

RANDOM HOUSE WEBSTER'S
**COMPUTER
& INTERNET
DICTIONARY**

Third Edition

Philip E. Margolis



Random House
New York

PREFACE

Random House Webster's Computer & Internet Dictionary, Third Edition

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Back in 1995, when I prepared the second edition of this book, then called the *Random House Personal Computer Dictionary*, the World Wide Web was just beginning to create a small buzz in the computing world. But few realized then that the Web represented a paradigm shift in the way computers are used. Prior to the Web, personal computers were mainly machines for creating documents, analyzing data, and playing games. Today, PCs are portals into rich virtual environments—environments that offer a wealth of information as well as communities. Not surprisingly, *computerese* is evolving to describe things and situations that never even existed a couple of years ago. Words like *Web*, *Net*, *surf*, *chat*, *e-mail*, and *URL* have become commonplace. This new edition—retitled to reflect its changes—includes nearly 1,000 new terms, mostly in the Internet category.

Just as the Web is profoundly changing *computerese*, it's also changing the way *computerese* is documented. In 1996, I created an on-line version of the dictionary called the *PC Webopædia* (www.pcwebopedia.com). The Web site has undergone many changes and now serves as both an on-line glossary and a search engine for technology information. And just as the first two editions of the book contained the core information for the Web site, the expanded site now forms the basis for this new book.

While the electronic version of the dictionary has some obvious advantages—more frequent updates, full-text search engine, and hot-linked cross-references—printed books continue to be the preferred medium of choice for most people most of the time. This preference is probably due to the still rather primitive and clumsy computer interfaces, but may also be tied to a deeper human need for tactile feedback. It will be interesting to see whether the new generation of children who are growing up with the Internet will still choose printed matter over its electronic equivalents.

Once again, I owe thanks to my intrepid editor, Enid Pearsons, who has now masterfully guided the dictionary through three editions. And special thanks go to Charles Kozierok for reviewing the manuscript and pointing out many errors. I highly recommend his Web site, the *PC Guide* (www.pcguide.com) for more detailed information about computers. Of course, I accept full responsibility for any errors or omissions that remain. Lastly, thanks to the thousands of visitors to the *PC Webopædia* who e-mailed encouragement and questions and who asked repeatedly for access to this information in book form. It was the first time in my 20 years of being an author and technical writer that I received so much direct response from readers. This is one advantage of electronic publishing that I had not expected, and one that I find nearly irresistible—immediate feedback from readers :-).

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⇒ See also ETHERNET; IPX; LOCAL-AREA NETWORK; NDS; NOVELL; OPERATING SYSTEM; SAP; SPX; TOKEN-RING NETWORK.

NetWare Loadable Module Known as an *NLM*, it is software that enhances or provides additional functions in a NetWare 3.x or higher server. Support for database engines, workstations, network protocols, and fax and print servers are examples. The NetWare 2.x counterpart is a VAP.

network A group of two or more computer systems linked together. There are many types of computer networks, including:

local-area networks (LANs): The computers are geographically close together (that is, in the same building).

wide-area networks (WANs): The computers are farther apart and are connected by telephone lines or radio waves.

In addition to these types, the following characteristics are also used to categorize different types of networks:

topology: The geometric arrangement of a computer system. Common topologies include a bus, star, and ring.

protocol: The protocol defines a common set of rules and signals that computers on the network use to communicate. One of the most popular protocols for LANs is called *Ethernet*. Another popular LAN protocol for PCs is the *IBM token-ring network*.

architecture: Networks can be broadly classified as using either a *peer-to-peer* or *client/server architecture*.

Computers on a network are sometimes called *nodes*. Computers and devices that allocate resources for a network are called *servers*.

⇒ See also BACKBONE; CLIENT/SERVER ARCHITECTURE; COMMUNICATIONS; ETHERNET; FIREWALL; HETEROGENEOUS NETWORK; INTRANET; LOCAL-AREA NETWORK; MAN; NETWORK MANAGEMENT; PACKET SWITCHING; PROTOCOL; SERVER; SNA; SNMP; TOKEN-RING NETWORK; TOPOLOGY; WIDE-AREA NETWORK.

network adapter Same as NETWORK INTERFACE CARD.

Network Address Translation See NAT.

Network Basic Input/Output System See NetBIOS.

network card Same as NETWORK INTERFACE CARD.

network computer A computer with minimal memory, disk storage, and processor power designed to connect to a network, especially the Internet. The idea behind network computers is that many users who are connected to a network don't need all the computer power they get from a typical personal computer. Instead, they can rely on the power of the net-

work servers.

This is really a variation on an old idea — *diskless workstations* — which are computers that contain memory and a processor but no disk storage. Instead, they rely on a server to store data. Network computers take this idea one step further by also minimizing the amount of memory and processor power required by the workstation. Network computers designed to connect to the Internet are sometimes called *Internet boxes*, *Net PCs*, and *Internet appliances*.

One of the strongest arguments behind network computers is that they reduce the *total cost of ownership (TCO)* — not only because the machines themselves are less expensive than PCs, but also because network computers can be administered and updated from a central network server.

⇒ See also DISKLESS WORKSTATION; INTERNET; NC; NET PC; ORACLE; SMS; SUN MICROSYSTEMS; TCO; THIN CLIENT; WINDOWS TERMINAL; WORKSTATION; ZAW.

Network Device Interface Specification See NDIS.

Network Directory Services See NDS.

Network File System See NFS.

network interface card Often abbreviated as *NIC*, an *expansion board* you insert into a computer so the computer can be connected to a network. Most NICs are designed for a particular type of network, protocol, and media, although some can serve multiple networks.

⇒ See also AUI; BNC CONNECTOR; DLC; EXPANSION BOARD; LOCAL-AREA NETWORK; MAC ADDRESS; MEDIA; NDIS; NETWORK; ODI; PROTOCOL; PROTOCOL STACK; TRANSCIEVER.

network management Refers to the broad subject of managing computer networks. There exists a wide variety of software and hardware products that help network system administrators manage a network. Network management covers a wide area, including:

Security: Ensuring that the network is protected from unauthorized users.

Performance: Eliminating bottlenecks in the network.

Reliability: Making sure the network is available to users and responding to hardware and software malfunctions.

⇒ See also CMIP; DIB; MIB; NETWORK; RMON; SECURITY; SNIFFER; SNMP; SPOOF.

Network Neighborhood A Windows 95 and 98 folder that lists computers, printers, and other resources connected to your local-area network (LAN). By default, a Network Neighborhood icon appears on your desktop, and the folder is also accessible from within the Windows 95 Explorer. The Network Neighborhood is designed to replace the *drive map*