

GLOSSARY

absolute path The direct route from the root directory through the hierarchical structure of a directory tree to the subdirectory of interest.

active desktop object A piece of Web content placed on the desktop that needs to be updated on a regular basis, such as stock market prices or a weather map.

active window The window that is currently in use when multiple windows are open.

ActiveX A set of technologies that enables software components to interact with one another in a networked environment, regardless of the language in which the components were created. ActiveX is used primarily to develop interactive content for the World Wide Web, although it can be used in other kinds of programs.

adapter card A printed circuit board that is installed in a computer to allow the installation and control of some type of device, such as a monitor.

add-on An accessory or utility program designed to work with, extend, and increase the capabilities of an original product.

allocation unit See *cluster*.

alphanumeric keys The keys on a keyboard that are letters (A–Z), numbers (0–9), and other characters such as punctuation marks.

ANSI An acronym for American National Standards Institute. A coding scheme used for transmitting data between a computer and peripherals. Each character has a numerical equivalent in ANSI.

app See *application package*.

application package A computer program that is user-oriented and is usually for a specific job, such as word processing. Application packages are also called *packages*, *off-the-shelf software*, *canned software*, or *apps*.

application program See *application package*.

application software See *application package*.

application window The window of the application that is currently open and on the desktop. An application window may also contain a document window.

archival backup A backup procedure in which all the files on a hard disk are backed up by being copied to floppy disks or some other backup medium.

archival data Information that is stored in archive files.

archive attribute See *archive bit*.

archive bit A file attribute that gives the backup history of a file (whether or not a file has been backed up). Archiving to save a file usually refers to long-term storage.

archiving a file Removing a file from a hard disk and storing it on another medium for historical purposes.

arithmetic/logic unit The circuitry that a computer uses for mathematical and logical functions and is an integral part of a microprocessor chip.

ASCII An acronym for American Standard Code for Information Interchange. A coding scheme used for transmitting data between a computer and peripherals. Each character has a numerical equivalent in ASCII.

ASCII editor A program that is similar to a word-processing program but is unable to perform any special editing. No embedded codes are inserted into documents. ASCII editors can only edit ASCII text files, also called text files or unformatted text files. ASCII editors are also called *text editors*.

asynchronous Not synchronized; not happening at regular time intervals.

asynchronous communication A form of data transmission that uses only two wires for communication between computers (generally for communicating via modems). Data is transmitted by the sending of one character at a time with variable time intervals between characters and a start bit and a stop bit to mark the beginning and end of the data.

attachment An external document included as part of an email message.

AutoPlay The feature that causes an audio CD placed in a CD-ROM drive to play automatically. To bypass this, hold the **[Shift]** key down when inserting the disc.

AutoRun The feature that causes a program CD placed in a CD-ROM drive to execute automatically. To bypass this, hold the **[Shift]** key down when inserting the disc.

background color The color that is in the background in Paint. It is not the current drawing color.

background printing Printing a document in the background while another program is being worked on in the foreground.

background program In Windows XP, which has multitasking capabilities, background program refers to a program that is being executed in the background at the same time that the user is working with another program in the foreground. For example, printing one document (background program) while at the same time editing another document (foreground program).

backup The process in which the user makes a copy of an original file or files for safe-keeping.

bandwidth The data transfer capacity of a digital communications system.

batch file A text file of DOS commands. When its name is keyed in at the DOS system level, the commands in the batch file are executed sequentially.

batch processing A manner of running programs without interruption. Programs to be executed are collected and placed into prioritized batches, and then the programs are processed one after another without user interaction or intervention.

baud rate Measure of how fast a modem can transmit data. Named after the French telegrapher and engineer J.M.E. Baudot.

beta test A formal process of pretesting hardware and software that is still under development with selected “typical” users to see whether any operational or utilization errors (bugs) still exist in the program before the product is released to the general public.

binary value A binary value is a variable-length set of hexadecimal digits.

BIOS An acronym for basic input/output system. A program that controls input/output devices.

BIOS bootstrap A process that occurs before booting. The program that controls this process is in the BIOS chip and the CMOS setup of the computer. A POST (power-on self test) is performed, wherein the computer checks its physical health. Plug-and-play devices are identified and configured, and a bootable partition is executed.

bit The smallest unit of information, expressed in binary numbers 0 and 1, that a computer can measure. Eight bits make a byte.

bitmap font A font that a printer creates dot by dot. When displayed on the monitor, bitmap fonts are created pixel by pixel.

bootable disk A disk containing the operating system files.

booting the system The process of powering on a computer. When first turned on (a cold boot) or reset (a warm boot), a computer executes the software that loads and starts the computer’s operating system. The computer can be said to pull itself up by its own bootstrap.

boot record If a disk is a system disk, the boot record contains the bootstrap routine used for loading. Otherwise, the disk will present a message that the disk is a nonsystem disk. Every disk has a boot record. The boot record also contains such information as the type of media, the number of tracks and sectors, and so forth.

