

# The Dictionary of Computing & Digital Media

*Terms &  
Acronyms*

Brad Hansen

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heads properly aligned. Videotape tracks are recorded diagonally. 3. One of the adjacent bands of the data spiral on a compact disc. The tracks on a hard disk exist in the form of concentric circles rather than in a spiral shape.

**trackball** (n.) An alternative input device to a mouse. A trackball functions like an upside-down mouse and requires little desktop space. Spinning the ball causes the cursor on the screen to move.

**tracking** (n.) 1. The overall amount of space between characters in a line of text. This is different from kerning, which deals with the space between certain pairs of characters. 2. In video production, lateral camera movement that is aligned with moving subjects so that the background appears to move, not the subjects. 3. The alignment of audio or video playback and record heads in relation to the tape that moves over them.

**track-relative time** (n.) A method used to determine the start and stop times of audio segments on a mixed-mode disc.

**tracks per inch** (tpi) (n.) A measurement of the density of magnetic media. A DOS-formatted, high-density, 3.5-inch floppy disk holds 135 tpi.

**traffic** (n.) Over a period of time, the number of messages transmitted on a communications circuit.

**transaction** (n.) In reference to a database system, a unit of interaction that occurs individually and coherently.

**transactional** (adj.) Describes a retail kiosk where a customer can make a credit card purchase or conduct business.

**transceiver** (n.) A system that receives, ampli-

fies, and retransmits a signal without altering the original content significantly.

**transcode** (v.) To convert from one video or graphic format to another, as opposed to encoding, which refers to the original capture or digitization of images.

**transducer** (n.) Any device that converts one form of energy into another, such as a microphone that converts varying sound pressure levels into an analogous varied stream of voltage.

**transfer rate** (n.) The rate at which digital information is transferred to or from a storage medium or device. For example, a single-speed compact disc reader transfers data at approximately 150 kilobytes per second (KBps).

**transistor** (n.) A semiconductor with three terminals used for amplification. It was invented in 1947 at Bell Labs and remains the fundamental component of most electronic circuits. Transistors are miniaturized and combined with other components to create complex integrated circuits (ICs), such as logic gates, microprocessors, and memory. The two types are the bipolar transistor (also called the *junction transistor*) and the field-effect transistor (FET).

**transistor-transistor logic** (TTL) (n.) Bipolar integrated circuit (IC) logic that employs transistors with multiple emitters.

**transit network** (n.) Any network with paths to at least two other networks. It passes traffic between those networks and carries traffic for its own hosts.

**transmission** (n.) The electronic transfer of a signal or data from one location or device to another.

**Transmission Control Protocol** (TCP) (n.)

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