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Webster's New World™

Dictionary of Computer Terms, 6th Edition

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**event-driven program** See *event-driven environment*.

**event handler** In an *event-driven environment*, a block of *program* code designed to handle the messages generated when a specific kind of event occurs, such as a *mouse click*.

**Excel** See *Microsoft Excel*.

**EXE** In *MS-DOS*, a file-name extension that indicates that the file is an executable *program*. To run the program with DOS, simply type the file name (but not the extension) and press Enter.

**executable file** See *executable program*.

**executable program** A *program* that is ready to run on a given computer. For a program to be executable, it first must be translated, usually by a *compiler*, into the *machine language* of a particular computer.

**execute** To carry out the instructions in an *algorithm* or *program*.

**expand** 1. In an *outlining utility* or a graphical file management utility (such as the *Windows Explorer*), to reveal all the subordinate entries below the selected outline heading or *directory*. In Explorer, for example, you can expand a directory quickly by double-clicking the directory *icon*—a folder. 2. In file compression, synonymous with *decompress*.

**expandability** The capability of a *computer system* to accommodate more *memory*, additional *disk drives*, or *adapters*. Computers vary in their expandability. When shopping for a computer, consider systems configured the way that you want but with space for growth. Look for one or two empty *drive bays*, three to five empty *expansion slots*, and room for at least four times as much *random access memory (RAM)* as comes installed.

**expanded memory** In older IBM PCs and compatibles running MS-DOS, a method of using more than 640KB of *random-access memory (RAM)*. Expanded memory works by paging blocks of data into and out of a fixed location within *conventional*



**K** Abbreviation for *kilobyte* (1024 bytes).

**K56plus** One of two competing *modulation protocols* for 56 Kbps *modems*. The K56plus standard is backed by Lucent and Rockwell; the competing x.2 standard is backed by U.S. Robotics. The two standards do not work together. A decision concerning the 56 Kbps modem standard will be made by the *ITU-TSS*.

**Kb** Abbreviation for *kilobit* (1024 bits).

**Kbps** See *bits per second (bps)*.

**Kerberos** An *authentication* system for computer networks developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Unlike server-based authentication systems, which provide only a single point of entry to the network, Kerberos enables administration and management of authentication at the network level. Passwords are encrypted to prevent interception en route.

**Kermit** An *asynchronous communications* protocol that makes the error-free transmission of program files via the telephone system easier. Developed by Columbia University and placed in the public domain, Kermit is used by academic institutions because, unlike *XMODEM*, Kermit can be implemented on mainframe systems that transmit 7 bits per byte. See *communications protocol*.

**kernel** In an *operating system*, the core portions of the program that reside in memory and perform the most essential operating system tasks, such as handling disk input and output operations and managing the internal memory.

**kerning** The adjustment of space between certain pairs of characters, so that the characters print in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

**Kerr effect** The tendency of polarized light to shift its orientation slightly when reflected from a magnetized surface. *Magneto-optical (MO) drives* rely on the Kerr effect to read and write data.