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Microsoft Computer Dictionary

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Acquisitions Editor: Alex Blanton
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automatically identifying and configuring it for optimum performance. Peripherals can be connected while the computer is running (*hot plugging*) and are automatically assigned a unique address (auto-addressing). Developed from the I2 architecture designed jointly by Philips and Digital Equipment Corporation, the ACCESS.bus specification is controlled by the ACCESS.bus Industry Group and competes with Intel's USB. *See also* bidirectional, bus, daisy chain[1], hot plugging, input/output port, peripheral. *Compare* USB.

access code *n. See* password.

access control *n.* The mechanisms for limiting access to certain items of information or to certain controls based on users' identities and their membership in various predefined groups. Access control is typically used by system administrators for controlling user access to network resources, such as servers, directories, and files. *See also* access privileges, system administrator.

access control list *n.* A list associated with a file or a resource that contains information about which users or groups have permission to access a resource or modify the file. *Acronym:* ACL.

accessibility *n.* A quality of software, hardware, or a complete computer system that makes it usable by people with one or more physical disabilities, such as restricted mobility, blindness, or deafness.

accessibility aids *n.* Utilities that make computers easier to use for people with disabilities. Examples of accessibility aids include screen readers, speech recognition programs, and on-screen keyboards.

access key *n.* A key combination, such as ALT+F, that moves the focus to a menu, a command, or a control, without using the mouse.

access mechanism *n.* **1.** The disk drive components that move the read/write head(s) to the proper track of a magnetic disk or optical disc. *See also* disk controller. **2.** A circuit that allows one part of a computer system to send signals to another part. **3.** In programming, the means by which an application can read from or write to a resource. *Also called:* access method.

access method *n. See* access mechanism.

access number *n.* The telephone number used by a subscriber to gain access to an online service.

accessory *n. See* peripheral.

access path *n. See* search path.

access permission *n. See* permission.

access point *n.* In a wireless LAN (local area network), a transceiver that connects the LAN to a wired network. *See also* wireless LAN.

access privileges *n.* The type of operations permitted a given user for a certain system resource on a network or a file server. A variety of operations, such as the ability to access a server, view the contents of a directory, open or transfer files, and create, modify, or delete files or directories, can be allowed or disallowed by the system administrator. Assigning access privileges to users helps the system administrator to maintain security on the system, as well as the privacy of confidential information, and to allocate system resources, such as disk space. *Also called:* access rights. *See also* file protection, file server, permission, system administrator, write access.

access provider *n. See* ISP.

access rights *n. See* access privileges.

access speed *n. See* access time.

access time *n.* **1.** The amount of time it takes for data to be delivered from memory to the processor after the address for the data has been selected. **2.** The time needed for a read/write head in a disk drive to locate a track on a disk. Access time is usually measured in milliseconds and is used as a performance measure for hard disks and CD-ROM drives. *See also* read/write head, seek time, settling time, wait state. *Compare* cycle time.

account *n.* **1.** A record-keeping arrangement used by the vendor of an online service to identify a subscriber and to maintain a record of customer usage for billing purposes. **2.** The record-keeping mechanism used by networks and multiuser operating systems for keeping track of authorized users. Network accounts are created by network administrators and are used both to validate users and to administer policies—for example, permissions—related to each user.

accounting file *n.* A file generated by a printer controller that keeps track of the number of pages printed per job as well as the user that requested the print job.

accounting machine *n.* **1.** One of the earliest applications of automatic data processing, used in business accounting primarily during the 1940s and 1950s. The first accounting machines were nonelectronic and used punched cards and wires arranged in plugboard panels. **2.** A computer in which an accounting software package

operations, both old and new data must be specified, and search-and-replace procedures may or may not be sensitive to uppercase and lowercase, depending on the application program. *See also* search[1], search and replace.

replay attack *n.* An attack in which a valid message is intercepted and then repeatedly retransmitted, either for fraudulent purposes or as part of a larger attack scheme.

replication *n.* In a distributed database management system, the process of copying the database (or parts of it) to the other parts of the network. Replication allows distributed database systems to remain synchronized. *See also* distributed database, distributed database management system.

report *n.* The presentation of information about a given topic, typically in printed form. Reports prepared with computers and appropriate software can include text, graphics, and charts. Database programs can include special software for creating report forms and generating reports. Desktop publishing software and laser printers or typesetting equipment can be used to produce publication-quality output.

report generator *n.* An application, commonly part of a database management program, that uses a report "form" created by the user to lay out and print the contents of a database. A report generator is used to select specific record fields or ranges of records, to make the output attractive by including such features as headings, running heads, page numbers, and fonts.

Report Program Generator *n. See* RPG (definition 2).

report writer *n. See* report generator.

repository *n.* **1.** A collection of information about a computing system. **2.** A superset of a data dictionary. *See also* data dictionary.

R

reprogrammable PROM *n. See* EPROM.

reprogrammable read-only memory *n. See* EPROM.

requested permissions *n.* Optionally specified permissions in an assembly that represent the minimum required, optionally desired, and always refused permissions for all code in the assembly. If there is no request, the code is granted the maximum that policy allows.

Request for Comments *n. See* RFC.

Request for Discussion *n.* A formal proposal for a discussion concerning the addition of a newsgroup to the Usenet hierarchy, the first step in a process that ends with a call for votes. *Acronym:* RFD. *See also* traditional newsgroup hierarchy, Usenet.

Request to Send *n. See* RTS.

required hyphen *n. See* hyphen.

Research Libraries Information Network *n.* The combined online catalog of the Research Libraries Group, which includes many of the major research libraries in the United States. *Acronym:* RLIN.

reserve *n.* A command that allocates contiguous disk space for the device instance's workspace. Digital video devices recognize this command.

reserve accumulator *n.* An auxiliary storage register generally used to store the intermediate results of an extended calculation.

reserved character *n.* A keyboard character that has a special meaning to a program and, as a result, normally cannot be used in assigning names to files, documents, and other user-generated tools, such as macros. Characters commonly reserved for special uses include the asterisk (*), forward slash (/), backslash (\), question mark (?), and vertical bar (|).

reserved date *n.* A date with a special meaning, rather than the date on the calendar. For example, some programs use 9999 to indicate an account or a database listing that does not expire. *See also* magic dates.

reserved memory *n. See* UMA.

reserved word *n.* A word that has special meaning to a program or in a programming language. Reserved words usually include those used for control statements (IF, FOR, END), data declarations, and the like. A reserved word can be used only in certain predefined circumstances; it cannot be used in naming documents, files, labels, variables, or user-generated tools such as macros.

reset button *n.* A device that restarts a computer without turning off its power. *Compare* big red switch.

resident font *n. See* internal font.

resident program *n. See* TSR.

resistance *n.* The ability to impede (resist) the flow of electric current. With the exception of superconductors, all substances have a greater or lesser degree of resistance. Substances with very low resistance, such as metals, conduct

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 **s**hielded **t**wisted **p**air. 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.

stream[1] *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.

stream[2] *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.