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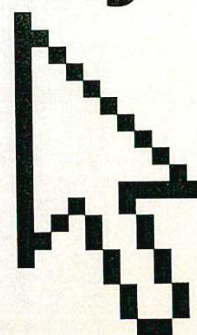


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Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	vii
<i>Changes in the Fifth Edition</i>	vii
<i>Order of Presentation</i>	vii
<i>Entries</i>	vii
<i>Future Printings and Editions</i>	ix

Dictionary of Computer Terms. 1

Appendix A:

Common Character Sets	587
ANSI Character Set	587
Apple Macintosh Extended Character Set	593
IBM Extended Character Set	597
EBCDIC Character Set	599

Appendix B:

Common File Extensions	605
------------------------------	-----

Appendix C:

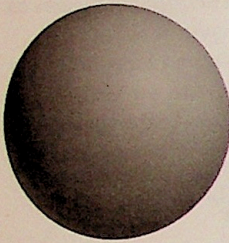
Instant Messaging Emoticons and Acronyms	613
--	-----

Appendix D:

Internet Domains	623
------------------------	-----

Appendix E:

Numeric Equivalents	631
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3-D-rendered
sphere3-D-rendered sphere
with bump mapping

Bump mapping. A 3-D-rendered sphere showing bump mapping.

bundle *vb.* To combine products for sale as a lot. Frequently, operating system software and some widely used applications are bundled with a computer system for sale.

bundled software *n.* 1. Programs sold with a computer as part of a combined hardware/software package. 2. Smaller programs sold with larger programs to increase the latter's functionality or attractiveness.

burn *vb.* 1. To write data electronically into a programmable read-only memory (PROM) chip by using a special programming device known variously as a PROM programmer, PROM blower, or PROM blaster. *Also called:* blast, blow. *See also* PROM. 2. To create read-only memory compact discs (CD-ROMs). 3. To write data electronically on a flash memory chip or a PC Card Type III. Unlike PROM chips or CD-ROM, flash memory media can be burned, or flashed, repeatedly with new information. *Also called:* flash.

burn in *vb.* 1. To keep a new system or device running continuously so that any weak elements or components will fail early and can be found and corrected before the system becomes an integral part of the user's work routine. Such a test is often performed at the factory before a device is shipped. 2. To make a permanent change in the phosphor coating on the inside of a monitor screen by leaving the monitor on and keeping a bright, unchanging image on the screen for extended periods. Such an image will remain visible after the monitor is turned off. Burning in was a danger with older PC monitors; it is no longer a concern with most new PC monitors. *Also called:* ghosting.

burst¹ *n.* Transfer of a block of data all at one time without a break. Certain microprocessors and certain buses have features that support various types of burst transfers. *See also* burst speed (definition 1).

burst² *vb.* To break fanfold continuous-feed paper apart at its perforations, resulting in a stack of separate sheets.

burster *n.* A device used to burst, or break apart at the perforations, fanfold continuous-feed paper.

burst extended-data-out RAM *n.* *See* BEDO DRAM.

burst mode *n.* A method of data transfer in which information is collected and sent as a unit in one high-speed transmission. In burst mode, an input/output device takes control of a multiplexer channel for the time required to send its data. In effect, the multiplexer, which normally merges input from several sources into a single high-speed data stream, becomes a channel dedicated to the needs of one device until the entire transmission has been sent. Burst mode is used both in communications and between devices in a computer system. *See also* burst¹.

burst rate *n.* *See* burst speed (definition 1).

burst speed *n.* 1. The fastest speed at which a device can operate without interruption. For example, various communications devices (as on networks) can send data in bursts, and the speed of such equipment is sometimes measured as the burst speed (the speed of data transfer while the burst is being executed). *Also called:* burst rate. 2. The number of characters per second that a printer can print on one line without a carriage return or linefeed. Burst speed measures the actual speed of printing, without consideration of the time taken to advance paper or to move the print head back to the left margin. Almost always, the speed claimed by the manufacturer is the burst speed. By contrast, *throughput* is the number of characters per second when one or more entire pages of text are being printed and is a more practical measurement of printer speed in real-life situations.

bursty *adj.* Transmitting data in spurts, or bursts, rather than in a continuous stream.

bus *n.* A set of hardware lines (conductors) used for data transfer among the components of a computer system. A bus is essentially a shared highway that connects different parts of the system—including the processor, disk-drive controller, memory, and input/output ports—and enables them to transfer information. The bus consists of specialized groups of lines that carry different types of information. One group of lines carries data; another carries memory addresses (locations) where data items are to be found; yet another carries control signals. Buses are characterized by the number of bits they can transfer at a single

bus enumerator

B

time, equivalent to the number of wires within the bus. A computer with a 32-bit address bus and a 16-bit data bus, for example, can transfer 16 bits of data at a time from any of 2^{32} memory locations. Most PCs contain one or more expansion slots into which additional boards can be plugged to connect them to the bus.

bus enumerator *n.* A device driver that identifies devices located on a specific bus and assigns a unique identification code to each device. The bus enumerator is responsible for loading information about the devices onto the hardware tree. *See also* bus, device driver, hardware tree.

