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Computer Dictionary

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Web page, including such features as providing a form that users can fill out, image maps that contain links to other Web pages or resources, and links that users can click on to send e-mail to a specified address. ActiveX controls and Java applets can provide much the same functionality as CGI scripts, through different means. *See also* CGI (definition 1), cgi-bin, image map, Perl. *Compare* ActiveX control, Java applet.

CGM *n.* *See* Computer Graphics Metafile.

chad *n.* The paper removed when a hole is punched in a card, in a tape, or at the perforated edge of continuous-form paper—the computer equivalent of a doughnut hole.

chaining *n.* **1.** In computers, the linking of two or more entities so that they are dependent upon one another for operation. **2.** In programming, the linking of two or more programs so that the first program causes the second program to begin executing. **3.** In programming, linking program statements so that each statement, except for the first, relies on the previous statement for input. **4.** With batch files, linking two or more batch files so that the completion of the first batch file causes the second batch file to begin executing. **5.** With data storage, linking two or more individual units of storage. For example, a single file on a disk may actually be stored on several different sectors of the disk, each of which points to the next sector containing a piece of that file. These sectors are said to be chained together, or, more literally, to be a chain of clusters. **6.** *See* daisy chaining.

chain printer *n.* *See* line printer.

chalkware *n.* *See* vaporware.

Challenge Handshake Authentication Protocol *n.* An authentication scheme used by PPP servers to validate the identity of the originator of a connection, upon connection or any time later. *Acronym:* CHAP. *See also* authentication, PPP.

change directory *n.* *See* cd.

change file *n.* A file that records transactional changes occurring in a database, providing a basis for updating a master file and establishing an audit trail. *Also called:* transaction log. *See also* addition record.

change management *n.* **1.** The process of tracking and controlling updates, revisions, and other changes to a hardware or software product or project. **2.** The process of managing change during a company's restructuring or reengineering.

channel *n.* **1.** A path or link through which information passes between two devices. A channel can be either internal or external to a microcomputer. **2.** In communications, a medium for transferring information. Depending on its type, a communications channel can carry information (data, sound, and/or video) in either analog or digital form. A communications channel can be a physical link, such as the cable connecting two stations in a network, or it can consist of some electromagnetic transmission on one or more frequencies within a bandwidth in the electromagnetic spectrum, as in radio and television, or in optical, microwave, or voice-grade communication. *Also called:* circuit, line. *See also* analog, band, bandwidth, digital, electromagnetic spectrum, frequency. **3.** A single color within a digital color space. For example, the RGB color space contains three channels—red, green, and blue—and all colors within the RGB color space are created with a combination of one or more of those three color channels. In CMYK there are four channels—cyan, magenta, yellow, and black. Color management and graphics applications rely on control and manipulation of individual color channels. *See also* color space.

channel access *n.* **1.** A method used in networked systems to gain access to the data communication channel that links two or more computers. Common methods of channel access are contention, polling, and the token ring network. *See also* channel, contention, polling, token ring network. **2.** In wireless technology, an access method such as CDMA (Code Division Multiple Access). *See also* Code Division Multiple Access.

channel adapter *n.* A device that enables hardware using two different types of communications channels to communicate.

channel aggregator *n.* *See* content aggregator.

channel capacity *n.* The speed at which a communications channel can transfer information, measured in bits per second (bps) or in baud.

