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Computer Dictionary

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hierarchical *adj.* Of, relating to, or organized as a hierarchy. *See also* hierarchy.

hierarchical computer network *n.* **1.** A network in which one host computer controls a number of smaller computers, which may in turn act as hosts to a group of PC workstations. **2.** A network in which control functions are organized according to a hierarchy and in which data processing tasks may be distributed.

hierarchical database *n.* A database in which records are grouped in such a way that their relationships form a branching, treelike structure. This type of database structure, most commonly used with databases for large computers, is well suited for organizing information that breaks down logically into successively greater levels of detail. The organization of records in a hierarchical database should reflect the most common or the most time-critical types of access expected.

hierarchical database management system *n.* A database management system that supports a hierarchical model. *Acronym:* HDBMS. *See also* hierarchical model.

Hierarchical Data Format *n.* A file format for storing multiple types of graphical and numerical data and transferring them between different types of machines, together with a library of functions for handling such files in a uniform way. NCSA developed and supports the file function and library and has placed them in the public domain. Hierarchical Data Format files are supported on most common types of computers. The format can easily be extended to accommodate additional data models. The library functions have both FORTRAN and C interfaces. *Acronym:* HDF. *See also* NCSA (definition 1).

hierarchical file system *n.* A system for organizing files on a disk in which files are contained in directories or folders, each of which can contain other directories as well as files. The main directory for the disk is called the root; the chain of directories from the root to a particular file is called the path. *See also* hierarchy, path (definition 2), root. *Compare* flat file system.

Hierarchical File System *n.* A tree-structured file system used on the Apple Macintosh in which folders can be nested within other folders. *Acronym:* HFS. *See also* hierarchy, path (definition 2), root. *Compare* flat file system.

hierarchical menu *n.* A menu that has one or more submenus. Such a menu/submenu arrangement is hierarchical because each level subsumes the next.

hierarchical model *n.* A model used in database management in which each record may be the “parent” of one or more child records, which may or may not have the same structure as the parent; a record can have no more than one parent. Conceptually, therefore, a hierarchical model can be, and usually is, regarded as a tree. The individual records are not necessarily contained in the same file. *See also* tree.

Hierarchical Storage Management *n.* *See* HSM.

hierarchy *n.* A type of organization that, like a tree, branches into more specific units, each of which is “owned” by the higher-level unit immediately above. Hierarchies are characteristic of several aspects of computing because they provide organizational frameworks that can reflect logical links, or relationships, between separate records, files, or pieces of equipment. For example, hierarchies are used in organizing related files on a disk, related records in a database, and related (interconnected) devices on a network. In applications such as spreadsheets, hierarchies of a sort are used to establish the order of precedence in which arithmetic operations are to be performed by the computer. *See also* hierarchical file system.

high availability *n.* The ability of a system or device to be usable when it is needed. When expressed as a percentage, high availability is the actual service time divided by the required service time. Although high availability does not guarantee that a system will have no downtime, a network often is considered highly available if it achieves 99.999 percent network uptime. *Also called:* RAS (reliability/availability/serviceability), fault resilience. *See also* five-nines availability, four-nines availability, three-nines availability, two-nines availability. *Compare* fault tolerance.

High-bit-rate Digital Subscriber Line *n.* *See* HDSL.

high byte *n.* The byte containing the most significant bits (bits 8 through 15) in a 2-byte grouping representing a 16-bit (bits 0 through 15) value. *See the illustration. See also* hexadecimal.



parallel server *n.* A computer system that implements some form of parallel processing to improve its performance as a server. *See also* SMP server.

parallel transmission *n.* The simultaneous transmission of a group of bits over separate wires. With microcomputers, parallel transmission refers to the transmission of 1 byte (8 bits). The standard connection for parallel transmission is known as the Centronics interface. *See also* Centronics parallel interface. *Compare* serial transmission.

parameter *n.* In programming, a value that is given to a variable, either at the beginning of an operation or before an expression is evaluated by a program. Until the operation is completed, a parameter is effectively treated as a constant value by the program. A parameter can be text, a number, or an argument name assigned to a value that is passed from one routine to another. Parameters are used as a means of customizing program operation. *See also* argument, pass by address, pass by value, routine.

parameter-driven *adj.* Of, pertaining to, or being a program or an operation whose character or outcome is determined by the values of the parameters that are assigned to it.

parameter passing *n.* In programming, the substitution of an actual parameter value for a formal parameter when a procedure or function call is processed.

parameter RAM *n.* A few bytes of battery-backed CMOS RAM on the motherboards of Apple Macintosh computers. Information about the configuration of the system is stored in parameter RAM. *Acronym:* PRAM. *See also* CMOS RAM. *Compare* CMOS (definition 2).

