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Microsoft

Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition

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Acquisitions Editor: Alex Blanton

Project Editor: Sandra Haynes

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read¹ *n.* The action of transferring data from an input source into a computer's memory or from memory into the CPU (central processing unit). *Compare* write¹.

read² *vb.* To transfer data from an external source, such as from a disk or the keyboard, into memory or from memory into the central processing unit (CPU). *Compare* write².

read-after-write *n.* A feature of certain data storage devices, such as tape drives, in which the device reads data immediately after it is written as a means of verifying data integrity.

reader *n.* *See* card reader.

Reader *n.* *See* Microsoft Reader.

read error *n.* An error encountered while a computer is in the process of obtaining information from storage or from another source of input. *Compare* write error.

README *n.* A file containing information that the user either needs or will find informative and that might not have been included in the documentation. README files are placed on disk in plain-text form (without extraneous or program-specific characters) so that they can be read easily by a variety of word processing programs.

read notification *n.* An e-mail feature providing feedback to the sender that a message has been read by the recipient.

read-only *adj.* Capable of being retrieved (read) but not changed (written). A read-only file or document can be displayed or printed but not altered in any way. Read-only memory (ROM) holds programs that cannot be changed; a read-only storage medium, such as CD-ROM, can be played back but cannot be used for recording information. *Compare* read/write.

read-only attribute *n.* A file attribute, stored with a file's directory entry, indicating whether or not a file may be changed or erased. When the read-only attribute is off, the file can be modified or deleted; when it is on, the file can only be displayed.

read-only memory *n.* *See* ROM.

read-only terminal *n.* *See* RO terminal.

read/write *adj.* Able to be both read from and written to. *Abbreviation:* R/W. *Compare* read-only.

read/write channel *n.* *See* input/output channel.

read/write head *n.* *See* head.

read/write memory *n.* Memory that can be both read from and written to (modified). Semiconductor RAM and core memory are typical read/write memory systems. *Compare* ROM (definition 2).

real address *n.* An absolute (machine) address specifying a physical location in memory. *See also* physical address. *Compare* relative address, virtual address.

RealAudio *n.* Streaming audio technology developed by RealNetworks, Inc., for distributing radio and FM-quality sound files over the Internet in real time. RealAudio is based on two components: client software for decompressing the sound on the fly and server software for delivering it. The client software is free, distributed either as a downloadable program or as part of browser software. *See also* RealPlayer, RealVideo, stream, streaming.

realloc *n.* A function in C that allows the programmer to request a larger portion of heap memory than was previously assigned to a particular pointer. *See also* dynamic memory allocation, heap (definition 1).

reallysafe palette *n.* A color look-up table (CLUT) consisting of 22 colors from the 216-color websafe palette that are completely consistent when viewed with all Web browsers on all major computer platforms. The reallysafe palette arose from an experiment that indicated that most of the colors of the websafe palette shift to some degree in different viewing environments. *See also* browser CLUT, websafe palette.

real mode *n.* An operating mode in the Intel 80x86 family of microprocessors. In real mode, the processor can execute only one program at a time. It can access no more than about 1 MB of memory, but it can freely access system memory and input/output devices. Real mode is the only mode possible in the 8086 processor and is the only operating mode supported by MS-DOS. In contrast, the protected mode offered in the 80286 and higher microprocessors provides the memory management and memory protection needed for multitasking environments such as Windows. *See also* 8086, privileged mode. *Compare* protected mode, virtual real mode.

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