bus extender *n.* 1. A device that expands the capacity of a bus. For example, IBM PC/AT computers used a bus extender to add onto the earlier PC bus and allow the use of 16-bit expansion boards in addition to 8-bit boards. *See also* bus. 2. A special board used by engineers to raise an add-on board above the computer's cabinet, making it easier to work on the circuit board.

business graphics *n.* *See* presentation graphics.

business information system *n.* A combination of computers, printers, communications equipment, and other devices designed to handle data. A completely automated business information system receives, processes, and stores data; transfers information as needed; and produces reports or printouts on demand. *Acronym:* BIS. *See also* management information system.

business logic *n.* A set of rules and calculations built into a business information application. The application uses business logic to sort incoming information and respond accordingly. Business logic functions as a set of guidelines that ensure the application's actions conform to the specific needs of a business.

business software *n.* Any computer application designed primarily for use in business, as opposed to scientific use or entertainment. In addition to the well-known areas of word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and communications, business software for microcomputers also encompasses such applications as accounting, payroll, financial planning, project management, decision and support systems, personnel record maintenance, and office management.

Business Software Alliance *n.* International organization of computer software companies that promotes the interests of the software industry. This alliance focuses on educating the public on the importance of software, advancing free and open world trade, and supporting legislation opposing software piracy and Internet theft. The Business Software Alliance has offices in the United States, Europe, and Asia, with members in more than 60 nations around the world. *Acronym:* BSA.

business-to-business *n.* *See* B2B.

business-to-consumer *n.* *See* B2C.

bus mastering *n.* In modern bus architectures, the ability of a device controller card—a network adapter or a disk controller, for example—to bypass the CPU and work directly with other devices to transfer data into and out of memory. Enabling devices to take temporary control of the system bus for data transfer and bus mastering frees the CPU for other work. This in turn improves performance in tasks, such as video replay and multiple-user queries to large databases, that require simultaneous data access and intensive processing. The technology known as direct memory access (DMA) is a well-known example of bus mastering. *See also* bus, controller, direct memory access. *Compare* PIO.

bus mouse *n.* A mouse that attaches to the computer's bus through a special card or port rather than through a serial port. *See also* mouse. *Compare* serial mouse.

bus network *n.* A topology (configuration) for a LAN (local area network) in which all nodes are connected to a main communications line (bus). On a bus network, each node monitors activity on the line. Messages are detected by all nodes but are accepted only by the node(s) to which they are addressed. A malfunctioning node ceases to communicate but does not disrupt operation (as it might on a ring network, in which messages are passed from one node to the next). To avoid collisions that occur when two or more nodes try to use the line at the same time, bus networks commonly rely on collision detection or token passing to regulate traffic. *See the illustration. Also called:* bus topology, linear bus. *See also* collision detection, contention, CSMA/CD, token bus network, token passing. *Compare* ring network, star network.

Table E.1 Exclusive OR.

<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a XOR b</i>
0	0	0
0	1	1
1	0	1
1	1	0

E

.exe *n.* In MS-DOS, a filename extension that indicates that a file is an executable program. To run an executable program, the user types the filename without the .exe extension at the prompt and presses Enter. *See also* executable program.

executable¹ *adj.* Of, pertaining to, or being a program file that can be run. Executable files have extensions such as .bat, .com, and .exe.

executable² *n.* A program file that can be run, such as file0.bat, file1.exe, or file2.com.

executable program *n.* A program that can be run. The term usually applies to a compiled program translated into machine code in a format that can be loaded into memory and run by a computer's processor. In interpreter languages, an executable program can be source code in the proper format. *See also* code (definition 1), compiler (definition 2), computer program, interpreter, source code.

execute *vb.* To perform an instruction. In programming, execution implies loading the machine code of the program into memory and then performing the instructions.

execute in place *n.* The process of executing code directly from ROM, rather than loading it from RAM first. Executing the code in place, instead of copying the code into RAM for execution, saves system resources. Applications in other file systems, such as on a PC Card storage device, cannot be executed in this way. *Acronym:* XIP.

execution time *n.* The time, measured in clock ticks (pulses of a computer's internal timer), required by a microprocessor to decode and carry out an instruction after it is fetched from memory. *Also called:* E-time. *See also* instruction time.

executive *n.* The set of kernel-mode components that form the base operating system for Microsoft Windows NT or later. *See also* operating system.

executive information system *n.* A set of tools designed to organize information into categories and reports. Because it emphasizes information, an executive information system differs from a decision support system

(DSS), which is designed for analysis and decision making. *Acronym:* EIS. *Compare* decision support system.

exerciser *n.* A program that exercises a piece of hardware or software by running it through a large set of operations.

exit *vb.* In a program, to move from the called routine back to the calling routine. A routine can have more than one exit point, thus allowing termination based on various conditions.

expanded *adj.* A font style that sets characters farther apart than the normal spacing. *Compare* condensed.

expanded memory *n.* A type of memory, up to 8 MB, that can be added to IBM PCs. Its use is defined by the Expanded Memory Specification (EMS). Expanded memory is not accessible to programs in MS-DOS, so the Expanded Memory Manager (EMM) maps pages (blocks) of bytes from expanded memory into page frames in accessible memory areas. Expanded memory is not needed in Windows 9x, all versions of Windows NT, and Windows 2000. *See also* EEMS, EMS, Expanded Memory Manager, page frame.

