BARRON'S

Dictionary of Computer and Internet Terms



IPR2025-00856
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Dictionary of Computer and Internet Terms

Tenth Edition

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All inquiries should be addressed to:
Barron's Educational Series, Inc.
250 Wireless Boulevard
Hauppauge, NY 11788
www.barronseduc.com

ISBN-13: 978-0-7641-4105-8
ISBN-10: 0-7641-4105-8

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 2008044365

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Downing, Douglas.
Dictionary of computer and Internet terms / Douglas A. Downing, Michael A. Covington, Melody Mauldin Covington. — 10th ed.
p. cm.
ISBN 978-0-7641-4105-8
1. Computers—Dictionaries. 2. Internet—Dictionaries. I. Covington, Michael A., 1957– II. Covington, Melody Mauldin. III. Title.

QA76.15.D667 2009
004.03—dc22 2008044365

PRINTED IN CHINA
9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Altair a pioneering microcomputer marketed to hobbyists in 1975, significant because the version of BASIC for this machine was the first Microsoft product.

AltaVista a popular World Wide Web SEARCH ENGINE originally developed by Digital Equipment Corporation. Their web address is *www.altavista.com*.

aluminum chemical element (atomic number 13) added to silicon to create a P-type SEMICONDUCTOR.

Amazon.com the first prominent E-TAIL merchant. Established as a bookstore in 1995 in Seattle, Washington, Amazon has since expanded to sell a wide variety of products around the world. Web address: *www.amazon.com*

ambient lighting (in three-dimensional computer graphics) the overall lighting of a scene. Ambient lighting in a computer scene appears to have no specific source.

AMD (**A**dvanced **M**icro **D**evices) a manufacturer of digital integrated circuits, including the Athlon and Duron, which are compatible substitutes for Intel's Pentium. AMD is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, and can be reached on the Web at *www.amd.com*. *See also* MICROPROCESSOR; PENTIUM.

AMD64 *see* X64.

America Online (AOL) an online information service based in Dulles, Virginia. America Online offers its subscribers e-mail, conferencing, software, computing support, interactive magazines and newspapers, online classes, and Internet access. In 2000, AOL merged with Time Warner. Web address: *www.aol.com*. *See* INTERNET; ONLINE (usage note).

AMI (**A**merican **M**egatrends, **I**nc.) the leading supplier of the BIOS software built into PC motherboards (*see* BIOS). AMI also makes diagnostic software, RAID disk array controllers, and other products. The company is headquartered in Norcross, Georgia (a suburb of Atlanta), and can be reached on the Web at *www.ami.com*.

Amiga a computer marketed by Commodore Business Machines in the 1980s to mid-90s. Similar in size and cost to the IBM PC, it had a quite different architecture and was ahead of its time in many ways, offering multitasking, windowing, an advanced graphics system, and MIDI music. Like the Macintosh, it used Motorola 68000-series microprocessors.

Despite being admired by knowledgeable programmers, the Amiga never achieved the popularity of the PC or Macintosh. Although Commodore went bankrupt in 1994, a new company named Amiga continued development on the Amiga platform (web address: *www.amiga.com*).

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