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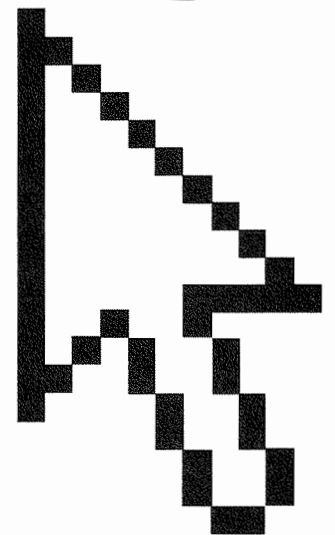
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# Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition



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are set on (1, or ous machine ssembly or

machine language situations. Condition codes are hardware-specific but usually include carry, overflow, zero result, and negative result codes. *See also* conditional branch.

**conditioning** *n.* The use of special equipment to improve the ability of a communications line to transmit data. Conditioning controls or compensates for signal attenuation, noise, and distortion. It can be used only on leased lines, where the path from sending to receiving computer is known in advance.

**conductor** *n.* A substance that conducts electricity well. Metals are good conductors, with silver and gold being among the best. The most commonly used conductor is copper. *Compare* insulator, semiconductor.

**Conference on Data Systems Languages** *n.* *See* CODASYL.

**CONFIG.SYS** *n.* A special text file that controls certain aspects of operating-system behavior in MS-DOS and OS/2. Commands in the CONFIG.SYS file enable or disable system features, set limits on resources (for example, the maximum number of open files), and extend the operating system by loading device drivers that control hardware specific to an individual computer system.

**configuration** *n.* **1.** In reference to a single microcomputer, the sum of a system's internal and external components, including memory, disk drives, keyboard, video, and generally less critical add-on hardware, such as a mouse, modem, or printer. Software (the operating system and various device drivers), the user's choices established through configuration files such as the AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files on IBM PCs and compatibles, and sometimes hardware (switches and jumpers) are needed to "configure the configuration" to work correctly. Although system configuration can be changed, as by adding more memory or disk capacity, the basic structure of the system—its architecture—remains the same. *See also* AUTOEXEC.BAT, CONFIG.SYS. **2.** In relation to networks, the entire interconnected set of hardware, or the way in which a network is laid out—the manner in which elements are connected.

**configuration file** *n.* A file that contains machine-readable operating specifications for a piece of hardware or software or that contains information on another file or on a specific user, such as the user's logon ID.

**congestion** *n.* The condition of a network when the current load approaches or exceeds the available resources and bandwidth designed to handle that load at a particular

location in the network. Packet loss and delays are associated with congestion.

**connect charge** *n.* The amount of money a user must pay for connecting to a commercial communications system or service. Some services calculate the connect charge as a flat rate per billing period. Others charge a varying rate based on the type of service or the amount of information being accessed. Still others base their charges on the number of time units used, the time or distance involved per connection, the bandwidth of each connected session, or some combination of the preceding criteria. *See also* connect time.

**connection** *n.* A physical link via wire, radio, fiberoptic cable, or other medium between two or more communications devices.

**connection-based session** *n.* A communications session that requires a connection to be established between hosts prior to an exchange of data.

**connectionism** *n.* A model in artificial intelligence that advocates using highly parallel, specialized processes that compute simultaneously and are massively connected. Thus, the connectionist approach would not use a single high-speed processor to compute an algorithm, but would break out many simple specialized processing elements that are highly connected. Neural networks are classic examples of connectionism in that each "neuron" in the network may be assigned to a single processor. *See also* algorithm, artificial intelligence, neural network.

**connectionless** *adj.* In communications, of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a method of data transmission that does not require a direct connection between two nodes on one or more networks. Connectionless communication is achieved by passing, or routing, data packets, each of which contains a source and destination address, through the nodes until the destination is reached. *See also* node (definition 2), packet (definition 2). *Compare* connection-oriented.

**connectionless session** *n.* A communications session that does not require a connection to be established between hosts prior to an exchange of data.

**connection-oriented** *adj.* In communications, of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a method of data transmission that requires a direct connection between two nodes on one or more networks. *Compare* connectionless.

**connection pooling** *n.* A resource optimization feature of ODBC (Open Database Connectivity) 3 that results in