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D

DAC, D/A converter *see* DIGITAL-TO-ANALOG CONVERTER.

daemon (under UNIX) a program that runs continuously in the background, or is activated by a particular event. The word *daemon* is Greek for "spirit" or "soul."

dagger the character †, sometimes used to mark footnotes. *See also* FOOTNOTE. Also called an OBELISK or LONG CROSS.

daisy-chain to connect devices together in sequence with cables. For example, if four devices A, B, C, and D are daisy-chained, there will be a cable from A to B, a cable from B to C, and a cable from C to D.

daisywheel printer a printer that uses a rotating plastic wheel as a type element. Daisywheel printers were often used with microcomputers in the early 1980s. They printed high-quality text, but they were relatively slow and could not print graphics.

dash (—) a punctuation mark similar to a hyphen, but longer. On a typewriter, a dash is typed as two hyphens.

Proportional-pitch type often includes one or more kinds of dashes, such as an em dash (—), which is as wide as the height of the font, and an en dash (–), which is two-thirds as wide as the em dash. Normally, the em dash joins sentences and the en dash joins numbers (as in "1995–98").

data information. The word was originally the plural of *datum,* which means "a single fact," but it is now used as a collective singular. Data processing is the act of using data for making calculations or decisions.

database a collection of data stored on a computer storage medium, such as a disk, that can be used for more than one purpose. For example, a firm that maintains a database containing information on its employees will be able to use the same data for payroll, personnel, and other purposes. *See* DATABASE MANAGEMENT.

database management the task of storing data in a database and retrieving information from that data. There are three aspects of database management: entering data, modifying or updating data, and presenting output reports. Many mainframe computers are used by businesses for database management purposes. Several software packages are available for database management on microcomputers, such as dBASE and Microsoft Access, and some data management capabilities are provided with spreadsheets such as Lotus 1-2-3 and Excel. Some examples of database applications include maintaining employee lists and preparing payrolls; maintaining parts order lists and keeping

M

Mac nickname for MACINTOSH.

MAC address (Media Access Control address) a built-in number that uniquely and permanently identifies a network adapter, such as the Ethernet card in a PC. It consists of 12 hexadecimal digits, which may be written with or without hyphens, such as 13-24-6C-2D-FF-3A or 13246C2DFF3A.

Under Windows 2000 and later, the MAC address can be displayed by typing `ipconfig /all` at a COMMAND PROMPT.

Contrast IP ADDRESS, which is assigned manually or automatically by network administrators. *See also* GUID.

MacApp a programming tool for developing application programs on the Macintosh. It was introduced in 1986 and was one of the first APPLICATION FRAMEWORK programs. Apple discontinued support for MacApp in 2001. *See* OBJECT-ORIENTED PROGRAMMING; VISUAL BASIC.

machine-dependent program a program that works on only one particular type of computer.

machine-independent program a program that can be used on many different types of computers. The usual way to make a program machine-independent is to write it in a widely used programming language, such as C or C++, and compile it separately for each machine. A Java program is machine-independent because it is compiled to a standard bytecode, which can be run using the Java virtual machine (JVM) available for each specific machine.

machine language instructions that a computer can execute directly. Machine language statements are written in a binary code, and each statement corresponds to one machine action.

The difference between machine language and assembly language is that each assembly-language statement corresponds to one machine-language statement, but the statements themselves are written in a symbolic code that is easier for people to read. (*See* ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE.) A single statement in a high-level language such as C may contain many machine instructions.

machine-readable data data in any form that can be fed into a computer through an input device. Examples of machine-readable data include magnetic disks and tapes, optical disks, punched cards, and bar codes.

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