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Computer Dictionary

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flies *n.* In Web development and marketing, individuals who spend significant time on the Web and who are the targets of specific Web content or advertising.

flight simulator *n.* A computer-generated recreation of the experience of flying. Sophisticated flight simulators costing hundreds of thousands of dollars can provide pilot training, simulating emergency situations without putting human crews and planes at risk. Flight simulator software running on personal computers simulates flight in a less realistic fashion; it provides entertainment and practice in navigation and instrument reading.

flip-flop *n.* A circuit that alternates between two possible states when a pulse is received at the input. For example, if the output of a flip-flop is high and a pulse is received at the input, the output “flips” to low; a second input pulse “flops” the output back to high, and so on. *Also called:* bistable multivibrator.

flippy-floppy *n.* An outmoded 5.25-inch floppy disk that uses both sides for storage but is used in an older drive that can read only one side at a time. Thus, to access the opposite side, the disk must be physically removed from the drive and flipped over. *See also* double-sided disk.

float *n.* The data type name used in some programming languages, notably C, to declare variables that can store floating-point numbers. *See also* data type, floating-point number, variable.

floating-point arithmetic *n.* Arithmetic performed on floating-point numbers. *See also* floating-point notation, floating-point number.

floating-point constant *n.* A constant representing a real, or floating-point, value. *See also* constant, floating-point notation.

floating-point notation *n.* A numeric format that can be used to represent very large real numbers and very small real numbers. Floating-point numbers are stored in two parts, a mantissa and an exponent. The mantissa specifies the digits in the number, and the exponent specifies the magnitude of the number (the position of the decimal point). For example, the numbers 314,600,000 and 0.0000451 are expressed respectively as 3146E5 and 451E-7 in floating-point notation. Most microprocessors do not directly support floating-point arithmetic; consequently, floating-point calculations are performed either by using software or with a special floating-point processor. *Also called:* exponential notation. *See also* fixed-point notation, floating-point processor, integer.

floating-point number *n.* A number represented by a mantissa and an exponent according to a given base. The mantissa is usually a value between 0 and 1. To find the value of a floating-point number, the base is raised to the power of the exponent, and the mantissa is multiplied by the result. Ordinary scientific notation uses floating-point numbers with 10 as the base. In a computer, the base for floating-point numbers is usually 2.

floating-point operation *n.* An arithmetic operation performed on data stored in floating-point notation. Floating-point operations are used wherever numbers may have either fractional or irrational parts, as in spreadsheets and computer-aided design (CAD). Therefore, one measure of a computer's power is how many millions of floating-point operations per second (MFLOPS or megaflops) it can perform. *Acronym:* FLOP. *Also called:* floating-point operation. *See also* floating-point notation, MFLOPS.

floating-point processor *n.* A coprocessor for performing arithmetic on floating-point numbers. Adding a floating-point processor to a system can speed up the processing of math and graphics dramatically if the software is designed to recognize and use it. The i486DX and 68040 and higher microprocessors have built-in floating-point processors. *Also called:* math coprocessor, numeric coprocessor. *See also* floating-point notation, floating-point number.

floating-point register *n.* A register designed to store floating-point values. *See also* floating-point number, register.

flooding *n.* The networking technique of forwarding a frame onto all ports of a switch except the port on which it arrived. Flooding can be used for robust data distribution and route establishment. *Also called:* flood routing.

FLOP *n.* *See* floating-point operation.

floppy disk *n.* A round piece of flexible plastic film coated with ferric oxide particles that can hold a magnetic field. When placed inside a disk drive, the floppy disk rotates to bring different areas, or sectors, of the disk surface under the drive's read/write head, which can detect and alter the orientation of the particles' magnetic fields to represent binary 1s and 0s. A floppy disk 5.25 inches in diameter is encased in a flexible plastic jacket and has a large hole in the center, which fits around a spindle in the disk drive; such a disk can hold from a few hundred thousand to over one million bytes of data. A 3.5-inch disk encased in rigid plastic is also called a floppy disk or a

on an open architecture to allow new server components to be installed in any part of the stream at any time.

