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# Microsoft Press® Computer Dictionary

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Microsoft Press

# Computer Dictionary

Third Edition



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**.arc** \dot-ärk', -Ä`R-C` \ *n.* The file extension that identifies compressed archive files encoded using the Advanced RISC Computing Specification (ARC) format. *See also* compressed file.

**arcade game** \är-käd' gām` \ *n.* 1. A coin-operated computer game for one or more players that features high-quality screen graphics, sound, and rapid action. 2. Any computer game designed to mimic the style of a coin-operated arcade game, such as games marketed for the home computer. *See also* computer game.

**Archie** \är'chē \ *n.* An Internet utility for finding files in public archives obtainable by anonymous FTP. The master Archie server at McGill University in Montreal downloads FTP indexes from participating FTP servers and merges them into a master list and sends updated copies of the master list to other Archie servers each day. Archie is a shortened form of *archive*. *See also* anonymous FTP, FTP<sup>1</sup> (definition 1). *Compare* Jughead, Veronica.

**Archie client** \är'chē klī`ənt \ *n.* *See* Archie.

**Archie server** \är'chē sər`vər \ *n.* On the Internet, a server that contains Archie indexes to the names and addresses of files in public FTP archives. *See also* Archie, FTP<sup>1</sup> (definition 1), server (definition 2).

**architecture** \är'kə-tek`chər \ *n.* 1. The physical construction or design of a computer system and its components. *See also* cache, CISC, closed architecture, network architecture, open architecture, pipelining, RISC. 2. The data-handling capacity of a microprocessor. 3. The design of application software incorporating protocols and the means for expansion and interfacing with other programs.

**archive**<sup>1</sup> \är'kīv \ *n.* 1. A tape or disk containing files copied from another storage device and used as backup storage. 2. A compressed file. 3. A file directory on the Internet that is available by File Transfer Protocol (FTP) or an Internet directory established for dissemination of stored files.

**archive**<sup>2</sup> \är'kīv \ *vb.* 1. To copy files onto a tape or disk for long-term storage. 2. To compress a file.

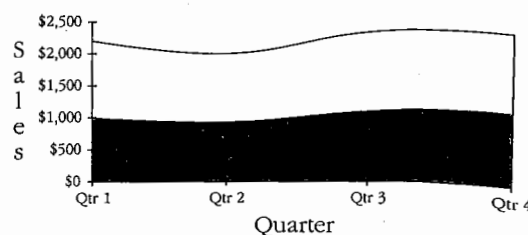
**archive bit** \är'kīv bit` \ *n.* A bit that is associated with a file and is used to indicate whether or not the file has been backed up. *See also* back up, bit.

**archive file** \är'kīv fīl` \ *n.* A file that contains a set of files, such as a program with its documentation and example input files, or collected postings from a newsgroup. On UNIX systems, archive files can be created using the tar program; they can then be compressed using compress or gzip. PKZIP under MS-DOS and Windows and Stuffit under Mac OS create archive files that are already compressed. *See also* compress<sup>1</sup>, gzip, PKZIP, Stuffit, tar<sup>1</sup>.

**archive site** \är'kīv sīt` \ *n.* A site on the Internet that stores files. The files are usually accessed through one of the following ways: downloaded through anonymous FTP, retrieved through Gopher, or viewed on the World Wide Web. *See also* anonymous FTP, Gopher.

**area chart** \är'ē-ə chärt` \ *n.* A graphical presentation, such as of quarterly sales figures, that uses shading or coloring to emphasize the difference between the line representing one set of data points and the line representing a separate but related set of data points. *See* the illustration.

Quarterly Sales Summary



Area chart.

**area search** \är'ē-ə sərç` \ *n.* In information management, the examination of a group of documents for the purpose of identifying those that are relevant to a particular subject or category.

**arg** \ärg \ *n.* *See* argument.

**argument** \är'gyə-mənt` \ *n.* An independent variable, used with an operator or passed to a subprogram that uses the argument to carry out specific operations. *See also* algorithm, operator (definition 1), parameter, subprogram.

