Cleartext

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Cleartext is transmitted or stored text that has not been subjected to encryption and is not meant to be encrypted. As such, **Cleartext** does not require decryption in order to be displayed. In its simplest form, **Cleartext** is rendered as [American Standard for Information Interchange (ASCII)](#) that can be read by any word processor or text editor. However, **Cleartext** can be subjected to encoding in a special format for use by [Applications](#) such as Microsoft Word, WordPerfect or [Hypertext markup language (HTML)](#). Any text that can be read on a computer with the appropriate program but without the need for [Decryption](#) is considered **Cleartext**.

The terms **Cleartext** and [Plaintext](#) are sometimes confused.

>   **Note: Plaintext** is a special instance of Cleartext

The characteristics of **Cleartext** it is:

1. Meant to be [Encrypted](#) prior to transmission or storage or
2. The result of [Decryption](#) of received or retrieved data

In [Information Technology (IT)](#), text is any human-readable sequence of characters and the words they form that can be encoded into computer-readable formats.

>   **Note:** Text differs from non-character encoded data, such as graphic images or programs, that are sometimes said to be in "binary" code but are actually in their own computer-readable formats.

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