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DICTIONARY OF
COMPUTING



PRENTICE HALL'S **ILLUSTRATED** DICTIONARY OF COMPUTING INTERNET UPDATE

THIRD EDITION JONAR C. NADER

Internet & WWW
Photos and tables
Official standards
Style manual
5500 terms

IBM-COMPATIBLE
INTERACTIVE
CD INCLUDED

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minute before the start of the year 70. (b) The representation used in the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC). *Note:* These examples use decimal notation but neither satisfies the definition of the decimal numeration system.]

decimal (numeration) system [ISO The fixed radix numeration system that uses the digits 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 and the radix ten and in which the lowest integral weight is 1. *Example:* In this numeration system, the numeral 576.2 represents the number $(5 \times 10^2) + (7 \times 10^1) + (6 \times 10^0) + (2 \times 10^{-1})$.]

decimal point [ISO The radix point in the decimal numeration system. *Note:* The decimal point may be represented, according to various conventions, by a comma, by a period, or by a point at the mid-height of the digits.]

decision content [ISO A logarithmic measure of the number of decisions needed to select a given event among a finite number of mutually exclusive events; in mathematical notation, this measure is: $(H_0 = \log n)$ where n is the number of events.]

decision table [ISO A table of conditions that are to be considered in the analysis of a problem, together with the action to be taken for each condition.]

decision tree A tree-like graphical presentation of a decision table.

declaration [ISO The mechanism for establishing a language object. *Note:* A declaration normally involves attaching an identifier, and allocating attributes, to the language object concerned.]

declarative language 1. A programming language, such as Structured Query Language, designed to assist the programmer to seek information from a computer by telling the computer what is required, rather than how to go about accomplishing the task. See **programming language** and **structured language**. 2. [ISO A programming language for expressing declarations. *Example:* A data description language.]

decode [ISO To convert data by reversing the effect of some previous encoding.]

decoder [ISO A functional unit that has a number of input lines such that any number may carry signals and a number of output lines such that no more than one at a time may carry a signal and such that the combination of input signals serves as a code to indicate which output line carries the signal.]

decollating The automatic or manual separating of sheets, and the removal of carbon paper from continuous stationery or other multipart documentation.

decompression To reverse the procedure conducted by the **compression** software algorithm to return data to its original size and condition.

decryption The process of decoding information so that it can be read and manipulated. Compare **encryption**.

DECtp Digital Equipment Corporation's transaction processing. A transaction processing systems environment that integrates the capabilities necessary to build transaction processing applications such as databases, storage systems, data interoperability products, transac-

tion processing monitors, and support programs. Digital products have been used in transaction processing systems since the early 1970s. Transaction processing monitors provide eight major functions, including terminal management, file/data management, transaction integrity, security, and productivity. See **transaction processing**.

dedicated file server In a local area network, a file server which only functions as a file server and cannot be used for any other purpose. Unlike a peer-to-peer network where all the computers are potential file servers, a dedicated file server's sole role is to run the network operating system and service the users on the network.

Deep Blue IBM's supercomputer that has become known as the 'chess' machine after winning the IBM Chess Challenger Rematch held in New York between 3 and 11 May 1997. Deep Blue's opponent was Azerbaijan-born Garry Kasparov born in 1963 who resigned from the sixth game after only 19 moves. Deep Blue's development team took the prize money of US\$700 000, while Kasparov received \$400 000. The rematch hit the news headlines because it was the first time a current world champion had lost a match to a computer under tournament conditions. See **IBM**.

deep crack For computer crackers, the state of extreme concentration to the point of stress when cracking (breaking into computer systems). A 'deep hack' is a similar condition for hackers. See **cracker** and **hacker**.

deep etch To remove the unwanted detail around the subject in a photograph.

The term comes from the days when photographs were printed from metal blocks, and all unwanted metal was etched away.

deep hack For computer hackers, the state of extreme concentration to the point of stress when hacking (breaking into computer systems). A 'deep crack' is a similar condition for crackers. See **cracker** and **hacker**.

de facto Referring to unofficial standards. These standards are not set by an agency, but are set over a period of time by users.

default 1. One of a set of operating conditions that is automatically used when a device (such as a printer or computer) is first switched on, or after it is re-set. 2. (Adjective.) [ISO Pertaining to an attribute, value, or option that is assumed when none is explicitly specified.]

default directory In computer applications, the directory which is automatically available when the application is first switched on. The default directory may be changed; when this is done, the new directory becomes the 'current' directory.

default drive The drive which first becomes available when an application is switched on. The default drive may be changed; when this is done, the new drive from which all files are retrieved (or written to) becomes the 'current' drive.

default home page The first page that always comes up when the Web browser is first activated. This default home page is usually set to the browser company's

parsing On the World Wide Web, the reading of a Web page by the Web browser for special instructions that are embedded in the Hypertext Markup Language. These instructions act as codes for the Web browser, enabling it to display the retrieved file in the way that its author had intended. This could include instructions relating to page layout, fonts, position of graphics symbols, and colors to be used. Different Web browsers will parse in the same way, but may have slight variations in how the codes can be interpreted or executed. Effective browsers ought to first download the text of a page and then parse later so that a user can start reading the text while the browser is busily formatting the pages. See HTML.

partial carry [ISO In parallel addition, a procedure in which some or all of the carries are temporarily stored instead of being immediately transferred.]

partition Before a hard disk can be used for the first time, it must be partitioned and then formatted. Partitioning is a software function that involves dividing the storage space into usable sections, with each section assigned a letter as though it were a separate drive. This process conceivably allows each partition to be assigned to a different operating system. However, even if the entire disk is to belong to the same operating system, partitioning must still be performed. The size of each partition is variable, and must be specified. It is important to specify the partition from which the operating system is to boot (this is called the 'active partition'), and to specify the drive letter assignments. Normally the process automatically assigns letters starting with 'C'. However,

other letters may be assigned if there are multiple hard disks. After a hard disk is partitioned, each partition must be formatted by the operating system to which it is dedicated. Under DOS and Windows, the 'format' command lays out the structure on the disk and establishes how and where files can be stored. Note that the 'format' command works differently on a diskette drive as opposed to a hard disk drive. On a diskette drive, the command performs both low-level and high-level formatting. Low-level formatting involves the creation of sectors complete with their address markings (this process is called 'initializing'). High-level formatting lays out the operating system structure on the disk and establishes how and where files are stored. A new hard disk normally comes with low-level formatting already done. Consequently, the 'format' command on a hard disk only performs high-level formatting. Utility programs (such as MultiDisk) are available to help manage partitioned disks.

partitioned database A database whose contents are divided physically among multiple input/output subsystems, and governed by multiple operating systems.

partition-sector virus Any computer virus capable of replacing the original code of the partition sector found on a hard disk (diskettes do not have a partition sector). The hard disk's partition sector contains important information about the disk, such as the number of sectors that can be found in each partition. In most cases, when a personal computer is turned on, it first turns to drive A to read the boot sector. If a diskette is not present in drive A, it may turn to the hard disk (usually drive C).