Payload Definition

1. When data is sent over the Internet, each unit transmitted includes both header information and the actual data being sent. The header identifies the source and destination of the packet, while the actual data is referred to as the payload. Because header information, or overhead data, is only used in the transmission process, it is stripped from the packet when it reaches its destination. Therefore, the payload is the only data received by the destination system.

    a. **Source: http://www.techterms.com/definition/payload**

2. Refers to the "actual data" in a packet or file minus all headers attached for transport and minus all descriptive meta-data. In a network packet, headers are appended to the payload for transport and then discarded at their destination. In a key-length-value structure, the key and length are descriptive data about the value (the payload).

    a. **Source:** http://www.answers.com/topic/payload
    b. **Source:** http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia_term/0,2542,t=payload&i=48909,00.asp
    c. **Source:** http://www.yourdictionary.com/computer/payload

3. payload definition - telecom
    a. Also known as the *text field.*The user data within a block, cell, frame, or packet. See also block, cell, data format, frame, packet, and text field.
    b. The user data that traverses a circuit or network, in contrast to signaling and control information and overhead. Signaling and control information is used to monitor, supervise, maintain, and otherwise manage and control a network and its components. Overhead data is used for purposes such as addressing, congestion management, error control, priority indication, and routing calls, blocks, frames, packets, and cells containing payload. See also block, cell, frame, overhead, packet, and signaling and control.
    c. **Source: http://www.yourdictionary.com/telecom/payload**

4. The essential data that is being carried within a packet or other transmission unit. The payload does not include the "overhead" data required to get the packet to its destination. Note that what constitutes the payload may depend on the point-of-view. To a communications layer that needs some of the overhead data to do its job, the payload is sometimes considered to include the part of the overhead data that this layer handles. However, in more general usage, the payload is the bits that get delivered to the end user at the destination.
    a. **Source: http://searchsecurity.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid14_gci2144 75,00.html**