No-Op: 1) No effort required. No operation. A no-brainer. 2) A person who does not perform. "Ted is a no-op."


Nonlinear: Inappropriately intense negative response. "I told him we didn't have any Starbucks Gazebo Blend and he went totally nonlinear."

NRO: Next Release of Office. Used for a feature that can't be put into the current shipping version, but which is flagged to go into NRO.

Nyetscape: Nickname for AOL's less-than-full-featured Web browser.

ObFun: Obligatory Fun - Team-building exercises that are not optional, usually scheduled on top of the normal team meetings.

Offline: Outside the confines of a mass meeting, so as not to take up the time of attendees not directly concerned with an issue. "Let's take this conversation offline." By extension, a synonym for "in private" or "confidentially"; "Let's take this offline" equals "Let's talk about this in private."

OGF: Overall Good Feelings or Overall Goodness Factor. Used to describe the minimum consensus required in order to move forward on a project or to a new feature.

Ohnosecond: That minuscule fraction of time in which you realize that you've just made a big mistake.

One-off: To have a meeting, conversation, or e-mail message about a subject off the mainstream topic of focus of your job/project, or with someone who is outside your circle of coworkers. "I've been involved in a couple of one-off meetings about the next beta." (Derived from e-mail addressing where you compose a mail message to an address that is not part of the Global Address List or directory.)

OOF: A TLA that's turned into a word of its own. Stands for "out of office," although as an accurate acronym it leaves something to be desired (OOO would be more precise). Most frequently used as part of the phrases "OOF mail" or "OOF notice," meaning an automatic e-mail response to correspondents that the receiver will be out of the office for a designated period of time. This term is also is a legacy from Xenix Mail (like little r, big R). The command in Xenix mail to set an out-of-office message was oof.

Open the Kimono: Basically a somewhat sexist synonym for "open the books." It means to reveal the
inner workings of a project or company to a prospective new partner.

**Open-Collar Workers**: People who work at home or telecommute.

**Own**: To take responsibility for an issue. Ownership is even more serious than drivership; you can drive an issue without owning it, but it’s unlikely that you would own it without also driving it (just like automobiles, in fact).

**Pan-Galactic**: Larger than worldwide in strategic context. "Microsoft's Office has a truly pan-galactic market."

**Parallel Processing**: To do two things at once. "I'm parallel processing both tasks A and B."

**Party**: Kick out the managers and add new features to a program, especially after the deadline for adding new features has passed. Also used to refer to what software does to memory and hard disks. "This new code parties on the hard disk for a while and then locks up the system."

**Percussive Maintenance**: The fine art of whacking the crap out of an electronic device to get it to work again.

**Perot**: To quit unexpectedly. "My cellular phone just peroted."

**Pimped**: Screwed, hosed, stopped cold. "Tough luck, dude: Your project just got pimped."

**Ping**: To send a brief e-mail. "I'll ping Jim about revising the schedule." Derives from Internet jargon, where one computer can ping, or send a message to, another computer, asking it to respond, to verify the connection.

**Plug-and-Play**: A new hire who doesn't need any training. "The new guy, John, is great. He's totally plug-and-play."

**PM Pinata**: Otherwise known as a spec review.

**PNAMBC**: Pronounced "panambic." An acronym meaning "Pay No Attention to the Man Behind the Curtain." Usually used for demos that look like, but aren't really, the real product. It comes from "The Wizard of Oz."

**Postal**: Going postal is going over the edge emotionally, like the postal workers who vented their frustration on former bosses and coworkers (often with high-powered weapons).

**Prairie Dogging**: When someone yells or drops something loudly in a cube farm and people's heads pop up over the walls to see what's going on.

**Process**: The complex system devised to deal with a deliverable involving tracing and documenting its progress through every stage of its development. The ideal process structure personnel ratio consists of approximately five people assigned to document the actual work of one person.

**Puke**: To fail spectacularly, especially application crashes. "Word puked when it attempted to import this corrupt file."

**Punt**: 1) To avoid, to omit. In Microsoft context, one "punts" a feature in a product, or some other deliverable, when it would be too difficult to implement or produce. 2) Widely used as the demise of LAN Manager neared. The LanMan 2.2 release contained mostly bug fixes--new features were "Put-off Until NT" (PUNT-ed).

**Push**: To urge or bring pressure without the weight of direct authority. "Tech support is pushing for more
sample code."

