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Acquisitions Editor: Kim Fryer
Project Editor: Maureen Williams Zimmerman, Anne Taussig
Technical Editors: Dail Magee Jr., Gary Nelson, Jean Ross, Jim Fuchs, John Conrow, Kurt Meyer, Robert Lyon, Roslyn Lutsch

computer off before saving any data, a blackout will cause all unsaved data to be irretrievably lost. The most potentially damaging situation is one in which a blackout occurs while a disk drive is reading information from or writing information to a disk. The information being read or written will probably become corrupted, causing the loss of a small part of a file, an entire file, or the entire disk; the disk drive itself might suffer damage as a result of the sudden power loss. The only reliable means of preventing damage caused by a blackout is to use a battery-backed uninterruptible power supply (UPS). *See also* UPS. *Compare* brownout.

blank[1] \blānk\ *n.* The character entered by pressing the spacebar. *See also* space character.

blank[2] \blānk\ *vb.* To not show or not display an image on part or all of the screen.

blanking \blān´kēng\ *n.* The brief suppression of a display signal as the electron beam in a raster-scan video monitor is moved into position to display a new line. After tracing each scan line, the beam is at the right edge of the screen and must return to the left (horizontal retrace) to begin a new line. The display signal must be turned off during the time of the retrace (horizontal blanking interval) to avoid overwriting the line just displayed. Similarly, after tracing the bottom scan line, the electron beam moves to the top left corner (vertical retrace), and the beam must be turned off during the time of this retrace (vertical blanking interval) to avoid marking the screen with the retrace path.

blast \blast\ *vb. See* burn.

bleed \blēd\ *n.* In a printed document, any element that runs off the edge of the page or into the gutter. Bleeds are often used in books to mark important pages so they are easier to find. *See also* gutter.

blind carbon copy \blīnd` kär`bən kop´ē\ *n. See* bcc.

blind courtesy copy \blīnd` kər´tə-sē kop`ē\ *n. See* bcc.

blind search \blīnd sərch´\ *n.* A search for data in memory or on a storage device with no foreknowledge as to the data's order or location. *See also* linear search. *Compare* binary search, indexed search.

blink \blēnk\ *vb.* To flash on and off. Cursors, insertion points, menu choices, warning messages, and other displays on a computer screen that are intended to catch the eye are often made to blink. The rate of blinking in a graphical user interface can sometimes be controlled by the user.

blink speed \blēnk´ spēd\ *n.* The rate at which the cursor indicating the active insertion point in a text window, or other display element, flashes on and off.

blip \blip\ *n.* A small, optically sensed mark on a recording medium, such as microfilm, that is used for counting or other tracking purposes.

bloatware \blōt´wâr\ *n.* Software whose files occupy an extremely large amount of storage space on a user's hard disk, especially in comparison with previous versions of the same product.

block[1] \blok\ *n.* **1.** Generally, a contiguous collection of similar things that are handled together as a whole. **2.** A section of random access memory temporarily assigned (allocated) to a program by the operating system. **3.** A group of statements in a program that are treated as a unit. For example, if a stated condition is true, all of the statements in the block are executed, but none are executed if the condition is false. **4.** A unit of transmitted information consisting of identification codes, data, and error-checking codes. **5.** A collection of consecutive bytes of data that are read from or written to a device (such as a disk) as a group. **6.** A rectangular grid of pixels that are handled as a unit. **7.** A segment of text that can be selected and acted upon as a whole in an application.

block[2] \blok\ *vb.* **1.** To distribute a file over fixed-size blocks in storage. **2.** To prevent a signal from being transmitted. **3.** To select a segment of text, by using a mouse, menu selection, or cursor key, to be acted upon in some way, such as to format or to delete the segment.

block cipher \blok´ sī`fər\ *n.* A private key encryption method that encrypts data in blocks of a fixed size (usually 64 bits). The encrypted data block contains the same number of bits as the original. *See also* encryption, private key.

block cursor \blok´ kur`sər\ *n.* An on-screen cursor that has the same width and height in pixels as a text-mode character cell. A block cursor is used in text-based applications, especially as the mouse

be created and destroyed as required. *See also* allocate, deallocate. *Compare* static allocation.

dynamic binding \dī-nam`ik bīn`dēng\ *n.* Binding (converting symbolic addresses in the program to storage-related addresses) that occurs during program execution. The term often refers to object-oriented applications that determine, during run time, which software routines to call for particular data objects. *Also called* late binding. *Compare* static binding.

dynamic caching \dī-nam`ik kash´ēng\ *n.* A technique for storing recently used data in memory where cache size is based on how much memory is available rather than how much memory is assigned to the application currently running.

