Microsoft Press

Computer Dictionary

Third Edition

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changing electrical signals and vice versa. Disk drives usually contain one head for each surface that can be read from and written to.

head arm \hed´ ärm\ *n.* *See* access arm.

head-cleaning device \hed´klē-nēng də-vīs`\ *n.* An apparatus for applying a small amount of cleaning fluid to a magnetic head to remove accumulated debris.

head crash \hed´ krash\ *n.* A hard disk failure in which a read/write head, normally supported on a cushion of air only millionths of an inch thick, comes into contact with the platter, damaging the magnetic coating in which data is recorded. Still more damage occurs when the head picks up material gouged out of the surface and pushes it. A head crash can be caused by mechanical failure or by heavy shaking of the disk drive. If the crash occurs on a directory track, the whole disk may become instantly unreadable.

header \hed´ər\ *n.* **1.** In word processing or printing, text that is to appear at the top of pages. A header might be specified for the first page, all pages after the first, even pages, or odd pages. It usually includes the page number and may also show the date or the title or other information about a document. *Also called* heading, running head. *Compare* footer. **2.** An information structure that precedes and identifies the information that follows, such as a block of bytes in communications, a file on a disk, a set of records in a database, or an executable program. **3.** One or more lines in a program that identify and describe for human readers the program, function, or procedure that follows.

header file \hed´ər fīl`\ *n.* A file that is identified to be included at the beginning of a program in a language such as C and that contains the definitions of data types and declarations of variables used by the functions in the program.

header label \hed´ər lā`bəl\ *n.* An initial structure, such as an opening record, in the linear organization of a file or communication that describes the length, type, and structure of the data that follows. *Compare* trailer label (definition 1).

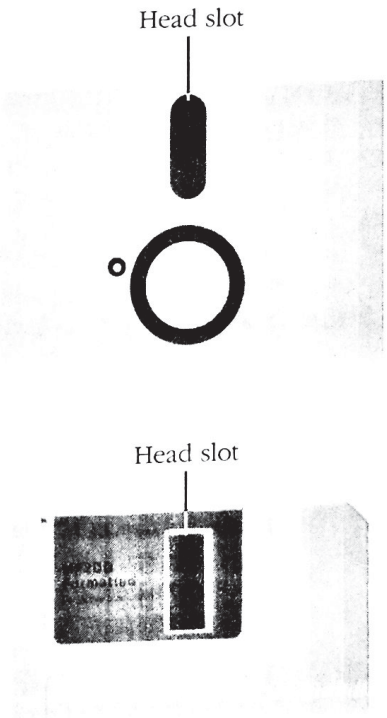
header record \hed´ər rek`ərd\ *n.* The first record in a sequence of records.

heading \hed´eng\ *n.* *See* header (definition 1).

head-per-track disk drive \hed`pər-trak` disk´ drīv\ *n.* A disk drive that has one read/write head for every data track. Such a disk drive has a very low seek time because the heads do not have to move across the disk surface to the required track for reading and writing. Because read/write heads are expensive, this type of drive is uncommon.

head positioning \hed´ pə-zish`ə-nēng\ *n.* The process of moving the read/write head of a disk drive to the proper track for reading and writing.

head slot \hed´ slot\ *n.* The oblong opening in the jacket of a floppy disk that provides access to the magnetic surface of the disk for the read/write head. See the illustration.



Head slot. *The head slots on a 5.25-inch disk (top) and a 3.5-inch disk (bottom). (The metal shutter on the 3.5-inch disk has been pulled back to show the head slot.)*

head switching \hed´ swich`ēng\ *n.* The process of electrically switching among multiple read/write heads in a disk drive.

heap \hēp\ *n.* **1.** A portion of memory reserved for a program to use for the temporary storage of data structures whose existence or size cannot be

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