

Technology Buzzwords for 2022

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As we enter 2022, new tech terms seem to pop up every day. Even those of us who have had decades-long technology careers struggle to keep up to date. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) is adding new tech words for 2021 as well. The OED word of the year is VAX, meaning vaccinations. Interestingly, those of us who are techies will remember VAX as a popular super minicomputer in the 1980s-1990s made by Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC), a company which no longer exists. Here are a few tech terms seen lately in various news articles to add to your vocabulary:

5G. This stands for fifth generation mobile network. 5G networks are intended to deliver multi-gigabits-per-second speeds with low latency (delays), increased network capacity, increased network availability, and higher reliability. 3G (third generation) has reached end-of-life and is going away in 2022. 4G (4th generation) is still in use. It's unclear yet whether 5G will live up to its much-hyped promises.

Internet of Things (IoT). Sensors can collect and send information and computers can receive information and act on it. "Smart Homes" or "Connected Homes" have Internet-connected devices, often with a hub, such as Amazon Echo, Apple HomePod, Google Nest, Samsung SmartThings, and more. Some examples of devices connecting to smart home hubs are thermostats, home security systems, speakers, water sensors, garage doors (did I close it?), and lighting.

Big Data. This deals with data extraction and analysis. There are large amounts of data these days, and it's often referred to with the three V's: increased **V**olume, faster **V**elocity of accumulation, and the **V**ariety and scope of data. Information can come from data "mining" and in different formats.

Cryptocurrency. From nerdwallet.com: "... cryptocurrency... is a form of payment that can circulate without the need for a central monetary authority such as a government or bank...that enable people to buy, sell or trade them securely. Cryptocurrencies can be exchanged for goods and services, though they often are used as investment vehicles". Bitcoin is the best-known cryptocurrency.

Blockchain. From Investopedia.com: "Blockchain is a distributed database that is shared among the nodes of a computer network. As a database, a blockchain stores information electronically in digital format. Blockchains are best known for their crucial role in cryptocurrency systems, such as Bitcoin, for maintaining a secure and decentralized record of transactions".

NFT. This term keeps popping up in articles on investing. It stands for non-fungible token, a unique digital asset, for example an audio recording or a digital image. It could be considered an investment, though one enjoyed on a digital screen. Ownership is stored on the blockchain.

Links to detailed articles, definitions, and more extensive lists of new tech terms can be found along with an electronic copy of this article at www.oakmont-learning.org.