

OVER
10,000
ENTRIES

Microsoft

Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition

- Fully updated with the latest technologies, terms, and acronyms
- Easy to read, expertly illustrated
- Definitive coverage of hardware, software, the Internet, and more!



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Introduction

The *Microsoft Computer Dictionary, Fifth Edition* is designed to be a comprehensive and authoritative source of definitions for computer-related terms and abbreviations. The dictionary includes terms drawn from a wide variety of topics relevant to computer users, including software, hardware, networking, data storage, graphics, games, information processing, the Internet and the World Wide Web, gaming, history, jargon and slang, organizations, programming, and standards.

Although this book covers nearly every aspect of computing, it does not include entries on most companies or on most makes and models of computers, nor does it contain entries on most application software products. The few exceptions to this rule of thumb are key companies and products that have a historical or universal importance within the computing industry.

This dictionary emphasizes terminology that the average computer user will encounter in documentation, online help, computer manuals, marketing and sales materials, the popular media, and the computer trade press. Because most computer users operate personal computers and desktop systems at home, work, or both, the majority of the entries in this dictionary cover the terminology used in describing and working with these systems. However, some specialized or highly technical language is included that pertains to areas of industry, academia, software and hardware development, and research. These terms have been included because they have a bearing on more common computer terminology or because they are of historical significance.

Changes in the Fifth Edition

The fifth edition of the *Microsoft Computer Dictionary* has been revised and expanded to include over 10,000 entries, reflecting the many advances in the computer field and

including several areas that have come into prominence in the public eye, such as networking, Web authoring, and new technologies, such as .NET. The content from the Year 2000 appendix has been integrated into the body of the dictionary and a new appendix on emoticons and instant messaging symbols has been added.

Order of Presentation

Entries are alphabetized by letter. Spaces are ignored, as are characters such as hyphens and slashes; for example, *Baud-dot code* falls between *baud* and *baud rate*, and *machine-independent* falls between *machine identification* and *machine instruction*. Numbers and symbols are located at the beginning of the book and are listed in ascending ASCII order. If an entry begins with a letter or letters but contains a number, it is listed alphabetically, according to the initial letter(s), and then according to ASCII order. Thus, V20 precedes V.2x, and both precede VAB.

Entries

Entries are of two types: main entries, which contain full definitions, and synonymous cross-references, which contain *See* references to the appropriate main entries. Synonymous cross-references are generally secondary or less common ways of referring to a main entry. The definition at the main entry can be substituted as a definition for the synonymous cross-reference.

Format

Information in each main entry is presented in a consistent format: entry name in boldface, spelling variants (if any), part of speech, definition, illustration or table reference (if any), acronym (if any), alternative names (if any), and cross-references (if any).

Main Entries

Entries that are acronyms or abbreviations for one or more words or concatenations of two or more words have those words spelled out at the beginning of the definition. The letters in these words or phrases that make up the acronym, abbreviation, or concatenation are in boldface.

When a main entry is spelled exactly the same as another main entry, the two entries are differentiated by the use of a superscript numeral after each term. These entries are called homographs, and they are generally different parts of speech. For example,

e-mail¹ (*noun*)

e-mail² (*verb*)

Spelling Variants

When a main entry has one or more variations in the way it is spelled, each spelling variant follows the main entry, after the word *or*.

Parts of Speech

Entries are broken down into four parts of speech, in addition to prefixes, abbreviated as follows:

n. noun

vb. verb

adj. adjective

adv. adverb

Definitions

Each of the more than 10,000 entries is written in clear, standard English. Many go beyond a simple definition to provide additional detail and to put the term in context for a typical computer user. When an entry has more than one sense or definition, the definitions are presented in a numbered list, to make it easier to distinguish the particular, sometimes subtle, variations in meaning.

Illustration and Table References

Some entries have affiliated illustrations or tables that aid in defining the entry. In most cases, illustrations and tables appear on the same page as the entries to which they apply.

In some instances, however, page layout requirements have forced them to a subsequent page. Entries with illustrations or tables usually have references at the end of the definition for an entry, in the following formats:

See the illustration.

See the table.

