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Microsoft

Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition

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abstract machine language *n.* **1.** An intermediate programming language used by an interpreter or compiler. **2.** See pseudocode (definition 1).

abstract syntax *n.* A data structure description that is independent of hardware structures and encodings.

Abstract Syntax Notation One *n.* The ISO standard notation for independent specification of data types and structures for syntax conversion. *Acronym:* ASN.1. See also data type, ISO, syntax.

abstract syntax tree *n.* A treelike representation of programs used in many integrated programming environments and structure-oriented editors.

Abstract Window Toolkit *n.* A library of Java GUIs (graphical user interfaces) that provides the connections between a Java application and the native GUI of the computer on which the application runs. *Also called:* AWT.

A/B switch box *n.* A switch box with two outputs. By flipping the switch, the user can select which to use. See also switch (definition 1), switch box.

AC *n.* See alternating current.

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.

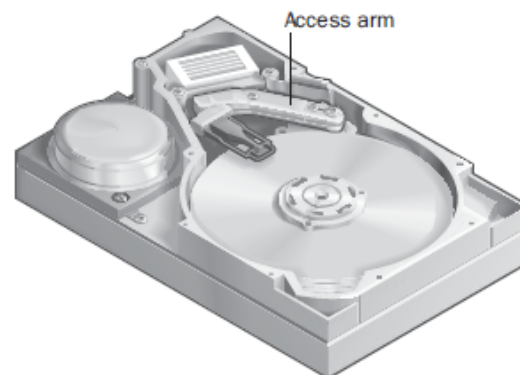
acceptance test *n.* A formal evaluation of a hardware product performed by the customer, usually at the factory, to verify that the product is performing according to specifications.

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 *n.* Microsoft's relational database-management software for the Windows desktop platform. Part of the family of Microsoft Office products, Access in its most recent version (Access 2002) supports Web technology for building, managing, and sharing data. Access 2002 also includes new and improved tools for accessing and viewing information and offers integration with Microsoft's BackOffice database product, SQL Server. See also Office.

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 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