

# Your personal 'techtionary'

## Learn the internet lingo basics

Sometimes the language of technology can seem complex, but it's an increasingly common, and important, part of day-to-day life. Hopefully, this column will make your use of technology a little smoother.

I often describe myself as a translator, and I want to help you create your own "techtionary." I'll define some common words associated with the internet and related services, and, hopefully, this will give you a simple reference you can keep handy.

► **BROADBAND:** This term is meant to define fast internet. The fastest broadband services come from providers that rely on fiber optic networks, although some companies do offer broadband plans through networks reliant on copper cables. I like to think of broadband as a garden hose delivering water. The higher the water pressure — how many megabits per second your plan provides — the faster the speed!

► **OVER-THE-TOP (OTT) VIDEO:** This term refers to media delivered through an internet connection — often with the help of a smart TV, Roku, Apple TV or other streaming device — as opposed to your standard cable TV or satellite TV.

► **WI-FI:** This is the way you can connect a computer, television or other device to the

internet without using a wire. From your home to the coffee shop, Wi-Fi is increasingly essential as more and more people rely on mobile devices or connected devices, such as a Roku, Amazon Echo or gaming box. Keep in mind, Wi-Fi can be either open for all to access or protected with a password. If you have a home Wi-Fi network, consider using a secure password.

► **WIRELESS ROUTER:** This device converts a broadband connection into a Wi-Fi signal. Routers need to be maintained and updated regularly to have the best connection. Many broadband providers sell routers or offer plans where they manage the router. Using a router recommended by your broadband provider is a good idea because they typically help

maintain the device and keep it updated. I think of a router as a sprinkler head attached to the end of the garden hose. It distributes the broadband signal to a wider area, much like a sprinkler distributes water.

► **STREAMING:** This term refers to accessing content, such as television shows or music, over the internet. If you like to watch a video using applications such as Netflix or YouTube, you are streaming video. If you listen to music online through Pandora or Spotify, you are streaming audio. The content is stored online as opposed to you downloading it to your device.

► **VOICE OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL (VOIP):** While the phone seems to work as it always has, VoIP technology is very different from that used

when copper wires transmit phone calls. With VoIP, calls go through your internet connection. VoIP is becoming more and more common, and in most cases you don't even know you are using an internet-based phone.

These are just a few of the words you may hear in regards to your internet service. Don't hesitate to ask questions when speaking to your internet service provider, which is a great resource. The internet network can seem like magic at times, but it's not as mysterious as it may appear. ☎



**CARISSA SWENSON**  
IS A TRAINING  
AND EDUCATION  
CONSULTANT  
FOR CONSORTIA  
CONSULTING.