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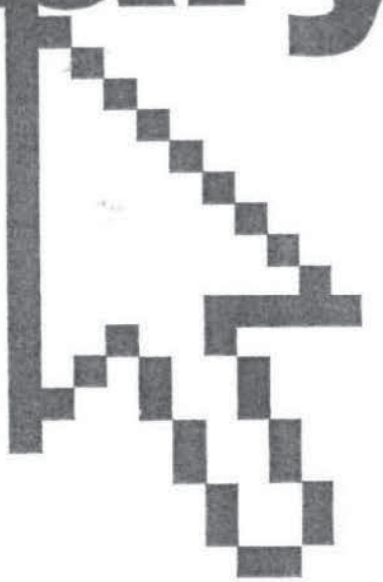
Fourth Edition



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D

DA *n. See* desk accessory.

DAC \dak\ *n. See* digital-to-analog converter.

daemon *n.* A program associated with UNIX systems that performs a housekeeping or maintenance utility function without being called by the user. A daemon sits in the background and is activated only when needed, for example, to correct an error from which another program cannot recover.

daisy chain[1] *n.* A set of devices connected in series. In order to eliminate conflicting requests to use the channel (bus) to which all the devices are connected, each device is given a different priority. SCSI (**S**mall **C**omputer **S**ystem **I**nterface) and the newer USB (**U**niversal **S**erial **B**us) both support daisy chained devices. *See also* SCSI, USB.

daisy chain[2] *vb.* To connect a series of devices, one to another, like daisies in a chain of flowers.

daisy wheel *n.* A print element consisting of a set of formed characters with each character mounted on a separate type bar, all radiating from a center hub. *See also* daisy-wheel printer, thimble, thimble printer.

daisy-wheel printer *n.* A printer that uses a daisy-wheel type element. Daisy-wheel output is crisp and slightly imprinted, with fully formed characters resembling typewriter quality. Daisy-wheel printers were standard for high-quality printing until being superseded by laser printers. *See also* daisy wheel, thimble, thimble printer.

damping *n.* A technique for preventing overshoot (exceeding the desired limit) in the response of a circuit or device.

D-AMPS *n.* Acronym for **D**igital **A**dvanced **M**obile **P**hone Service. The digital form of the analog AMPS cellular phone service. D-AMPS, sometimes spelled DAMPS, differs from AMPS in being digital and in tripling the number of available channels by using time division multiple access (TDMA) to divide each of the 30 AMPS channels into three separate channels. *See also* AMPS, FDMA, TDMA.

DAP \dap\ *n. See* Directory Access Protocol.

dark fiber *n.* Unused capacity in fiber-optic communications.

Darlington circuit *n.* An amplifier circuit made of two transistors, often mounted in the same housing. The collectors of the two transistors are connected, and the emitter of the first is connected to the base of the second. Darlington circuits provide high-gain amplification. *Also called* Darlington pair.

Darlington pair *n. See* Darlington circuit.

DARPA \där´pə\ *n. See* Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

DARPANET \där´pə-net`\ *n.* Short for **D**efense **A**dvanced **R**esearch **P**rojects **A**gency **Net**work. *See* ARPANET.

DAS *n. See* dual attachment station.

DASD \daz´dē\ *n.* Acronym for **d**irect **a**ccess **s**torage **d**evice. A data storage device by which information can be accessed directly, instead of by passing sequentially through all storage areas. For example, a disk drive is a DASD, but a tape unit is not, because, with a tape unit, the data is stored as a linear sequence. *See also* direct access. *Compare* sequential access.

.dat *n.* A generic file extension for a data file.

DAT \dat\ *n. See* digital audio tape, dynamic address translation.

data *n.* Plural of the Latin *datum,* meaning an item of information. In practice, *data* is often used for the singular as well as the plural form of the noun. *Compare* information.

data acquisition *n.* The process of obtaining data from another source, usually one outside a specific system.

data aggregate *n.* A collection of data records. It usually includes a description of the placement of the data blocks and their relation to the entire set.

data attribute *n.* Structural information about data that describes its context and meaning.

data bank *n.* Any substantial collection of data.