boot sector The first sector on every logical drive.

boot sector virus A virus that replaces a disk’s original boot sector with its own and then loads itself into memory. Once in memory, it infects other disks.

bootstrap The process a computer uses to get itself ready for loading the operating system into memory. It pulls itself up by its bootstraps.

browser An application software package that allows you to easily explore the Internet and the World Wide Web.

buffer A temporary holding area for data in memory.

bug An error in software that causes the program to malfunction or to produce incorrect results.

built-in font A resident font that comes with a printer.

bulletin board service (BBS) A service that users link to using their modems. Some BBSs allow users to read and post messages, download program fixes or other programs, and much more.

bundled Describes programs included with a larger program to make the larger program more attractive or functional. It is also used to describe a purchase of hardware that includes all devices as well as installed software.

bus A set of hardware lines (wires) that are used for data transfer among the elements of a computer system.

bus topology A topology (network design) for a local area network in which all computers or peripherals (nodes) are connected to a main communications line (bus). On a bus network, each node monitors activity on the line.

byte A unit of measurement that represents one character (a letter, number, or punctuation mark). A byte is comprised of eight bits. Computer storage and memory are measured in bytes.

cache A place in memory where data can be stored for quick access.

cache memory A place in memory where data can be stored for quick access.

caching A process where Windows sets up a reserved area in RAM where it can quickly read and write frequently used data without having to read from or write to the disk.

card A short name for an adapter card.

cascaded Windows layered on top of one another.

cascading menu A menu that opens another menu. A secondary menu will open as a result of a command issued on the first or primary menu. A right-pointing arrow next to the primary menu indicates that a cascade menu is available. Also called a hierarchical menu.

case sensitive Describes a program that distinguishes between upper- and lowercase characters.

CD-ROM An acronym for compact disc-read-only memory. It usually refers to a disc that plays in a CD-ROM device.

central processing unit (CPU) The central processing unit (CPU) is the brain of the computer. It carries out the instructions or commands given to it by a program.

chain When referring to the file allocation table, a pointer that links clusters together.

channel A Web site that has been expressly designed for push technology so that content can be delivered to your computer system.

character set A grouping of alphabetic, numeric, and other characters that have some relationship in common. A font file has character definitions.

character string A set of letters, symbols, and control characters that are treated as a unit.

checkbox A box that is clicked to either set or unset a feature.

child directory An analogous title given to offshoots (subdirectories) of any root or subdirectory.

child menu A menu in a hierarchical menu structure that is under the parent menu above it. Each subsequent child menu becomes a parent to the next menu in the hierarchy.

child window A window that belongs to a parent window. A child window can have only one parent but one or more child windows of its own..

clicking Pressing and releasing the left mouse button once.

client In networking, a client is a computer that accesses the shared network resources provided by the server.

client application An application program that is receiving an object from the server application.

clip art A collection of proprietary or public-domain photographs, maps, drawings, and other graphics that can be “clipped” from the collection and incorporated into other documents.

Clipboard A special memory area used by Windows that stores a copy of the last information that was copied or cut. A paste operation passes data from the Clipboard to the current program. The Clipboard allows information to be transferred from one program to another, provided the second program can read data generated by the first.

Close button A button that shuts down a window and closes an application package or dialog box.

cluster The smallest unit of disk space that DOS or Windows 95/98 can write to or read from. It is comprised of one or more sectors. A cluster can also be called an *allocation unit*.

cluster overhang Since clusters are made up of one or more 512-byte sectors and Windows reads to or writes from only one cluster at a time, a file will occupy more space than it needs for its data, causing cluster overhang.

CMD.EXE That part of the operating system that the user actually communicates and interacts with. It processes and interprets what has been keyed in. It is also known as the command processor or the command interpreter.

CMOS An acronym for complementary metal-oxide semiconductor. CMOS, maintained by a battery pack, is memory that is used to store parameter values, such as the size and type of the hard disk and the number and type of floppy drives, the keyboard, and display type, that are used to boot PCs.

coaxial cable A type of cable used in connecting network components.

Color box In Paint, the box that displays the foreground and background colors you may use in your drawing.

combo box A combination text box and list box.

command An instruction that is a program that the user keys in at the command line prompt. This instruction executes the selected program.

command button A button that, when selected by the user, performs the desired action.

command interpreter See *command processor*.

command processor That portion of an operating system that interprets what the user keys in.

command syntax The vocabulary, order, and punctuation necessary to execute a command properly.

communication protocol A set of communication rules that enable computers to exchange information.

compact disc-read-only memory See *CD-ROM*.

compound document A document that contains information, data, or other objects created from more than one application program.

compressed file A file written (utilizing a file compression utility) to a special disk format that minimizes the storage space needed.

computer virus A computer program designed as a prank or sabotage that can replicate itself by attaching to other programs and spreading unwanted and often damaging operations. A virus can be spread to other computers by floppy disk and/or through electronic bulletin boards.

conditional processing A comparison of two items that yields a true or false value. Once the value is determined, a program can be directed to take some action based on the results of the test.

configuration information Information about your system such as the hardware applications and user preferences.

context menu A menu that opens with a right-click of the mouse. It is also referred to as a pop-up menu or a shortcut menu.

contiguous Describes elements that are next to each other. Contiguous files are those files that are written to adjacent clusters on a disk.

control Provides a way the user can interact (provide input) with available choices. Usually a control is a way to initiate an action, display information, or set the values that you are interested in. Example of controls include command buttons, options buttons, drop-down list boxes, and text boxes.

