# The Computer Glossary

## The Complete Illustrated Dictionary

**Eighth Edition**

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applications compared to digitizing actual music. For example, a three-minute MIDI file may take only 20 to 30K, whereas a WAV file (digital audio) could consume up to several megabytes depending on sound quality.

## general-purpose computer

Refers to computers that follow instructions, thus virtually all computers from micro to mainframe are general purpose. Even computers in toys, games and single-function devices follow instructions in their built-in program. In contrast, computational devices can be designed from scratch for special purposes (see *ASIC*).

## general-purpose controller

A peripheral control unit that can service more than one type of peripheral device; for example, a printer and a communications line.

## general-purpose language

A programming language used to solve a wide variety of problems. All common programming languages (FORTRAN, COBOL, BASIC, C, Pascal, etc.) are examples. Contrast with *special-purpose language*.

## generator

(1) Software that creates software. See *application generator* and *macro generator*.

(2) A device that creates electrical power or synchronization signals.

## Genie

An online information service from IDT, Hackensack, NJ, that provides Internet access, chat lines, roundtable discussions and games. It was originally the General Electric Network for Information Exchange. See *online services*.

## genlock

(generator lock) Circuitry that synchronizes video signals for mixing. In personal computers, a genlock display adapter converts screen output into an NTSC video signal, which it synchronizes with an external video source.

## geometry calculations

In 3-D graphics rendering, the transformation from 3-D world coordinates into screen coordinates, the clipping of non-visible parts and lighting.

## geostationary, geosynchronous

Earth aligned. Refers to communications satellites that are placed 22,282 miles above the equator and travel at the same speed as the earth's rotation, thus appearing stationary.

## germanium

The material used in making the first transistors. Although still used in very limited applications, germanium was replaced by silicon years ago.

## gesture recognition

The ability to interpret simple hand-written symbols such as check marks and slashes.

## get

In programming, a request for the next record in an input file. Contrast with *put*.

## Gflops

See *gigaflops*.

## ghost

(1) A faint second image that appears close to the primary image on a display or printout. In transmission, it is a result of secondary signals that arrive ahead of or later than the primary signal. On a printout, it is caused by bouncing print elements as the paper passes by.

(2) To display a menu option in a dimmed, fuzzy typeface, indicating it is not selectable at this time.