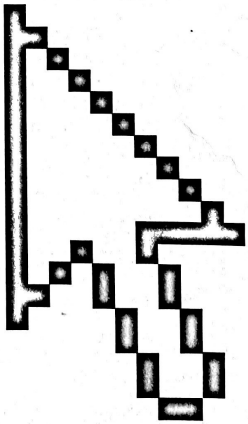
Microsoft

Microsoft Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition



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privileged mode *n.* A mode of execution, supported by the protected mode of the Intel 80286 and higher microprocessors, in which software can carry out restricted operations that manipulate critical components of the system, such as memory and input/output ports (channels). Application programs cannot be executed in privileged mode; the heart (kernel) of the OS/2 operating system can be, as can the programs (device drivers) that control devices attached to the system.

privileges *n. See* access privileges.

PRN *n.* The logical device name for *printer*. A name reserved by the MS-DOS operating system for the standard print device. PRN usually refers to a system's first parallel port, also known as LPT1.

.pro *n.* One of seven new top-level domain names approved in 2000 by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), .pro is meant for use in Web sites relating to professions such as physicians, accountants, and lawyers. Six of the new domains became available for use in the spring of 2001; negotiations are still underway for the final registry agreement for the .pro domain.

probability *n.* The likelihood that an event will happen, which can often be estimated mathematically. In mathematics, statistics and probability theory are related fields. In computing, probability is used to determine the likelihood of failure or error in a system or device.

problem solving *n.* **1.** The process of devising and implementing a strategy for finding a solution or for transforming a less desirable condition into a more desirable one. **2.** An aspect of artificial intelligence wherein the task of problem solving is performed solely by a program. *See also* artificial intelligence.

procedural language *n.* A programming language in which the basic programming element is the procedure (a named sequence of statements, such as a routine, subroutine, or function). The most widely used high-level languages (C, Pascal, Basic, FORTRAN, COBOL, Ada) are all procedural languages. *See also* procedure. *Compare* nonprocedural language.

procedural rendering *n.* The rendering of a two-dimensional image from three-dimensional coordinates with texturing according to user-specified conditions, such as direction and degree of lighting.

procedure *n.* In a program, a named sequence of statements, often with associated constants, data types, and variables, that usually performs a single task. A procedure can usually be called (executed) by other procedures, as well as by the main body of the program. Some languages distinguish between a procedure and a function, with the latter (the function) returning a value. *See also* function, parameter, procedural language, routine, subroutine.

procedure call *n.* In programming, an instruction that causes a procedure to be executed. A procedure call can be located in another procedure or in the main body of the program. *See also* procedure.

process[1] *n.* A program or part of a program; a coherent sequence of steps undertaken by a program.

process[2] *vb.* To manipulate data with a program.

process-bound *adj.* Limited in performance by processing requirements. *See also* computation-bound.

process color *n.* A method of handling color in a document in which each block of color is separated into its subtractive primary color components for printing: cyan, magenta, and yellow (as well as black). All other colors are created by blending layers of various sizes of halftone spots printed in cyan, magenta, and yellow to create the image. *See also* color model, color separation (definition 1). *Compare* spot color.

processing *n.* The manipulation of data within a computer system. Processing is the vital step between receiving data (input) and producing results (output)—the task for which computers are designed.

processor *n. See* central processing unit, microprocessor.

Processor Direct Slot *n. See* PDS (definition 1).

Processor Input/Output *n. See* PIO.

Procmail *n.* An open-source e-mail-processing utility for Linux and other UNIX-based computers and networks. Procmail can be used to create mail servers and mailing lists, filter mail, sort incoming mail, preprocess mail, and perform other mail-related functions.

Prodigy *n.* An Internet service provider (ISP) that offers Internet access and a wide range of related services. Prodigy was founded by IBM and Sears as a proprietary online service, was acquired by International Wireless in 1996, and in 1999 entered into a partnership with SBC Commu-

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