Control key The key labeled **Ctrl** on the keyboard that, when held down with another key, causes the other key to have another meaning.

controller A board that goes into the computer and is needed to operate a peripheral device.

control menu Has an icon, located in the upper-left corner of a window, that can be opened to provide commands to manipulate the window. These commands are usually keyboard oriented rather than mouse oriented. The icon is referred to as the control-menu icon.

control-menu icon In Windows, the icon that can be clicked to provide a drop-down menu with additional commands. It is also called the control-menu box.

conventional memory The first 640KB of memory, where programs and data are located while the user is working.

cookie On the World Wide Web, a block of data that a Web server stores on your computer system. When you return to the same Web site, your browser sends a copy of the cookie back to the server. Cookies are used to identify users, instruct the server to send a customized version of the requested Web page, or submit account information for the user.

CPU See *central processing unit (CPU)*.

cross-linked files Two files that claim the same sectors in the file allocation table (FAT).

current directory The default directory.

cursor The location where the user can key in information.

cyberspace A term used when referring to the Internet; a virtual place where computers can connect and individuals or organizations can communicate.

cylinder The vertical measurement of two or more disk platters that have the track aligned. It is used when referring to hard disks.

data Information, in the widest possible sense. Usually it refers to the numbers and text used by a computer to do the work requested by the user.

database A collection of related information (data) stored on a computer, organized, and structured so that the information can be easily manipulated.

database management program An application program that allows for manipulation of information in a database.

data bits A group of bits used to represent a single character for transmission over a modem. A start bit and stop bit must be used in transmitting a group of data.

data file A file that is usually composed of related data created by the user with an application program. They are organized in a specific manner and usually can be used only by this program.

debugging Finding and correcting problems in a program. Debug is also a program usable at the command line interface.

dedicated server A computer in a server-based network that is devoted to providing network resources.

default What the computer system or computer program “falls back to” if no other specific instructions are given.

default drive The disk drive that the OS looks on to locate commands or files if no other instructions are given.

default folder The folder data will be read to or written from unless you change it.

default subdirectory The subdirectory that the computer “falls back to” when no other specific instructions are given.

defragger A means to optimize performance on a disk. Running the Disk Defragmenter program rearranges the storage of files on a disk so that they are contiguous.

delimiter A special character that is used to separate information so that an operating system such as Windows XP can recognize where one part of a parameter ends and the next one begins.

designated drive See *default drive*.

desktop The on-screen work area that emulates the top of a desk.

destination file The desired file that data is to be sent to.

device A piece of computer equipment, such as a disk drive or a printer, that performs a specific job.

device driver Software necessary for the use of a hardware device. The program controls the specific peripheral device.

device icon A small graphic that represents a device such as a printer or a disk drive.

device name A reserved name that the operating system assigns to a device, such as PRN for printer.

dialog box In a graphical user interface, a box that either conveys information to or requests information from the user.

differential backup A differential backup backs up all the selected files that have changed since the last time an All selected files backup was used.

directional keys Keys used to move the cursor in various directions.

directory The location or container where documents, program files, devices, and other folders are stored on your disk. The terms *folders* and *directories* are synonymous.

directory tree The structure of the current disk drive.

disk A magnetically coated disk that allows permanent storage of computer data.

disk buffer Acts as the go-between for a disk and RAM.

disk cache An area in memory where Windows XP looks for information prior to reading from or writing to the disk for the purpose of optimizing performance.

disk compression program A means to increase disk space by fooling the operating system into thinking that there is more space on the disk.

disk drive A device that rotates a disk so that the computer can read information from and write information to the disk.

disk file A file that is stored on a disk.

disk optimization program A means to optimize performance on a disk. Usually the user runs the Disk Defragmenter program that rearranges the storage of files on a disk so that they are contiguous. It is also called a *disk defragger*.

docucentric Describes a paradigm or model that designs a computer system or program around the fact that what is most important to the user is the data (the document), not the program that created it.

document A self-contained piece of work created with an application program and, if saved on a disk, given a unique file name by which it can be retrieved.

documentation Written instructions that inform the user how to use hardware and/or software.

document file A data file whose information was created in an application file and saved to a disk.

documenting Writing the purpose of and instructions for a computer program.

document window A window that belongs to a program window and is always contained within a program window.

domain name An alphabetic alias to the IP address. Some examples of domain names are saddleback.cc.ca.us and daedal.net.