Wireless Transaction Protocol *n.* A lightweight request/reply transaction protocol for devices with limited resources over networks with low to medium bandwidth. It is not called the Wireless Transport Protocol or the Wireless Transfer Protocol. *Acronym:* WTP.

Wireless Transport Layer Security *n.* See WTLS.

wire-pin printer *n.* See dot-matrix printer.

wire-wrapped circuits *n.* Circuits constructed on perforated boards using wire instead of the metal traces found on printed circuit boards. The stripped ends of insulated wires are wrapped around the long pins of special wire-wrapped integrated circuit sockets. Wire-wrapped circuits are generally handmade, one-of-a-kind devices used for prototyping and research in electrical engineering. *Compare* printed circuit board.

wiring closet *n.* A room or location in a building where telecommunications and/or networking equipment such as hubs, switches, and routers are installed. *Also called:* data closet, telecom closet, telecommunications closet.

wizard *n.* **1.** Someone who is adept at making computers perform their “magic.” A wizard is an outstanding and creative programmer or a power user. *Compare* guru, UNIX wizard. **2.** A participant in a multiuser dungeon (MUD) who has permission to control the domain, even to delete other players’ characters. *See also* MUD. **3.** An interactive help utility within an application that guides the user through each step of a particular task, such as starting up a word processing document in the correct format for a business letter.

wizywig *n.* See WYSIWYG.

WLAN *n.* See wireless LAN.

WMA *n.* Acronym for **Windows Media Audio**. *See* Windows Media Audio.

.wmf *n.* A file extension that identifies a vector image encoded as a Microsoft Windows Metafile.

WMF *n.* **1.** *See* Windows Metafile Format. **2.** Acronym for **Wireless Multimedia Forum**. A consortium of technology companies formed to promote open standards for wireless streaming products. WMF members include Cisco Systems, Intel, and the Walt Disney Internet Group. *See also* ISMA.

WMI *n.* *See* Windows Management Instrumentation.

WML *n.* Acronym for **Wireless Markup Language**. A markup language developed for Web sites that are accessed with microbrowsers on Wireless Application Protocol (WAP)–enabled devices. A Web site written with WML would be viewable on handheld devices with small screens, such as cell phones. *See also* markup language, microbrowser, Wireless Application Protocol.

WMLScript *n.* A scripting language derived from the JavaScript language for use in the development of Wireless Markup Language (WML).

WMM *n.* *See* Windows Movie Maker.

word *n.* The native unit of storage on a particular machine. A word is the largest amount of data that can be handled by the microprocessor in one operation and also, as a rule, is the width of the main data bus. Word sizes of 16 bits and 32 bits are the most common. *Compare* byte, octet.

Word *n.* Microsoft’s word processing software, available for the Windows and Macintosh platforms. In addition to extensive editing, formatting, and customization features, Word provides such tools as automatic text completion and correction. The most recent version, Word 2002 (part of Office XP) adds Web functionality—for example, the ability to save documents in HTML format. The first version, Microsoft Word for MS-DOS 1.00, was introduced in 1983.

word-addressable processor *n.* A processor that cannot access an individual byte of memory but can access a larger unit. In order to perform operations on an individual byte, the processor must read and write memory in the larger unit. *See also* central processing unit.

WordPerfect Office *n.* A suite of business application programs from Corel Corporation. The basic (Standard Edition) WordPerfect Office suite includes the WordPerfect word processor, Quattro Pro spreadsheet, Corel Presentations presentation software, CorelCENTRAL personal information manager, Microsoft Visual Basic for Applications scripting tools, and Trellix Web publisher. A home and small-business package, the Voice-Powered Edition, adds speech recognition and publishing products; a business and corporate package, the Professional Edition, adds database and Internet tools to all of the preceding.

word processing *n.* The act of entering and editing text with a word processor. *Acronym:* WP.

word processor *n.* An application program for creating and manipulating text-based documents. A word processor is the electronic equivalent of paper, pen, typewriter, eraser, and, most likely, dictionary and thesaurus. Depending on