File Transfer Protocol (FTP)

Definition - What does *File Transfer Protocol (FTP)* mean?

File Transfer Protocol (FTP) is a client/server protocol used for transferring files to or exchanging files with a host computer. It may be authenticated with user names and passwords. Anonymous FTP allows users to access files, programs and other data from the Internet without the need for a user ID or password. Web sites are sometimes designed to allow users to use 'anonymous' or 'guest' as a user ID and an email address for a password. Publicly available flies are often found in a directory called pub and can be easily FTPed to a user's computer. FTP is also the internet standard for moving or transferring files from one computer to another using TCP or IP networks.

File Transfer Protocol is also known as RFC 959.

Techopedia explains *File Transfer Protocol (FTP)*

The original FTP specification was written by Abhay Bhushan and published as RFC 114 on April 16, 1971. This was later replaced by RFC 765 (June 1980). The current specification is RFC 959 (October 1985). RFC stands for request for comments.

The first FTP client applications used the DOS command prompt with standardized commands and syntax. Since then, many graphical user interface (GUI) clients have been developed within operating systems, making it easier for the user to upload and download files.

There are various uses for and types of FTP:

1. An FTP site is a web site where users can easily upload or download specific files.
2. FTP by mail allows users without access to the Internet to access and copy files using anonymous FTP by sending an email message to ftpmail@decwrl.dec.com (mailto:ftpmail@decwrl.dec.com) and putting the word help in the body of the text.
3. FTP Explorer is an FTP client based on Windows 95 file manager (Windows 95 Explorer).
4. An FTP server is a dedicated computer which provides an FTP service. This invites hackers and necessitates security hardware or software such as utilizing usernames, passwords and file access control.
5. An FTP client is a computer application which accesses an FTP server. While doing so, users should block incoming FTP connection attempts using passive mode and should check for viruses on all downloaded files.

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