Acronyms

Some terminology in the computer field, particularly computer standards and Internet slang, can be shortened to form acronyms. Sometimes the acronym is the more common way to refer to the concept or object; in these cases, the acronym is the main entry. In other cases, the acronym is not as commonly used as the words or phrase for which it stands. In these cases, the words or phrase constitute the main entry. The acronym is given after the definition for these entries in the following format:

Acronym:

Alternative Names

Some items or concepts in the computer field can be referred to by more than one name. Generally, though, one way is preferred. The preferred terminology is the main entry. Alternative names are listed after any acronyms; otherwise they are listed after the definition in the following format:

Also called:

Cross-References

Cross-references are of three types: *See*, *See also*, and *Compare*. A *See* reference is used in an entry that is a synonymous cross-reference and simply points to another entry that contains the information sought. A *See also* reference points to one or more entries that contain additional or supplemental information about a topic and follows any acronyms or alternative names after the definition. A *Compare* reference points to an entry or entries that offer contrast and follows any *See also* references; otherwise it follows any acronyms or alternative names after the definition.

redirection *n.* The process of writing to or reading from a file or device different from the one that would normally be the target or the source. For example, the MS-DOS or OS/2 command *dir >prn* redirects a directory listing from the screen to the printer. *Compare* pipe.

redirector *n.* Software on a client computer that intercepts requests for information and, when appropriate, directs them to the network. Redirectors can either be built into the client operating system or be part of an added networking package.

redlining *n.* A feature of a word processing application that marks changes, additions, or deletions made to a document by a coauthor or editor. The purpose of redlining is to produce a record of the changes made to a document during the course of its development.

redraw *n.* *See* refresh (definition 1).

reduce *vb.* In a graphical user interface, to decrease the size of a window. A user can reduce a window either by clicking the appropriate button in the title bar or by clicking the mouse on the border of the window and dragging the border toward the middle of the window. *See also* maximize, minimize.

Reduced Instruction Set Computing *n.* *See* RISC.

redundancy *n.* Using one or more servers on a Web site to perform identical tasks. If one of the servers crashes, another server assumes its tasks. Redundancy ensures that the Web site will continue to function if one of the servers stops working.

redundancy check *n.* *See* CRC, LRC.

redundant code *n.* Code that duplicates a function performed elsewhere—for example, code to sort a list that has already been sorted.

R

reengineer *vb.* To rethink and redefine processes and procedures. In the context of computer systems, to reengineer means to change the way work is done in order to maximize the benefits of new technology.

reengineering *vb.* **1.** With regard to software, changing existing software to strengthen desirable characteristics and remove weaknesses. **2.** With regard to corporate management, using information technology principles to address the challenges posed by a global economy and to consolidate management of a rapidly expanding work force.

reentrant code *n.* Code written so that it can be shared by several programs at the same time. When a program is executing reentrant code, another program can interrupt

the execution and can then start or continue execution of that same code. Many operating-system routines are written to be reentrant so that only one copy needs to reside in memory to serve all executing applications. *See also* relocatable code.

refactoring *n.* An optimization process in object-oriented programming intended to improve the design or structure of a program without changing its functionality. The goal of refactoring is to make the program clearer and easier to work with—in part by removing duplication, abstracting common behaviors, and refining class hierarchies—and to improve the extensibility and reusability of existing code.

reference¹ *n.* A data type in the C++ programming language. A reference must be initialized with a variable name. The reference then becomes an alias for that variable but actually stores the address of the variable.

reference² *vb.* To access a variable, such as an element in an array or a field in a record.

reference parameter *n.* A parameter in which the address of a variable, rather than the explicit value, is passed to the called routine. *See also* parameter.

reference type *n.* A data type that is represented by a reference (similar to a pointer) to the type's actual value. If a reference type is assigned to a variable, that variable references (or "points to") the original value. No copy is made. Reference types comprise classes, interfaces, delegates, and boxed value types. *See also* data type, value type.

reflecting software *n.* *See* reflector.

reflective liquid-crystal display *n.* A liquid crystal display that is not equipped with edge light or backlight to enhance readability but rather depends on reflecting ambient light, making it difficult to read in brightly lit environments such as the outdoors. *Also called:* reflective LCD.

reflective routing *n.* In wide area networks, the process of using a reflector to distribute data, thereby reducing the load of the network server. *See also* reflector.

reflector *n.* A program that sends messages to a number of users upon receipt of a signal from a single user. A common type of reflector is an e-mail reflector, which forwards any e-mail sent to it to the multiple recipients currently on its list. *See also* multiple recipients. *Compare* mail reflector.

reformat *vb.* **1.** In applications, to change the look of a document by altering stylistic details, such as font, layout, indentation, and alignment. **2.** In data storage, to prepare for