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K

kil'ə-bit *n.* Short for **kilobyte**.

kil'ō *prefix* See **kilo-**.

K&R C *n.* Short for (Brian W.) **Kernighan** and (Dennis M.) **Ritchie C**. The version of the C programming language, defined by those two authors, that was the informal C standard until a more formal standard was developed by an ANSI committee. *See also* C.

kil'ə-bit *n.* *See* **kilobit**.

kil'ə-bit *n.* *See* **kilobyte**.

kil'ə-bit *n.* *See* **kilobit**.

kil'ə-bit *n.* *See* **kilobits per second**.

kil'ə-bit *n.* *See* **kilobyte**.

kil'ə-sī'kl *n.* *See* **kilocycle**.

Kerberos or **kerberos** *\kər'bər-os* *n.* A network authentication protocol developed by MIT. Kerberos authenticates the identity of users attempting to log on to a network and encrypts their communications through secret-key cryptography. A free implementation of Kerberos is available from MIT, although it is also available in many commercial products. *See also* authentication, cryptography.

Kermit *n.* A file transfer protocol used in asynchronous communications between computers. Kermit is a very flexible protocol used in many software packages designed for communications over telephone lines. *Compare* Xmodem, Ymodem, Zmodem.

Kern *vb.* To alter selectively the distance between pairs of letters for readability and to make the type spacing more balanced and proportional. *See* the illustration.

AWAKE
AWAKE

Kern. The first three letters of the second example are kerned.

kernel *n.* The core of an operating system—the portion of the system that manages memory, files, and peripheral devices; maintains the time and date; launches applications; and allocates system resources.

key *n.* **1.** On a keyboard, the combination of a plastic keycap, a tension mechanism that suspends the keycap but allows it to be pressed down, and an electronic mechanism that records the key press and key release. **2.** In database management, an identifier for a record or group of records in a datafile. *See also* B-tree, hash², index¹ (definition 1), inverted list, key field. **3.** In encryption and digital signatures, a string of bits used for encrypting and decrypting information to be transmitted. Encryption commonly relies on two different types of keys, a public key known to more than one person (say, both the sender and the receiver) and a private key known only to one person (typically, the sender). **4.** A metal object used with a physical lock to disable a computer system.

keyboard *n.* A hardware unit with a set of switches that resembles a typewriter keyboard and that conveys information from a user to a computer or data communications circuit. *See also* Alt key, Apple key, arrow key, Backspace key, Break key, Caps Lock key, character code, Clear key, Command key, control character, Control key, Delete key, Dvorak keyboard, End key, enhanced keyboard, Enter key, ergonomic keyboard, Escape key, function key, Help key, Home key, Insert key, keyboard buffer, keyboard controller, keyboard enhancer, keycap, key code, numeric keypad, Num Lock key, Option key, original Macintosh keyboard, Page Down key, Page Up key, Pause key, PC/XT keyboard, Power-on key, Print Screen key, QWERTY keyboard, Return key, scan code, Scroll Lock key, Shift key, Sys Req key, Tab key.

keyboard buffer *n.* A small amount of system memory that stores the most recently typed characters. This buffer is used to store typed characters that have not yet been processed. *Also called* type-ahead buffer.