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American Heritage® Dictionaries

Revised
Edition

Dictionary of
**Computer
Words**

An A to Z Guide to
Today's Computers

Includes
the Latest
Terms in
Interactive
and
Multimedia
Technology

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another for phone numbers. See also *flat-file database*, *hypertext*, *relational database*.

database management system Abbreviated **DBMS** The program or programs that control a *database* so that the information it contains can be stored, retrieved, updated, and sorted. The scale and capabilities of DBMSs vary widely. There are database management systems that run on personal computers, such as FileMaker or dBASE. There are also huge, specialized applications that operate on *mainframes* and over large *networks* such as airline flight reservation systems.

Most database management systems let you request a *report* giving *information* from the database organized in a way that meets your specific needs. For example, to do a mailing to customers, you may need their names and addresses printed out on mailing labels and sorted by ZIP code. Often requests for information must be structured in the form of a *query* that specifies the criteria for the selection of information. Queries can be structured by simply choosing options from a menu or by *query by example*, in which the DBMS presents a blank record and the user specifies the fields and values he or she wants. More sophisticated DBMSs may require the user to use a special *query language*. Once the language is learned, the user has a great deal of power in structuring needed information. See also *report generator*.

database server A computer system on a *network* that stores a shared *database* and enables network users to retrieve the data they request. See also *client/server network*, *server*.

data compression The transformation of *data* into a form that minimizes the space required, as to store or transmit it, for example. One system of data compression, for example, assigns special *binary* codes to frequently used words so that they take up fewer *bits* than they would if each letter were coded separately. Data compression can speed up transmission of data by *FAX machine* or *modem* because it enables these devices to transmit the same amount of data using fewer bits. Data compression is also used in *backup* utilities,

in storing images. A will automatically decompress noticeable capacity of *compression*.

data entry sially the *sheet* from

data entry form appearing on or update. custom data form.

data file A as a *document* also *program*.

data processing of *data* by numerical

data type 1 (floating-point) a particular mines which 2. In *data* grams, a *data* amount, for

daughter board a computer *expansion* computer's *expansion*