**Push Back:** Respond more forcefully to an unfavorable answer. If your request for three new headcount for your project is denied by upper management, you must push back with stronger reasons why you cannot possibly accomplish the project without those three headcount.

**Quality Bar:** The remarkably flexible level of acceptability in a product. Tends inexorably to drop as the pressure of an impending milestone, content freeze, or other deadline builds.

**Ramp Up:** Technical term appropriated for general usage, meaning to gear up, to reinforce, and, in a sense, to gird oneself for greater effort. Can be applied externally, as in ramping up resources for a new project, or internally, as in "I’ve got to ramp up to deal with these Web issues."

**Random:** Epithet describing an idea that is poorly thought out or an action that is ill considered. Most commonly used in the exclamation "That's so random!" which Bill Gates uses frequently.

**Randomize:** To divert someone from their goal with tertiary tasks or niggling details. "Marketing has totally randomized me by constantly changing their minds about the artwork."

**Rat Holing:** A discussion that spirals away from the topic of the meeting.

**Real Person:** An employee, as opposed to a contractor, temp, or intern.

**Reality Distortion Field:** In the MS product-development process, it is defined as follows: When a team, engrossed in its own magnificence, convinces itself that impossible dates can be met, that enormously complex technical problems are nothing to worry about, and the naysayers just "don't have the religion." (From "Is Your Project Out of Control," by Chris Williams.)

**Release Candidate or RC:** The final release build and potential candidate for RTM. Also known as "golden" code.

**Reorg:** An unattractive abbreviation for "reorganization." A frequent phenomenon at monolithic corporations, where organizational structures are revamped regularly to create the impression of flexibility. "People are beginning to understand their jobs. Time for a reorg."

**Repro:** Short for reproducible. "Is that bug repro?" or "How repro is it?"

**Repurpose:** Fairly useless neologism meaning to redesign for use in another context. "We’ll repurpose the reviews in the core product to use on the Web site."

**Resonate:** To make sense or to appeal (to someone). "Does that resonate with you?" "I'll send your proposal around and see how it resonates."

**Robust:** In a vaguely Rubenesque sense, a program or piece of code that’s fully fleshed-out, strong, brimming with health so that bugs can’t survive. Increasingly often applied to more nebulous, theoretical concepts (ideas, plans, specs, etc.).

**Roll out:** To introduce. "We plan to roll out the tool in the May time frame prior to Beta 2."

**RTM:** Acronym for the fictional date that a product is scheduled to be released to manufacturing. "We need to push back the RTM again."

**RTW:** Release To Web; The "Internet Time" analog of RTM. "We RTW next Tuesday."

**rWorld:** The Real World or everyday people and non-digital things; contrast to eWorld and mWorld.
**Salmon Day**: The experience of spending an entire day swimming upstream only to get screwed in the end.

**Salsa Shark**: A memory leak in software code.

**Schedule Chicken**: Setting an unattainable schedule in the hopes that another team will slip first and buy you more time. From the teenage game "chicken," where two cars drive toward each other in a test of nerves to see who will chicken out and swerve away.

**Screw**: To work 70-hour weeks to meet some unrealistic deadline. "The employees in XBU have to scrow regularly to meet bogus deadlines."

**Seagull Manager**: A manager who flies in, makes a lot of noise, craps over everything, and then leaves.

**Self Hosed**: Installing a daily build of a product that completely ruins, or "hoses," your machine. A bastardization of "self-hosted," which is basically "eating your own dogfood" (running the software you're developing on your own PC).

**Self-Toasted**: Alternate term for Self-Hosed used by the Win95 group.

**Server**: Fictional central computer designed to provide employees with a sure-fire excuse for failing to meet deadlines. "I would have finished but the damn server's been down all morning."

**Share**: A portion of a directory on a networked computer that is made public to the intranet or to certain individuals on the intranet.

**Ship Party**: Fictional event to celebrate the successful release of a new product or product version. Rumored to occur long after anyone can remember why.

**Shoot in the Head**: Remove a feature from a program. "Sure, we can ship on time, as long as we can shoot the TCP/IP connectivity module in the head."

**Showstopper**: A really big bug. A function, object, or issue important enough to jeopardize a ship date or schedule in order to correct or include. "They're offering Dove bars to anyone who finds a showstopper in the latest beta."

**Shrimp & Weenies**: Refers to cost-cutting strategy. For example, getting rid of expenses such as lavish parties in favor of smaller-scale events. First used by Bob Herbvold.

