



Dictionary of Computer and Internet Terms

Twelfth Edition

More than 3,200 terms defined and explained,
many with helpful illustrations and tables

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and operating systems

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Melody Covington, Catherine Anne Barrett,
and Sharon Covington

Qomplx LLC, Exhibit 2034

Page 2034 - 1

IPR2026-00182, Microsoft Corp. v. Qomplx LLC

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Qomplx LLC, Exhibit 2034

Page 2034 - 2

IPR2026-00182, Microsoft Corp. v. Qomplx LLC

variant (also called *union*) a data type that can take on values corresponding to more than one other type.

VAX popular line of minicomputers produced by Digital Equipment Corporation in the 1970s and 1980s. VAX stood for Virtual Address Extension (i.e., hardware support for virtual memory).

VB.NET *see* VISUAL BASIC.

VBScript a Microsoft product for adding executable commands to a web page using a language based on Visual BASIC. For another example of a web page scripting language, *see* JAVASCRIPT.

VDI (video display terminal) a computer screen. *See* MONITOR.

vector a quantity with both magnitude (length) and direction. For example, "one mile due northeast" describes a vector. Vectors can also be described with coordinates. For example (4, 10) describes a vector in two-dimensional space, and (12, 15, -4) describes a vector in three-dimensional space.

vector graphics a method of creating pictures on a computer by telling it to draw lines in particular positions. The lines may be displayed on a screen or plotted on paper. An advantage of vector graphics is that a picture can be enlarged or reduced without loss of sharpness, since the picture is not made of a fixed number of pixels. *Contrast* BITMAP GRAPHICS. *See also* DRAW PROGRAM; PAINT PROGRAM.



FIGURE 292. Vector graphics displayed as wireframe

vector processor a computer that can perform an operation on an entire array of numbers in a single step; also known as an *array processor*. Cray supercomputers are vector processors. They have machine instructions that can (for example) add each entry of array A to the corresponding entry of array B and store the result in the corresponding entry of array C. *Contrast* SCALAR PROCESSOR; SUPERSCALAR PROCESSOR.

verified user on Twitter, an account belonging to a public figure that has been authenticated. The person posting is who they claim to be and has submitted documentation to prove it.

version control system a software package that stores not only the current version of a set of files but also all previous versions, and can retrieve