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Microsoft

Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition

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PUBLISHED BY

Microsoft Press
A Division of Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, Washington 98052-6399

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Microsoft Computer Dictionary.--5th ed.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-7356-1495-4

1. Computers--Dictionaries. 2. Microcomputers--Dictionaries.

AQ76.5. M52267 2002
004'.03--dc21

200219714

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 QWT 7 6 5 4 3 2

Distributed in Canada by H.B. Fenn and Company Ltd.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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Acquisitions Editor: Alex Blanton

Project Editor: Sandra Haynes

Body Part No. X08-41929

Contributors

Peter Aiken

Bart Arenson

Janice Borzendowski

Jerome Colburn

Duane Hanson

Andrew Himes

Robert Howecton

Annette B. Jackson

Larry S. Jackson

Thomas A. Jackson

Chris Kinata

Ilana Kingsley

Robin Lombard

Thomas A. Long

William G. Madison

Thomas P. Magliery

David Mason

Terrence M. McLaren

Wallace Parker

Charles Petzold

Phil Rose

John Ross

David Rygmyr

Aimée Truchard

Michael Vose

Bruce Webster

Judson D. Weeks

Tom Winn

JoAnne Woodcock

Illustrators

Travis Beaven

David Holter

Alton Lawson

Rob Nance

Joel Panchot

ActiveSync *n.* A Microsoft program that manages synchronization of information, including e-mail, schedules, and application files, between a handheld PC and a desktop computer.

active vision *n.* A branch of computer vision research that believes robotic vision problems can be solved by allowing a robot to collect and analyze a sequence of images dynamically from changing viewpoints. Not unlike human or animal vision, active vision uses the information derived from multiple viewpoints to gain a greater depth of perception, resolve haziness, and establish relationships between the visual representation of an action and the action itself. Active vision systems may be characterized by simple image-processing algorithms, little or no calibration, and fast real-time hardware. *See also* artificial intelligence, computer vision, robotics.

active window *n.* In an environment capable of displaying multiple on-screen windows, the window containing the display or document that will be affected by current cursor movements, commands, and text entry. *See also* graphical user interface. *Compare* inactive window.

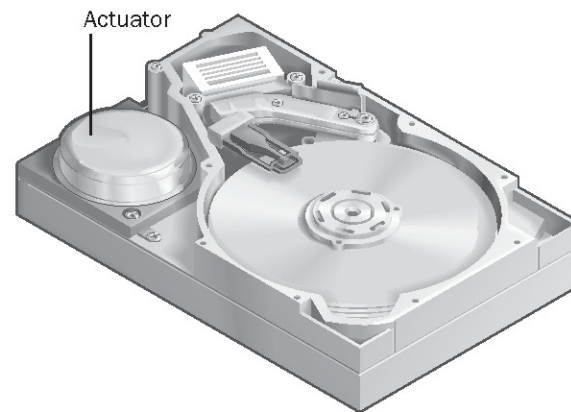
ActiveX *n.* A set of technologies that enables software components to interact with one another in a networked environment, regardless of the language in which the components were created. ActiveX, which was developed by Microsoft in the mid 1990s and is currently administered by the Open Group, is built on Microsoft's Component Object Model (COM). Currently, ActiveX is used primarily to develop interactive content for the World Wide Web, although it can be used in desktop applications and other programs. ActiveX controls can be embedded in Web pages to produce animation and other multimedia effects, interactive objects, and sophisticated applications. *See also* ActiveX control, COM. *Compare* applet, plug-in (definition 2).

ActiveX control *n.* A reusable software component based on Microsoft's ActiveX technology that is used to add interactivity and more functionality, such as animation or a popup menu, to a Web page, applications, and software development tools. An ActiveX control can be written in any of a number of languages, including Java, C++, and Visual Basic. *See also* ActiveX. *Compare* helper program.

activity ratio *n.* The number of records in use compared with the total number of records in a database file. *See also* database, record¹.

ACTOR *n.* An object-oriented language developed by The Whitewater Group, Ltd., designed primarily to facilitate Microsoft Windows programming. *See also* object-oriented programming.

actuator *n.* A disk drive mechanism for moving the read/write head(s) to the location of the desired track on a disk. *See the illustration. See also* disk drive, stepper motor, voice coil.



Actuator.