**Single Threaded**: Not able to do two things at once. "He's single threaded; he can't chew gum and walk at the same time." The opposite is multi threaded.

**SITCOMs**: What yuppies turn into when they have children and one of the parents stops working to stay home with the kids. Stands for Single Income, Two Children, Oppressive Mortgage.

**Slang**: Language viewed as cant, argot, or jargon that extends beyond individual subgroups such as gangsters, hackers, merchant marines, or rockers, and finds a larger audience. If enough subgroups begin to use a particular word or expression, it may become slang.

**Slime Tree**: An oozy, fungal, botanical growth existing only in the imagination of the new hire overhearing a coworker discussing the file structure of an SLM (Source Library Manager) share.

**Slipping**: Euphemism for abjectly failing to hit a deadline.

**Smart Guy**: The ultimate compliment. "He doesn't shower often, but he's a real smart guy...OK, let's hire him."
SNAFU: Situation Nominal: All F***ed Up. Used when a system that is chronically in poor working order breaks down, as in "SNAFU on the UNIX box last night, my cron config got corrupted again.

Sneakernet: When all else fails, get up off of your butt and walk to the cube of the person with the most expertise in the area that you are needing assistance.

Sniff Test: Also smoke test - refers to testing the daily build of a product during development; stolen from the electronics industry, where people would plug in a board and see what smoked. (Source: "Is Your Project Out of Control," by Chris Williams.)

Spacordi: The mass of cords strewn underneath your desk (just add sauce).

Square-Headed Girlfriend: Another word for a computer. The victim of a square-headed girlfriend is a "computer widow."

Squirt the Bird: To transmit a signal up to a satellite. "Crew and talent are ready...what time do we squirt the bird?"

Stake in the Ground: A somewhat grandiose marketing term signifying the area or market segment that a corporation plans to dominate.

Starter Marriage: A short-lived first marriage that ends in divorce with no kids, no property, and no regrets.

Story: A publicized plan or strategy for a product or feature not yet available. Often optimistic, occasionally bordering on the fictitious. "Most of the people at the developer conference bought into our Java story." "We don't have a good Mac client story yet."

Stress Puppy: A person who seems to thrive on being stressed out and whiny.

Swag: Acronym for Stupid Wild-Assed Guess. An educated guess at the amount of time necessary to complete a feature or work item. It is also used to describe any object or article of clothing that has a Microsoft company or product logo on it. Because such items are frequently handed out as rewards, every Microsoft employee has a collection. In this sense, it stands for "Stuff We All Get".

Swiped Out: An ATM or credit card that has been rendered useless because the magnetic strip is worn away after extensive use.

Take-away: Not, as might be suspected, food to go, but impressions gleaned from a meeting or message. "My take-away from his e-mail was that he wasn’t ready to drill down yet."

TBD: Acronym meaning To Be Determined. "That FAQ is TBD."

Telephone Number Salary: A salary (or project budget) that has seven digits.

Thrashing: Never getting anything done because you are trying to do too much. Thrashing happens when you do too much context switching. "I went to that meeting but there was so much context switching that all we accomplished was a lot of thrashing."

Three-Finger Salute: Process of simultaneously striking Ctrl, Alt, Delete in order to restart your computer after it freezes up.

Throw Over the Wall: To give a project to another group, with the implication that you neither will provide support, nor care what they do with it.

TLA: Three-letter acronym.
To drop something on the floor: To silently ignore something, due to being overloaded, out of stupidity, or possibly even out of malice. "The server is full, so all new requests are just being dropped on the floor." The implication is that the sender of the request doesn't even know that the item is being ignored and thinks the matter is being attended to. Can be applied metaphorically. "I sent mail to the bug reporting alias but haven't heard anything from them. Do you think they're just dropping the bug reports on the floor?" (Etymology is probably from mailroom analogy--A piece of mail that is dropped on the floor gets swept up by the janitor and is never seen again. In the context of film and video editing, it could be a reference to throwing a piece of film away.)

To get firehose-y: To spout feedback during a spec review faster than the PM can write it down.

Total Disconnect: An extremely low-bandwidth human interaction. "It was a total disconnect. I spent half an hour explaining how this stuff worked, and he just didn't get it."

Tourists: People who are taking training classes just to get a vacation from their jobs. "We had about three serious students in the class; the rest were tourists."

Trash-sitters: People who come into a meeting late and then sit on the trash receptacles instead of at the table. Usually done in an attempt to remain aloof from the rest of the participants.

