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data flow or **dataflow** *n.* **1.** The movement of data through a system, from entry to destination. **2.** In parallel processing, a design in which a calculation is made either when all necessary data is available (data-driven processing) or when other processors request the data (demand-driven processing). *See also* parallel processing.

data fork *n.* In Macintosh files, the part of a stored document that contains user-supplied information, such as the text of a word-processing document. A Macintosh file can have a data fork, a resource fork (which contains information such as program code, font data, digitized sound, or icons), and a header. All three parts are used by the operating system in file management and storage. *See also* resource (definition 2), resource fork.

data format *n.* The structure applied to data by an application program to provide a context in which the data can be interpreted.

data frame *n.* A packet of information transmitted as a unit on a network. Data frames are defined by the network's data-link layer and exist only on the wire between network nodes. *See also* data-link layer, frame (definition 2).

data glove *n.* A data input device or controller in the form of a glove fitted with sensors that convert movement of the hand and fingers into commands. *See also* virtual reality.

datagram *n.* One packet, or unit, of information, along with relevant delivery information such as the destination address, that is sent through a packet-switching network. *See also* packet switching.

data independence *n.* The separation of data in a database from the programs that manipulate it. Data independence makes stored data as accessible as possible.

data integrity *n.* The accuracy of data and its conformity to its expected value, especially after being transmitted or processed.

data interchange format *n.* A format consisting of ASCII codes in which database, spreadsheet, and similar documents can be structured to facilitate their use by and transfer to other programs. *Acronym:* DIF. *See also* ASCII.

data item *n. See* data element.

data library *n.* A cataloged collection of data files on disk or in another storage medium.

data link *n.* A connection between any two devices capable of sending and receiving information, such as a computer and a printer or a main computer and a terminal. Sometimes the term is extended to include equipment, such as a modem, that enables transmission and receiving. Such devices follow protocols that govern data transmission. *See also* communications protocol, data-link layer, DCE (definition 1), DTE.

Data Link Connection Identifier *n.* A virtual circuit on frame relay networks that permanently identifies the path to a particular destination. *See also* frame relay, virtual circuit.

Data Link Control *n. See* DLC.

data link escape *n.* In data transmission, a control character that changes the meaning of the characters immediately following it.

data-link layer *n.* The second of seven layers in the ISO/OSI reference model for standardizing computer-to-computer communications. The data-link layer is one layer above the physical layer. Its concern is packaging and addressing data and managing the flow of transmissions. It is the lowest of the three layers (data-link, network, and transport) involved in actually moving data between devices. See the illustration. *See also* ISO/OSI reference model.

ISO/OSI MODEL

ISO/OSI Layer	*Focus*
Application *(highest level)*	Program-to-program transfer of information
Presentation	Text formatting and display, code conversion
Session	Establishing, maintaining, and coordinating communication
Transport	Accurate delivery, service quality
Network	Transport routes, message handling and transfer
Data-link	Coding, addressing, and transmitting information
Physical	Hardware connections

Data-link layer on ISO/OSI reference model.

data management *n.* The control of data from acquisition and input through processing, output, and storage. In microcomputers, hardware manages data by gathering it, moving it, and following instructions to process it. The operating system manages the hardware and ensures that

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