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Microsoft

Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition

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Usually a combination of hardware and software, a firewall prevents computers in the organization's network from communicating directly with computers external to the network and vice versa. Instead, all communication is routed through a proxy server outside of the organization's network, and the proxy server decides whether it is safe to let a particular message or file pass through to the organization's network. *See also* proxy server.

firewall sandwich *n.* The use of load-balancing appliances on both sides of Internetworked firewalls to distribute both inbound and outbound traffic among the firewalls. The firewall sandwich architecture helps to prevent firewalls from degrading network performance and creating a single point of network failure. *See also* firewall, load balancing.

FireWire *n.* A high-speed serial bus from Apple that implements the IEEE 1394 standard. *See also* IEEE 1394.

firmware *n.* Software routines stored in read-only memory (ROM). Unlike random access memory (RAM), read-only memory stays intact even in the absence of electrical power. Startup routines and low-level input/output instructions are stored in firmware. It falls between software and hardware in terms of ease of modification. *See also* RAM, ROM.

FIR port *n.* Short for **fast infrared port**. A wireless I/O port, most common on a portable computer, that exchanges data with an external device using infrared light. *See also* infrared, input/output port.

FIRST *n.* Acronym for **Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams**. An organization within the Internet Society (ISOC) that coordinates with CERT in order to encourage information sharing and a unified response to security threats. *See also* CERT, Internet Society.

first-generation computer *n.* *See* computer.

first in, first out *n.* A method of processing a queue, in which items are removed in the same order in which they were added—the first in is the first out. Such an order is typical of a list of documents waiting to be printed. *Acronym:* FIFO. *See also* queue. *Compare* last in, first out.

first normal *n.* *See* normal form (definition 1).

fishbowl *n.* A secure area within a computer system in which intruders can be contained and monitored. A fishbowl is typically set up by a security administrator to impersonate important applications or information so that

the system administrator can learn more about hackers who have broken into the network without the hacker learning more about or damaging the system. *See also* honeypot.

fitting *n.* The calculation of a curve or other line that most closely approximates a set of data points or measurements. *See also* regression analysis.

five-nines availability *n.* The availability of a system 99.999 percent of the time. *See also* high availability.

FIX *n.* Acronym for **Federal Internet Exchange**. A connection point between the U.S. government's various internets and the Internet. There are two Federal Internet Exchanges: FIX West, in Mountain View, California; and FIX East, in College Park, Maryland. Together, they link the backbones of MILNET, ESnet (the TCP/IP network of the Department of Energy), and NSInet (NASA Sciences Internet) with NSFnet. *See also* backbone (definition 1), MILNET, NSFnet, TCP/IP.

fixed disk *n.* *See* hard disk.

fixed-length field *n.* In a record or in data storage, a field whose size in bytes is predetermined and constant. A fixed-length field always takes up the same amount of space on a disk, even when the amount of data stored in the field is small. *Compare* variable-length field.

fixed-pitch spacing *n.* *See* monospacing.

fixed-point arithmetic *n.* Arithmetic performed on fixed-point numbers. *See also* fixed-point notation.

fixed-point notation *n.* A numeric format in which the decimal point has a specified position. Fixed-point numbers are a compromise between integral formats, which are compact and efficient, and floating-point numeric formats, which have a great range of values. Like floating-point numbers, fixed-point numbers can have a fractional part, but operations on fixed-point numbers usually take less time than floating-point operations. *See also* floating-point notation, integer.

fixed space *n.* A set amount of horizontal space used to separate characters in text—often, the width of a numeral in a given font. *See also* em space, en space, thin space.

fixed spacing *n.* *See* monospacing.

fixed storage *n.* Any nonremovable storage, such as a large disk that is sealed permanently in its drive.

fixed-width font *n.* *See* monospace font.

fixed-width spacing *n.* *See* monospacing.

