

BYTE SIZE

To infinity and beyond: MERCHANTCANTOS gets the measure of data

Words such as gigabyte, terabyte and even the exotic-sounding yottabyte are tossed around by corporations and the media, usually without any explanation of how they relate to the real world. To put them in perspective, this infographic shows the units numbered from small to large, with an explanation of each.

The data capacity to store one character, the letter **A**, for instance, is **one byte**. With each prefix, the number of bytes grows by a factor of 1,024, chosen because it is a power of two and a round number in the binary system computers use. While a yottabyte is the largest unit we currently need, brontobytes – 1,024 yottabytes – are standing by, with geobytes waiting in the wings.

KILOBYTE

1

A kilobyte, or 1,024 bytes, holds about a quarter of a page of plain text



MEGABYTE

2

A megabyte can hold roughly one short novel – *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, for instance



GIGABYTE

3

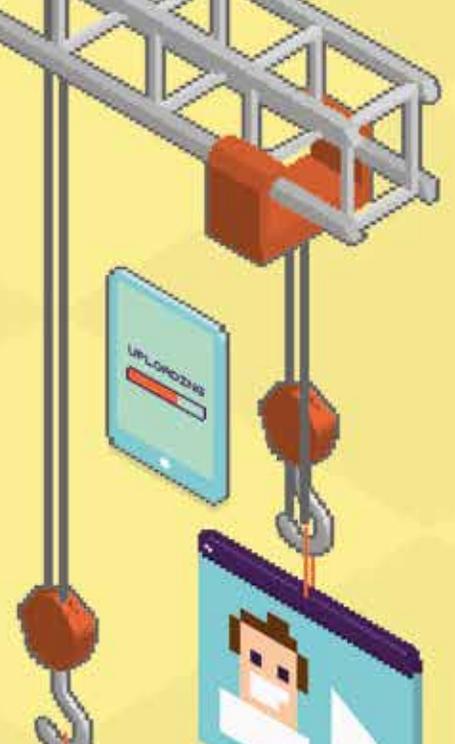
A gigabyte was the maximum capacity of the first iPod Shuffle. Released in 2005, the device held 240 four-minute songs



TERABYTE

4

A terabyte can hold all the X-rays on file in a large modern hospital





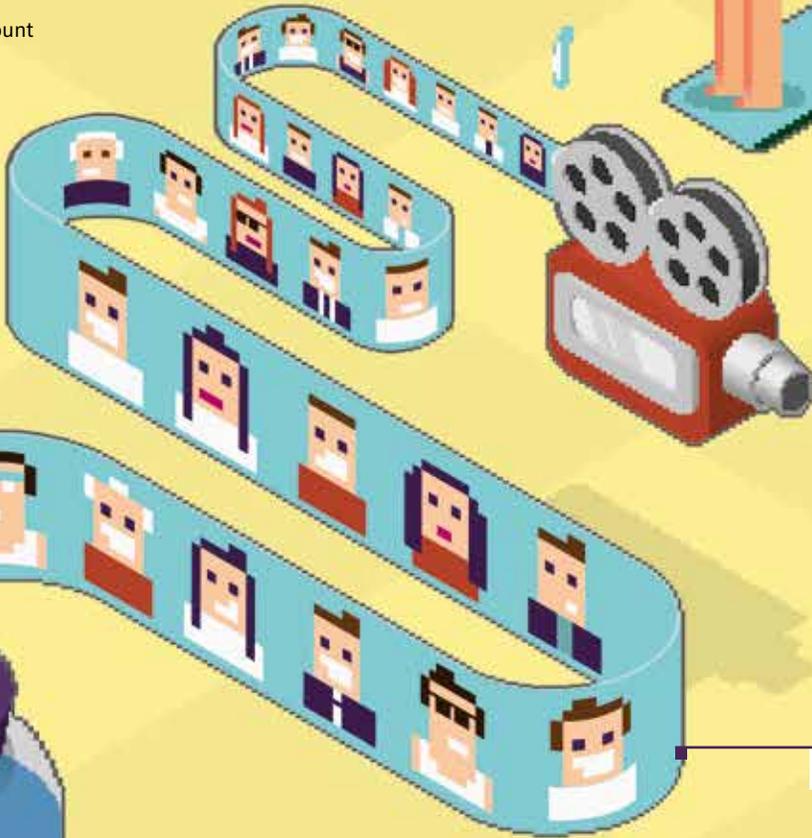
EXABYTE 6

One exabyte equals the amount of data added to the internet every 10 hours



ZETTABYTE 7

If a gigabyte were a single cup of water, one zettabyte could fill more than 100,000 Olympic-sized pools



YOTTABYTE 8

109 yottabytes could store a video of the complete life of every person who has ever lived



PETABYTE 5

The human brain holds about 2.5 petabytes of information



MERCHANTCANTOS is Brunswick's international creative agency. It helps companies shape messages and engage audiences through employee engagement, branding, digital projects, film and video, corporate reporting, webcasts – and infographics. MerchantCantos has offices in London, Dubai, Hong Kong and New York. www.merchantcantos.com
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Sources: Apple, Cisco, Environmental Protection Agency, Scientific American, Harvard, Scholastic, National Institute of Standards and Technology, World Bank, TechAmerica Foundation, Susosight

