

Microsoft Press

# Computer Dictionary

Third Edition

**Microsoft** Press

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**C \C\** *n.* A programming language developed by Dennis Ritchie at Bell Laboratories in 1972. It is so named because its immediate predecessor was the B programming language. Although C is considered by many to be more a machine-independent assembly language than a high-level language, its close association with the UNIX operating system, its enormous popularity, and its standardization by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) have made it perhaps the closest thing to a standard programming language in the microcomputer/workstation marketplace. C is a compiled language that contains a small set of built-in functions that are machine dependent. The rest of the C functions are machine independent and are contained in libraries that can be accessed from C programs. C programs are composed of one or more functions defined by the programmer; thus C is a structured programming language. *See also* C++, compiled language, library, Objective-C, structured programming.

**C++** \C plus-plus\ *n.* An object-oriented version of the C programming language, developed by Bjarne Stroustrup in the early 1980s at Bell Laboratories and adopted by a number of vendors, including Apple Computer and Sun Microsystems, Inc. *See also* C, object-oriented programming, Objective-C.

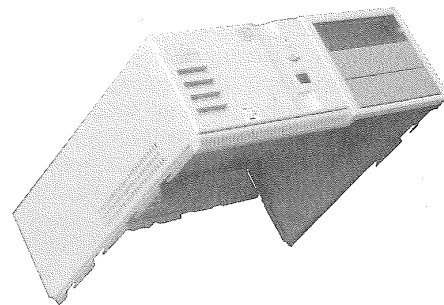
**C2** \C-tō\ *n.* The lowest level of security in the U.S. National Computer Security Center's hierarchy of criteria for trusted computer systems, requiring user logon with password and a mechanism for auditing. The C2 level is outlined in the Orange Book. *See also* Orange Book (definition 1).

**.ca** \dot{C}-A\ *n.* On the Internet, the major geographic domain specifying that an address is located in Canada.

**.cab** \dot{kab\ *n.* File extension for cabinet files, which are multiple files compressed into one and extractable with the extract.exe utility. Such files

are frequently found on Microsoft software (for example, Windows 95) distribution disks.

**cabinet** \kab'ə-nət\ *n.* The box in which the main components of a computer (CPU, the hard drive, floppy and CD-ROM drives, and expansion slots for peripheral devices, such as monitors) are located. *See the illustration. See also* CPU, expansion slot.



**Cabinet.**

**cable** \kā'bl\ *n.* A collection of wires shielded within a protective tube, used to connect peripheral devices to a computer. A mouse, a keyboard, and a printer might all be connected to a computer with cables. Printer cables typically implement a serial or a parallel path for data to travel along.

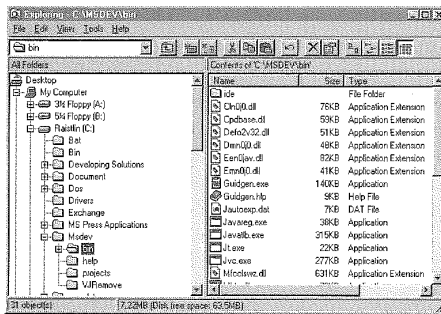
**cable connector** \kā'bl kə-nek'tər\ *n.* The connector on either end of a cable. *See also* DB connector, DIN connector, RS-232-C standard, RS-422/423/449.

**cable matcher** \kā'bl mach'ər\ *n.* A device that allows the use of a cable that has slightly different wire connections from those required by the device(s) to which it is attached.

**cable modem** \kā'bl mō'dəm\ *n.* A modem that sends and receives data through a coaxial cable television network instead of telephone lines, as with a conventional modem. Cable modems,



**drill down** \dril doun\ *vb.* To start at a top-level menu, directory, or Web page and pass through several intermediate menus, directories, or linked pages, until the file, page, menu command, or other item being sought is reached. Drilling down is common practice in searching for files or information on the Internet, where high-level Gopher menus and World Wide Web pages are frequently very general and become more specific at each lower level. See the illustration. *See also* Gopher, menu, Web page.



*Drill down.*

**drive** \driv\ *n.* *See* disk drive.

**drive bay** \driv' bā\ *n.* A hollow, rectangular area in a computer chassis designed to hold a disk drive. A drive bay always has side walls, usually made of metal, that generally contain holes to facilitate installation of a disk drive. Some drive bays, such as those intended to hold hard disks, are not visible to the user. Most drives are located on the front of the chassis so that the user can interact with the drive.

**drive letter** \driv' let'er\ *n.* The naming convention for disk drives on IBM and compatible computers. Drives are named by letter, beginning with A, followed by a colon.

**drive mapping** \driv' map'ēng\ *n.* The assignment of a letter or name to a disk drive so that the operating system or network server can identify and locate it. For example, in PCs, the primary drive mappings are A: and B: for floppy disk drives and C: for the hard disk. *See also* A:, disk drive, hard disk.

**drive number** \driv' num'bər\ *n.* The naming convention for Macintosh disk drives. For example, a two-drive system calls its drives 0 and 1.

**driver** \drī'vər\ *n.* A hardware device or a program that controls or regulates another device. A line driver, for example, boosts signals transmitted over a communications line. A device driver is a device-specific control program that enables a computer to work with a particular device, such as a printer or a disk drive. *See also* device driver.

