



THE ULTIMATE COMPUTER REFERENCE

Microsoft Press

Over
8,000
Entries

with useful appendixes
available on CD-ROM

Microsoft **Computer Dictionary** Fourth Edition

- *Three new appendixes, including Y2K, file extensions, and Internet domains*
- *Searchable text on CD-ROM*
- *Extensive coverage of hardware, software, the Internet, and more!*
- *Detailed illustrations and diagrams for easy reference*



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

Copyright © 1999 by Microsoft Corporation

All rights reserved. No part of the contents of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Microsoft Computer Dictionary. -- 4th ed.

p. cm.

Previous eds. published under title: Microsoft Press computer dictionary

ISBN 0-7356-0615-3

1. Computers Dictionaries. 2. Microcomputers Dictionaries.

I. Microsoft Press computer dictionary.

QA76.15.M538 1999

004'.03--dc21

99-20168

CIP

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 MLML 4 3 2 1 0 9

Distributed in Canada by Penguin Books Canada Limited.

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

Microsoft Press books are available through booksellers and distributors worldwide. For further information about international editions, contact your local Microsoft Corporation office or contact Microsoft Press International directly at fax (425) 936-7329. Visit our Web site at mspress.microsoft.com.

Macintosh, Power Macintosh, QuickTime, and TrueType fonts are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc. Kodak is a registered trademark of the Eastman Kodak Company. Intel is a registered trademark and Indeo is a trademark of Intel Corporation. Active Desktop, Active Directory, ActiveMovie, Active Platform, ActiveX, Authenticode, BackOffice, DirectInput, DirectX, Microsoft, Microsoft Press, MS-DOS, MSN, NetMeeting, NetShow, Visual Basic, Visual C++, Visual J++, WebTV, WebTV Network, Win32, Win32s, Windows, Windows NT, and XENIX are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. PANTONE is a registered trademark of Pantone, Inc. Other product and company names mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

The example companies, organizations, products, people, and events depicted herein are fictitious. No association with any real company, organization, product, person, or event is intended or should be inferred.

Acquisitions Editor: Christey Bahn
Project Editor: Kim Fryer

A

AC adapter *n.* An external power supply that converts from a 110 VAC or 220 VAC domestic electric supply ("house current" or "main power") to low-voltage DC, which is required to operate solid-state electronic equipment (such as a laptop computer) that does not include an internal power supply.

Accelerated Graphics Port *n.* See AGP.

accelerator *n.* **1.** In applications, a key or key combination used to perform a defined function. *Also called* shortcut key. **2.** In hardware, a device that speeds or enhances the operation of one or more subsystems, leading to improved program performance. *See also* accelerator card, Windows-based accelerator.

accelerator board *n.* See accelerator card.

accelerator card *n.* A printed circuit board that replaces or augments the computer's main microprocessor, resulting in faster performance. *Also called* accelerator board. *See also* expansion board, graphics accelerator.

acceptable use policy *n.* A statement issued by an ISP (Internet service provider) or an online information service that indicates what activities users may or may not engage in while logged into the service. For example, some providers prohibit users from engaging in commercial activity on the network. *Acronym:* AUP. *See also* ISP, online information service.

acceptance test *n.* A formal evaluation of a hardware product performed by the customer, usually at the factory, to verify that the product is performing according to specifications.

access¹ *n.* **1.** The act of reading data from or writing data to memory. **2.** Connection to the Internet or other network or system.

access² *vb.* To gain entry to memory in order to read or write data.

access arm *n.* A mechanical arm that moves the read/write head(s) over the surface of a disk in a disk drive. *See the illustration. Also called* head arm.

ACCESS.bus *n.* A bidirectional bus for connecting peripherals to a PC. The ACCESS.bus can connect up to 125 low-speed peripherals, such as printers, modems, mice, and keyboards, to the system through a single, general-purpose port. Peripherals that support the ACCESS.bus provide a connector or port connection that is similar to a phone-jack connector and are daisy-chained together. However, the PC communicates directly with each peripheral and vice versa.

Connecting an ACCESS.bus device (for example, a printer) to a system results in the system automatically identifying and configuring it for optimum performance. Peripherals can be connected while the computer is running (*hot plugging*) and are automatically assigned a unique address (auto-addressing). Developed from the architecture designed jointly by Philips and Digital Equipment Corporation, the ACCESS.bus specification is controlled by the ACCESS.bus Industry Group and competes with Intel's USB. *See also* bidirectional, bus, daisy chain¹, hot plugging, input/output port, peripheral. *Compare* USB.

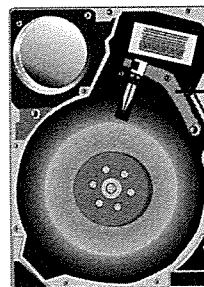
access code *n.* See password.

access control *n.* The mechanisms for limiting access to certain items of information or to certain controls based on users' identities and their membership in various predefined groups. Access control is typically used by system administrators for controlling user access to network resources, such as servers, directories, and files. *See also* access privileges, system administrator.

access control list *n.* A list associated with a file that contains information about which users or groups have permission to access or modify the file. *Acronym:* ACL.

accessibility *n.* A quality of software, hardware, or a complete computer system that makes it usable by people with one or more physical disabilities, such as restricted mobility, blindness, or deafness.

access mechanism *n.* **1.** The disk drive components that move the read/write head(s) to the proper track of a magnetic disk or optical disc. *See also* disk controller. **2.** A circuit that allows one part of a computer system to send signals to another part. **3.** In programming, the means by which an application can read from or write to a resource. *Also called* access method.



