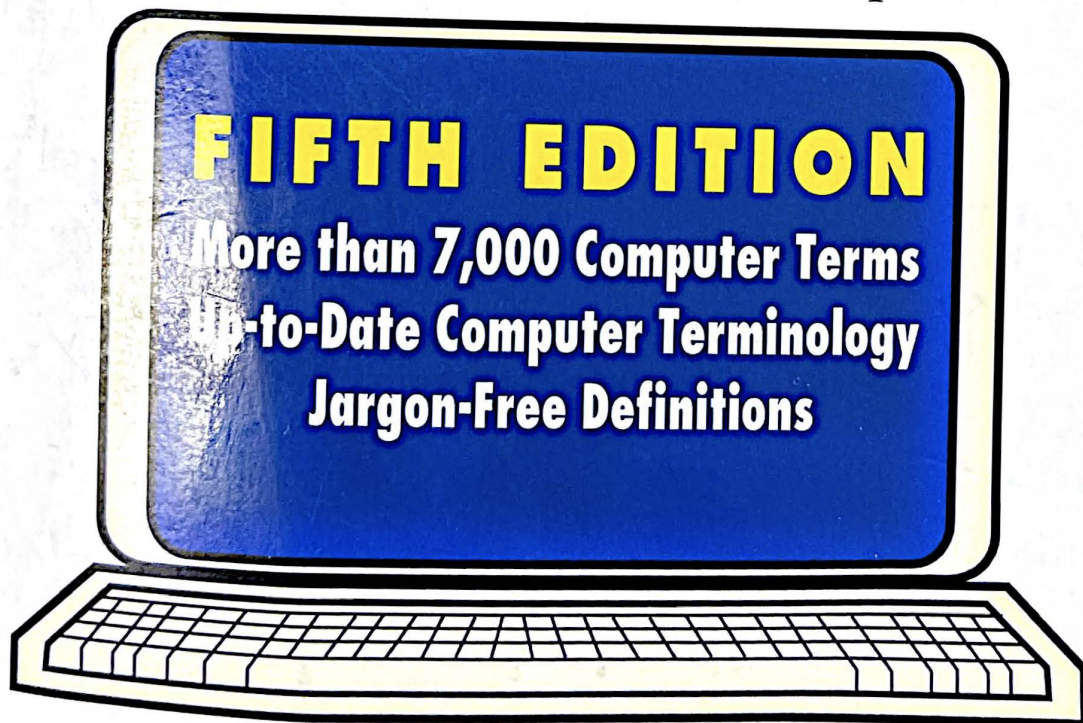


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Webster's

**NEW WORLD
DICTIONARY®
OF
COMPUTER
TERMS**

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OF COMPUTER TERMS

FIFTH EDITION

Compiled by
Donald Spencer

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Fifth Edition

hierarchical model A database model in which each object is of a particular hierarchy in a tree structure.

hierarchical network A computer network in which processing and control functions are performed at several levels by computers specially designed for the functions performed.

hierarchical structure In DATABASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, the simplest form of file organization, in which records of various levels are related by owning or belonging to each other.

hierarchy (1) The order in which arithmetic operations within a formula or statement will be executed. (2) Arrangement into any graded series.

hierarchy chart A chart that divides the software package into small pieces until a program can be written to implement each piece.

hierarchy plus input-process-output (HIPO) A design and program documentation method that represents functional structure and data flow in a series of three types of diagrams: visual tables of contents that name the program modules and specify their hierarchical relationships; overview diagrams that describe the input, processing, and output for members of the hierarchy; and detailed diagrams that extend the overview diagrams to include more specific input, processing, and output detail with narrative.

high-density disk A floppy disk that holds more information than a double-density disk. A 5.25-inch high-density disk holds 1.2 megabytes, and a 3.5-inch high-density disk holds 1.44 megabytes.

high-end High-priced.

high-level language Any programming language that allows users to write instructions in a familiar notation rather than in a machine code. Each statement in a high-level language corresponds to several machine-code instructions. Contrast with LOW-LEVEL LANGUAGE.

high-level programming language See HIGH-LEVEL LANGUAGE.

highlight (1) In graphics, refers to a user's ability to enhance a graph or

mega A prefix indicating one million, or 10^6 . Abbreviated M. Contrast with MICRO, one-millionth.

