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ber, which identifies the service. For example, port 80 on an Internet node indicates a Web server. *See also* port number. **2.** The receptacle part of a connector, which receives a plug. *See also* female connector.

soc. newsgroups \sōsh`dot nōōz´grōōps\ *n.* Usenet newsgroups that are part of the soc. hierarchy and have the prefix soc. These newsgroups are devoted to discussions of current events and social issues. Soc. newsgroups are one of the seven original Usenet newsgroup hierarchies. The other six are comp., misc., news., rec., sci., and talk. *See also* newsgroup, traditional newsgroup hierarchy, Usenet.

soft \soft\ *adj.* **1.** In computing, temporary or changeable. For example, a soft error is a problem from which the system can recover, and a soft patch is a temporary program fix that holds only while the program is running. *Compare* hard (definition 1). **2.** In electronics, characterized by magnetic materials that do not retain their magnetism when a magnetic field is removed. *Compare* hard (definition 2).

soft boot \soft´ bōōt\ *n. See* warm boot.

soft copy \soft´ kop`ē\ *n.* The temporary images presented on a computer display screen. *Compare* hard copy.

soft error \soft´ âr`ər\ *n.* An error from which a program or operating system is able to recover. *Compare* hard error.

soft font \soft font´\ *n. See* downloadable font.

soft hyphen \soft` hī´fən\ *n. See* hyphen.

soft link \soft´ lēnk\ *n. See* symbolic link.

softmodem \soft´mō`dəm\ *n. See* software-based modem.

soft patch \soft pach´\ *n.* A fix or modification performed only while the code being patched is loaded into memory, so that the executable or object file is not modified in any way. *See also* patch[1].

soft return \soft` rə-turn´\ *n.* A line break inserted in a document by a word processor when the next word in the current line of text would cause the line to overflow into the margin—a movable line break. *See also* wordwrap. *Compare* hard return.

soft-sectored disk \soft`sek-tərd disk´\ *n.* A disk, especially a floppy disk, whose sectors have been marked with recorded data marks rather than punched holes. *See also* index hole. *Compare* hard-sectored disk.

software \soft´wâr\ *n.* Computer programs; instructions that make hardware work. Two main types of software are system software (operating systems), which controls the workings of the computer, and applications, such as word processing programs, spreadsheets, and databases, which perform the tasks for which people use computers. Two additional categories, which are neither system nor application software but contain elements of both, are network software, which enables groups of computers to communicate, and language software, which provides programmers with the tools they need to write programs. In addition to these task-based categories, several types of software are described based on their method of distribution. These include packaged software (canned programs), sold primarily through retail outlets; freeware and public domain software, which are distributed free of charge; shareware, which is also distributed free of charge, although users are requested to pay a small registration fee for continued use of the program; and vaporware, software that is announced by a company or individuals but either never makes it to market or is very late. *See also* application, canned software, freeware, network software, operating system, shareware, system software, vaporware. *Compare* firmware, hardware, liveware.

software-based modem \soft`wâr-bāsd mō´dəm\ *n.* A modem that uses a general-purpose, reprogrammable digital signal processor chip and RAM-based program memory rather than a dedicated chip with the modem functions burned into the silicon. A software-based modem can be reconfigured to update and change the modem's features and functions.

software-dependent \soft´wâr-də-pen`dənt\ *adj.* Of, pertaining to, or being a computer or device that is tied to a particular program or set of programs developed for it.

software engineering \soft´wâr en-jə-nēr`ēng\ *n.* The design and development of software. *See also* programming.

software handshake \soft`wâr hand´shāk\ *n.* A handshake that consists of signals transmitted over the same wires used to transfer the data, as in

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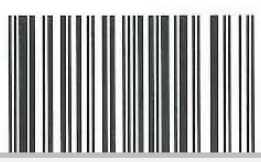

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