Access arm.

access method *n.* See access mechanism (definition 3).

access number *n.* The telephone number used by a subscriber to gain access to an online service.

accessory *n.* See peripheral.

access path *n.* See search path.

access permission *n.* See permission.

access point *n.* In a wireless LAN (local area network), a transceiver that connects it to a wired network. See also wireless LAN.

access privileges *n.* The type of operations permitted a given user for a certain system resource on a network or a file server. A variety of operations, such as the ability to access a server, view the contents of a directory, open or transfer files, and create, modify, or delete files or directories, can be allowed or disallowed by the system administrator. Assigning access privileges to users helps the system administrator to maintain security on the system, as well as the privacy of confidential information, and to allocate system resources, such as disk space. Also called access rights. See also file protection, file server, permission, system administrator, write access.

access provider *n.* See ISP.

access rights *n.* See access privileges.

access speed *n.* See access time.

access time *n.* 1. The amount of time it takes for data to be delivered from memory to the processor after the address for the data has been selected. 2. The time needed for a read/write head in a disk drive to locate a track on a disk. Access time is usually measured in milliseconds and is used as a performance measure for hard disks and CD-ROM drives. See also read/write head, seek time, settling time, wait state. Compare cycle time.

account *n.* 1. A record-keeping arrangement used by the vendor of an online service to identify a subscriber and to maintain a record of customer usage for billing purposes. 2. The record-keeping mechanism used by networks and multiuser operating systems for keeping track of authorized users. Network accounts are created by network administrators and are used both to validate users and to administer policies—for example, permissions—related to each user.

accounting file *n.* A file generated by a printer controller that keeps track of the number of pages printed per job as well as the user that requested the print job.

accounting machine *n.* 1. One of the earliest applications of automatic data processing, used in business accounting primarily during the 1940s and 1950s. The first accounting machines were nonelectronic and used punched cards and wires arranged in plug-board panels. 2. A computer in which an accounting software package starts up whenever the machine is turned on, the computer thus becoming a dedicated machine with accounting as its sole function.

account name *n.* The part of an e-mail address that identifies a user, or an account, on an e-mail system. An e-mail address on the Internet typically consist of an account name, followed by the @ (at) symbol, a host name, and a domain name. See also account (definition 2), domain name, e-mail address.

account policy *n.* On local area networks and multi-user operating systems, a set of rules governing whether a new user is allowed access to the system and whether an existing user's rights are expanded to include additional system resources. An account policy also generally states the rules with which the user must comply while using the system in order to maintain access privileges.

ACCU *n.* See Association of C and C++ Users.

accumulator *n.* A register used for logic or arithmetic, usually to count items or accumulate a sum. See also register.

accuracy *n.* The degree to which the result of a calculation or measurement approximates the true value. Compare precision (definition 1).

ACIS *n.* Acronym for Andy, Charles, Ian's System. An object-oriented geometric modeling toolkit owned by Spatial Technology. Designed for use as a "geometry engine" within 3-D modeling applications, ACIS provides an open architecture framework for wire-frame, surface, and solid modeling from a common, unified data structure. ACIS is generally considered the de facto standard for solid modeling in the CAM/CAE industries.

ACK \ak\ *n.* Short for acknowledgment. A message sent by the receiving unit to the sending station or computer indicating either that the unit is ready to receive transmission or that a transmission was received without error. Compare NAK.

ACL *n.* See access control list.

ACM *n.* See Association for Computing Machinery.

A

Microsoft

Computer Dictionary

Fourth Edition



The Comprehensive Standard for Business, School, Library, and Home

MICROSOFT COMPUTER DICTIONARY, Fourth Edition, remains the authoritative source of definitions for computer terms, concepts, and acronyms. Written in a clear, easy-to-understand style, this Fourth Edition defines over 8,000 terms and has been fully updated to include the latest technologies you will encounter at home and at work—including Y2K, networks, e-commerce, cyberculture, enterprise computing, component terminology, Windows® 98, and UNIX. As an added bonus, the dictionary extensively covers computer industry acronyms, jargon, and slang—often the most confusing terms in the high-tech world.

U.S.A. \$34.99
U.K. £32.99
[V.A.T. included]
Canada \$52.99
[Recommended]

Computers/General Reference



ISBN 0-7356-0615-3



9 0000



Here's why the new MICROSOFT COMPUTER DICTIONARY, Fourth Edition, is the finest reference of its kind:

- **It's comprehensive**—covering everything from A: (drive) to Zulu time.
- **It's easy to use**—in addition to definitions, you'll find pronunciation keys for difficult words, parts of speech, and extensive cross-references.
- **It's up to date**—plus, you can access and download online updates every quarter on the Microsoft Press® Web site.



Included on CD-ROM

Fully searchable versions of the MICROSOFT COMPUTER DICTIONARY and MICROSOFT MANUAL OF STYLE FOR TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS—plus Microsoft Internet Explorer 5!

For system requirements see the information page near the CD-ROM.

"The Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary is the perfect way to clear up a puzzling word or phrase in computer culture."

—Michael Heim, Ph.D.,
author of *Electric Language* and
Virtual Realism

"The must-have computer resource."

—Compute

Other Great Learning Solutions—Made by Microsoft

Whether you're a beginner or an advanced user, Microsoft Press has books to fit your needs and your style.

Quick Course® series—
Software training for people in a hurry



At a Glance series—
Easy, visual information, just when you need it



Microsoft Pocket Guides—
Compact quick references



Step by Step series—
Microsoft's self-paced training kits



Step by Step Interactive series—
Multimedia training



Running series—
Comprehensive information in one volume



Expert Companion series—
High-powered tips and tricks for advanced users



To learn more about Microsoft Press products, visit:
mspress.microsoft.com

Microsoft® Press