MEGA A personal computer series from Atari Corporation that is compatible with the Atari ST series of microcomputers.

megabit Loosely, one million bits or one thousand kilobits. Actually, 1,048,576 bits, or 1,024 kilobits.

megabyte (MB) Specifically, 2^{20} , or 1,048,576 bytes; 1,024 kilobytes. Roughly, one million bytes or one thousand kilobytes.

megacycle One million cycles per second.

megaflop One million floating-point operations per second. Also called Mflops.

megahertz (MHz) A unit of electrical frequency equal to one million cycles per second, a measure of transmission frequency. Megahertz is used to measure a CPU's clock rate.

megapel display In computer graphics, a display system that handles a million or more pixels. A resolution of 1,000 lines by 1,000 dots per line requires a million pixels for a full-screen image.

member object In OBJECT-ORIENTED PROGRAMMING, a repository for part of the state of an object; collectively, the member objects of an object constitute its structure. The terms FIELD, INSTANCE VARIABLE, *member object*, and SLOT are interchangeable.

membrane keyboard A keyboard constructed of two thin plastic sheets (called membranes) that are coated with a circuit made of electrically conductive ink. The keyboard is sensitive to touch. It is an economical, flat type used in several early microcomputers. Today, such keyboards are used primarily on printers.

memory Storage facilities of the computer, capable of storing vast amounts of data.

memory allocation See STORAGE ALLOCATION.

radix The base number in a number system, such as 2 in the binary system or 10 in the decimal system. Synonymous with **BASE**.

radix complement See **COMPLEMENT**.

radix point In a number system, the character (a dot) or implied character that separates the integral part of a numeral from the fractional part. See **BINARY POINT**, **DECIMAL POINT**, **HEXADECIMAL POINT**, and **OCTAL NUMBER**.

radix sorting Same as **DIGITAL SORTING**.

rag The irregularity along the left or right ends of the lines on a printed page. See **RAGGED LEFT MARGIN** and **RAGGED RIGHT MARGIN**.

ragged left margin A term applied to text printed with a straight right margin and an uneven left margin. Also called **flush right**.

ragged right margin A term applied to text printed with a straight left margin and an uneven right margin. Also called **flush left**.

raised flooring Elevated flooring used in computer rooms so that connecting cables can be laid directly between equipment units.

RALU Acronym for **r**egister, **a**rithmetic, and **l**ogic **u**nit, a major part of a microprocessor where arithmetic and logic operations are performed.

RAM Acronym for **r**andom **a**ccess **m**emory, a memory into which the user can enter information and instructions (write) and from which the user can call up data (read). It is the working memory of the computer into which applications programs can be loaded from outside and then executed.

RAM card A printed circuit board containing RAM chips. By plugging such a board into some computers, their internal storage can be expanded.

RAM cache A section of random access memory (RAM) set aside to serve as a buffer between the central processing unit and the disk drives.

RAM chip A semiconductor storage device. RAM chips can be either static or dynamic memory.

trolled devices capable of performing many of the tasks performed by humans.

robustness The quality that enables a software program or set of programs to handle, or at least avoid disaster in the face of, unexpected circumstances, such as when given improper data.

roll In computer graphics, to scroll in an upward or downward direction.

rollback A system that will restart the running program after a system failure. Snapshots of data and programs are stored at periodic intervals, and the system rolls back to restart at the last recorded snapshot.

roll out To record the contents of INTERNAL STORAGE in AUXILIARY STORAGE.

rollover A buffer that can store typed characters and commands when they are entered faster than the computer system can process them.

roll paper Printer paper in continuous form on a spool. Contrast with FANFOLD PAPER.

ROM Acronym for **READ-ONLY MEMORY**, generally a solid-state storage chip programmed at the time of its manufacture that cannot be reprogrammed by the computer user. Also called firmware, since this implies software that is permanent or firmly in place on a chip. Contrast with PROM and EPROM.

Roman In typography, a medium-weight typeface in which all letters are upright.

ROM BIOS Acronym for **Read-Only Memory, Basic Input/Output System**. A special chip used to provide instructions to the computer when the computer is turned on.

ROM cartridge A plug-in module that contains software permanently stored in ROM; a method of entering data and/or programs into a computer. The module can contain one or more printer fonts, programs, games, or other information.

ROM simulator A general-purpose device used to replace ROMs or PROMs in a system during program checkout. Because it offers real-time in-cir-

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tab The carriage control that specifies output columns.

table The collection of data in a form suitable for ready reference. The data are frequently stored in consecutive storage locations or written in the form of an array of rows and columns for easy entry. An intersection of labeled rows and columns serves to locate a specific piece of information. Tables are useful for holding tabular data, such as the data found in spreadsheets.

table look-up The procedure for using a known value to locate an unknown value in a table.

table plotter See FLATBED PLOTTER.

tablet In computer graphics, a locator device with a flat surface and a mechanism that converts indicated positions on the surface into coordinated data.

tabulate (1) To print totals. (2) To form data into a table.

tagged image file format (TIFF) A common file format used to store BIT-MAPPED GRAPHICS. TIFF simulates gray-scale shading.

tail A special data item that locates the end of a list.

tailor-made Describing a program specially written for one particular task, business, or set of people. Tailor-made programs are usually commissioned by an individual customer and not sold to anyone else.

talking computer A computer system that uses a speech synthesizer to produce speech.

tandem computers Two or more computers connected together and working on the same problem at the same time.

Tandy Corporation A leading manufacturer of personal computers and electronics. In 1977, Tandy introduced one of the first personal computers, the Radio Shack TRS-80 Model I. Several other TRS-80 models were

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This Best-Selling Guide to Computer Terms Just Got Better!

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