

NEWTON'S TELECOM DICTIONARY

11th Edition

The Official Dictionary of Telecommunications
Computer Telephony, Data Communications
Internet Telephony, Voice Processing
Windows 95 & NT Communications
LAN, WAN and Wireless Networking

by Harry Newton



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Port 1. An entrance to or an exit from a network.

2. The physical or electrical interface through which one gains access. A point in the computer or telephone system where data may be accessed. Peripherals — like call accounting devices — are connected to ports. The two most common ports are the parallel and serial ports.

3. The interface between a process or program and a communications or transmission facility.

4. To move a process, program or subroutine from one processor to controller to another ("port it over").

5. Network access point for data entry or exit. In Internet terms, it is the identifier (16-bit unsigned integer) used by Internet transport protocols to distinguish among multiple simultaneous connections to a single destination host.

Port Connection The point of entry into a public frame relay network service.

Port Identifier The identifier assigned by a logical node to represent the point of attachment of a link to that node.

Port Multiplier A local area network interconnect, a concentrator providing connection to a network for multiple devices.

Port Replicators Low-cost docking station substitutes that provide one-step connection to multiple desktop devices.

Port Selector Another name for a dataPBX. Since the advent of LANs (local area networks) these devices have been getting a bad rap. Not fair. These gadgets are really great at transmitting and switching huge number of low-speed asynchronous lines. If you put this sort of traffic on a LAN, you could severely mess up its performance. Some port selectors have data throughput in excess of 20 million bits per second.

Port Sharing 1. A system which connects multiple lines to a single port by means of a manual or automatic line selection method.

2. In frame relay, where multiple virtual connections share the same port connection.

Port Sharing Device A system which connects multiple lines to a single port by means of a manual or automatic line selection method.

Port Switching According to 3Com, port switching is merely an electronic patch panel function, not the genuine switching capability that provides a performance boost. Port switching lets administrators configure their networks, allocating any port to any backplane on their hub. Unlike true switching, it doesn't increase the bandwidth available to the network manager.

Portability 1. The ability of a customer to take his telephone number from place to place and, for 800 numbers, from one long-distance company to another.

2. The ability of software designed for one computer system to be used on other systems. Little software outside MS-DOS software for IBM and IBM clone computers is portable. UNIX software is portable to an extent.

Portable A one-piece, self-contained cellular telephone — easily carried in a brief case or purse. Portables normally have a built-in antenna and rechargeable battery and operate with six-tenths of one watt (0.6 watt) of power. Car cellular phones operate with three watts.

Portable Cellular Phone Also known as a "hand-held phone". Refers to a lightweight, compact cellular handset that incorporates a battery power supply, and can be used without any peripheral power or antenna. See PORTABLE.

Portable Teletransaction Computers PTC. These are typically handheld devices used for retail (inventory), healthcare (tracking supplies), mobile field repair (reporting fixes), insurance (visiting car wrecks and other disasters), etc. The devices typically have telecommunications capabilities, sometimes wireless, sometimes landlines. And they typically include microprocessors, memories, displays, keyboards, touchscreens, character recognition software, barcode readers, printers, modems and local and/or wide area data radios.

Portrait Most computer screens are horizontal, i.e. they are wider than they are high. In the new language of computer screens, this is called "landscape." When a computer screen is higher than it is wide, it's called "portrait." Some computer screens can actually work both ways. Some even have a small mercury switch in them that determines which way the screen is standing (portrait or landscape) and will adjust their image accordingly. See also PORTRAIT MODE.

Portrait Mode 1. In facsimile, the mode of scanning lines across the shorter dimension of a rectangular original. ITU-T Group 1, 2 and 3 facsimile machines use portrait mode.

2. In computer graphics, the orientation of a page in which the shorter dimension is horizontal. The opposite is called landscape mode. See also PORTRAIT.

POS 1. Point Of Service. Also called Point of Presence. See POINT OF PRESENCE.

2. POS Device. A point of sale device such as a credit card scanner used for authorization when a purchase is made.

POSI Promoting Conference for OSI. Consists of executives from the six major Japanese computer manufacturers and Nippon Telephone and Telegraph. They set policies and commit resources to promote OSI.

Position A telephone console at a switchboard manned, er, staffed by an attendant, or operator, or agent, or whatever the latest fashionable word is.

Positive Action Digit A digit that must be dialed before a PBX will advance a call to a higher-cost route. The WATS lines are busy. Time on the queue is over. It's time to move the call to the more expensive direct distance dial. Before it can go that route, the caller must punch in a positive action digit. This affirms that the user knows he is now making a more expensive call. It causes him to think twice, allegedly.

POSIX Portable Operating System Interface uniX. A proposed universal UNIX Interface to user-created application programs that would run on all vendor equipment, thereby improving system interoperability.

Post 1. To compose a message for an Internet Usenet newsgroup and then send it out for others to see.

2. Power-On Self-Test

Post Dial Delay PDD. The time from when the last digit is dialed to the moment the phone rings at the receiving location.

Post Office Any part of an e-mail system that directs or delivers mail. But, says PC Magazine's David Stone, to refer to a particular level of mail handling, the term post office needs a modifier. A local post office or host post office is the module on a LAN that users directly interact with to send and receive mail. A domain post office is the module that controls the mail delivery within a domain of multiple hosts on a single network.

In Windows 95, the postoffice is a temporary message store, holding the message until the recipient's workstation retrieves it. The postoffice exists as a directory structure on a server and has no programmatic components.