Expanded Memory Manager *n.* A driver that implements the software portion of the Expanded Memory Specification (EMS) to make expanded memory in IBM and compatible PCs accessible. *Acronym:* EMM. *See also* EMS, expanded memory, extended memory.

Expanded Memory Specification *n.* *See* EMS.

expansion *n.* A way of increasing a computer's capabilities by adding hardware that performs tasks that are not part of the basic system. Expansion is usually achieved by plugging printed circuit boards (expansion boards) into openings (expansion slots) inside the computer. *See also* expansion board, expansion slot, open architecture (definition 2), PC Card, PCMCIA slot.

expansion board *n.* A circuit board that is plugged into a computer's bus (main data transfer path) to add extra functions or resources to the computer. Typical expansion boards add memory, disk drive controllers, video support, parallel and serial ports, and internal modems. For laptops and other portable computers, expansion boards come in credit card-sized devices called PC Cards that plug into a slot in the side or back of the computer. *Also called:* expansion board, extender board. *See also* expansion slot, PC Card, PCMCIA slot.

expansion bus *n.* A group of control lines that provide a buffered interface to devices. These devices can be located

top-down design *n.* A program design methodology that starts with defining program functionality at the highest level (a series of tasks) and then breaks down each task into lower-level tasks, and so on. *See also* bottom-up programming, top-down programming. *Compare* bottom-up design.

top-down programming *n.* An approach to programming that implements a program in top-down fashion. Typically, this is done by writing a main body with calls to several major routines (implemented as stubs). Each routine is then coded, calling other, lower-level, routines (also done initially as stubs). *See also* bottom-up design, stub, top-down design. *Compare* bottom-up programming.

topic drift *n.* The tendency of an online discussion to move from its original subject to other related or unrelated subjects. For example, someone in a conference devoted to television may ask about a news program; then somebody else may say something about a story on that program about food poisoning, which leads somebody else to start a general discussion on the advantages of organic fruits and vegetables.

topic group *n.* An online discussion area for participants with a common interest in a particular subject.

top-level domain *n.* In the domain-name system of Internet addresses or DNS hierarchy, any of the broadest category of names, under which all domain names fit. Top-level domains for sites in the United States include .com, .edu, .gov, .net, and .org. *See also* DNS (definition 1), major geographic domain.

top-of-file *n.* 1. The beginning of a file. 2. A symbol used by a program to mark the beginning of a file—the first character in the file or, in an indexed (ordered) database, the first indexed record. *Acronym:* TOF. *See also* beginning-of-file.

topology *n.* The configuration or layout of a network formed by the connections between devices on a LAN (local area network) or between two or more LANs. *See also* bus network, LAN, ring network, star network, token ring network, tree network.

top posting *n.* In e-mail and newsgroup discussions, placing new material before material quoted from earlier posts rather than after. Because top-posted messages are read out of chronological order, top-posting is considered an undesirable practice.

total bypass *n.* A communications network that uses satellite transmission to bypass both local and long-distance telephone links.

total cost of ownership *n.* Specifically, the cost of owning, operating, and maintaining a single PC; more generally, the cost to businesses and organizations of setting up and maintaining complex and far-reaching networked computer systems. Total cost of ownership includes the up-front costs of hardware and software added to later costs of installation, personnel training, technical support, upgrades, and repairs. Industry initiatives designed to lower the total cost of ownership include centralized network management and administration, as well as hardware solutions in the form of network-based computers with or without local storage and expansion capability. *Acronym:* TCO.

touch pad *n.* A variety of graphics tablet that uses pressure sensors, rather than the electromagnetics used in more expensive high-resolution tablets, to track the position of a device on its surface. *See also* absolute pointing device, graphics tablet.

touch screen *n.* A computer screen designed or modified to recognize the location of a touch on its surface. By touching the screen, the user can make a selection or move a cursor. The simplest type of touch screen is made up of a grid of sensing lines, which determine the location of a touch by matching vertical and horizontal contacts. Another, more accurate type uses an electrically charged surface and sensors around the outer edges of the screen to detect the amount of electrical disruption and pinpoint exactly where contact has been made. A third type has infrared light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and sensors around the outer edges of the screen. These LEDs and sensors create an invisible infrared grid, which the user's finger interrupts, in front of the screen. *Compare* light pen.

touch-sensitive display *n.* *See* touch screen.

touch-sensitive tablet *n.* *See* touch pad.

touch tone dialing *n.* The signaling system used in telephones with touch-tone keypads, in which each digit is associated with two specific frequencies. During dialing, these frequencies—for example, 1336 Hz and 697 Hz for the number 2—are transmitted to the telephone company. *Also called:* DTMF, Dual Tone Multiple Frequency.

tower *n.* A microcomputer system in which the cabinet for the central processing unit (CPU) is tall, narrow, and

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