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Microsoft

Computer Dictionary

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automatically identifying and configuring it for optimum performance. Peripherals can be connected while the computer is running (*hot plugging*) and are automatically assigned a unique address (auto-addressing). Developed from the I2 architecture designed jointly by Philips and Digital Equipment Corporation, the ACCESS.bus specification is controlled by the ACCESS.bus Industry Group and competes with Intel's USB. *See also* bidirectional, bus, daisy chain¹, hot plugging, input/output port, peripheral. *Compare* USB.

access code *n.* *See* password.

access control *n.* The mechanisms for limiting access to certain items of information or to certain controls based on users' identities and their membership in various pre-defined groups. Access control is typically used by system administrators for controlling user access to network resources, such as servers, directories, and files. *See also* access privileges, system administrator.

access control list *n.* A list associated with a file or a resource that contains information about which users or groups have permission to access a resource or modify the file. *Acronym:* ACL.

accessibility *n.* A quality of software, hardware, or a complete computer system that makes it usable by people with one or more physical disabilities, such as restricted mobility, blindness, or deafness.

accessibility aids *n.* Utilities that make computers easier to use for people with disabilities. Examples of accessibility aids include screen readers, speech recognition programs, and on-screen keyboards.

access key *n.* A key combination, such as ALT+F, that moves the focus to a menu, a command, or a control, without using the mouse.

access mechanism *n.* **1.** The disk drive components that move the read/write head(s) to the proper track of a magnetic disk or optical disc. *See also* disk controller. **2.** A circuit that allows one part of a computer system to send signals to another part. **3.** In programming, the means by which an application can read from or write to a resource. *Also called:* access method.

access method *n.* *See* access mechanism.

access number *n.* The telephone number used by a subscriber to gain access to an online service.

accessory *n.* *See* peripheral.

access path *n.* *See* search path.

access permission *n.* *See* permission.

access point *n.* In a wireless LAN (local area network), a transceiver that connects the LAN to a wired network. *See also* wireless LAN.

access privileges *n.* The type of operations permitted a given user for a certain system resource on a network or a file server. A variety of operations, such as the ability to access a server, view the contents of a directory, open or transfer files, and create, modify, or delete files or directories, can be allowed or disallowed by the system administrator. Assigning access privileges to users helps the system administrator to maintain security on the system, as well as the privacy of confidential information, and to allocate system resources, such as disk space. *Also called:* access rights. *See also* file protection, file server, permission, system administrator, write access.

access provider *n.* *See* ISP.

access rights *n.* *See* access privileges.

access speed *n.* *See* access time.

access time *n.* **1.** The amount of time it takes for data to be delivered from memory to the processor after the address for the data has been selected. **2.** The time needed for a read/write head in a disk drive to locate a track on a disk. Access time is usually measured in milliseconds and is used as a performance measure for hard disks and CD-ROM drives. *See also* read/write head, seek time, settling time, wait state. *Compare* cycle time.

account *n.* **1.** A record-keeping arrangement used by the vendor of an online service to identify a subscriber and to maintain a record of customer usage for billing purposes. **2.** The record-keeping mechanism used by networks and multiuser operating systems for keeping track of authorized users. Network accounts are created by network administrators and are used both to validate users and to administer policies—for example, permissions—related to each user.

accounting file *n.* A file generated by a printer controller that keeps track of the number of pages printed per job as well as the user that requested the print job.

accounting machine *n.* **1.** One of the earliest applications of automatic data processing, used in business accounting primarily during the 1940s and 1950s. The first accounting machines were nonelectronic and used punched cards and wires arranged in plugboard panels. **2.** A computer in which an accounting software package