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Newton's
Telecom
Dictionary

by
**Harry
Newton**

The Official Dictionary of
Computer Telephony, Telecommunications,
Networking, Data Communications,
Voice Processing and the Internet

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NEWTON'S TELECOM DICTIONARY

tions at Columbia University. The protocol has become popular because of its flexibility. Kermit is found most frequently on DEC VAX computers, IBM mainframes and other minicomputers. One of the clearest advantages of Kermit is its ability to be tailored for virtually any equipment. Protocols break a file into equal parts called blocks or packets. These packets are sent and the receiving computer checks the arriving packet and sends an acknowledgement (ACK) back to the sending computer. Because modems use phone lines to transfer data, noise or interference on the line will often mess up the block. When a block is damaged in transit, an error occurs. The purpose of a protocol is to set up a mathematical way of measuring if the block came through accurately. And if it didn't, ask the distant end to re-transmit the block until it gets it right. Because of Kermit's emphasis on flexibility, Kermit is very slow and should not be used when faster options (i.e. Zmodem) are available.

KERNEL The part of a computer operating system that performs basic functions such as switching between tasks. See KERNEL-BASED WINDOW SYSTEM.

KERNEL BASED WINDOW SYSTEM Kernel-based window systems are those in which the software application executes and displays in the same physical machine. Examples include personal computers and Macintoshes. The advantage is speed. The disadvantage is that applications are closely tied to the system environment and are therefore not portable. Kernel-based window systems also do not allow users/developers to use the network as a means of sharing computer resources.

KERR EFFECT When polarized light is shined onto a magnetized surface, the light is reflected back at an angle and in a different direction, depending on the polarity of the magnetism. This quirk of nature is called the Kerr Effect and it is the basis of magneto-optical (erasable) discs.

KEVLAR A strong synthetic material used in cable strength members. The name is a trademark of the Dupont Company. Kevlar is also used in bulletproof vests worn by police.

KEY 1. One or more characters or perhaps a field within a data record used to identify the data and perhaps control its use. 2. The physical button on a telephone set. (What normal people call a "Switch," telephone people call a "Key.") 3. The device which unlocks your front door or perhaps your terminal or computer.

KEY ILLUMINATION A lamp under a button (called a "key" in telephony) which flashes at different rates to signal an incoming call, a steady busy and "wink" (fast) hold.

KEY MAP A MIDI patch-map entry that translates key values for certain MIDI messages, for example, the keys used to play the appropriate percussion instrument or a melodic instrument in the appropriate octave.

KEY PAD The touchtone dial pad on a pushbutton phone. Touchtone is a registered trademark of AT&T, so most people use the word "pushbutton." But there's really no difference.

KEY PAD STATE An AT&T enhanced fax term. The KEYPAD state can be: NULL: The keypad is in use by a feature and is not available for use on a call. NON-NULL: The keypad is available for use in originating a call or for sending