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the nonexhausted and previous-destination files. When there is only one file left the process stops. The repeated merging is referred to as **polyphase merging**.

PON *Abbrev. for passive optical network.*

pop *See STACK.*

Pop (point of presence) An access point to the Internet, either the geographical location or, as a technical term, the equipment that supports the Internet access hardware and software.

POP (post office protocol) A protocol that defines the communication between an email client and a utility that can accept email on behalf of a user, holding it until such time as the user wishes to recover the messages. Version 3 (**POP3**) is the standard protocol for this on the Internet. *See also* IMAP.

POP-2 A programming language developed by the University of Edinburgh (UK) for research in artificial intelligence. POP-2 provided the facility to manipulate the linked data structures characteristic of *Lisp, but retained a more familiar procedural structure, and was thus more accessible to programmers raised in the Algol environment of the time. *POP-11 is a modern version of POP-2.

POP-11 A programming language for artificial intelligence that claims to combine *Lisp and *POP-2.

POP3 *See POP.*

P operation (down operation) *See* SEMAPHORE.

POPL (Principles of Programming Languages) Title of an annual conference organized by the *ACM at which the results of much research in programming languages are announced.

POPLOG A programming environment combining *POP-11 and *Prolog.

population *See* SAMPLING.

pop-up A web page, often containing advertisements, that appears unexpectedly when a user is browsing.

pop-up menu A *menu that appears on the display when the user changes the state of a *button or makes a selection from a *menu bar. The menu item is selected by pointing to and clicking the desired entry.

port 1. (I/O port) A connection point with associated control circuitry that allows I/O devices to be connected to the internal bus of a microprocessor. *See also* PARALLEL PORT, SERIAL PORT, COMMUNICATION PORT.
2. A point through which data can enter or leave a *network, either on the network or the *DTE (computer) interface. **3.** To move software from one type of computer system to another, making any necessary changes en route. In a simple case little more than recompilation may be required, while in extreme cases the software might have to be entirely rewritten.

portable 1. Another word for machine-independent. **2.** A word applied to software that can readily be transferred to other machines, although not actually *machine-independent. **3.** A computer that can be simply carried from one place to another by one person. They cannot necessarily be used in transit. Examples include *laptop computers.

portable network graphics *See* PNG.

portal A website that seeks to act as an attractive user-friendly access point to the Internet. Portals typically provide services (email, instant messaging, games, online shopping, etc.), content (news, listings of events, etc.), facilities for online shopping, and a *search engine to search the rest of the Web.

portrait An orientation of a page in which the shorter side is at the top. *Compare* LANDSCAPE.

POS (point of sale) *See* POINT-OF-SALE SYSTEM.

poset *Short for partially ordered set. See* PARTIAL ORDERING.

POS expression *Short for product of sums expression.*

positional system *See* NUMBER SYSTEM.