Treeware: Hacker slang for documentation or other printed material.

Triage: The process of deciding which bugs to fix and which to ignore. (Originally, the word refers to the prioritization of treatment for patients and battle and disaster victims, with the least attention being given to those most likely to die.) At Microsoft, the term has come to mean any decisions about which elements will be shipped and which will be deferred until the next drop.

Truline: (or Tru-Line) n. (From screenwriting jargon, recently appropriated for Microsoft purposes.) One-sentence summary of a project’s projected appeal or purpose.

Turn and Burn: Developing a product without debugging tools. Requires you to build it and then test the whole product at once.

Two-Five: In the Microsoft performance-evaluation system, in which a 4 is excellent and a 3 is OK, a 2.5 is less than acceptable. If you're a two-five, you've got one foot out the door. "Well, yes, I need more people, but don't send me another two-five!"

UE: Acronym for User Education. Refers to the documentation team. "Who owns the tool tips, Dev or UE?"

UI: Acronym for User Interface. The means by which people navigate through applications and documents on computers. Interfaces can take the form of textual, graphical, physical, and auditory devices. Often a synonym for buttons, buttons, and more buttons. "There's nothing intuitive about the new UI. I can't find anything!"

Under Mouse Arrest: Getting busted for violating an online service's rule of conduct. "Sorry I couldn't get back to you. AOL put me under mouse arrest."

Uninstalled: Euphemism for being fired.

Useless Fluff: The features or functionality of a program that have no apparent practical purpose. The features and functionality primarily composing the "useless fluff" of a program were generally created by committee and/or for purposes other than improving the usability of the program (i.e., competition).

Vaporware: A semi-affectionate slang term for software that has been announced, perhaps even
demonstrated, but not delivered to commercial customers. Hyperware is hardware that has been announced but has not yet been delivered. Slideware is hardware or software whose reason for existing (eventually) has been explained in 35-mm slides, foils, charts, and/or PC presentation programs. Slideware is usually less real than vaporware or hyperware, though some people would argue with this. Allegedly the term vaporware came as a result of the many delays in releasing Windows after Bill Gates announced it at the Fall 1983 COMDEX show in Las Vegas.

**Vesting:** Not an uncommon term by itself, but used uniquely at Microsoft to describe someone who is burned out and underperforming, but waiting for stock options to vest before leaving the company. "Joe's totally out of it. Why is he still here? Oh, he's just vesting."

**Vpness:** Used to describe an employee who was recently promoted who attempts to exercise one of the more outrageous perks associated with the new level. "Her VPness is having a dinner party in the Microsoft Home."

**Vulcan Nerve Pinch:** The taxing hand position required to reach all of the appropriate keys for certain commands. For instance, the warm reboot for a Mac II computer involves simultaneously pressing the Control key, the Command key, the Return key, and the Power On key.

**Wack:** A one-syllable synonym for "backward slash" or "back slash" on the keyboard. Most commonly used in spoken verbal conversation when describing the name of someone's computer on the network. E.g.s wack-wack products wack applications is the computer name \products\apps. "Do you still need the DLL? It's in the developer folder on wack-wack products wack apps."

**WAH:** "Working at Home"; typically in the subject line of an email to team members (e.g. BillG WAH this AM).

**Wallcrawlers:** Shy Microsofties who walk down the hallways with a shoulder pressed against the wall and their eyes cast downward.

**Warm Fuzzy:** A warm fuzzy feeling. If I ask you to give me a warm fuzzy, I'm asking you to do or say something that will assuage my apprehension about something. I'm telling you I'm nervous, and that I know it's not really your business to do or tell me what I'm asking for, but it would make me feel better if you would.

**Wide Distribution:** A process in which someone seeking crucial information ("Has anyone seen my Gumby poster?") sends e-mail to thousands of Microsoft employees and contractors in hopes of finding one individual with the answer. In anticipation of the inevitable flame mail and death threats that will follow, such e-mail often begins, "Sorry for the wide distribution, but…"

**WIM:** Any sort of party or employee morale builder, usually held during business hours. Taken from the Windows NT group's "Weekly Integration Meetings" held every Friday as a way to let off steam during the early days of NT development.

**Win:** A beneficial event. "Better documentation is a win for both technical support and for the user."

**World Wide Wait:** The real meaning of WWW.

**Xerox Subsidy:** Euphemism for swiping free photocopies from a workplace.