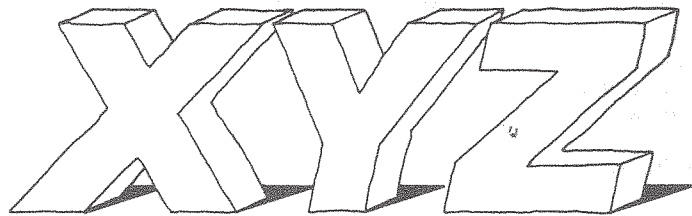


The Teleconnect Dictionary

A Glossary of
Telecom Acronyms,
Terms and Jargon

edited by Harry Newton



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The TELECONNECT Dictionary An Explanation of Telecommunications Terms, Acronyms and Jargon

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TELECONNECT DICTIONARY

have been spied for under \$1,000. From the first portable units, weight has already dropped by more than half. There's at least one unit that will fit in your breast pocket and not overly stretch your suit.

CELLULAR RADIO SWITCHING OFFICE: The electronic switching office which switches calls between cellular (mobile) phones and wireline (i.e. normal wired) phones. The switch controls the "handoff" between cells and monitors usage. Different manufacturers call their equipment different things, as usual.

CENTEL CORPORATION: An independent telephone company serving over one million customer lines. It's based near the Chicago O'Hare Airport.

CENTRAL OFFICE: Telephone company facility where subscribers lines are joined to switching equipment for connecting other subscribers to each other, locally and long distance. Also called CO, as in *See-Ooh*.

CENTRAL OFFICE BATTERY: A group of wet cells joined in series to provide 48 volts DC. Central office batteries are typically charged off the main 120 volts AC. The batteries do two basic functions: 1. Provide a constant source of DC power for 8 hours or so after AC powers drops, and 2. Isolate the central office from glitches on the AC line.

CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT: CPU. The part of a computer which has the logic, computational and decision-making. It interprets and executes instructions as it receives them. Personal computers have one CPU — typically a single chip. It is the so-called "computer on a chip." That chip identifies them as an 8-bit, 16-bit or 32-bit machine.

Telephone systems are not that different, especially smaller ones. Typically they have one main CPU — a chip. That chip controls the various functions in the telephone. Today's telephone's systems are in reality nothing more than special purpose computers. As phone systems get bigger, the question of CPUs — central processing units — becomes harder to figure. The design of phone systems has, of late, tended away from single processor-controlled telephone systems (as in single processor controlled PCs). There are several reasons for this move. First, it's more economical for growth. Make modules of "little" switches and join little ones together to make big ones. Second, it's more reliable. It's obviously better not to rely on one big CPU. But to have several. In short,

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the issue of Central Processing Units ~ CPUs ~ is blurring. But the concept is still important. Because ~ by understanding how your telephone switch works (its architecture) ~ you will understand its strengths and weaknesses.

CENTRALIZED AUTOMATIC MESSAGE ACCOUNTING:
CAMA. The recording of toll calls at a centralized point.

CENTREX: Centrex is a business telephone service offered by a local telephone company from a local central office. Centrex is basically single line telephone service delivered to individual desks (the same as you get at your house) with important "bells and whistles," i.e. features, added. Those "bells and whistles" include features like intercom, call forwarding, call transfer, toll restrict, least cost routing and call hold (on single line phones).

Think about your home phone. You can often get "Custom Calling" features. These features are typically fourfold: Call forwarding, Call Waiting, Call Conferencing and Speed Calling. Centrex is basically Custom Calling, but instead of four features, it has 19 features, and more. Like Custom Calling, Centrex features are provided by the local phone company's central office. Centrex is leased to businesses by the local phone company as a substitute for that business buying its telephone system ~ its own PBX or a key system.

Before Divestiture, Centrex was presumed dead. AT&T was intent on becoming a major PBX and key system supplier. Then Divestiture came, and the operating phone companies recognized they were no longer part of AT&T, no longer had factories to support, but did have a huge number of Centrex installations, which were providing large monthly revenues. As a result the local operating companies have injected new life in Centrex, making the service more attractive in features, price, service and attitude. Here are the main reasons businesses go with Centrex as against going with a stand-alone telephone system:

1. Money. Centrex is typically cheaper to get into (the central office already exists). Installation charges can be low. Commitment can also be low, since most Centrex service is leased on a month-to-month basis. So it's perfect for companies planning an early move. There may be some economies of scale, also. Some phone companies are now offering low cost, large size packages.

2. Multiple locations. Companies with multiple locations in the same city are often cheaper with Centrex than with multiple private phone systems and tie lines, or with one private phone system and OPX lines.