PARC *n.* *See* Xerox PARC.

parent/child *adj.* **1.** Pertaining to or constituting a relationship between processes in a multitasking environment in which the parent process calls the child process and most often suspends its own operation until the child process aborts or is completed. **2.** Pertaining to or constituting a relationship between nodes in a tree data structure in which the parent is one step closer to the root (that is, one level higher) than the child.

parity *n.* The quality of sameness or equivalence, in the case of computers usually referring to an error-checking procedure in which the number of 1s must always be the same—either even or odd—for each group of bits trans-

mitted without error. If parity is checked on a per-character basis, the method is called vertical redundancy checking, or VRC; if checked on a block-by-block basis, the method is called longitudinal redundancy checking, or LRC. In typical modem-to-modem communications, parity is one of the parameters that must be agreed upon by sending and receiving parties before transmission can take place. *See* the table. *See also* parity bit, parity check, parity error.

Table P.1 *Types of Parity.*

Type	Description
Even parity	The number of 1s in each successfully transmitted set of bits must be an even number.
Odd parity	The number of 1s in each successfully transmitted set of bits must be an odd number.
No parity	No parity bit is used.
Space parity	A parity bit is used and is always set to 0.
Mark parity	A parity bit is used and is always set to 1.

parity bit *n.* An extra bit used in checking for errors in groups of data bits transferred within or between computer systems. With PCs, the term is frequently encountered in modem-to-modem communications, in which a parity bit is often used to check the accuracy with which each character is transmitted, and in RAM, where a parity bit is often used to check the accuracy with which each byte is stored.

parity check *n.* The use of parity to check the accuracy of transmitted data. *See also* parity, parity bit.

parity error *n.* An error in parity that indicates an error in transmitted data or in data stored in memory. If a parity error occurs in communications, all or part of a message must be retransmitted; if a parity error occurs in RAM, the computer usually halts. *See also* parity, parity bit.

park *vb.* To position the read/write head over a portion of a disk that stores no data (and therefore can never be damaged) or beyond the surface of the disk, prior to shutting down the drive, especially in preparation for moving it. Parking can be performed manually, automatically, or by a disk utility program.



parrallaxing *n.* A 3-D animation technique, often used by computer game developers, where backgrounds are displayed using different levels of speed to achieve realism. For example, distant levels move at a slower speed than closer levels, thereby giving the illusion of depth. *See also* animation.

parse *vb.* To break input into smaller chunks so that a program can act upon the information.

parser *n.* An application or device that breaks data into smaller chunks so that an application can act on the information. *See also* parse.

partition *n.* **1.** A logically distinct portion of memory or a storage device that functions as though it were a physically separate unit. **2.** In database programming, a subset of a database table or file.

Partition Boot Sector *n.* The first sector in the system (startup) partition of a computer's bootable hard disk, or the first sector of a bootable floppy disk. On an x86-based computer, the Partition Boot Sector is read into memory at startup by the Master Boot Record. It is the Partition Boot Sector that contains the instructions required to begin the process of loading and starting the computer's operating system. *See also* Master Boot Record, partition table.

partition table *n.* A table of information in the first sector of a computer's hard disk that tells where each partition (discrete portion of storage) on the disk begins and ends. The physical locations are given as the beginning and ending head, sector, and cylinder numbers. In addition to these "addresses," the partition table identifies the type of file system used for each partition and identifies whether the partition is bootable—whether it can be used to start the computer. Although it is a small data structure, the partition table is a critical element on the hard disk.

partnership *n.* The settings on a desktop computer and Windows CE device that allow information to be synchronized, as well as copied or moved between the computer and device. The mobile device can have partnerships with up to two desktop computers. *See also* synchronization (definition 6).

