

# MacBook Jargon Explained

Since MacBooks are essentially portable computers, a lot of the jargon is the same as for other computers. However, it is worth looking at some of this jargon and the significance it has in terms of MacBooks.

## Don't forget



Memory can be thought of as a temporary storage device, as it only keeps information about the currently-open apps. Storage is more permanent, as it keeps the information even when the MacBook has been turned off.

- **Processor.** Also known as the central processing unit, or CPU, this refers to the processing of digital data as it is provided by apps on the computer. The more powerful the processor, the quicker the data is interpreted. As with the rest of Apple's computers, MacBooks use Intel processors
- **Memory.** This closely relates to the processor and is also known as random-access memory, or RAM. Essentially, this type of memory manages the apps that are being run and the commands that are being executed. The greater the amount of memory there is, the quicker apps will run. With more RAM they will also be more stable and less likely to crash. In the current range of MacBooks, memory is measured in megabytes (MB) or gigabytes (GB)
- **Storage.** This refers to the amount of digital information the MacBook can store. It is frequently referred to in terms of hard disk space and is measured in gigabytes. MacBooks and MacBook Airs have either ROM or Flash memory
- **Trackpad.** This is an input device that takes the place of a mouse (although a mouse can still be used with a MacBook, either with a USB cable or wirelessly). Traditionally, trackpads have come with a button that duplicates the function of the buttons on a mouse. However, the trackpad on a MacBook has no button, as the pad itself performs these functions



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- **Graphics card.** This is a device that enables images, video and animations to be displayed on the MacBook. It is also sometimes known as a video card. The faster the graphics card, the better the quality relevant media will be displayed at. In general, very fast graphics cards are really only needed for intensive multimedia applications, such as video games or videos. On a MacBook this is the Intel HD Graphics card
- **Wireless.** This refers to a MacBook's ability to connect wirelessly to a network, i.e. another computer or an Internet connection. In order to be able to do this, the MacBook must have a wireless card, which enables it to connect to a network or high-speed Internet connection. This is known as the AirPort Extreme Wi-Fi wireless networking card
- **Bluetooth.** This is a radio technology for connecting devices wirelessly over short distance. It can be used for items such as a wireless mouse, or for connecting to a device, such as an iPhone for downloading photos
- **Ports.** These are the parts of a MacBook that external devices can be plugged into, using a cable such as a USB or a FireWire. They are located on the side of the MacBook



- **USB.** This is a method for connecting a variety of external devices, such as digital cameras, MP3 music players, scanners and printers
- **Ethernet.** This is for connecting an Ethernet cable to a router, for accessing the Internet, rather than doing it wirelessly



Don't forget



USB stands for Universal Serial Bus and is a popular way of connecting external devices to computers.

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- **FireWire.** This is a similar method of data transfer to USB but it is much faster. For this reason, it is generally used for devices that need to transfer larger amounts of data, such as digital video cameras. FireWire ports are only available on the MacBook Pro
- **Thunderbolt.** This is a port for transferring data at high speeds, even faster than FireWire. It can also be used to attach a Thunderbolt Display monitor 
- **CD/DVD players or re-writers.** The latest range of MacBook Air and MacBook Pro Retina display do not have a built-in CD/DVD player or re-writer. However, an external USB SuperDrive can be purchased for playing DVDs or burning content to a CD or DVD. For copying content, pen drives are also a popular option as they can contain large amounts of data and connect via a USB port. The non-Retina display 13- and 15-inch MacBook Pros still have a built-in SuperDrive which can be used for CDs and DVDs



- **Webcam (FaceTime).** This is a type of camera fitted into the MacBook and it can be used to take still photographs or communicate via video with other people. On the MacBook, it is known as the FaceTime camera and it works with the FaceTime app. The FaceTime camera is built-in at the top-middle of the inner casing

