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For Suzanne, always

— BP

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conversations with other system users while they are online.

talk hierarchy In Usenet, one of the seven standard newsgroup hierarchies. The talk newsgroups are expressly devoted to controversial topics and are often characterized by acrimonious debate. Topics covered include abortion, drugs, and gun control. See *Usenet*.

tape A strip of thin plastic coated with a magnetically sensitive recording medium. In mainframe computing and minicomputing, tape is widely used as a backup medium. Thanks to a dramatic price drop in cartridge tape backup units, tape has become increasingly common in personal computing for backing up entire hard drives. See *backup procedure*, *backup utility*, *quarter-inch cartridge (QIC)*, *random access*, *sequential access*, *tape backup unit*.

tape backup unit A device that reads and writes data on a magnetically sensitive tape. Tape backup units are useful for performing backups on hard disks—thus protecting data from loss by accidental erasure—and for storing important but rarely needed data that would otherwise take up space on a hard disk. Quarter-inch cartridge (QIC) tape drives are the most common tape backup units for personal computers.

tape drive See *tape backup unit*.

tar A standard file archive utility in Unix and Unix-like operating systems (including Linux) that does not offer compression services. After they are created, tar archives are generally compressed using the Unix compress (.Z extension) or gzip (.gz extension) utilities, resulting in compound extensions such as tar.Z or tar.gz. See *archive*, *compression*, *gzip*.

Targa A graphics file format developed by Truevision for Targa and Vista graphics products and now widely used as a standard

file format for high-end graphics output (such as rendering and ray tracing). Targa files, with the extension .TGA, can have a color depth of up to 32 bits for certain purposes, although the most common color depth is 24 bits, providing more than 16 million colors.

taskbar In Microsoft Windows, an application launcher and task switcher that (by default) remains visible at the bottom of the screen. After launching a program with the Start menu, the program's task button appears on the taskbar, allowing the user to switch to it by clicking the button.

task button In Microsoft Windows, a button that appears on the taskbar after an application program is launched. The user can switch to the application by clicking the task button.

Tcl An interpreted scripting language that is now maintained by Sun Microsystems. Used primarily on Unix and Linux systems, Tcl includes a graphical user interface toolkit that enables developers to create simple GUI applications in short order. See *Perl*, *Python*, *scripting language*.

TCM See *trellis-code modulation*.

TCO Acronym for Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (Sweden's largest white-collar labor union). In monitors, TCO is known for its very stringent regulations regarding electromagnetic radiation—even stricter than MPR II rules. Not many TCO-certified monitors are available in the United States, but the TCO standards are the toughest in the world.

TCP Acronym for Transmission Control Protocol. On the Internet, the protocol (standard) that permits two Internet-connected computers to establish a reliable connection. TCP ensures reliable data delivery with a method known as positive

acknowledgment with retransmission (PAR). The computer that sends the data continues to do so until it receives a confirmation from the receiving computer that the data has been received intact. See *Internet Protocol (IP)*, *TCP/IP*.

TCP/IP Abbreviation for Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP), and a commonly used phrase to refer to the entire Internet protocol suite. By far the most widely used suite of networking protocols, TCP/IP is the leading packet switching technology. It provides the technical foundation for the public Internet as well as for large numbers of private networks (called internets with a small "i") to distinguish them from the public Internet) that are not linked to the public Internet. The key achievement of TCP/IP is its flexibility with respect to lower-level protocols, which—in contrast to the design philosophy expressed in the OSI Reference Model—are not defined. As a result, TCP/IP can work with a wide variety of physical media, including local area networks (LANs) such as Ethernets, frame relay, digital T1 and T3 backbones, fiber optic, packet radio, and many more. Although more than 100 protocols make up the entire TCP/IP protocol suite, the two most important of these (TCP and IP) sum up the network's character; the Internet Protocol (IP) is a highly efficient connectionless protocol that is used unless the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP)—a connection-oriented protocol—is needed so that data reception can be actively verified. See *connectionless protocol*, *connection-oriented protocol*, *Ethernet*, *internet*, *Internet*, *Internet Protocol (IP)*, *OSI Reference Model*, *TCP*.

TCP/IP network A network that uses Internet technology and the TCP/IP protocols, whether or not it is connected to the external Internet. The public Internet is indicated by spelling "Internet" with a capital I; private, TCP/IP-based networks may

also be called internets, but with a small initial "i." See *Internet*, *TCP/IP*.

TDMA Acronym for Time Division Multiple Access. One of two major protocols (the other is CDMA) for digital cellular telephony. TDMA enables multiple callers to share the same channel by giving each phone a specified time slot in which it may transmit or receive. TDMA operates at 800 MHz or 1900 MHz; when operating at the higher frequency, it enables Personal Communication Services (PCS) such as paging, text-based Internet access by means of the Wireless Applications Protocol (WAP), and voice mail. TDMA enables data communications at a transfer rate of 14.4 Kbps. U.S. TDMA service providers include AT&T Wireless and Nextel. A narrowband version of the TDMA standard called Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) is the *de facto* cellular telephony standard in Europe and Asia, but it is not widely available in the U.S. GSM enables data communications at a transfer rate of 9.6 Kbps. See *CDMA*, *digital cellular phone*, *GSM*.

techie An often derogatory term for a programmer or other computer expert. Like "bit twiddler," "computer jock," and "computer nerd," the term sometimes connotes a lack of interpersonal skills.

technical support Providing technical advice and problem-solving expertise to registered users of a hardware device or program.

technobabble Technical jargon, especially when it is used excessively or vaguely for marketing purposes ("The new application supports enterprise-wide object integration") or used metaphorically in noncomputer contexts ("The President is getting input from his advisors").

technocentrism An overidentification with computer technology, often associated