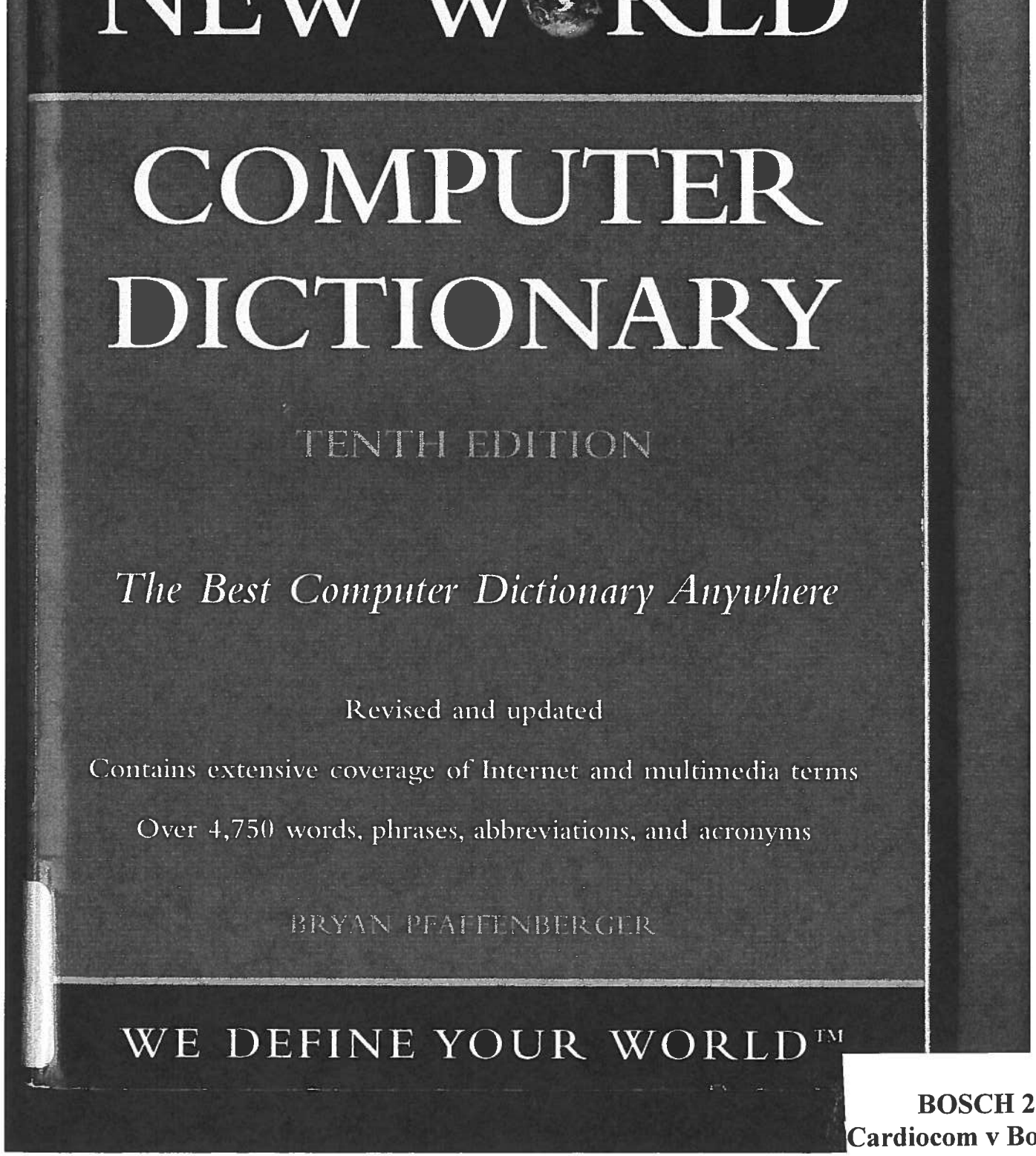

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COMPUTER DICTIONARY

10TH EDITION

By Bryan Pfaffenberger, Ph.D.

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procedural programming language A programming language such as BASIC or Pascal that requires the programmer to specify the procedure the computer must follow to accomplish the task. See *declarative programming language.*

process In operating systems designed for server applications (including Windows 2000, Unix, and Linux), an executing program or service. A parent process may have one or more child processes that perform additional tasks.

process color One of the four colors—cyan, magenta, yellow, and black—that are mixed to create other colors. See *CMYK color model, color model, spot color.*

processing The execution of program instructions by the computer's central processing unit (CPU) that in some way transforms data, such as sorting it, selecting some of it according to specified criteria, or performing mathematical computations on it.

processor See *microprocessor.*

processor serial number See *PSN.*

processor upgrade A chip designed to replace or complement a microprocessor and provide improved performance. Intel's OverDrive chip is a processor upgrade for the Intel 80486. Also, the act of installing such a chip.

production In digital video, the phase in which the raw footage is shot. See *post-production.*

Professional Graphics Array (PGA) An early video adapter for IBM personal computers that was designed for computer-assisted design (CAD) applications. The adapter displays 256 colors with a resolution of 640 × 480.

professional workstation A high-performance personal computer optimized for professional applications in fields such as digital circuit design, architecture, and technical drawing. Professional workstations typically offer excellent screen resolution, fast and powerful microprocessors, and lots of memory. Examples include the workstations made by Sun Microsystems and NeXT, Inc. Professional workstations are more expensive than personal computers and typically use the Unix operating system. The boundary between high-end personal computers and professional workstations, however, is eroding as personal computers become more powerful.

program A list of instructions, written in a programming language, that a computer can execute so that the machine acts in a predetermined way. Synonymous with software. See *compiler, executable program, high-level programming language, machine language, source code.*

program development life cycle See *PDLC.*

program generator A program that creates the program code automatically from a description of the application. In database management programs, for example, one can use simple program-generation techniques to describe the format he or she wants graphically. The program generator then uses the input as a set of parameters by which to build the output program code.

Program Information File See *pif.*

programmable Capable of being controlled through instructions that can be varied to suit the user's needs.

programmable read-only memory See *PROM.*

programmer A person who designs, codes, tests, debugs, and documents a computer program. Professional programmers often hold bachelor of science or master of science degrees in computer science, but a great deal of programming (professional and otherwise) is done by individuals with little or no formal training. More than half the readers of a popular personal computer magazine, for example, stated in a survey that they regularly programmed their personal computers using languages such as BASIC, Pascal, and assembly language.

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