Channel Definition Format *n.* A file format based on XML that describes a channel—a collection of Web pages—on a server. The Channel Definition Format is used with the Active Channel feature in Microsoft Internet Explorer to deliver selected, often personalized, information to individuals on a subscription basis. *See also* Active Channel, webcasting.

channel hop *vb.* To switch repeatedly from one IRC channel to another. *See also* IRC.

surfaces. Because the markings permit an electric current to flow, a set of conductive brushes that ride on the surface of the conductive wheels can detect these conductive markings. The electronics in the mouse translate these electrical movement signals into mouse-movement information that can be used by the computer. *See also* mouse, trackball. *Compare* optical mouse, optomechanical mouse.

mechatronics *n.* A term derived from the words *mechanical* and *electronics* to describe a field of engineering that applies mechanical, electrical, and electronic engineering concepts to product design and manufacture. A relatively new discipline, mechatronics is applicable to products in fields as diverse as medicine, robotics, manufacturing, and consumer electronics.

media *n.* The physical material, such as paper, disk, and tape, used for storing computer-based information. *Media* is plural; *medium* is singular.

Media Access Control *n.* *See* MAC.

Media Control Interface *n.* *See* MCI (definition 1).

media conversion *n.* Transferring data from one storage medium to another—for example, from disk to tape.

media eraser *n.* A device that removes or obliterates data from a storage medium on a wholesale basis, usually by writing meaningless data (such as zeros) over it. *See also* bulk eraser.

media filter *n.* **1.** A device used with local area networks (LANs) as an adapter between two different types of media. For example, an RJ-45 connector might be used between coaxial cable and unshielded twisted pair (UTP) cables. Media filters are similar in function to transceivers. As with many components to LANs, manufacturers often choose different names for similar products, so a LAN expert is needed to decide which media filters are required for a particular LAN. *See also* coaxial cable, connector (definition 1), LAN, transceiver, UTP. **2.** A device added to data networks to filter out electronic noise from the environment. For example, a media filter might be added to an Ethernet network based on coaxial cabling to prevent data loss from interference by nearby electronic equipment. *See also* coaxial cable, Ethernet (definition 1).

media stream *n.* A continuous sequence of audio or audio-and-video through a network.

medium¹ *adj.* Of or relating to the middle part of a range of possible values.

medium² *n.* A substance in which signals can be transmitted, such as a wire or fiber-optic cable. *See* media.

medium model *n.* A memory model of the Intel 80x86 processor family. The medium model allows only 64 kilobytes for data but generally up to 1 megabyte for code. *See also* memory model.

medium-scale integration *n.* A concentration of circuit elements in the hundreds on a single chip. *Acronym:* MSI. *See also* integrated circuit.

meg *n.* *See* megabyte.

mega- *prefix* One million (10^6). In computing, which is based on the binary (base-2) numbering system, *mega-* has a literal value of 1,048,576, which is the power of 2 (2^{20}) closest to one million. *Abbreviation:* M.

megabit *n.* Usually 1,048,576 bits (2^{20}); sometimes interpreted as 1 million bits. *Abbreviation:* Mb, Mbit.

megabyte *n.* Usually 1,048,576 bytes (2^{20}); sometimes interpreted as 1 million bytes. *Abbreviation:* MB.

megacycle *n.* A term for 1 million cycles—usually used to mean 1 million cycles per second. *Abbreviation:* MC. *See also* megahertz.

megaflops *n.* *See* MFLOPS.

megahertz *n.* A measure of frequency equivalent to 1 million cycles per second. *Abbreviation:* MHz.

megapel display *n.* *See* megapixel display.

megapixel *adj.* A reference to image resolution of one million pixels or more. The term is used in reference to devices such as digital cameras, scanners, and computer monitors and display adapters.

megapixel display *n.* A video display capable of displaying at least 1 million pixels. For example, a video display with a screen size of 1024 horizontal pixels and 1024 vertical pixels is a megapixel display. *Also called:* megapel display.

Melissa *n.* A macro virus that affects Word files in Microsoft Office 97 and Office 2000 and first appeared in the spring of 1999. Melissa is delivered as an attachment to an e-mail with the subject line “An Important Message From <user name>,” a message beginning “Here is that document you asked for...,” or both. When the attachment is opened, the virus propagates (if Microsoft Outlook is installed) by sending itself to the first 50 e-mail addresses in the user’s Outlook address book. On the infected machine,