

Digital Life 101

Directions

Below are common words related to digital media. Test your family members on the definitions! If they are having trouble understanding the term, help them by reading the correct definition. For more digital terms, check out our online digital glossary at www.common sense media.org/educators/digital-glossary.

An **aggregator** is a website or Web application where headlines and other content are collected for easy viewing. Aggregators such as Google News compile news articles and posts.

An **avatar** is a two- or three-dimensional icon that represents a computer user or a gamer. An avatar can be a cartoonish graphic, a photograph, a screen name, or a fully-developed character.

A **blog**, from the term “weblog,” is a type of website usually updated by an individual or a group of bloggers. Some blogs provide news or opinions on a specific subject, while others are more like online journals. Most blogs allow readers to leave comments on blog posts.

Flaming is the act of saying mean things online, usually in ALL CAPS, and often in a public forum with the intention to humiliate. **Flame wars** can occur easily online, as it can be difficult to figure out people’s intentions or emotions online.

A **mash-up** is a remix or blend of multiple songs, videos, or other media content into one product. Fan fiction writing is one form of a mash-up, as writers take characters from a well-known video game, movie, or book, and rewrite their actions or relationships.

A **massively multiplayer online game (MMOG)** is usually an online virtual world that multiple players navigate and play in together. While in this virtual world, their avatars chat, cooperate, and quest together, oftentimes towards a goal.

A **P2P**, or **Peer-to-Peer**, network allows for sharing of mp3s, videos, and other digital files by transferring information directly between two computers rather than by going through a central server. P2P technology is also behind the popular Internet phone service Skype.

Phishing is the illegal act of sending emails or messages that appear to come from authentic sources, but really come from spammers. Phishers often try to get people to send them their personal information, everything from account numbers to passwords.

A **podcast** is a downloadable video or audio file. Podcasts can be verbal, based on a certain topic, or can include music, video, and commentary. Most podcasts are updated regularly through the addition of new episodes.

An **SMS**, or **text message**, is a short message of fewer than 160 characters sent from a cell phone. An **MMS** is a text message that contains an attached multimedia file, such as a picture or song.

Digital Life 101

Directions

Think about your life with media. First consider the questions below. Use your responses to help you finish the statement, “My media life is like a ...” This statement is a simile, a literary device for comparing two unlike things. For instance, someone who does not use much media might say that her media life is like a desert, because there is little life there. Someone might say that his media life is like a track meet, because he is exhausted at the end of the day. Finally, make a picture or drawing of the simile you created. The drawing can include text.

Questions to consider:

1. Are digital media a small, medium, or big part of your life?
2. What kind of impact do digital media have on you (a little, some, a lot)?
3. What are your favorite and least-favorite things to do with digital media?
4. Do you connect with others or create things with digital media?

Finish this statement: My media life is like a _____

because _____.

Illustrate your simile here: