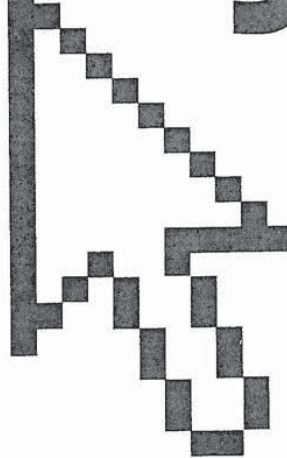


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D

DA *n.* See desk accessory.

DAC \dak\ *n.* See digital-to-analog converter.

daemon *n.* A program associated with UNIX systems that performs a housekeeping or maintenance utility function without being called by the user. A daemon sits in the background and is activated only when needed, for example, to correct an error from which another program cannot recover.

daisy chain¹ *n.* A set of devices connected in series. In order to eliminate conflicting requests to use the channel (bus) to which all the devices are connected, each device is given a different priority. SCSI (Small Computer System Interface) and the newer USB (Universal Serial Bus) both support daisy chained devices. See also SCSI, USB.

daisy chain² *vb.* To connect a series of devices, one to another, like daisies in a chain of flowers.

daisy wheel *n.* A print element consisting of a set of formed characters with each character mounted on a separate type bar, all radiating from a center hub. See also daisy-wheel printer, thimble, thimble printer.

daisy-wheel printer *n.* A printer that uses a daisy-wheel type element. Daisy-wheel output is crisp and slightly imprinted, with fully formed characters resembling typewriter quality. Daisy-wheel printers were standard for high-quality printing until being superseded by laser printers. See also daisy wheel, thimble, thimble printer.

damping *n.* A technique for preventing overshoot (exceeding the desired limit) in the response of a circuit or device.

D-AMPS *n.* Acronym for Digital Advanced Mobile Phone Service. The digital form of the analog AMPS cellular phone service. D-AMPS, sometimes spelled DAMPS, differs from AMPS in being digital and in tripling the number of available channels by using time division multiple access (TDMA) to divide each of the 30 AMPS channels into three separate channels. See also AMPS, FDMA, TDMA.

DAP \dap\ *n.* See Directory Access Protocol.

dark fiber *n.* Unused capacity in fiber-optic communications.

Darlington circuit *n.* An amplifier circuit made of two transistors, often mounted in the same housing. The collectors of the two transistors are connected, and the emitter of the first is connected to the base of the second. Darlington circuits provide high-gain amplification. Also called Darlington pair.

Darlington pair *n.* See Darlington circuit.

DARPA \där'pə\ *n.* See Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

DARPANET \där'pə-net\ *n.* Short for Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Network. See ARPANET.

DAS *n.* See dual attachment station.

DASD \daz'dē\ *n.* Acronym for direct access storage device. A data storage device by which information can be accessed directly, instead of by passing sequentially through all storage areas. For example, a disk drive is a DASD, but a tape unit is not, because, with a tape unit, the data is stored as a linear sequence. See also direct access. Compare sequential access.

.dat *n.* A generic file extension for a data file.

DAT \dat\ *n.* See digital audio tape, dynamic address translation.

data *n.* Plural of the Latin *datum*, meaning an item of information. In practice, *data* is often used for the singular as well as the plural form of the noun. Compare information.

data acquisition *n.* The process of obtaining data from another source, usually one outside a specific system.

data aggregate *n.* A collection of data records. It usually includes a description of the placement of the data blocks and their relation to the entire set.

data attribute *n.* Structural information about data that describes its context and meaning.

data bank *n.* Any substantial collection of data.

RAMDAC \ram'dak\ *n.* Acronym for random access memory digital-to-analog converter. A chip built into some VGA and SVGA video adapters that translates the digital representation of a pixel into the analog information needed by the monitor to display it. The presence of a RAMDAC chip generally enhances overall video performance. *See also* SVGA, VGA.

RAM disk *n.* Short for random access memory disk. A simulated disk drive whose data is actually stored in RAM memory. A special program allows the operating system to read from and write to the simulated device as if it were a disk drive. RAM disks are extremely fast, but they require that system memory be given up for their use. Also, RAM disks usually use volatile memory, so the data stored on them disappears when power is turned off. Many portables offer RAM disks that use battery-backed CMOS RAM to avoid this problem. *See also* CMOS RAM. *Compare* disk cache.

RAM refresh *n.* *See* refresh (definition 2).

RAM resident *adj.* *See* memory-resident.

RAM-resident program *n.* *See* terminate-and-stay-resident program.

random *adj.* Specifically, a reference to an arbitrary or unpredictable situation or event. The term is also given an extended, pejorative or semi-pejorative meaning, however, in which it is used in the sense of *non-specific, arbitrary, incoherent, poorly organized, loser*, and so on.

random access *n.* The ability of a computer to find and go directly to a particular storage location without having to search sequentially from the beginning location. The human equivalent of random access would be the ability to find a desired address in an address book without having to proceed sequentially through all the addresses. A computer's semiconductor memory (both RAM and ROM) provides random access. Certain types of files stored on disk under some operating systems also allow random access. Such files are best used for data in which each record has no intrinsic relationship to what comes physically before or after it, as in a client list or an inventory. *Also called* direct access. *See also* RAM, ROM. *Compare* indexed sequential access method, sequential access.

random access memory *n.* *See* RAM.