**DRO** \D'R-O'\ *n.* Acronym for **d**estructive **r**ead-**o**ut. *See* destructive read.

**drop cap** \drop kap\ *n.* A large capital letter at the beginning of a text block that occupies the vertical depth of two or more lines of regular text. See the illustration.

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*Drop cap.*

**drop-dead halt** \drop'ded hält\ *n.* *See* dead halt.

**drop-down menu** \drop'doun men'yōō\ *n.* A menu that drops from the menu bar when requested and remains open without further action until the user closes it or chooses a menu item. *Compare* pull-down menu.

**drop in** \drop in'\ *vb.* To read a spurious signal during a data read/write operation, producing erroneous data.

**droplet** \drop'lit\ *n.* **1.** An extension for Quark Express that allows files to be dragged onto a page from the finder. **2.** A feature from Frontier that allows scripts to be embedded within an application and run when the application is double-clicked. **3.** A general name for any AppleScript program that allows files to be dragged and dropped into it for processing. *See also* AppleScript.

**drop out** \drop out\ *vb.* To lose the signal momentarily during a data read/write operation, thus producing erroneous data.

**drum** \drum\ *n.* A rotating cylinder used with some printers and plotters and (in the early days

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smaller than a postage stamp and require only a few milliwatts of power. *See also* integrated circuit.

**microfiche** \mī`krō-fēsh` \ n. A small sheet of film, about 4 by 6 inches, used for recording photographically reduced images, such as document pages, in rows and columns forming a grid pattern. The resulting images are too small to read with the naked eye, and a microfiche reader is required to view the documents. *Compare* microfilm.

**microfilm** \mī`krō-film` \ n. A thin strip of film stored on a roll and used to record sequential data images. As with microfiche, a special device magnifies the images so that they can be read. *See also* CIM (definition 2), COM (definition 4). *Compare* microfiche.

**microfloppy disk** \mī`krō-flop`ē disk` \ n. A 3.5-inch floppy disk of the type used with the Apple Macintosh and with IBM and compatible microcomputers. A microfloppy disk is a round piece of polyester film coated with ferric oxide and encased in a rigid plastic shell equipped with a sliding metal cover. On the Macintosh, a single-sided microfloppy disk can hold 400 kilobytes (KB); a double-sided (standard) disk can hold 800 KB; and a double-sided high-density disk can hold 1.44 megabytes (MB). On IBM and compatible machines, a microfloppy can hold either 720 KB or 1.44 MB of information. *See also* floppy disk.

**microform** \mī`krō-fōrm` \ n. The medium, such as microfilm or microfiche, on which a photographically reduced image, called a *microimage*, is stored. A microimage usually represents text, such as archived documents. *See also* microfiche, microfilm.

**micrographics** \mī`krō-graf`iks` \ n. The techniques and methods for recording data on microfilm. *See also* microform.

**microimage** \mī`krō-im`əj` \ n. A photographically reduced image, usually stored on microfilm or microfiche, that is too small to be read without magnification. *See also* microform, micrographics.

**microinstruction** \mī`krō-in-struk`shən` \ n. An instruction that is part of the microcode. *See also* microcode.

**microjustification** \mī`krō-ju-stə-fə-kā`shən` \ n. *See* microspace justification.

**microkernel** \mī`krō-kər`nəl` \ n. **1.** In programming, the strictly hardware-dependent part of an operating system that is intended to be portable from one type of computer to another. The microkernel provides a hardware-independent interface to the rest of the operating system, so only the microkernel needs to be rewritten to port the operating system to a different platform. *See also* kernel, operating system. **2.** A kernel that has been designed with only the basic features and typically in a modular fashion.

**micrologic** \mī`krō-loj`ik` \ n. A set of instructions, stored in binary form, or a set of electronic logic circuits that defines and governs the operation within a microprocessor.

**microminiature** \mī`krō-min`ə-chur` \ n. An extremely small circuit or other electronic component, especially one that is a refinement of an already miniaturized element.

**microphone** \mī`krō-fōn` \ n. **1.** A device that converts sound waves into analog electrical signals. Additional hardware can convert the microphone's output into digital data that a computer can process; for example, to record multimedia documents or analyze the sound signal. **2.** A communications program that runs on the Apple Macintosh computer.

**microprocessor** \mī`krō-pros`es-ər` \ n. A central processing unit (CPU) on a single chip. A modern microprocessor can have over 1 million transistors in an integrated-circuit package that is roughly 1 inch square. Microprocessors are at the heart of all personal computers. When memory and power are added to a microprocessor, all the pieces, excluding peripherals, required for a computer are present. The most popular lines of microprocessors today are the 680x0 family from Motorola, which powers the Apple Macintosh line, and the 80x86 family from Intel, which is at the core of all IBM PC-compatible and PS/2 computers. *See also* 6502, 65816, 6800, 68000, 68020, 68030, 68040, 80286, 80386DX, 80386SX, 8080, 8086, 8088, 88000, DECchip 21064, i486DX, i486DX2, i486SL, i486SX, Pentium, Pentium Pro, PowerPC, SPARC, Z80.

**microprogramming** \mī`krō-prō`gram-ēng` \ n. The writing of microcode for a processor. Some systems, chiefly minicomputers and mainframes,



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