**arithmetic**<sup>1</sup> \är-ith-met'ik \ *adj.* Pertaining to the mathematical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

**arithmetic**<sup>2</sup> \är-ith'mə-tik` \ *n.* The branch of mathematics dealing with the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of real numbers.



**base RAM** \bās' ram, R-A-M' \ *n.* See conventional memory.

**Basic** or **BASIC** \bā'sik, B'A-S-I-C' \ *n.* Acronym for **B**eginner's **A**ll-purpose **S**ymbolic **I**nstruction **C**ode, a high-level programming language developed in the mid-1960s by John Kemeny and Thomas Kurtz at Dartmouth College. It is widely considered one of the easiest programming languages to learn. *See also* True BASIC, Visual Basic.

**Basic Rate Interface** \bā'sik rāt in'tər-fās' \ *n.* See BRI.

**.bat** \dot-bat', -B'A-T' \ *n.* The file extension that identifies a batch program file. In MS-DOS, .bat files are executable files that contain calls to other program files. *See also* batch file.

**batch** \bach' \ *n.* A group of documents or data records that are processed as a unit. *See also* batch job, batch processing.

**batch file** \bach' fil' \ *n.* An ASCII text file containing a sequence of operating-system commands, possibly including parameters and operators supported by the batch command language. When the user types a batch filename at the command prompt, the commands are processed sequentially. *Also called* batch program. *See also* AUTOEXEC.BAT, .bat.

**batch file transmission** \bach' fil tranz-mish'an' \ *n.* The transmission of multiple files as the result of a single command. *Acronym:* BFT (B'F-T').

**batch job** \bach' job' \ *n.* A program or set of commands that runs without user interaction. *See also* batch processing.

**batch processing** \bach' pros'es-ēng' \ *n.* 1. Execution of a batch file. *See also* batch file. 2. The practice of acquiring programs and data sets from users, running them one or a few at a time, and then providing the results to the users. 3. The practice of storing transactions for a period of time before they are posted to a master file, typically in a separate operation undertaken at night. *Compare* transaction processing.

**batch program** \bach' prō'gram' \ *n.* A program that executes without interacting with the user. *See also* batch file. *Compare* interactive program.

**batch system** \bach' si'stəm' \ *n.* A system that processes data in discrete groups of previously scheduled operations rather than interactively or in real time.

**batch total** \bach' tō'təl' \ *n.* A total calculated for an element common to a group (batch) of records, used as a control to verify that all information is accounted for and has been entered correctly. For example, the total of a day's sales can be used as a batch total to verify the records of all individual sales.

**battery** \bat'ər-ē' \ *n.* Two or more cells in a container that produces an electrical current when two electrodes within the container touch an electrolyte. In personal computers, batteries are used as an auxiliary source of power when the main power is shut off, as a power source for laptop and notebook computers (rechargeable batteries, such as nickel cadmium, nickel metal hydride, and lithium ion, are used), and as a method to keep the internal clock and the circuitry responsible for the part of RAM that stores important system information always powered up. *See also* lead ion battery, lithium ion battery, nickel cadmium battery, nickel metal hydride battery, RAM.

**battery backup** \bat'ər-ē bak'up' \ *n.* 1. A battery-operated power supply used as an auxiliary source of electricity in the event of a power failure.

2. Any use of a battery to keep a circuit running when the main power is shut off, such as powering a computer's clock/calendar and the special RAM that stores important system information between sessions. *See also* UPS.

**battery meter** \bat'ər-ē mē'tər' \ *n.* A device used to measure the current (capacity) of an electrical cell.

**baud** \bäd, bôd' \ *n.* One signal change per second, a measure of data transmission speed. Named after the French engineer and telegrapher Jean-Maurice-Emile Baudot and originally used to measure the transmission speed of telegraph equipment, the term now most commonly refers to the data transmission speed of a modem. *See also* baud rate.

**Baudot code** \bō-dō' kōd' \ *n.* A 5-bit coding scheme used principally for telex transmissions, originally developed for telegraphy by the French engineer and telegrapher Jean-Maurice-Emile Baudot. Sometimes it is equated, although inaccurately, with the International Alphabet Number 2 proposed by the Comité Consultatif International Téléphonique et Téléphonique (CCITT).

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