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THOMPSON COBURN LLP



10053871

REF TK 5102 .N48 2000

Newton, Harry.

**Newton's telecom dictionary : the official
dictionary of telecommunications**

10053871

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Published by CMP Books

An Imprint of CMP Media Inc.

12 West 21 Street

New York, NY 10010

ISBN 1-57820-053-9

July, 2000

Sixteenth and a Half Edition, Expanded and Updated

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Distributed to the book trade in the U.S. and Canada by

Publishers Group West

1700 Fourth St., Berkeley, CA 94710

first is to join the desktop phone to the computer with a cable. This is often done via the PC's serial port connecting via cable to the phone's data communications port (if it has one — if it doesn't, you get one). The second way to be PC Centric is by simply replacing the standalone phone with a board that emulates in a phone and drop it into the PC's bus.

PC Companion This generic term is used to describe a handheld PC that acts as a satellite, companion, or backup to a user's main PC. It contains communications. It is different to a HPC, Handheld PC. It is also different to a PDA. PDAs can generally be classified as stand-alone, keyboardless devices with proprietary user interfaces and applications that require pen-based entry and navigation.

PC Network IBM's first LAN (Local Area Network).

PC Telephony Another term for Computer Telephony. See Computer Telephony.

PC's The plural of the word PC, according to the New York Times. However, every other computer and general magazine spells them PCs. And that's the spelling which this dictionary writer prefers also.

PCA 1. Premises Cabling Association. A association in Great Britain.

2. Protective Connecting Arrangement. A device that AT&T and members of the Bell System insisted be connected between a telecommunications device (like a phone) that wasn't made and sold by AT&T and a phone line provided by a local Bell operating phone company. Many years later, the PCAs were found by the FCC to be totally unnecessary and AT&T and members of the Bell System were ordered to refund all payments received for rental of PCAs. The Bell System insisted on the PCAs as a way of protecting AT&T's effective monopoly of telecommunications equipment. See also Voice Connecting Arrangement.

PCB Printed Circuit Board.

PCC Personal Companion Computer. What other companies call a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant), Intel calls a PCC. A PCC or PDA is meant to have significant telecommunications abilities — including wired and wireless. See PDA.

PCCA Portable Computer and Communications Association. An association formed to provide a forum for exchange of information between the computer and communications industries. PCCA has developed standards for wireless and mobile computing. www.pcca.org.

PCCA AT Command Set The new PCCA AT command set for wireless modems contains well-defined commands for obtaining link status information. See PCCA and www.pcca.org.

PCF Physical Control Fields. The AC (Access Control) and FC (Frame Control) bytes in a Token Ring header.

PCH Paging CHannel. Specified in IS-136, PCH carries signaling information for set up and delivery of paging messages from the cell site to the user terminal equipment. PCH is a logical subchannel of SPACH (SMS (Short Message Service) point-to-point messaging, Paging, and Access response CHannel), which is a logical channel of the DCCH (Digital Control CHannel), a signaling and control channel which is employed in cellular systems based on TDMA (Time Division Multiple Access). The DCCH operates on a set of frequencies separate from those used to support cellular conversations. See also DCCH, IS-136, PAGING, SPACH and TDMA.

PCI 1. Protocol Control Information. The protocol information added by an OSI entity to the service data unit passed down from the layer above, all together forming a Protocol Data Unit (PDU).

2. Peripheral Component Interconnect, a 32 bit local bus inside a PC or a Mac designed by Intel for the PC. According to Intel, it can transfer data between the PC's main microprocessor (its CPU) and peripherals (hard disks, video adapters, etc.) at up to 132 megabytes per second, compared to only five megabytes per second which the original PC's ISA bus is capable of. PCI is one of two widely adopted local-bus standards. The other, the VL-Bus, is primarily used in 486 PCs. See also CompactPCI and VLB.

PCIA Personal Communications Industry Association. A leading association of providers of wireless voice and data communications services. PCIA member companies include PCS licensees and others in the cellular, paging, ESMR, SMR, mobile data, cable, computing, manufacturing, and local and interexchange sectors of the industry. www.pcia.com.

PCL 1. Hewlett-Packard's Printer Control Language, developed by HP in 1984 as a way for the then-new PC to communicate with a new breed of laser printers — the HP LaserJet printer. HP's PCL language is now the de facto industry standard for PC printing. Most of the printers in the world today are equipped with PCL or a PCL-compatible language. PCL allows the type of sophisticated page creation generally referred to as "laser quality output." PCL supports such advanced features as fully scalable typefaces and rotation of text. PCL defines a standard set of commands enabling applications to communicate with HP or HP-compatible printers. PCL has become a de facto standard for laser and ink jet printers and is supported by virtually all printer manufacturers. On April 8, 1996 HP announced PCL 6 which it billed as "the next generation" of HP Printer Control Language). HP said that PCL 6 includes font synthesis technology for true what-you-see-is-what-you-get (WYSIWYG) printing and better document fidelity. PCL 6 commands were designed by HP to closely match Microsoft Windows GDI (Graphical Direct Interface) commands.

2. Product Compute-Module Load.

PCLEC Packet Competitive Local Exchange Carrier. Covad invented this term for a CLEC who provides dedicated high-speed digital communications services using DSL technology to Internet Service Providers ("ISPs") and corporate enterprise customers.

PCM Pulse Code Modulation. The most common method of encoding an analog voice signal into a digital bit stream. First, the amplitude of the voice conversation is sampled. This is called PAM, Pulse Amplitude Modulation. This PAM sample is then coded (quantized) into a binary (digital) number. This digital number consists of zeros and ones. The voice signal can then be switched, transmitted and stored digitally. There are three basic advantages to PCM voice. They are the three basic advantages of digital switching and transmission. First, it is less expensive to switch and transmit a digital signal. Second, by making an analog voice signal into a digital signal, you can interleave it with other digital signals — such as those from computers or facsimile machines. Third, a voice signal which is switched and transmitted end-to-end in a digital format will usually come through "cleaner," i.e. have less noise, than one transmitted and switched in analog. The reason is simple: An electrical signal loses strength over a distance. It must then be amplified. In analog transmission, everything is amplified, including the noise and static the signal has collected along the way. In digital transmission, the signal is "regenerated," i.e. put back together again, by comparing the incoming signal to a logical question: Is it a one or