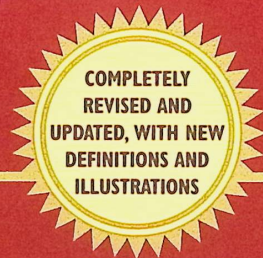


MICROSOFT PRESS®

COMPUTER DICTIONARY

SECOND EDITION



THE COMPREHENSIVE
STANDARD FOR
BUSINESS, SCHOOL,
LIBRARY, AND HOME



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damping A technique for preventing overshoot (exceeding the desired limit) in the response of a circuit or device. An amplifier circuit, for example, might contain components that damp the output, preventing it from exceeding a critical level.

Darlington circuit Sometimes called a Darlington pair. An amplifier circuit consisting of two transistors, often mounted in the same housing. The collectors of the two transistors are connected, and the emitter of the first is connected to the base of the second. Darlington circuits are used to provide high-gain current amplification.

Darlington pair See Darlington circuit.

DASD Sometimes pronounced "dazz-dee." Acronym for direct access storage device, a data storage device on which information can be accessed directly, rather than by starting at the beginning of the data and passing sequentially over all intervening storage areas. Thus, a disk drive is a DASD unit. A tape is not a DASD unit because the data is stored as a linear block. *Compare* sequential access; *see also* direct access.

DAT See digital audio tape, dynamic address translation.

data Plural of the Latin *datum*, meaning an item of information. Following classical usage, one item of information should be called a datum, and more than one item should be called data: "The datum is," but "the data are." In practice, however, *data* is frequently used for the singular as well as the plural form of the noun. *Compare* information.

data acquisition The process of obtaining data from another source, typically one outside the system. It can be done by electronic sensing, as in process control or communications, or through data terminal input, as in online transaction processing, or from some magnetic medium, as in batch database processing.

data aggregate A collection of data records or blocks that typically includes a description of the placement of each block within the collection and its relationship to the entire set.

data attribute Structural information about data that serves to establish its context and give mean-

ing to it. The term is also used to refer to descriptive structural information about a data field in a record.

data bank A repository of data; any substantial collection of data.

database Loosely, any aggregation of data; a file consisting of a number of records (or tables), each of which is constructed of fields (columns) of a particular type, together with a collection of operations that facilitate searching, sorting, recombination, and similar activities.

database administrator Abbreviated DBA. The individual or group of individuals responsible for a database. Typically, the DBA is responsible for determining the information content of the database; determining the internal storage structure and access strategy for the database; defining data security and integrity checks; and monitoring database performance and responding to changing requirements.

database analyst An individual who provides the analytic functions required to design and/or maintain applications requiring use of a database. The functions performed by a database analyst are, in a database context, much like the functions performed by a systems analyst in a programming context.

database designer An individual who provides the design and implementation functions required to implement and/or maintain applications that use a database. The functions performed are, in a database context, much like the functions performed by a programmer in a programming context.

database engine The program module or modules that provide access to the functions of a database management system (DBMS). A database engine is used as an interface between the data manipulation language (DML) or programs written in conventional programming languages and the functions supported by the DBMS.

database machine A computer peripheral device that, from the viewpoint of the computer, directly executes database-related tasks, relieving the main computer of the execution of these tasks. Database machines can be attached to the computer