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centralized processing *n.* The location of computer processing facilities and operations in a single (centralized) place. *Compare* decentralized processing, distributed processing.

central office *n.* In communications, the switching center where interconnections between customers' communications lines are made.

central processing unit *n.* *See* CPU.

Centronics parallel interface *n.* A de facto standard for parallel data exchange paths between computers and peripherals, originally developed by the printer manufacturer Centronics, Inc. The Centronics parallel interface provides eight parallel data lines plus additional lines for control and status information. *See also* parallel interface.

CERN \særn\ *n.* Acronym for Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire (the European Laboratory for Particle Physics). CERN, a physics research center located in Geneva, Switzerland, is where the original development of the World Wide Web took place by Tim Berners-Lee in 1989 as a method to facilitate communication among members of the scientific community. *See also* NCSA (definition 1).

CERN server *n.* One of the first Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) servers, developed at CERN by Tim Berners-Lee. The CERN server is still in wide use and is free of charge. *See also* CERN, HTTP server (definition 1).

CERT \sært\ *n.* Acronym for Computer Emergency Response Team. An organization that provides a round-the-clock security consultation service for Internet users and provides advisories whenever new virus programs and other computer security threats are discovered.

certificate authority *n.* An issuer of digital certificates, the cyberspace equivalent of identity cards. A certificate authority may be an external issuing company (such as VeriSign) or an internal company authority that has installed its own server (such as the Microsoft Certificate Server) for issuing and verifying certificates. A certificate authority is responsible for providing and assigning the unique strings of numbers that make up the "keys" used in digital certificates for authentication and to encrypt and decrypt sensitive or confidential incoming and outgoing online information. *Acronym:* CA. *See also* digital certificate, encryption.

Certificate in Computer Programming *n.* *See* CCP.

Certificate in Data Processing *n.* *See* CDP.

certification *n.* **1.** The act of awarding a document to demonstrate a computer professional's competence in a particular field. Some hardware and software suppliers, such as Microsoft and Novell, offer certification in the use of their products; other organizations, such as the Institute for Certification of Computer Professionals (ICCP) and the Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA), offer more general certification. **2.** The act of awarding a document to demonstrate that a hardware or software product meets some specification, such as being able to work with a certain other hardware or software product. **3.** The issuance of a notice that a user or site is trusted for the purpose of security and computer authentication. Often certification is used with Web sites.

certification authority *n.* An organization that assigns encryption keys.

CGA *n.* Acronym for Color/Graphics Adapter. A video adapter board introduced by IBM in 1981. The CGA is capable of several character and graphics modes, including character modes of 40 or 80 horizontal characters (columns) by 25 vertical lines with 16 colors, and graphics modes of 640 horizontal pixels by 200 vertical pixels with 2 colors, or 320 horizontal pixels by 200 vertical pixels with 4 colors. *See also* graphics adapter, video adapter.

CGI *n.* **1.** Acronym for Common Gateway Interface. The specification that defines communications between information servers (such as HTTP servers) and resources on the server's host computer, such as databases and other programs. For example, when a user submits a form through a Web browser, the HTTP server executes a program (often called a CGI script) and passes the user's input information to that program via CGI. The program then returns information to the server via CGI. Use of CGI can make a Web page much more dynamic and add interactivity for the user. *See also* CGI script, HTTP server (definition 1). **2.** *See* Computer Graphics Interface.

cgi-bin *n.* Short for Common Gateway Interface-binaries. A file directory that holds external applications to be executed by HTTP servers via CGI. *See also* CGI (definition 1).

CGI program *n.* *See* CGI script.

CGI script *n.* Short for Common Gateway Interface script. An external application that is executed by an HTTP server machine in response to a request by a

currently with the CPU using a technique called bus mastering. The PCI specification allows for multiplexing, a technique that permits more than one electrical signal to be present on the bus at one time. *See also* local bus. *Compare* VL bus.