Domain Name System (DNS) The system by which domain names are translated into their IP numeric addresses.

DOS An acronym for disk operating system, the character-based operating system commonly used on microcomputers. It is also a shorthand way of referring to the command line interface.

dot A subdirectory marker; a shorthand name; the . for the specific subdirectory name.

dot-matrix printer A printer that produces text characters and graphics by creating them with a series of closely spaced dots. It uses a print head, platen, and ribbon to form the characters.

dot pitch In printers, the distance between dots in a dot matrix. In video displays, a measure of image clarity. In a video display, the dot pitch is the vertical distance, expressed in millimeters, between like-colored pixels. A smaller dot pitch generally means a sharper image.

double-clicking Pressing and releasing the left mouse button twice in rapid succession.

downloading Receiving a file from a remote computer while connected by a modem, another outside connection, or a network.

downward compatible Describes software/hardware that can be used on older computer systems.

dragging Placing the pointer over an object, holding down the left mouse button, and moving the object to another location.

dragging and dropping Moving or manipulating an object or document across the desktop and dropping it in another location.

drawing area In Paint, the area where you create your drawing.

drive letter A letter of the alphabet that identifies a specific disk drive.

driver A piece of software that tells a piece of hardware how to work.

drop-down list box A box that contains a default selection. However, if the user clicks on the down arrow, a list box drops down and displays further choices.

drop-down menu A menu that presents choices that drop down from the menu bar when requested and remain open on the screen until the user chooses a menu item or closes the menu.

DVD An enhancement to CD-ROM technology. It provides the next generation of optical disc storage technology. It encompasses audio, video, and computer data. DVD is not an acronym but a trademark.

dynamic data exchange (DDE) A set of standards that supports data exchange among application programs.

dynamic link library (DLL) A feature that allows executable routines to be stored separately as files with DLL extensions and to be loaded only when needed by a program. A

DLL file does not consume any memory until it is used. Since a DLL file is separate, a programmer can make corrections or improvements to only that module without affecting other programs or other DLLs. Also, the same dynamic link library can be used with other programs.

dynamic RAM (DRAM) Memory chips that hold data for a short time. DRAM is less expensive than SRAM and thus, most memory is DRAM. See also *static RAM*.

ellipsis Three dots that can appear after a menu item or on a command button. If you choose the item, a dialog box will open.

email Short for electronic mail. Email is a note or message that is sent between different computers that use telecommunications services or are on a network.

Emergency Repair Disk A bootable disk that has critical system files on it.

end-of-file (EOF) marker A symbol that alerts the operating system when a file has no more data.

enhancement Increases the capabilities of a computer by adding or updating hardware or software.

event An action performed by you or by your program that your computer can notify you of. Usually the notification is a sound, such as a beep if you press an incorrect key.

executable Refers to programs that place instructions in memory. The instructions are followed by the computer.

executing a program A process where instructions are placed in memory and then followed by the computer.

expansion slot An empty slot or space inside a system unit that can be used for adding new boards or devices to expand the computer's capabilities.

exporting Using an existing file or data in the file and sending it to another file.

extension See *file extension*.

external command A program that resides on a disk and must be read into RAM before it can be used.

external storage media Storage devices that are outside the computer system. Floppy, CD-ROM, and removable drives are the most common external storage media.

FAT See *file allocation table (FAT)*.

FAT file system The system originally used by MS-DOS to organize and manage files. The FAT (file allocation table) is a data structure is created on a disk when the disk is formatted. When a file is stored on a formatted disk, the operating system places information about the stored file in the FAT so that the operating system (DOS) can retrieve the file later.

file A program or a collection of related information stored on a disk.

file allocation table (FAT) A map of the disk that keeps track of all the clusters on a disk. It is used in conjunction with the directory table.

file attributes Attributes are stored as part of a file's directory entry and describe and give other information about the file.

file extension The last portion of a file name following the last period. Usually file extensions describe the type of data in the file. See also *file type*.

file format A special format used to construct a file so an application program can read the data. It consists of special codes that only the creating application program understands.

file infector virus Adds programming instructions to files that run programs. The virus then becomes active when you run the program.

file name A label used to identify a file. When most users refer to the file name, they are referring to the file specification.

file server On a network, a file storage device that stores files. On a large network, a file server is a sophisticated device that not only stores files but also manages them and maintains order as network users request files and make changes to the files.

file specification The complete name of a file, including the file name and the file extension (file type).

file type The last portion of a file name following the last period in a file name. Usually file types describe the type of data in the file. See also *file extension*.

firewall A security system intended to protect an organization's network against external threats, such as hackers. A firewall prevents computers in the organization's network from communicating directly with computers external to the network and vice versa.

fixed disk See *hard disk*.

fixed parameter A parameter whose values are specific and limited.

flag A marker of some type used to process information. File attributes are commonly called flags because they indicate a particular condition of a file.

floating Describes a toolbar or taskbar that can be positioned anywhere on the screen and does not have to be anchored to a window.

floppy disk A magnetically coated disk that allows permanent storage of data.

floppy disk drive See *disk drive*.

folder The location or container where documents, program files, devices, and other folders are stored on your disk. The terms *folders* and *directories* are synonymous.

folder icon The graphic representation of a folder that will open when you double-click it.