Ada *n.* A high-level programming language designed under the direction of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) in the late 1970s and intended to be the primary language for DoD software development. Originally based on Pascal, Ada supports real-time operations and multitasking. The language was named after Augusta Ada Byron, who assisted Charles Babbage in developing programs for his Analytical Engine, the first mechanical computer, in the nineteenth century. *See also* multitasking, Pascal, real-time.

adapter or **adaptor** *n.* A printed circuit board that enables a personal computer to use a peripheral device, such as a CD-ROM drive, modem, or joystick, for which it does not already have the necessary connections, ports, or circuit boards. Commonly, a single adapter card can have more than one adapter on it. *Also called:* interface card. *See also* controller, expansion board, network adapter, port¹, video adapter.

adapter card or **adaptor card** *n.* *See* adapter.

3-D-rendered sphere



3-D-rendered sphere with bump mapping



Bump mapping. A 3-D-rendered sphere showing bump mapping.

bundle *vb.* To combine products for sale as a lot. Frequently, operating system software and some widely used applications are bundled with a computer system for sale.

bundled software *n.* **1.** Programs sold with a computer as part of a combined hardware/software package. **2.** Smaller programs sold with larger programs to increase the latter's functionality or attractiveness.

burn *vb.* **1.** To write data electronically into a programmable read-only memory (PROM) chip by using a special programming device known variously as a PROM programmer, PROM blower, or PROM blaster. *Also called:* blast, blow. *See also* PROM. **2.** To create read-only memory compact discs (CD-ROMs). **3.** To write data electronically on a flash memory chip or a PC Card Type III. Unlike PROM chips or CD-ROM, flash memory media can be burned, or flashed, repeatedly with new information. *Also called:* flash.

burn in *vb.* **1.** To keep a new system or device running continuously so that any weak elements or components will fail early and can be found and corrected before the system becomes an integral part of the user's work routine. Such a test is often performed at the factory before a device is shipped. **2.** To make a permanent change in the phosphor coating on the inside of a monitor screen by leaving the monitor on and keeping a bright, unchanging image on the screen for extended periods. Such an image will remain visible after the monitor is turned off. Burning in was a danger with older PC monitors; it is no longer a concern with most new PC monitors. *Also called:* ghosting.

burst¹ *n.* Transfer of a block of data all at one time without a break. Certain microprocessors and certain buses have features that support various types of burst transfers. *See also* burst speed (definition 1).

burst² *vb.* To break fanfold continuous-feed paper apart at its perforations, resulting in a stack of separate sheets.

burster *n.* A device used to burst, or break apart at the perforations, fanfold continuous-feed paper.

burst extended-data-out RAM *n.* *See* BEDO DRAM.

burst mode *n.* A method of data transfer in which information is collected and sent as a unit in one high-speed transmission. In burst mode, an input/output device takes control of a multiplexer channel for the time required to send its data. In effect, the multiplexer, which normally merges input from several sources into a single high-speed data stream, becomes a channel dedicated to the needs of one device until the entire transmission has been sent. Burst mode is used both in communications and between devices in a computer system. *See also* burst¹.

burst rate *n.* *See* burst speed (definition 1).

burst speed *n.* **1.** The fastest speed at which a device can operate without interruption. For example, various communications devices (as on networks) can send data in bursts, and the speed of such equipment is sometimes measured as the burst speed (the speed of data transfer while the burst is being executed). *Also called:* burst rate. **2.** The number of characters per second that a printer can print on one line without a carriage return or linefeed. Burst speed measures the actual speed of printing, without consideration of the time taken to advance paper or to move the print head back to the left margin. Almost always, the speed claimed by the manufacturer is the burst speed. By contrast, *throughput* is the number of characters per second when one or more entire pages of text are being printed and is a more practical measurement of printer speed in real-life situations.

bursty *adj.* Transmitting data in spurts, or bursts, rather than in a continuous stream.

bus *n.* A set of hardware lines (conductors) used for data transfer among the components of a computer system. A bus is essentially a shared highway that connects different parts of the system—including the processor, disk-drive controller, memory, and input/output ports—and enables them to transfer information. The bus consists of specialized groups of lines that carry different types of information. One group of lines carries data; another carries memory addresses (locations) where data items are to be found; yet another carries control signals. Buses are characterized by the number of bits they can transfer at a single

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