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NEWTON's TELECOM DICTIONARY

The Official Dictionary of
Telecommunications & the Internet

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16th Updated, Expanded and Much
Improved Edition

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board, which you place over certain of the keys on a phone or console. When you punch in a certain code, the buttons become what's written on the programming overlay.

Program Sharing The ability of several users or computers to use a program simultaneously.

Program Store Permanent memory in a stored program control central office that contains the machine's generic software program, parameters and translations.

Progressive Conference A PBX feature. Allows the extension user to create conferences of more than three people using the consultation hold and add-on conference features. To create a conference, an extension user typically uses the consultation hold, dials the desired internal or external number and effects an add-on conference. The conference may then be progressively expanded, in this same fashion, to the maximum capability of the phone system offering this feature. A good question to ask before you get sold this feature is "does the conferencing have amplification and balancing?" Without these features, the conferencing conversation will simply get more and more difficult to hear on.

Progressive Dialing A form of predictive dialing, progressive dialing is slightly more automated than preview dialing. The customer data is not displayed until the number is dialed, giving the agent less time to review it and a shorter time between calls. See also Predictive Dialing and Preview Dialing.

Progressive Display See Interlaced GIF.

Progressive Tuning A method of painting pictures on computer monitors or TV screens in which the picture is painted line by line. It is today's most common way of painting a picture or an image on a computer screen.

Project Evaluation Review Technique PERT. A technique for managing a project — say the installation of a PBX — which produces a guess at the project's critical path (longest task to complete) and of project milestone completion dates. See PERT.

PROM Programmable Read Only Memory. A PROM is a programmable semiconductor device in which the contents are not intended to be altered during normal operation. PROM acts like nonvolatile memory. When you install an autoboot PROM on a LAN network board, the workstation can boot up from the network server. This is particularly useful for diskless workstations.

Promiscuous Mode Most Ethernet cards ignore all the packets on the network that aren't destined for them. But in a Remote server — one serving multiple remote users all calling in over modems — the Ethernet LAN card has to get access to all the packets and grab those that are meant for it — so it can pass them over to the remote callers. I assume it's called "promiscuous mode" because it means that the Ethernet card has to have a relationship with all the packets traveling on the local area network. Another application for promiscuous mode is if you want to attach software or hardware to your computer, monitor and analyze all the packets flying around your network. You can set some (but not all) Ethernet cards to promiscuous mode.

Promotion According to various dictionaries, "promotion" means to raise in station, status, rank or honor." Once upon a time, a promotion meant you got a better title, a bigger office and a raise in pay. Today, it means that a software release or your hardware product just made a change in status from alpha test to beta test, or from beta test to general release. See also Alpha Test and Beta Test.

Prompt An audible or visible signal to the system user that

Also used to signify a need for further input and/or location of needed input. See also the next three definitions.

Prompt Tagging And Encoding According to Steve Gladstone, author of the book, "Testing Computer Telephony Systems," (available from 212-691-8215) many test applications require the test system "know" which prompt is being played by the computer telephony system. This is often accomplished by prompt tagging, also known as prompt encoding. Prompt tagging has the computer telephony system play-out an audio tone that can be heard by the test system with each prompt that is played. Prompt tagging is relatively inexpensive to perform, and inexpensive to automate. Prompt tagging can be accomplished in two ways, either by inserting tones into actual user prompts ("insert" mode), or by having a special programmatic switchable test mode that may be toggled on/off by the computer telephony system that will play out a tone sequence before or after each prompt is played ("append" mode).

Prompting Visually or audibly indicating to a user of a telephony device that a call has reached (and been accepted by) the device and is capable of being answered. This is typically done by ringing the device, flashing a lamp, or presenting a message on the device display.

Prompts 1. Recorded instructions delivered by voice processing units. Prompts may include MENUS or other information that is played each time you get into the system.

2. Messages from the computer instructing the user on how to use the system. See Menu and Audio Menu.

Proof Of Concept You're at a trade show. You go to a booth. You see some great new technology. You can't buy it. It's simply a demonstration of new technology. What's called "proof of concept." It proves that the idea works. It doesn't mean there's a market for it. The idea of "proof of concept" is to excite people — customers or security analysts. Maybe someone will place a big order or buy the company's stock?

Propagation Delay The delay caused by the finite speed at which electronic signals can travel through a transmission medium. Propagation delay is estimated at 160,000,000 meters per second in copper wire. Note: No signal can travel through any medium faster than the speed of light, which is 300,000,000 meters per second, or 186,000 miles per second. Propagation delay is not a huge issue in most communications networks or applications scenarios, with the clear exception being satellite communications. Given the fact that the originating signal must travel from the earth station 22,300 miles up to the satellite and 22,300 miles back down, a roundtrip transmission takes about 1/4 second. This level of propagation delay renders satellite communications ineffective for highly interactive data communications applications, as the users get really bored. Satellite communications also is highly aggravating for voice communications.

Propagation Time Time required for an electrical wave to travel between two points on a transmission line.

Propagation Velocity The speed at which electrons or photons travel through a transmission medium.

Propeller Head An excessively technical person, whose social skills are lacking.

Properties Windows 95 treats all objects, such as windows, icons, applications, disk drives, documents, folders, modems, and printers as self-contained objects. Each object has its own properties, such as the object's name, size position on-screen, and color, among others. You can change an object's properties using the properties dialog box.