Folders pane The left pane of the Explorer window.

font A typeface (set of characters) that consists of several parts, such as the type size and weight (i.e., bold or italic).

footer One or more identifying lines printed at the bottom of a page.

foreground Describes the application or window that the user is currently working on.

foreground application An application or window that the user is currently working on. It is also referred to as the foreground window or active window.

foreground window An application or window in which the user is currently working. It is also referred to as the foreground window or active window.

formatting Preparing a disk for use. It can also refer to the way data looks in a document.

form feed An operation that advances the hard copy on the printer to the next page.

fragmented See *fragmented disk*.

fragmented disk A disk that has many noncontiguous files on it.

fragmented file A file that is written to a disk in noncontiguous clusters. See also *noncontiguous*.

freeware A computer program given away free of charge and often made available on the Internet or through newsgroups.

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) A protocol that allows files to be transferred to and from a node running FTP services.

full backup A backup procedure that backs up every file on a disk, regardless of whether a file has changed or not.

full system backup A backup procedure that backs up every file on a disk, including special system files, regardless of whether a file has changed or not.

function keys Programmable keys on a keyboard. **F1** and **F2** are examples of function keys. Function keys are program dependent.

gig A colloquial term for gigabyte.

gigabyte (GB) A unit of measurement equal to approximately one billion bytes.

glide pad An input device that is a small, smooth object on which you move your finger to control the action of the pointer.

global file specifications The symbols * and ?, also called wildcards, that are used to represent a single character (?) or a group of characters (*) in a file name.

graphic file Pictures and drawings that can be produced on the screen or printer and are saved in a file.

grid of cells Two sets of lines or linear elements at right angles to each other. A spreadsheet is a grid of rows and columns; a graphics screen is a grid of horizontal and vertical lines of pixels. In optical character recognition, a grid is used for measuring or specifying characters.

GUI (graphical user interface) A display format that allows the user to interact with the computer by using pictorial representations and menu choices to manage the computer resources and work with application programs.

hard copy A printed paper copy of information that is created when using the computer. It can also be referred to as a printout.

hard disk A disk that is permanently installed in a computer system and has a larger capacity to store files than a floppy disk. Hard disks are measured in megabytes or gigabytes.

hard disk drive See *hard disk*.

hard return Generated when **Enter** is pressed. The system will not move a hard return, but will move a soft return.

hardware Physical computer components.

hardware interrupt A request for service or a signal from peripherals to the CPU for attention so the device may be serviced.

head crash A hard disk failure in which a read/write head, normally supported on a cushion of air, comes into contact with the platter, damaging the magnetic coating in which data is recorded.

header In word processing or printing, text that is to appear at the top of pages.

head slot Exposes the disk surface to the read/write heads via an opening in the jacket of a floppy disk.

hexadecimal A numbering system that uses a base of 16 consisting of the digits 0-9 and the letters A-F.

hidden file A file that is not displayed in Explorer or My Computer or when the DIR command is used in the DOS window.

hierarchical menu A menu that opens another menu. A secondary menu will open as a result of a command issued on the first or primary menu. A right-pointing arrow next to the primary menu indicates that a cascade menu is available. It is also called a cascading menu.

hierarchical structure The logical grouping of files and programs based on pathways between root directories and their subsequent directories. It is also called a tree-structured directory.

hierarchy A group of things that are ordered by rank. In a disk's structure, it is a dependent relationship where one folder is dependent on the folder above it. Every disk begins with the root directory (folder), with subsequent folders branching from the root.

high-capacity disk See *high-density disk*.

high-density disk A floppy disk that can store up to 1.2 MB on a 5¼-inch disk or 1.44 MB on a 3½-inch disk.

high-level formatting Also known as logical formatting. The process that Windows uses to structure a disk so that files can be stored or retrieved.

highlighting The process of selecting an object, text, or an icon. Objects must be selected before they can be acted upon. Highlighting is indicated by reverse video.

home page On a server, the first screen that appears when you select a Web site.

housekeeping task Any number of routines to keep the environment where programs run in good working order.

hovering A mouse technique that highlights objects with an underline as you drag your mouse, which indicates that you have selected an object.

HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) The programming language with which Web documents are created.

HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) A common protocol used to access sites on the Internet.

hypertext A means to easily jump from one logically related topic to the next.

