

Microsoft Press

# Computer Dictionary

Third Edition

**Microsoft** Press

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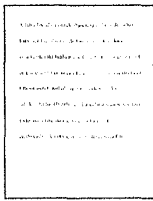
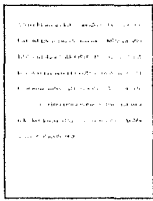
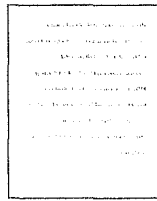
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**rag**

**rag** \rag\ *n.* Irregularity along the left or right edge of a set of lines of text on a printed page. Rag complements justification, in which one or both edges of the text form a straight vertical line. See the illustration. *See also* justify, ragged left, ragged right.

**Ragged right****Justified****Ragged left****Rag.**

**ragged left** \rag`əd left` *adj.* Of, relating to, or being lines of text whose left ends are not vertically aligned but form an irregular edge. Text may be right-justified and have a ragged left margin. Ragged-left text is used infrequently—typically, for visual effect in advertisements. *See also* rag, right-justify.

**ragged right** \rag`əd rit` *adj.* Of, relating to, or being lines of text whose right ends are not vertically aligned but form an irregular edge. Letters and other word-processed documents are commonly left-justified, with ragged-right margins. *See also* left-justify, rag.

**RAID** \rād, R`A-I-D` *n.* Acronym for **redundant array of independent disks** (formerly called **redundant array of inexpensive disks**). A data storage method in which data, along with information used for error correction, such as parity bits or Hamming codes, is distributed among two or more hard disk drives in order to improve performance and reliability. The hard disk array is governed by array management software and a disk controller, which handles the error correction. RAID is generally used on network servers. Several defined levels of RAID offer differing trade-offs among access speed, reliability, and cost. *See also* disk controller, error-correction coding, Hamming code, hard disk, parity bit, server (definition 1).

**RAID array** \rād` ə-rā`, R`A-I-D` *n.* *See* RAID.

**RAM** \ram, R`A-M` *n.* Acronym for **random access memory**. Semiconductor-based memory

**RAM disk**

that can be read and written by the central processing unit (CPU) or other hardware devices. The storage locations can be accessed in any order. Note that the various types of ROM memory are capable of random access but cannot be written to. The term *RAM*, however, is generally understood to refer to volatile memory that can be written to as well as read. *Compare* core, EPROM, flash memory, PROM, ROM (definition 2).

**RAM cache** \ram` kash, R`A-M` *n.* Cache memory that is used by the system to store and retrieve data from the RAM. Frequently accessed segments of data may be stored in the cache for quicker access compared with secondary storage devices such as disks. *See also* cache, RAM.

**RAM card** \ram` kārđ, R`A-M` *n.* An add-in circuit board containing RAM memory and the interface logic necessary to decode memory addresses.

**RAM cartridge** \ram` kār`trij, R`A-M` *n.* *See* memory cartridge.

**RAM chip** \ram` chip, R`A-M` *n.* A semiconductor storage device. RAM chips can be either dynamic or static memory. *See also* dynamic RAM, RAM, static RAM.

**RAM compression** \ram` kəm-presh`ən, R-A-M` *n.* Short for **random access memory compression**. This technology was an attempt by a number of software vendors to solve the problem of running out of global memory under Windows 3.x. Compression of the usual contents of RAM may lessen the system's need to read or write to virtual (hard disk-based) memory and thus speed up the system, as virtual memory is much slower than physical RAM. Because of the falling prices of RAM and the introduction of Windows 95 and Windows NT, which handle RAM more effectively, RAM compression is generally used only on older PCs. *See also* compression, RAM, Windows, Windows 95.

**RAMDAC** \ram`dak, R-A-M`D-A-C` *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** \ram` disk, R`A-M` *n.* Short for **random access memory disk**. A simulated disk drive