

TX 5-190-859
#TX0005190859#

WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD™

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
MAR 26 2000
COPYRIGHT OFFICE

DICTIONARY⁵ — of — COMPUTER TERMS

EIGHTH EDITION

By Bryan Pfaffenberger, Ph.D.

IDG Books Worldwide, Inc.
An International Data Group Company
Foster City, CA • Chicago, IL • Indianapolis, IN •
New York, NY

Dedication

For Suzanne, always

Webster's New World™ Dictionary of Computer Terms, 8th Edition

Copyright © 2000 by
IDG Books Worldwide, Inc.
An International Data Group Company
919 E. Hillsdale Blvd.
Suite 400
Foster City, CA 94404

All rights reserved including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

For general information on IDG Books Worldwide's books in the U.S., please call our Consumer Customer Service department at 1-800-762-2974. For reseller information, including discounts, bulk sales, customized editions, and premium sales, please call our Reseller Customer Service department at 1-800-434-3422.

A Webster's New World™ Book

WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY is a registered trademark of IDG Books Worldwide, Inc.

Library of Congress Catalog Number: ~~98-68180~~

ISBN: 0-02-863777-1

Manufactured in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 00 1 02 03 04

99075534

QA76

.15

P395

2000
Copy 1



biological feedback device A device that translates eye movements, body movements, and even brain waves into computer input.

biometric authentication A method of authentication that requires a biological scan of some sort, such as a retinal scan or voice recognition.

BIOS Acronym for Basic Input-Output System. A set of programs encoded in read-only memory (ROM) in IBM PC-compatible computers. These programs handle startup operations such as the Power-On Self-Test (POST) and low-level control for hardware, such as disk drives, keyboard, and monitor. Popular brands of BIOS chips on motherboards sold today include Phoenix Technologies and American Megatrends, Inc. Some system components have their own BIOS chip, whose instructions are also read into the PC's memory at startup. The BIOS on a hard disk controller, for example, stores a table of tracks and sectors on the drive.

B-ISDN See *Broadband ISDN*.

bit The basic unit of information in a binary numbering system (BInary digiT). The electronic circuitry in computers detects the difference between two states (high current and low current) and represent these states as one of the two numbers in a binary system: 1 or 0. These basic high/low, either/or, yes/no units of information are called bits. Because building a reliable circuit that tells the difference between a 1 and a 0 is easy and inexpensive, computers are accurate in their internal processing capabilities, typically making fewer than one internal error in every 100 billion processing operations. Eight bits comprise 1 byte, or octet.

bit depth In a scanner, the length (expressed in bits) of the storage unit used to store information about the scanned image. The greater the bit depth, the better the scanner's resolution. A common bit depth for a home-quality scanner is 30 bits.

bit length In encryption, the length (expressed in bits) of the key used to encode and decode the text data. The greater the bit length, the stronger (less breakable) the encryption.

bitmap The representation of a video image stored in a computer's memory as a set of bits. Each picture element (pixel), corresponding to a tiny dot onscreen, is controlled by an on or