IAP Internet access provider.

icon A symbol that represents a more simple access to a program file, a data file, or a task.

impact printer A type of printer that transfers images onto paper through a mechanism that strikes a ribbon and transfers the images to paper. It is similar to a typewriter.

importing Bringing information from one program into another. You can import an entire file or part of a file.

incremental backup A backup process that only backs up files that have changed since the last full or incremental backup.

information superhighway Refers to the Internet. A worldwide network of networks that provides the ability to gather information, do research, explore ideas, purchase items, send email, and chat with people around the world. See also *cyberspace*.

initialization files Files that initialize a program or process. In earlier versions of Windows, the operating system and most application programs stored information about the users, environmental parameters, and necessary drivers in .INI files. The .INI extension is derived from initialization files.

initializing Getting a medium (a disk or a file) ready for use.

initializing a disk Getting a disk ready for use. It is another term for formatting a disk.

inkjet printer A nonimpact printer that prints by spraying a matrix of dots onto the paper.

input Refers to data or information entered into the computer.

input device A means to get information into RAM by communicating with the computer. Typical input devices include the keyboard and the mouse.

input/output The process of data and program instructions going into and out of the CPU (central processing unit). It is also referred to as I/O.

insert A mode that allows the user to enter data in which new text is inserted at the cursor, pushing all text that follows to the right.

install Copying files (programs) from a CD or floppy disk onto the hard disk.

integrated circuit An electronic device that combines thousands of transistors on a small wafer of silicon (chip). Such devices are the building blocks of computers.

integrated pointing device An input device that is an eraser-like object on the keyboard that you can manipulate to control the cursor.

interactive Describes the ability to update data within the computer system instantaneously.

interactive processing Sometimes called online or real-time mode, interactive means interacting directly with the computer.

interface Hardware and/or software needed to connect computer components. Also used as a synonym for interacting with a computer.

interface card The circuit board that is needed to connect computer components.

interlaced A technique used in some monitors in which the electron beam refreshes (updates) all odd-numbered scan lines in one vertical sweep of the screen and all even-numbered scan lines in the next sweep. The picture on these monitors tends to flicker. See also *noninterlaced*.

Internet A network of networks that connects computer users around the world.

intranet A network designed for information processing within a company or organization.

I/O See *input/output*.

IP address A unique numeric address that identifies a computer on the Internet.

ISP (Internet service provider) A company or organization that provides a gateway or connection to the Internet, usually for a fee. It is also called an access provider or a service provider.

keyboard A major device used for entering data into a computer consisting of a typewriter-like collection of labeled keys.

kilobyte (KB) A unit of measurement equal to 1,024 bytes.

LAN See *local area network (LAN)*.

landscape A printing orientation that prints horizontally (sideways) on the paper.

laser printer A high-resolution nonimpact printer that provides letter-quality output of text and graphics. Laser printers are based on a technology in which characters are formed by a laser and made visible by the same technology used by photocopy machines.

legacy hardware Hardware that is not plug-and-play compatible.

legacy software Older versions of software that were designed to run on earlier versions of operating system, such as DOS.

light pen A pointing device (connected to the computer by a cable and resembling a pen) that is used to provide input to the computer by writing, sketching, or selecting commands on a special monitor designed to respond to the light pen.

line feed An operation that advances the hard copy to the next line of text whether or not the line is full.

list box A box that presents the user with a list of options. It is used in menus and dialog boxes.

loading Placing information (data or programs) from storage into memory.

local area network (LAN) A network of computer equipment located in one room or building and connected by a communication link that enables any device to interact with any other in the network, making it possible for users to exchange information, share peripherals, and draw on common resources.

local bus See *bus*.

locally In a networked environment, this means that you are not using the network, but only your own local computer.

local printer A printer physically attached to your computer.

logical device A device named by the logic of a software system regardless of its physical relationship to the system.

logical disk drive A drive named by the logic of the software (operating) system. It is an “imaginary drive” that acts exactly like a real disk drive.

logical formatting See *high-level formatting*.

logical view A view of items that are represented by icons rather than by their physical presence.

logo A distinctive signature or trademark that usually functions as a graphical representation of a company.

long file name (LFN) The term used to indicate that file names are no longer limited to the 8.3 character file names. In Windows 95 and in Windows 98, file names cannot exceed 255 characters.

loop back The address 127.0.0.1, which is used to send data to your own computer without using the network card. The data “loops back.”

lost cluster Clusters that have no directory entry in the directory table and do not belong to any file. They are debris that results from incomplete data, and they should be cleaned up periodically with Check Disk.

low-level formatting Also known as physical formatting. The process of numbering the tracks and sectors of a disk sequentially so that each can be identified. On a hard disk, this process is done by the manufacturer of the hard disk.

macro A short key code command which stands for a sequence of saved instructions that when retrieved will execute the commands to accomplish a given task.

mandatory parameter A parameter that must be used with a command.

mapped drive A network drive or folder (one that has been shared) that you may assign a local drive letter.

master boot record (MBR) Used before booting. It determines the location of the bootable partition of the hard disk and gives control over to it.