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database *n.* A file composed of records, each containing fields together with a set of operations for searching, sorting, recombining, and other functions.

database administrator *n.* One who manages a database. The administrator determines the content, internal structure, and access strategy for a database, defines security and integrity, and monitors performance. *Acronym:* DBA. *Also called* database manager.

database analyst *n.* One who provides the analytic functions needed to design and maintain applications requiring a database.

database designer *n.* One who designs and implements functions required for applications that use a database.

database engine *n.* The program module or modules that provide access to a database management system (DBMS).

database machine *n.* **1.** A peripheral that executes database tasks, thereby relieving the main computer from performing them. **2.** A database server that performs only database tasks.

database management system *n.* A software interface between the database and the user. A database management system handles user requests for database actions and allows for control of security and data integrity requirements. *Acronym:* DBMS. *Also called* database manager. *See also* database engine.

database manager *n.* *See* database administrator, database management system.

database publishing *n.* The use of desktop publishing or Internet technology to produce reports containing information obtained from a database.

database server *n.* A network node, or station, dedicated to storing and providing access to a shared database. *Also called* database machine.

database structure *n.* A general description of the format of records in a database, including the number of fields, specifications regarding the type of data that can be entered in each field, and the field names used.

data bit *n.* In asynchronous communications, one of a group of from 5 to 8 bits that represents a single character of data for transmission. Data bits are preceded by a start bit and followed by an optional parity bit and one or more stop bits. *See also* asynchronous transmission, bit, communications parameter.

data buffer *n.* An area in memory where data is temporarily stored while being moved from one location to another. *See also* buffer[1].

data bus *n.* *See* bus.

data cable *n.* Fiber-optic or wire cable used to transfer data from one device to another.

data capture *n.* **1.** The collection of information at the time of a transaction. **2.** The process of saving on a storage medium a record of interchanges between a user and a remote information utility.

data carrier *n.* *See* carrier (definition 1).

Data Carrier Detected *n.* *See* DCD (definition 1).

data chaining *n.* The process of storing segments of data in noncontiguous locations while retaining the ability to reconnect them in the proper sequence.

data channel *n.* *See* channel (definition 1).

data collection *n.* **1.** The process of acquiring source documents or data. **2.** The grouping of data by means of classification, sorting, ordering, and other organizing methods.

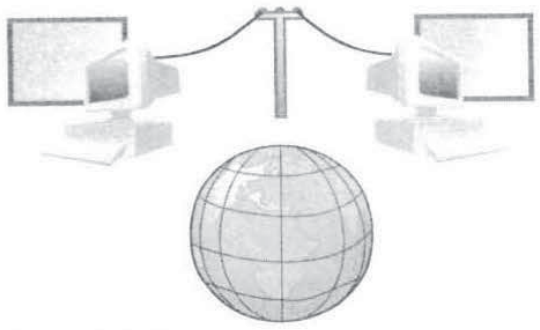
datacom *n.* Short for **data communications**. *See* communications.

data communications *n.* *See* communications.

data compaction *n.* *See* data compression.

data compression *n.* A means of reducing the amount of space or bandwidth needed to store or transmit a block of data, used in data communications, facsimile transmission, file storage and transfer, and CD-ROM publishing. *Also called* data compaction.

data conferencing *n.* Simultaneous data communication among geographically separated participants in a meeting. Data conferencing involves whiteboards and other software that enable a single set of files at one location to be accessed and modified by all participants. See the illustration. *See also* desktop conferencing, whiteboard. *Compare* video conferencing.



Data conferencing.

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data control *n.* The aspect of data management concerned with tracking how and by whom data is used, accessed, altered, owned, and reported on.

data conversion *n.* Changing the way information is represented in a document or file—for instance, changing binary representation to decimal or hexadecimal.

data corruption *n. See* corruption.

data declaration *n.* A statement in a program that specifies the characteristics of a variable. The requirements for data declarations vary among different programming languages but can include such values as variable name, data type, initial value, and size specification. *See also* array, data type, record[1], variable.

data definition language *n.* A language that defines all attributes and properties of a database, especially record layouts, field definitions, key fields, file locations, and storage strategy. *Acronym:* DDL.

data description language *n.* A language designed specifically for declaring data structures and files. *See also* data definition language.

data dictionary *n.* A database containing data about all the databases in a database system. Data dictionaries store all the various schema and file specifications and their locations. They also contain information about which programs use which data and which users are interested in which reports.

data directory *n. See* catalog, data dictionary.

data-driven processing *n.* A form of processing where the processor or program must wait for data to arrive before it can advance to the next step in a sequence.

data element *n.* A single unit of data. *Also called* data item. *See also* data field.

data encryption *n. See* encryption.

data encryption key *n.* A sequence of secret information, such as a string of decimal numbers or binary digits, that is used to encrypt and decrypt data. *Acronym:* DEK. *See also* decryption, encryption, key (definition 3).

data encryption standard *n. See* DES.

data entry *n.* The process of writing new data to computer memory.

data/fax modem *n.* A modem that can handle both serial data and facsimile images to either send or receive transmissions.

data field *n.* A well-defined portion of a data record, such as a column in a database table.

data field masking *n.* The process of filtering or selecting part of a data field to control the way it is returned and displayed.

data file *n.* A file consisting of data in the form of text, numbers, or graphics, as distinct from a program file of commands and instructions. *Compare* program file.

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.

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