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Bryan Pfaffenberger

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data Factual information (such as text, numbers, sounds, and images) in a form that can be processed by a computer.

Although data is the plural of the Latin word *datum*, the term "data" is commonly used to represent both singular and plural. In formal contexts (such as university computer science and engineering departments), the plural (*data*) and the singular (*datum*) are sometimes distinguished.

database A collection of related *information* about a subject organized in a useful manner that provides a base or foundation for procedures, such as retrieving information, drawing conclusions, and making decisions. Any collection of information that serves these purposes qualifies as a database, even if the information isn't stored on a computer. In fact, important predecessors of today's sophisticated business database systems were files kept on index cards and stored in file cabinets. Information usually is divided into *data records*, each with one or more *data fields*.

database design The choice and arrangement of *data fields* in a *database* so that fundamental errors (such as *data redundancy* and *repeating fields*) are avoided or minimized.

database driver A program that enables a spreadsheet program to exchange *data* with other *database* programs, such as *dBASE*.

database management Tasks related to creating, maintaining, organizing, and retrieving information from a *database*. See *data manipulation*.

database management program An *application program* that provides the tools for *data retrieval*, modification, deletion, and insertion. Such programs also can create a *database* and produce meaningful output on a *printer* or on-screen. In *personal computing*, three kinds of *database management programs* exist: *flat-file*, *relational*, and *text-oriented*. See *band* and *relational database management system*.

database management system (DBMS) A program that organizes *data* in a *database*, providing information storage, organization, and retrieval capacities, sometimes including simultaneous access to multiple databases through a shared field (*relational database management*). See *flat-file database management program*.

database structure In *database management*, a definition of the *data records* in which information is stored, including the number of *data fields*; a set of field definitions that specify the type,