PCL *n.* *See* Printer Control Language.

PCM *n.* *See* pulse code modulation.

PCMCIA *n.* Acronym for Personal Computer Memory Card International Association. A group of manufacturers and vendors formed to promote a common standard for PC Card-based peripherals and the slot designed to hold them, primarily on laptop, palmtop, and other portable computers, as well as for intelligent electronic devices. PCMCIA is also the name of the standard for PC Cards, first introduced in 1990 as release 1. *See also* PC Card, PCMCIA slot.

PCMCIA card *n.* *See* PC Card.

PCMCIA connector *n.* The 68-pin female connector inside a PCMCIA slot designed to hold the 68-pin male connector on a PC Card. *See also* PC Card, PCMCIA slot.

PCMCIA slot *n.* An opening in the housing of a computer, peripheral, or other intelligent electronic device designed to hold a PC Card. *Also called* PC Card slot. *See also* PC Card, PCMCIA connector.

PC memory card *n.* **1.** An add-in circuit card that increases the amount of RAM in a system. *See also* memory card. **2.** A Type I PC Card as specified by PCMCIA. In this context, such a card consists of conventional static RAM chips powered by a small battery and is designed to provide additional RAM to the system. *See also* PC Card. *Compare* flash memory.

p-code *n.* *See* pseudocode.

PCS *n.* *See* Personal Communications Services.

PCT *n.* **1.** Acronym for **program comprehension tool**. A software engineering tool that facilitates the process of understanding the structure and/or functionality of computer programs. **2.** Acronym for **Private Communication Technology**, a protocol standard drafted by Microsoft and submitted to the IETF for consideration. PCT, like the Netscape-designed SSL (Secure Sockets Layer), supports authentication and encryption for securing privacy in Internet communications.

.pcx *n.* The file extension that identifies bitmapped images in the PC Paintbrush file format.

PC/XT *n.* The second-generation of the original IBM Personal Computer. The IBM PC/XT was introduced in 1983 and was the first of the PC computers to support hard disks. *See also* IBM PC.

PC/XT keyboard *n.* The keyboard for the PC/XT. Strong, reliable, and equipped with 83 keys, the PC/XT keyboard offers a typist an audible click. *See also* IBM PC, PC/XT.

PDA *n.* Acronym for **Personal Digital Assistant**. A lightweight palmtop computer designed to provide specific functions for personal organization (calendar, note taking, database, calculator, and so on) as well as communications. More advanced models also offer multimedia features. Many PDA devices rely on a pen or other pointing device for input instead of a keyboard or mouse, although some offer a keyboard too small for touch typing to use in conjunction with a pen or pointing device. For data storage, a PDA relies on flash memory instead of power-hungry disk drives. *See also* firmware, flash memory, PC Card, pen computer.

PDC *n.* *See* Primary Domain Controller.

PD-CD drive *n.* Short for **phase change rewritable disc-compact disc drive**. A storage device that combines a CD-ROM drive and a phase change rewritable disc (PD) drive, which can store up to 650 megabytes of data on cartridges of rewritable optical discs. *See also* phase-change recording.

PDD *n.* Acronym for **Portable Digital Document**. A graphics file created from a document by QuickDraw GX under Mac OS. PDDs are stored in a form that is independent of printer resolution; they print at the highest resolution available on the printer used; and they can contain the original fonts used in the document. Therefore, a PDD can be printed by a computer other than the one on which it was created.

.pdf *n.* The file extension that identifies documents encoded in the Portable Document Format developed by Adobe Systems. In order to display or print a .pdf file, the user should obtain the freeware Adobe Acrobat Reader. *See also* Acrobat, Portable Document Format.

PDL *n.* *See* page-description language.

PDM *n.* *See* pulse duration modulation.

PDO *n.* *See* Portable Distributed Objects.

PDS *n.* **1.** Acronym for **Processor Direct Slot**. An expansion slot in Macintosh computers that is con-

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