Dynamic Data Exchange \dī-nam`ik dā´tə eks-chānj`, dat´ə\ *n. See* DDE.

dynamic dump \dī-nam`ik dump´\ *n.* A listing, either stored on disk or sent to a printer, of memory contents generated at the time of a break in the execution of a program—a useful tool for programmers interested in knowing what is happening at a certain point in the execution of a program.

Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol \dī-nam`ik hōst´ kən-fi-gyər-ā`shən prō`tə-kol\ *n. See* DHCP.

dynamic keys \dī-nam`ik kēz´\ *n.* An encryption technique in which messages are encrypted differently for each transmission based on different keys so that if a key is captured and decrypted, it would never be useful again. *See also* encryption, key (definition 3).

dynamic-link library \dī-nam`ik-lēnk lī´brâr-ē\ *n.* A feature of the Microsoft Windows family of operating systems and OS/2 that allows executable routines to be stored separately as files with DLL extensions and to be loaded only when needed by a program. A dynamic-link library has several advantages. First, it does not consume any memory until it is used. Second, because a dynamic-link library is a separate file, a programmer can make corrections or improvements to only that module without affecting the operation of the calling program or any other dynamic-link library. Finally, a programmer can use the same dynamic-link library with other programs. *Acronym:* DLL (D`L-L´).

dynamic memory allocation \dī-nam`ik mem´ər-ē al-ə-kā`shən\ *n.* The allocation of memory to a process or program at run time. Dynamic memory is allocated from the system heap by the operating system upon request from the program.

dynamic page \dī-nam`ik pāj´\ *n.* An HTML document that contains animated GIFs, Java applets, or ActiveX controls. *See also* ActiveX controls, GIF, HTML, Java applet.

dynamic RAM \dī-nam`ik ram´, R-A-M´\ *n.* A form of semiconductor random access memory (RAM). Dynamic RAMs store information in integrated circuits containing capacitors. Because capacitors lose their charge over time, dynamic RAM boards must include logic to refresh (recharge) the RAM chips continuously. While a dynamic RAM is being refreshed, it cannot be read by the processor; if the processor must read the RAM while it is being refreshed, one or more wait states occur. Despite being slower, dynamic RAMs are more commonly used than RAMs because their circuitry is simpler and because they can hold up to four times as much data. *Acronym:* DRAM (dram, D´ram). *See also* RAM. *Compare* static RAM.

dynamic random access memory \dī-nam`ik ran`dəm ak-ses mem´ər-ē\ *n. See* dynamic RAM.

dynamic relocation \dī-nam`ik rē-lō-kā´shən\ *n.* The relocation in memory of data or of the code of a currently running program by an internal system routine. Dynamic relocation helps a computer use memory efficiently.

dynamic scheduling \dī-nam`ik skej`ə-lēng\ *n.* The management of concurrently running processes (programs), usually by the operating system.

dynamic SLIP \dī-nam`ik slip´, S`L-I-P´\ *n.* Short for **dynamic** **S**erial **L**ine **I**nternet **P**rotocol. Internet access under SLIP in which the user's IP address is not permanent but is reassigned from a pool each time the user connects. The number of IP addresses an Internet service provider needs to offer is reduced to the number of connections that can be in use at once, rather than the total number of subscribers. *See also* IP address, ISP, SLIP.

dynamic storage \dī-nam`ik stōr`əj\ *n.* **1.** Information storage systems whose contents will be lost if power is removed from the system. RAM (random access memory) systems are the most

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