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Definitions and Tips for
All Computer Users

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Credits

CAUTION: *Using a timed backup feature is no substitute for saving your work to disk at the end of a working session. The files created by timed backup utilities are temporary files that are deleted when you exit the program properly. Use timed backups, but don't forget to save your work. See* backup procedure, save, *and* tape drive.

time division multiplexing   In local area networks, a technique for transmitting two or more signals over the same cable by alternating them, one after the other. Time division multiplexing is used in baseband (digital) networks. See *baseband, frequency division multiplexing, local area network (LAN),* and *multiplexing.*

time out   An interruption, resulting in a frozen keyboard, while the computer tries to access a device (or a remote computer) that isn't responding as it should. The computer keeps trying for a predetermined time and then gives up, returning control to you.

time-sharing   A technique for sharing a multiuser computer's resources in which each user has the illusion that he or she is the only person using the system. In the largest mainframe systems, hundreds or even thousands of people can use the system simultaneously without realizing that others are doing so. At times of peak usage, however, system response time tends to decline noticeably.

title bar   In graphical user interfaces such as Microsoft Windows, a bar that stretches across the top of a window, indicating the name of the document displayed in that window. The color of the title bar indicates whether the window is active. See *graphical user interface (GUI).*

toggle   To switch back and forth between two modes or states. On the IBM PC-compatible keyboard, for example, the Caps Lock key is a toggle key. When you press the key the first time, you switch the keyboard into a caps-entry mode. When you press the key the second time, you switch the keyboard back to the normal mode, in which you must press the Shift key to type capital letters.

TIP: *If you're shopping for an IBM PC-compatible system, look for one equipped with a keyboard that has indicator lights for the Caps Lock, Num Lock, and Scroll Lock keys. Without these lights, you may not realize that you've pressed one of these keys accidentally.*

toggle key   A key that switches back and forth between two modes. See *Caps Lock key, Num Lock key, Scroll Lock key,* and *toggle.*

token passing   In local area networks, a network protocol in which a special bit configuration, called a *token,* is circulated among the workstations. A node gains access to the network only if the node can obtain a free token. The node converts the token into a *data frame* containing a network message.

Every workstation constantly monitors the network to catch a token addressed to that workstation. When a workstation receives a token, it attaches an acknowledgment message to the data frame. When the data frame with an acknowledgment comes back to the source node, the node puts a token into circulation.

Because token passing rules out the data collisions that occur when two devices begin transmitting at the same time, this channel access method is preferred for large, high-volume networks. See *carrier sense multiple access with collision detection (CSMA/CD), contention, local area network (LAN),* and *polling.*

token-ring network   In local area networks, a network architecture that combines token passing with a hybrid star/ring topology.

Developed by IBM and announced in 1986, the IBM Token-Ring Network uses a Multistation Access Unit at its hub. This unit is wired with twisted-pair cable in a star configuration with up to 255 workstations, but the resulting network is actually a decentralized ring network. See *local area network (LAN)* and *token passing.*

toner   The electrically charged ink used in laser printers and photocopying machines. To form the image, toner is applied to an electrostatically charged drum and fused to the paper by a heating element. See *laser printer* and *toner cartridge.*