

# WILEY ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERING DICTIONARY

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**contrast control** A circuit, device, or system which controls the **contrast** (2) of reproduced images.

**contrast medium** A substance, usually a dye, which is introduced into an organ or other internal body structure which is to be analyzed via X-rays, MRI, or other similar medical diagnostic procedure, so as to enhance resolution.

**contrast range** The brightness interval between the lightest and darkest areas on a display screen, such as that of a computer or TV.

**contrast ratio** 1. For a display screen, such as that of a computer or TV, the ratio of the brightness of the lightest areas, to that of the darkest areas. 2. For a display screen, such as that of a computer or TV, the ratio of the maximum luminance, to the minimum luminance.

**control** 1. A circuit, device, component, piece of equipment, signal, mechanism, or system, or a combination of these, that operates, regulates, or manages. For instance, a control panel. 2. The operating, regulating, or managing effect a circuit, device, component, piece of equipment, signal, or system has. 3. The means by which a control system maintains the desired output. 4. A single factor or variable which is varied in two or more experiments in which the remaining factors and variables are held constant. This is done to better determine the influence of the factor or variable in question. 5. An object appearing on a computer screen, such as a push-button or scroll bar, which helps perform an action in a program. 6. Same as **control key**.

**control accuracy** In a control system, the level of correspondence between the controlled value and the ideal or specified value.

**control action** In a control system, an action taken to maintain the desired output.

**control agent** In a control system, an agent which controls a variable.

**control block** A block of computer memory that contains information used for control purposes.

**control board** Same as **control panel** (1).

**Control-Break** Same as **Ctrl-Break**.

**control bus** The conductors which carry control information between the CPU and other devices within a computer. For instance, interrupt request signals are sent over these conductors.

**control center** A location, device, console, terminal, or station which operates, regulates, or manages devices, equipment, or systems.

**control channel** A channel, such as a communications channel, that transmits control information.

**control character** 1. A character utilized to control a device, computer, piece of equipment, or system. 2. Within the ASCII character set, a **control character** (1). Such a character has an assigned numeric value, representing an ASCII code, and controls a function such as backspace. 3. A character which is typed in conjunction with the control key, such as control-A. The specific function for any given key combination will depend on which program is running.

**control circuit** 1. A circuit utilized to control a device, piece of equipment, system, or process. 2. In a computer, a circuit which responds to instructions, such as those of a control program.

**control+click** To press a computer mouse button while holding down the control key. Used, for instance, to add or remove an item to or from an already populated selection. In this context it is better suited for non-consecutive items, while a **shift+click** is simpler for consecutive items. Its abbreviation is **Ctrl+click**.

**control+clicking** To select and deselect utilizing **control+clicks**.

**control code** 1. A code utilized to control a device, computer, piece of equipment, or system. 2. In computers, a code which controls an action. Such codes may be in the form of control characters, and are utilized to control programs, peripheral devices, and the like.

**control component** A component utilized to control a device, piece of equipment, system, or process.

**control computer** A computer utilized in a control system. Used, for instance, to monitor selected parameters and send signals which maintain the desired output.

**control counter** Same as **control register**.

**control data** Computer data utilized to control data, programs, or hardware devices. Also called **control information** (1).

**control desk** Same as **console** (1).

**control device** A device which controls a given mechanism, piece of equipment, function, process, or system. An example is an infrared remote control for electronic equipment.

**control diagram** Also called **control flow diagram**, **flow-chart**, or **flow diagram**. 1. A diagram which uses a set of standard symbols to represent the sequence of operations of a system. 2. A diagram which uses a set of standard symbols to represent the sequence of operations of a computer program or system. Such a chart may show, for instance, the flow of data or the steps of a subroutine.

**control electrode** An electrode whose input is used to regulate the current of one or more other electrodes. For instance, the gate electrode in a field-effect transistor.

**control element** An element utilized to control a device, piece of equipment, system, or process.

**control field** In a computer record, a field which contains control information, such as the type of packet being transmitted.

**control flow diagram** Same as **control diagram**.

**control function** A function which controls a given piece of equipment, process, or system. For example, functions of a computer operating system.

**control grid** The **control electrode** in a vacuum tube. It is usually placed between the cathode and the anode.

**control-grid bias** In a vacuum tube, the average DC voltage applied between the control grid and the cathode.

**control information** 1. Same as **control data**. 2. Any information utilized for control purposes.

**control instruction** A computer instruction utilized to control data, programs, or hardware devices. For instance, an instruction pertaining to the operation of a peripheral. Also called **control statement** (2).

**control key** A modifier key included on computer keyboards that is used in combination with other keys to generate a function. The specific function for any given key combination will depend on which program is running. Also called **control** (6). Its abbreviation is **Ctrl**, or **Ctrl key**.

**control knob** A knob utilized to control or adjust the settings of a device or piece of equipment.

**control language** A set of language statements utilized to control programs or hardware devices. For example, a printer control language.

**control logic** The sequence of steps that hardware or software follow, to perform control functions.

**control mark** A control character or code which indicates a subdivision in a magnetic tape file. Also known as **tape mark** (2). Its abbreviation is **CM**.