Pascal *n.* A concise procedural language designed between 1967 and 1971 by Niklaus Wirth. Pascal, a compiled, structured language built upon ALGOL, simplifies syntax while adding data types and structures such as

subranges, enumerated data types, files, records, and sets. *See also* ALGOL, compiled language. *Compare* C.

pASP *n.* *See* pocket Active Server Pages.

pass¹ *n.* In programming, the carrying out of one complete sequence of events.

pass² *vb.* To forward a piece of data from one part of a program to another. *See also* pass by address, pass by value.

pass by address *n.* A means of passing an argument or parameter to a subroutine. The calling routine passes the address (memory location) of the parameter to the called routine, which can then use the address to retrieve or modify the value of the parameter. *Also called:* pass by reference. *See also* argument, call¹. *Compare* pass by value.

pass by reference *n.* *See* pass by address.

pass by value *n.* A means of passing an argument or a parameter to a subroutine. A copy of the value of the argument is created and passed to the called routine. When this method is used, the called routine can modify the copy of the argument, but it cannot modify the original argument. *See also* argument, call¹. *Compare* pass by address.

passivation *n.* In Sun Microsystems's J2EE network platform, the process of "turning off" an enterprise java bean (EJB) by caching it from memory to secondary storage. *See also* Enterprise JavaBeans, J2EE. *Compare* activation.

passive hub *n.* A type of hub used on ARCnet networks that passes signals along but has no additional capability. *See also* ARCnet. *Compare* active hub, Intelligent hub.

passive-matrix display *n.* An inexpensive, low-resolution liquid crystal display (LCD) made from a large array of liquid crystal cells that are controlled by transistors outside of the display screen. One transistor controls an entire row or column of pixels. Passive-matrix displays are commonly used in portable computers, such as laptops and notebooks, because of their thin width. While these displays have good contrast for monochrome screens, the resolution is weaker for color screens. These displays are also difficult to view from any angle other than straight on, unlike active-matrix displays. However, computers with passive-matrix displays are considerably cheaper than those with active-matrix screens. *See the illustration. Also called:* dual-scan display. *See also* liquid crystal display, supertwist display, transistor, twisted nematic display. *Compare* active-matrix display.

title bar *n.* In a graphical user interface, a horizontal space at the top of a window that contains the name of the window. Most title bars also contain boxes or buttons for closing and resizing the window. Clicking on the title bar allows the user to move the entire window.

TLA *n.* Acronym for **three-letter acronym**. An ironic term, usually used in jest on the Internet in e-mail, newsgroups, and other online forums, referring to the large number of acronyms in computer terminology, particularly those consisting of three letters.

TLD *n.* *See* top-level domain.

TLS *n.* Acronym for **Transport Layer Security**. A standard protocol that is used to provide secure Web communications on the Internet or intranets. It enables clients to authenticate servers or, optionally, servers to authenticate clients. It also provides a secure channel by encrypting communications. TLS is the latest and a more secure version of the SSL protocol. *See also* authentication, communications protocol, SSL.

TMS34010 *n.* *See* 34010, 34020.

TN display *n.* *See* twisted nematic display.

TOF *n.* *See* top-of-file.

toggle¹ *n.* An electronic device with two states or a program option that can be turned on or off using the same action, such as a mouse click.

toggle² *vb.* To switch back and forth between two states. For example, the Num Lock key on an IBM-style keyboard toggles the numeric keypad between numbers and cursor movement.

ToggleKeys *n.* A feature of Windows 9x and Windows NT 4 that sounds high and low beeps when one of the toggle keys (Caps Lock, Num Lock, or Scroll Lock) is turned on or off. *See also* typematic. *Compare* BounceKeys, FilterKeys, MouseKeys, ShowSounds, SoundSentry, StickyKeys.

token *n.* **1.** A unique structured data object or message that circulates continuously among the nodes of a token ring and describes the current state of the network. Before any node can send a message, it must first wait to control the token. *See also* token bus network, token passing, token ring network. **2.** Any nonreducible textual element in data that is being parsed—for example, the use in a program of a variable name, a reserved word, or an operator. Storing tokens as short codes shortens program files and speeds execution. *See also* Basic, parse.

token bus *n.* The IEEE 802.4 specification for token-passing networks based on a bus or tree topology. Token bus networks were designed primarily for manufacturing but the specification also corresponds to the ARCnet architecture used for LANs.

token bus network *n.* A LAN (local area network) formed in a bus topology (stations connected to a single, shared data highway) that uses token passing as a means of regulating traffic on the line. On a token bus network, a token governing the right to transmit is passed from one station to another, and each station holds the token for a brief time, during which it alone can transmit information. The token is transferred in order of priority from an “upstream” station to the next “downstream” station, which might or might not be the next station on the bus. In essence, the token “circles” through the network in a logical ring rather than a physical one. Token bus networks are defined in the IEEE 802.4 standards. *See also* bus network, IEEE 802 standards, token passing. *Compare* token ring network.

token passing *n.* A method of controlling network access through the use of a special signal, called a *token*, that determines which station is allowed to transmit. The token, which is actually a short message or a small packet, is passed from station to station around the network. Only the station with the token can transmit information. *See also* token bus network, token ring network. *Compare* collision detection, contention, CSMA/CD.

token ring *n.* Spelled with lowercase *t* and *r*, the IEEE specification 802.5 for token ring networks. *See also* token ring network.

