

Webster's

NEW WORLD DICTIONARY[®]

— OF —

COMPUTER TERMS

FOURTH EDITION

Compiled by

Donald Spencer



Prentice Hall

New York • London • Toronto • Sidney • Tokyo • Singapore



Prentice Hall General Reference
15 Columbus Circle
New York, NY 10023

Copyright © 1992 by Simon & Schuster, Inc.
All rights reserved
including the right of reproduction
in whole or in part in any form

A Webster's New World™ Book

Webster's New World Dictionary and colophon are
registered trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Prentice Hall is a registered trademark of Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Dictionary Editorial Offices:
New World Dictionaries
850 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Spencer, Donald.
Webster's new world dictionary of computer terms /
compiled by Donald Spencer.—4th ed.
p. cm.

ISBN 0-671-84651-5

1. Computers—Dictionaries. 2. Electronic data
processing—Dictionaries. I. Title.

QA76.15.S675 1993 2-12598
004'.03—dc20 CIP

Manufactured in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Introduction

Webster's New World Dictionary of Computer Terms, Fourth Edition, is a collection of more than 5,000 computer terms that focus on topics of interest to computer-users. These terms have been selected as those most likely to confront the beginning computer-user. The book is written in terms a layperson can understand. Wherever possible, technical terms have been avoided so that the definitions might be easily read and understood. Where a proper understanding of a term depends upon the comprehension of another term, the reader is directed to it by a cross-reference (in small capitals).

All terms are entered in a strict alphabetical listing, so spaces and dashes are to be ignored in looking up a particular word or phrase; for example, *programming language* comes between *program* and *program storage*. The terms normally appear in boldface lowercase characters. Acronyms are capitalized and the proper letters are amplified in the text; for example, RAM stands for random access memory.

The most common meaning has been provided for most terms. Frequently, the same term will have other, more specific meanings when used in specialized fields within the computer industry. If a term has more than one commonly accepted meaning, or is used as more than one part of speech, each sense is preceded by a number. Wherever possible, the more general sense of the term appears first.

This book is intended to be a useful reference for anyone with an interest in computer technology.

- autoflow** A setting found in many page layout programs that allows for continuous placement of blocked text from page to page without operator intervention.
- autofont** A self-training OCR system that automatically adjusts to the type designs of different typefaces in order to read a wide range of documents quickly and accurately.
- auto indexing** A system of indexing that superimposes additional information at any of several given addresses.
- auto-load** A key on some computer keyboards that activates the computer. Essentially boots the operating system into internal storage and starts execution of the system.
- automata** A theory related to the study of the principles of operation, behavioral characteristics, and application of automatic devices.
- automated data processing** A largely self-regulating process in which information is handled with a minimum of human effort and intervention.
- automated flowchart** A flowchart drawn by a computer-controlled printer or plotter.
- automated office** The result of the merger of computers, office electronic devices, and telecommunications technology in an office environment.
- automated teller machine (ATM)** A banking terminal that provides customers with 24-hour deposit-and-withdrawal service; a special-purpose device connected to the bank's computer system. To use the automatic teller, the customer inserts a plastic identification card, enters a special password code, and communicates with the system by using a numeric keypad and visual display.
- automatic** Pertaining to a process or device that, under specified conditions, functions without intervention by a human operator.
- automatic carriage** A control mechanism for a printer that can automatically control the feeding, spacing, skipping, and ejecting of paper or preprinted forms.
- automatic check** An equipment check built in specifically for checking purposes.