WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD™

DICTIONARY

of

COMPUTER TERMS

SIXTH EDITION

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Dictionary of Computer Terms, 6th Edition

S-HTTP   Acronym for Secure HyperText Transport Protocol. An extension of the *World Wide Web's (WWW) HyperText Transport Protocol (HTTP)* that supports secure commercial transactions on the Web. Secure HTTP provides this support in two ways: by assuring vendors that the customers attempting to buy the vendors' wares are who they say they are (authentication) and by encrypting sensitive information (such as credit-card numbers) so that it cannot be intercepted while en route. Secure HTTP was developed by Enterprise Integration Technology (EIT) and the *National Center for Supercomputer Applications (NCSA),* with subsequent commercial development by Terisa Systems. *Netscape Communications* developed a competing security technology, the Secure Sockets Layer *(SSL)* protocol. Although S-HTTP is still used by some *Web servers,* SSL has emerged as the clear de facto stand—and for good reason. S-HTTP is an application-layer protocol, which means that it cannot support secure, encrypted exchange of other types of data, including *FTP* or *NNTP* resources.

Shugart Associates Standard Interface (SASI)   An early-1980s standard for connecting *hard disks* to personal computers. SASI later became the *Small Computer System Interface (SCSI)* standard.

sig   Common abbreviation for *signature.*

SIG   See *special interest group.*

signal   The portion of a transmission that coherently represents information, unlike the random and meaningless *line noise* that occurs in the transmission channel.

signal-to-noise ratio   In *Usenet,* the ratio between meaningful content and noise (ranting, raving, and *flaming*). A good *newsgroup* has a high signal-to-noise ratio; a poor newsgroup has a low one. A major advantage of *moderated newsgroups* is to ensure a high signal-to-noise ratio. The term was originally used in electrical engineering to describe the ratio of information to background noise in an electronic circuit.

signature   1. In *e-mail* and *Usenet newsgroups,* a brief file (of approximately three or four lines) that contains the message sender's name, organization, address, e-mail address, and (option-