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PUBLISHED BY

Microsoft Press

A Division of Microsoft Corporation

One Microsoft Way

Redmond, Washington 98052-6399

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Microsoft Computer Dictionary.--5th ed.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-7356-1495-4

1. Computers--Dictionaries. 2. Microcomputers--Dictionaries.

AQ76.5. M52267 2002

004'.03--dc21

200219714

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 QWT 7 6 5 4 3 2

Distributed in Canada by H.B. Fenn and Company Ltd.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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Body Part No. X08-41929

devices. A storage area network, or SAN, includes components such as hubs and routers that are also used in local area networks (LANs), but it differs in being something of a “subnetwork” dedicated to providing a high-speed connection between storage elements and servers. Most SANs rely on fiber-channel connections that deliver speeds up to 1000 Mbps and can support up to 128 devices. SANs are implemented to provide the scalability, speed, and manageability required in environments that demand high data availability. *Acronym:* SAN. *Also called:* system area network.

storage device *n.* An apparatus for recording computer data in permanent or semipermanent form. When a distinction is made between primary (main) storage devices and secondary (auxiliary) storage devices, the former refers to random access memory (RAM) and the latter refers to disk drives and other external devices.

storage location *n.* The position at which a particular item can be found—either an addressed location or a uniquely identified location on a disk, tape, or similar medium.

storage media *n.* The various types of physical material on which data bits are written and stored, such as floppy disks, hard disks, tape, and optical discs.

storage tube *n.* *See* direct view storage tube.

store-and-forward *n.* A method of delivering transmissions in which messages are held temporarily by an intermediary before being sent on to their destination. Store and forward is used by some switches in delivering packets to their destinations. *Compare* cut-through switch.

stored procedure *n.* A precompiled collection of SQL statements and optional control-of-flow statements stored under a name and processed as a unit. They are stored in an SQL database and can be run with one call from an application.

stored program concept *n.* A system architecture scheme, credited largely to the mathematician John von Neumann, in which both programs and data are in direct-access storage (random access memory, or RAM), thereby allowing code and data to be treated interchangeably. *See also* von Neumann architecture.

storefront *n.* *See* virtual storefront.

storm *n.* On a network, a sudden, excessive burst of traffic. Storms are often responsible for network outages.

STP *n.* Acronym for shielded twisted pair. A cable consisting of one or more twisted pairs of wires and a sheath

of foil and copper braid. The twists protect the pairs from interference by each other, and the shielding protects the pairs from interference from outside. Therefore, STP cable can be used for high-speed transmission over long distances. *See also* twisted-pair cable. *Compare* UTP.

straight-line code *n.* Program code that follows a direct sequence of statements rather than skipping ahead or jumping back via transfer statements such as GOTO and JUMP. *See also* GOTO statement, jump instruction. *Compare* spaghetti code.

stream¹ *n.* Any data transmission, such as the movement of a file between disk and memory, that occurs in a continuous flow. Manipulating a data stream is a programming task. Consumers, however, are likely to encounter references to streams and streaming in connection to the Internet, which has increased reliance on stream techniques to enable users (even those with slower equipment) to access large multimedia files—especially those containing audio and video components—and to display or play them before all the data has been transferred.

stream² *vb.* To transfer data continuously, beginning to end, in a steady flow. Many aspects of computing rely on the ability to stream data: file input and output, for example, and communications. If necessary, an application receiving a stream must be able to save the information to a buffer in order to prevent loss of data. On the Internet, streaming enables users to begin accessing and using a file before it has been transmitted in its entirety.

stream cipher *n.* A method for encrypting a data sequence of unlimited length using a key of fixed length. *See also* key (definition 3). *Compare* block cipher.

streaming *n.* **1.** On the Internet, the process of delivering information, especially multimedia sound or video, in a steady flow that the recipient can access as the file is being transmitted. **2.** In magnetic tape storage devices, a low-cost technique to control the motion of the tape by removing tape buffers. Although streaming tape compromises start/stop performance, it achieves highly reliable storage and retrieval of data, and is useful when a steady supply of data is required by a particular application or computer.

streaming buffer *n.* A small sound buffer that can play lengthy sounds because the application dynamically loads audio data into the buffer as it plays. For example, an application could use a buffer that can hold 3 seconds of audio data to play a 2-minute sound. A streaming buffer requires much less memory than a static buffer. *See also* static buffer.

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