

The Facts On File
DICTIONARY
of
COMPUTER SCIENCE

Revised Edition

Edited by
John Daintith
Edmund Wright

 **Facts On File**
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The Facts On File Dictionary of Computer Science
Revised Edition

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volt are thus often written mm, ms, mV. Milli- is part of a sequence
milli-, micro-, nano-, pico-, ...
of decreasing powers of 1000.

MIMD (multiple instruction multiple data stream processing) A type of computer architecture used in parallel processing in which CPUs are used to process data and fetch instructions independently. *See* CPU; parallel processing.

MIME /mĭm/ (multipurpose Internet mail extensions) A method for attaching files to an e-mail that allows 8-bit binary data to be included with the e-mail rather than encoding the binary data as 7-bit ASCII text. An e-mail program is said to be MIME compliant if it can both send and receive files using the MIME standard.

mini /min-ee/ *See* minicomputer.

minicomputer /min-ee-kŏm-pyoo-ter/ (mini) Loosely, a medium-size computer, i.e. one that is usually considered to be smaller and less capable in terms of performance than a contemporary MAINFRAME computer, and hence cheaper. A modern minicomputer might well operate faster than many of the mainframes used in the 1970s. Again, it might be outperformed by a sophisticated MICROCOMPUTER. Minicomputers came on the scene before microcomputers and the boundary between the two is no longer clear.

Minicomputers are often to be found in laboratories built into complex experiments, or controlling industrial processes. They are also used for small multiuser systems, although networks of PERSONAL COMPUTERS attached to a server are now commonly used for this purpose. Mainframe computers often have a number of minicomputers to perform such tasks as input/output or communications, thus freeing the power of the mainframe CPU for more demanding tasks.

minimize To shrink a window down so that it is displayed only on the TASK BAR. A minimized application remains active and can be brought back by clicking on the task

bar button with the application's name on it.

minitower /min-ee-tow-er/ A microcomputer in which the power supply, motherboard, and mass storage devices are stacked on top of one another in a small vertical cabinet.

MIP mapping A technique used in 3D graphics for correcting pixelation and speeding up rendering times. Different pre-built texture maps are applied when the object on the screen is close up or far away. MIP is an abbreviation for the Latin *multum in parvo* (many in few).

MIPS Millions of instructions per second; a measure of processor speed.

mirror An arrangement where data is written to more than one hard disk simultaneously, so that if one disk fails, the system can instantly switch to the other disk without any loss of data or service. Mirrored disks are a type of RAID.

mirror site A Web or FTP site that maintains exact copies of material originated at another location, usually in order to provide more widespread access to the information or to improve the performance of a heavily used site.

mod /mod/ Modulo. *See* integer arithmetic.

model A mathematical or graphical representation of something. Mathematical models can usually be changed so that 'What if' analyses can be carried out. *See also* simulation.

modem /moh-dem/ A device that converts a DIGITAL SIGNAL into an ANALOG SIGNAL suitable for transmission over an analog communication channel, and that converts an incoming analog signal back into a digital signal. It does this by MODULATION of the digital signal and demodulation of the incoming analog signal. (The word 'modem' is a contraction of 'modulator/demodulator'.) A pair of modems can