Token Ring *n.* *See* Token Ring network.

token ring network *n.* A LAN (local area network) formed in a ring (closed loop) topology that uses token passing as a means of regulating traffic on the line. On a token ring network, a token governing the right to transmit is passed from one station to the next in a physical circle. If a station has information to transmit, it “seizes” the token, marks it as being in use, and inserts the information. The “busy” token, plus message, is then passed around the circle, copied when it arrives at its destination, and eventually returned to the sender. The sender removes the attached message and then passes the freed token to the next station in line. Token ring networks are defined in the IEEE 802.5 standards. *See also* IEEE 802 standards, ring network, token passing. *Compare* token bus network.



ISO/OSI MODEL	
ISO/OSI Layer	Focus
Application (highest level)	Program-to-program transfer of information
Presentation	Text formatting and display, code conversion
Session	Establishing, maintaining, and coordinating communication
Transport	Accurate delivery, service quality
Network	Transport routes, message handling and transfer
Data-link	Coding, addressing, and transmitting information
Physical	Hardware connections

Transport layer.

Transport Layer Security *n.* See TLS.

transpose¹ *n.* The result of rotating a matrix.

transpose² *vb.* **1.** To reverse, as the order of the letters *h* and *t* in *hte*, in correcting the spelling of *the*; or reversing two wires in a circuit. **2.** In mathematics and spreadsheets, to rotate a matrix (a rectangular array of numbers) about a diagonal axis.

transputer *n.* Short for **transistor computer**. A complete computer on a single chip, including RAM and an FPU, designed as a building block for parallel computing systems.

trap¹ *n.* See interrupt.

trap² *vb.* **1.** To intercept an action or event before it occurs, usually in order to do something else. Trapping is commonly used by debuggers to allow interruption of program execution at a given spot. See also interrupt, interrupt handler. **2.** To slightly overlap adjacent colors in preparing material for printing. Page layout and prepress programs trap color to prevent gaps between colors caused by minor variations in registration during printing.

trapdoor *n.* See back door.

trap handler *n.* See interrupt handler.

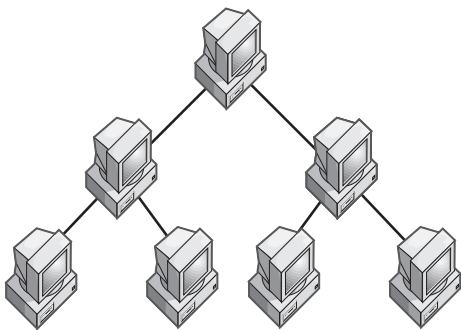
Trash *n.* An icon on the screen in the Macintosh Finder, resembling a garbage can. To delete a file or eject a diskette, the user drags the icon for the file or diskette to the Trash. However, until the user shuts down the system or

chooses the menu option “Empty Trash,” a file in the Trash is not actually deleted; the user can retrieve it by double-clicking the Trash icon and dragging the file’s icon out of the resulting window. Compare Recycle Bin.

traverse *vb.* In programming, to access in a particular order all of the nodes of a tree or similar data structure.

tree *n.* A data structure containing zero or more nodes that are linked together in a hierarchical fashion. If there are any nodes, one node is the root; each node except the root is the child of one and only one other node; and each node has zero or more nodes as children. See also child (definition 2), graph, leaf, node (definition 3), parent/child (definition 2), root.

tree network *n.* A topology for a local area network (LAN) in which one machine is connected to one or more other machines, each of which is connected to one or more others, and so on, so that the structure formed by the network resembles that of a tree. See the illustration. See also bus network, distributed network, ring network, star network, token ring network, topology.



Tree network.

tree search *n.* A search procedure performed on a tree data structure. At each step of the search, a tree search is able to determine, by the value in a particular node, which branches of the tree to eliminate, without searching those branches themselves. See also branch (definition 1), tree structure.

tree structure *n.* Any structure that has the essential organizational properties of a tree. See also tree.

tree view *n.* A hierarchical representation of the folders, files, disk drives, and other resources connected to a computer or network. For example, Windows Explorer uses a tree view to display the resources that are attached to a computer or a network. See also resource.

