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COMPUTER DICTIONARY

TENTH EDITION

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BRYAN PFAFFENBERGER

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WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD™

COMPUTER DICTIONARY

10TH EDITION

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Dedication

For Suzanne, always

— BP

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DA See *desk accessory*.

DAC Acronym for digital-to-analog converter; a computer chip, or set of chips, that converts digital signals into analog signals. Many devices that contain DAC functionality can also convert analog signals into digital signals; for instance, modems.

daemon (Pronounced *demon* or *daymon*.) A memory-resident program that remains in the background, awaiting an event that triggers a predefined action. For example, the Apache Web server runs a daemon called *httpd* that listens for Web page requests.

daisy chain A method of connecting together several devices along a bus and managing the signals for each device. Devices that use a SCSI interface, such as a CD-ROM, hard disk, and scanner, can be daisy-chained to one SCSI port. See *daisy chaining*.

daisy chaining In displays, the act of linking several monitors together so that they all show the same thing. Daisy chaining is convenient when large numbers of people must see the output of a computer simultaneously, such as at a convention or trade show. See *daisy chain*.

DARPA See *Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency*.

DASD See *direct access storage device*.

DAT Acronym for Digital Audio Tape. A digital magnetic tape format originally developed for CD-quality audio recording and now used for computer backup tapes. The latest DAT storage format, DDS, specifies storage capacities of up to 24GB.

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.

data aging In Y2K readiness testing, a method of testing system readiness by changing date values to future dates.

database 1. 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 is not 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. See *relational database*. 2. An application that provides the tools for data retrieval, modification, deletion, and insertion; for instance, Access, MySQL, and Oracle. Such applications also can create a database and produce reports. In personal computing, three kinds of database management programs exist: flat file, relational, and text-oriented. See *flat file database*, *relational database management system (RDBMS)*, *text-oriented database*.

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. See *1NF*, *2NF*, *3NF*, *normalization*.

database driver A program that enables a spreadsheet application (such as Excel) to exchange data with database applications (such as Access).

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