Maximize button A button that makes the current window fill the entire screen.

meg A colloquial term for *megabyte*.

megabyte (MB) A unit of measurement that is roughly equal to one million bytes.

megahertz (MHz) A unit of measurement used to compare clock speeds of computers.

memory The temporary workspace of the computer where data and programs are kept while they are worked on. It is also referred to as *RAM (random access memory)*. Information in RAM is lost when the computer is turned off, which is why memory is considered volatile.

menu A list of choices (selections) displayed on the screen from which the user chooses a course of action.

menu bar A rectangular bar, usually in a program, in which the names of the available, additional menus are shown. The user chooses one of these menus and a list of choices for that menu is shown.

message box A type of dialog box that informs you of a condition.

microcomputer A personal computer that is usually used by one person. It is also referred to as a desktop computer or a stand-alone computer.

microfloppy disk A 3½-inch floppy disk encased in a hard plastic shell.

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) A way to get input from your musical instruments into a computer and then modify and store the sounds you recorded.

minicomputer A mid-level computer larger than a microcomputer but smaller than a mainframe computer. It is usually used to meet the needs of a small company or department.

minifloppy disk A 5¼-inch floppy disk.

Minimize button A button that reduces the current window to a button on the taskbar.

modem Short for modulator/demodulator. A device that provides communication capability between computers using phone lines. Modems are typically used to access online services, such as AOL (America Online) or an ISP.

monitor A device similar to a television screen that displays the input and output of the computer. It is also called a *screen*, *display screen*, *cathode-ray terminal*, or *VDT (video display terminal)*.

monospaced typeface A typeface that gives all characters in the set the same width.

motherboard The main computer board that holds the memory and CPU, as well as slots for adapter cards. The power supply plugs directly into the motherboard. It is also called a *system board*.

mouse A small, hand-held device that is equipped with one or more control buttons and is housed in a palm-sized case. It is used to control cursor movement.

mouse pointer An onscreen pointer that is controlled by the movement of the mouse.

mouse trail A “ghost” of the mouse pointer that follows the movement of the mouse around the screen. It is used to improve the visibility of the cursor.

MS-DOS An abbreviation for *Microsoft disk operating system*, a character-based operating system for computers that use the 8086 or above microprocessor.

multitasking Describes the ability to work on more than one task or application program at a time.

naming convention A logical naming scheme for files and folders for facilitating the saving and retrieving of files and folders.

Net A colloquial name for the *Internet*.

netiquette A combination of the words *network* and *etiquette*. It is a set of principles of courtesy that should be observed when sending electronic messages such as email and newsgroup postings.

network A group of computers connected by a communication facility called a server, which permits the sharing and transmission of data. In addition, it allows the sharing of resources, such as a hard drive or a printer.

network administrator The person who decides how the hardware and software will be used on a network.

network interface card (NIC) An expansion card used to connect a computer to a local area network.

network operating system (NOS) An operating system installed on a server in a local area network that coordinates the activities of providing services to the computers and other devices attached to the network.

NIC See *network interface card*.

nonbootable disk A disk that does not contain the operating system files. The computer cannot boot from it.

noncontiguous Describes files that are written to a disk in nonadjacent clusters or clusters that are not next to one another.

nonimpact printer A type of printer that transfers images onto paper by means of ink-jet sprayers, melting ink, or lasers.

noninterlaced A display method on monitors in which the electron beam scans each line of the screen once during each refresh cycle. Monitors that are noninterlaced generally have clearer images and do not flicker. See also *interlaced*.

NOS See *network operating system*.

null value A test for nothing (no data).

numeric keypad A separate set of keys next to the main keyboard that contains the digits 0 through 9. It also includes an alternate set of commands that can be toggled such as **PgUp** and the arrow keys. These functions are program dependent.

object Most items in Windows are considered objects. Objects can be opened, have properties, and be manipulated. Objects can also have settings and parameters.

octet Refers to one of the four sections of the dotted-decimal notation address.

offline Describes a printer that may be attached to the computer but is not activated and ready to print. It also refers to not being connected to a network or the Internet.

online Describes a printer that is not only attached to the computer but also activated and ready for operation. When referring to communication, it refers to being attached to another computer, a network, or the Internet.

online help On-screen assistance consisting of advice or instructions on utilizing the program's features. It can be accessed without interrupting the work in progress.

open scroll area An area on a scroll bar to the right or left of the scroll box that will move you in large increments through a document.

operating system (OS) A master control program or set of programs that manages the operation of all the parts of a computer. An operating system, known as *system software*, is loaded into memory when the computer is booted. It must be loaded prior to any application software.

optional parameter A parameter that may be used with a command but is not mandatory.

option button Part of a list of choices presented to the user. Only one option can be selected at a time. Option buttons provide mutually exclusive choices.

overtyping See *typeover*.

overwrite mode The mode in which newly typed characters replace existing characters to the right of the cursor.

overwriting Replacing data by writing over old data with new data. Usually when you copy a file from one location to another, the file that is copied overwrites the file that was there.

packet A unit of information transferred between computers via a network or a modem.

