By the Editors of the
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AN A TO Z GUIDE
TO HARDWARE,
SOFTWARE,
AND CYBERSPACE

dictionary
of **computer**
and
internet
words

editorial and production staff

watches. Most LCDs in laptops are mono-
rk gray images on a light gray background,
enhance image contrast.

quid crystals sandwiched between two layers
rystals are rod-shaped molecules that flow
crystalline order in their arrangement. Elec-
d to control the alignment of the molecules
smission of light through the filters. Cells of
ged in an array to form pixels, each cell act-
lly controlled shutter.

vays to produce color LCDs. Active-matrix
ceptionally sharp color images but is very
ix technologies are cheaper but are difficult
produce washed-out color.

nter   A high-quality printer that resembles
f using a laser to create images on the print
am through a liquid-crystal panel. Individ-
ct as tiny shutters, blocking or transmitting
ttern on the drum. *See table at* **printer.** *Also*
tter printer.

ocessor.   A programming language that is
l intelligence research. Developed in the
at MIT, LISP is made up of expressions that
tions to the computer. These lists establish
mbolic values, and the computer performs
those relationships. Since each list yields a
other lists, there is no distinction between
hin a LISP program.

a with an organizational structure that al-
deleted in any order.

ram in source code.

manager owned by L-Soft International,
mail among the list's members. It was orig-
NET, and versions are available for Unix
latforms.

maintains mail distribution lists related to
ribing to a particular list server, a user will
eone sends a message to that list. Similarly,

anyone can send email to the whole group by sending a message to
that particular list.

literal   A letter or symbol that stands for itself as opposed to a feature,
function, or entity associated with it in a programming language.
For example, $ can be a symbol that refers to the end of a line, but
as a literal, it is a dollar sign.

lithium-ion battery   A rechargeable battery for portable computers.
Although more expensive than NiCad and NiMH batteries, it has
greater storage capacity, is lighter, and is free of poisonous metals
such as lead and mercury.

load   *v.*   **1.** To transfer a program from a storage device into a com-
puter's memory. Before a program on a disk can be executed, it must
be loaded into the computer's RAM (random-access memory).   **2.** To
transfer data into a computer's memory for processing.   **3.** To mount
an external storage device, such as a tape, floppy disk, or CD into its
drive.   **4.** To import a large amount of data into a database.
n. An amount of work that a computer undertakes at one time.

loader   A computer program that transfers data from offline memory
into internal storage.

local area network   *Abbreviated* **LAN**   A network that links together
computers and peripherals within a limited area, such as a building
or group of buildings. Each computer or device in LAN is known as
a node. The computers in a LAN have independent CPUs (central
processing units), but they are able to exchange data and files with
each other and to share such resources as laser printers.

The three principal LAN organizing structures, called topologies,
are bus, ring, and star. In a bus topology, all computers and other
devices are connected to a central cable. In a ring topology, the
computers are joined in a loop, so that a message from one passes
through each node until it reaches its proper destination. In a star
topology, all nodes are connected to one central computer, known
as the hub.

Additionally, LANs are organized as either peer-to-peer networks,
in which all computers are similarly equipped and communicate di-
rectly with one another, or client/server networks, in which a central
computer, the server, provides data and controls communication be-
tween all nodes.

Every LAN has a protocol that governs the exchange of data be-
tween nodes, and a network operating system (NOS), software that

an be issued interactively or can be em-

1 of **static random-access memory**.

:kets Layer.   An encryption standard transmitting data, especially business he Internet. Another encryption stan- ically to the World Wide Web, but SSL el, allowing for the encryption of data ls, including FTP.

d for temporary storage of information tly stored is the first to be retrieved, and t to be retrieved.

1 a self-contained, independently oper-

cedure or structure for a specific type of tandard physical structures that enable o plug into a variety of different com- ard communications methods, called a in one computer usable by other com-

an official organization, such as ANSI rds Institute), which establishes stan- guages. Other standards evolve natu- are developers attempt to create prod- with the more popular computers and d standards include the ASCII standard communications protocol.

p Language   *See* **SGML**.

topologies for a local area network, in ices, known as nodes, are connected to n as the hub. All communication be- hub. *See also* **bus, ring**. *See illustration*

munication, the bit that signals the be- *also* **stop bit**.

ains the operating system files that a king. The startup disk is usually a hard

disk; if a computer does not have a hard startup disk, a floppy startup disk must be inserted into one of the disk drives every time the computer is turned on. *Also called* **boot disk, system disk**.

statement   An elementary instruction in a high-level language. Pro- grams are made up of statements and expressions, operations, and values stated in symbolic form.

static   Unchanging or fixed. *See also* **dynamic**.

static RAM   *Abbreviated* **SRAM**   A type of random-access memory that does not need to be refreshed by the CPU (central processing unit) as often as dynamic RAM. Substantially faster than dynamic RAM, static RAM chips are also more expensive and are used for cache memory, a reserved area of memory that stores frequently used data or instructions for fast access. *See table at* **access time**.

static random-access memory   *See* **static RAM**.

stop bit   In asynchronous communication, the bit that signals the end of a byte of data. *See also* **start bit**.

storage   The places that hold computer information for subsequent use or retrieval. There are two types of storage: primary storage consists of a computer's RAM (random-access memory); secondary storage, or mass storage, refers to the places, such as hard disks or floppy disks, where large amounts of information can be permanently stored.

storage device   Any device used to record and store computer data. Among storage devices are hard disks, floppy disks, CD-ROMS, and tape.

store   To copy data onto a mass storage device, such as a floppy disk, or into memory from the CPU (central processing unit).

streaming audio   The sending and playing of audio in real time over the Internet, instead of first sending a file and playing after it has been downloaded.

streaming video   The sending and displaying of video in real time over the Internet, instead of first sending a file and displaying after it has been downloaded.

string   A set of consecutive characters treated by a computer as a single unit. Computers can perform operations on text by treating words as strings. *Also called* **character string**.

striping   On an array of disk drives, a technique for improving disk drive speed. Each file written into a striped array is spread, or