random noise *n.* A signal in which there is no relationship between amplitude and time and in which

many frequencies occur randomly, without pattern or predictability.

random number generation *n.* Production of an unpredictable sequence of numbers in which no number is any more likely to occur at a given time or place in the sequence than any other. Truly random number generation is generally viewed as impossible. The process used in computers would be more properly called "pseudorandom number generation."

range *n.* **1.** A block of cells selected for similar treatment in a spreadsheet. A range of cells can extend across a row, down a column, or over a combination of the two, but all cells in the range must be contiguous, sharing at least one common border. Ranges allow the user to affect many cells with a single command—for example, to format them similarly, enter the same data into all of them, give them a name in common and treat them as a unit, or select and incorporate them into a formula. **2.** In more general usage, the spread between specified low and high values. Range checking is an important method of validating data entered into an application.

range check *n.* In programming, a limit check of both the upper and lower limits of a value, thus determining whether the value lies within an acceptable range. *See also* limit check.

RARP *n.* Acronym for Reverse Address Resolution Protocol. A TCP/IP protocol for determining the IP address (or logical address) of a node on a local area network connected to the Internet, when only the hardware address (or physical address) is known. While RARP refers only to finding the IP address and ARP technically refers to the opposite procedure, ARP is commonly used for both senses. *See also* ARP.

RAS \raz\ *n.* *See* remote access server, Remote Access Service.

raster *n.* A rectangular pattern of lines; on a video display, the horizontal scan lines from which the term *raster scan* is derived.

raster display *n.* A video monitor (typically a CRT) that displays an image on the screen as a series of horizontal scan lines from top to bottom. Each scan line consists of pixels that can be illuminated and colored individually. Television screens and most computer monitors are raster displays. *See also* CRT, pixel. *Compare* vector display.

raster graphics *n.* A method of generating graphics that treats an image as a collection of small, indepen-

R

seed *n.* A starting value used in generating a sequence of random or pseudorandom numbers. *See also* random number generation.

seek *n.* The process of moving the read/write head in a disk drive to the proper site, typically for a read or write operation.

seek time *n.* The time required to move a disk drive's read/write head to a specific location on a disk. *See also* access time (definition 2).

segment *n.* A section of a program that, when compiled, occupies a contiguous address space and that is usually position independent; that is, it can be loaded anywhere in memory. With Intel-based microcomputers, a native-mode segment is a logical reference to a 64-KB contiguous portion of RAM in which the individual bytes are accessed by means of an offset value. Collectively, the segment:offset values reference a single physical location in RAM. *See also* overlay¹ (definition 1), real mode, segmentation.

segmentation *n.* The act of breaking up a program into several sections, or segments. *See also* segment.

segmented addressing architecture *n.* A memory-access technique typified by Intel 80x86 processors. Memory is divided into 64-KB segments in this architecture for addressing locations under the 16-bit address scheme; 32-bit schemes can address memory in segments as large as 4 GB. *Also called* segmented instruction addressing, segmented memory architecture. *Compare* linear addressing architecture.

segmented address space *n.* An address space that is logically divided into chunks called segments. To address a given location, a program must specify both a segment and an offset within that segment. (The offset is a value that references a specific point within the segment, based on the beginning of the segment.) Because segments may overlap, addresses are not unique; there are many logical ways to access a given physical location. The Intel 80x86 real-mode architecture is segmented; most other microprocessor architectures are flat. *See also* segment. *Compare* flat address space.

segmented instruction addressing *n.* *See* segmented addressing architecture.

segmented memory architecture *n.* *See* segmented addressing architecture.

select *vb.* **1.** In general computer use, to specify a block of data or text on screen by highlighting it or

otherwise marking it with the intent of performing some operation on it. **2.** In database management, to choose records according to a specified set of criteria. *See also* sort. **3.** In information processing, to choose from a number of options or alternatives, such as subroutines or input/output channels.

selected cell *n.* *See* active cell.

selection *n.* **1.** In applications, the highlighted portion of an on-screen document. **2.** In communications, the initial contact made between a computer and a remote station receiving a message. **3.** In programming, a conditional branch. *See also* conditional branch.

selective calling *n.* The capability of a station on a communications line to designate the station that is to receive a transmission.

selector channel *n.* An input/output data transfer line used by one high-speed device at a time.

selector pen *n.* *See* light pen.

self-adapting *adj.* The ability of systems, devices, or processes to adjust their operational behavior to environmental conditions.

self-checking digit *n.* A digit, appended to a number during its encoding, whose function is to confirm the accuracy of the encoding. *See also* checksum, parity bit.

self-clocking *n.* A process in which timing signals are inserted into a data stream rather than being provided by an external source, such as in phase encoding.

self-documenting code *n.* Program source code that, through its use of a high-level language and descriptive identifiers, can be understood by other programmers without the need for additional comments.

self-extracting archive *n.* *See* self-extracting file.

self-extracting file *n.* An executable program file that contains one or more compressed text or data files. When a user runs the program, it uncompresses the compressed files and stores them on the user's hard drive. *See* the illustration.

self-modifying code *n.* Program code, usually object code generated by a compiler or assembler, that modifies itself during instruction by writing new operation codes, addresses, or data values over existing instructions. *See also* pure procedure.

self-monitoring analysis and reporting technology system *n.* *See* SMART system.

self-organizing map *n.* *See* SOM (definition 2).

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