**control panel** 1. A panel in which there are multiple indicators and devices, such as switches and dials, which enable a user to monitor and control a system. Used, for instance, to control an aircraft. Also called **control board**, or **panel** (1). 2. In a computer, a utility program which enables a user to  
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set many system parameters, such as keyboard and mouse characteristics, monitor resolution, and printer settings. Also called **control panel program**.

**control panel program** Same as **control panel (2)**.

**control parallel** A computer architecture in which multiple processors simultaneously and independently execute different instructions on different sets of data. Also called **multiple instruction stream-multiple data stream**.

**control point** In an automatic control system, the target value towards which the system makes adjustments. In the case of a thermostat, for instance, it would be a given temperature.

**control processor** A processor used in a control system.

**control program** A program which controls the operations of a computer, performing tasks such as managing system resources. An operating system is an example of such a program.

**control register** In a CPU, a register that contains the address of the location in memory that is to be accessed by the next instruction. May also refer to the address of the current instruction. Also called by various other names, including **control counter**, **current-instruction register**, **program counter**, **program register**, **instruction register**, **instruction counter**, and **sequence register**.

**control rod** A material utilized to control the reactivity of a nuclear reactor by absorbing neutrons. Examples include gadolinium, boron, and europium.

**control room** A room which houses the necessary devices and equipment to monitor and control a facility such as a TV recording studio or a nuclear power plant.

**control sequence** The order in which computer instructions are executed. For instance, the sequence followed while performing a given task.

**control signal** 1. A signal utilized to control a device or process. In a computer, for instance, such a signal may be an interrupt request. 2. In telecommunications, a signal that transmits control information. For example, a customer picks up a telephone receiver, hears a dial tone, dials a sequence of digits, and then gets a busy signal. All the tones heard are control signals.

**control statement** 1. A computer statement which controls the flow of execution of a program. For instance, an IF-THEN statement. 2. Same as **control instruction**.

**control station** Within a communications network, the station that manages all operations, such as the orderly flow of traffic.

**control system** A system utilized to maintain one or more output quantities within specified parameters. In a closed-loop control system, a feedback signal is incorporated for this purpose, while in an open-loop control system there is no such feedback. The components of a control system may be electrical, mechanical, thermal, and so on.

**control total** A total, composed of several numbers taken from a file, which is calculated before, during, and after processing. The numbers utilized to calculate the total do not necessarily have to be taken from numeric data. Control totals are used to verify the accuracy of processed data, or to help ensure that transmitted messages have not been tampered with. At all stages the calculated totals must match, otherwise there is an error. Also called **hash total**.

**control track** A track on a recordable magnetic medium, such as a tape or a disk, containing control signals such as tape playback speed.

**control transformer** A transformer utilized to supply a control device.

**control unit** 1. In a computer, circuitry that performs control

to memory locations. 2. A unit which controls a given mechanism, piece of equipment, function, process, or system.

**control winding** A winding that carries a current that controls the output of a machine.

**control word** A computer word which stores information used for a control function.

**controlled-avalanche device** A semiconductor device with precisely defined avalanche voltage characteristics. Such devices can absorb repeated momentary power surges without damage.

**controlled-avalanche diode** A semiconductor diode with precisely defined avalanche voltage characteristics. Such diodes can absorb repeated momentary power surges without damage, and can be used, for instance, for surge suppression.

**controlled-carrier modulation** A type of amplitude modulation in which the amplitude of the carrier wave is varied according to the percentage of modulation, providing for an essentially constant modulation factor. Also called **floating-carrier modulation**, or **variable-carrier modulation**.

**controlled environment** An enclosure, such as a room, in which measures are taken to provide an environment that meets certain requirements, such as maintaining a specified level of temperature and/or humidity, guarding against static electricity or electromagnetic radiation, or isolating from dust. Such environments may be used, for instance, for testing, or to protect sensitive electronic equipment.

**controlled-path robot** A robot whose movements are dictated by a **controlled-path system**.

**controlled-path system** A computer control system in which a path of movement is numerically described. Used, for instance, in robotics.

**controlled rectifier** A rectifier, such as a silicon-controlled rectifier, whose output current may be regulated.

**controller** 1. A circuit board or device which controls the way peripheral devices access the computer, and vice versa. It is usually contained on a single chip. Examples include disk controllers, graphics controllers, and video controllers. Also called **peripheral controller**, or **host adapter**. 2. A signal, circuit, device, or system which controls any given mechanism, function, process, or piece of equipment. An example is an infrared remote control for electronic equipment. 3. A circuit, mechanism, device, or system, which monitors one or more variables, and automatically makes the necessary adjustments in order to maintain operation within the specified parameters. Also known as **automatic controller**. 4. The computer and programs which control a robot. Also called **controller system**, or **robot controller**.

**controller card** A circuit board which controls the way peripheral devices access the computer, and vice versa. Examples include disk controllers, graphics controllers, and SCSI controllers.

**controller system** 1. A system which monitors one or more variables, and automatically makes the necessary adjustments, in order to maintain operation within the specified parameters. 2. Same as **controller (4)**.

**convection** The transmission of energy or matter through a medium, which is itself moved. For instance, in convection cooling, the air transferring the heat moves along with the heat. This contrasts with **conduction**, where the medium itself is not moved as a whole, and with **radiation**, where waves or particles are emitted.

**convection cooling** A process by which an object transfers heat to the surrounding air. The heated air is less dense,