- pane** A division in a window.
- parallel** In data transmission, it refers to sending one byte (eight bits) at a time.
- parallel port** An input/output connector for parallel interface devices.
- parameter** A qualifier or modifier that can be added to a command and will specify the action to be taken.
- parent directory** The subdirectory above the current subdirectory. The parent directory is always one step closer to the root than the child.
- parent menu** A menu in a hierarchical menu structure that is at the top of the menu system. A parent menu may have a child menu; a child menu may become a parent and have child windows of its own.
- parent window** A window that is the owner of any objects in it. If there is a folder in the window, it is a child to that parent. A child window can have only one parent, but it can have one or more child windows of its own.
- parity** Parity bit is a simple method used to check for transmission errors. An extra bit is added to be sure that there is always either an even or an odd number of bits.
- partitioning** Physically dividing a section of the hard disk from other sections of the disk and then having the operating system treat that section as if it were a separate unit.
- password** A unique set of text or numbers that identifies the user. Passwords are used when logging onto networks and when Windows 98 has user profiles set up.
- path** Tells Windows where to look for programs and files on a disk that has more than one directory.
- path name** Information that tells the operating system where to look for program files on a disk that has more than one folder (directory).
- peer-to-peer network** A network that has no dedicated servers or a hierarchy among the computers. All the computers are equal, and therefore peers. Each computer can function as either client or server.
- pel** See *pixel*.
- peripheral device** Any device, such as a keyboard, monitor, or printer, that is connected to and controlled by the CPU.
- physical formatting** See *low-level formatting*.
- physical memory** The actual memory chips in a computer.
- physical view** A view of folders that shows the hierarchy of a file system, indicating drives and where they are located.
- pixel** The smallest element on the display screen grid that can be stored or displayed. Pixels are used to create or print letters, numbers, or graphics. The more pixels, the higher the resolution.
- Plug and Play** A feature of Windows that automatically detects and configures a new hardware device when it is added to a computer system.
- point** Fonts are measured in points. The more points, the larger the font. A point is $1/72$ of an inch.
- pointer** An arrow or other indicator on the screen which represents the current cursor (mouse) location.
- pointing** Placing the mouse pointer over an object.
- Point-to-Point Protocol (PPP)** A temporary dial-up connection that uses this protocol provides full access to the Internet as long as you are online.

pop-up menu A menu that opens with a right-click of the mouse. It is also referred to as a *shortcut* or *context menu*.

port A location or place on a CPU to connect other devices to a computer. It allows the computer to send information to and from the device.

portal An entry point to the World Wide Web (WWW). It is sometimes called a gateway. Search engines such as Yahoo! and service providers such as MSN are positioning themselves as portals.

portrait The most common printing mode for letters and other documents. This mode prints with the narrower side of the page across the top.

power cycle Physically turning the computer off, waiting at least five seconds, and turning the computer back on.

PPP See *Point-to-Point Protocol*.

primary mouse button The mouse button used for most operations, usually configured as the left mouse button.

printer A computer peripheral that produces a hard copy of text or graphics on paper.

printer driver Software used to send correct codes to the printer. It is also called *driver software* since it drives the printer.

printer font A font that a printer is capable of printing.

print job A print job usually consists of a single document, which can be one page or hundreds of pages long.

print queue A list of files that have been sent to the printer by various applications. The print manager sends the files to the printer as the printer becomes available.

print server On a network, a computer that is dedicated only to printing.

print spooler A program that compensates for differences in rates of the flow of data by temporarily storing data in memory and then doling it out to the printer at the proper speed.

process An executable program or part of a program that is a coherent set of steps. The process consists of the program itself, the memory address space it uses, the system resources it uses, and at least one thread.

program A set of step-by-step instructions that tells the computer what to do.

program approach A paradigm of treating programs as central. In order to use data, you must first open your program and then open your file. See also *docucentric*.

program file A file containing an executable computer program. See also *application software* and *application program*.

progress bar control See *progress bar indicator*.

progress bar indicator A control that is a visual representation of the progress of a task.

prompt A symbol on the screen that tells the user that the computer is ready for the next command. In the DOS window, the prompt usually consists of the letter of the current drive followed by a greater-than sign (e.g., A>, B>, or C>).

property sheet A special kind of dialog box that allows the user to view or change the properties (characteristics) of an object.

proportional typeface A typeface that varies the space given to each character. For instance, the *M* will take more space than the *I*.

protected mode An operating mode in which different parts of memory are allocated to different programs so that when programs are running simultaneously they cannot invade each other's memory space and can access only their own memory space.

- protocol** A set of rules or standards designed to enable computers to connect with one another and to exchange information.
- push technology** A method of distributing information over the Web by automatically sending updates from Web sites.
- queue** A line up of items waiting for processing.
- random access memory (RAM)** See *memory*.
- read-cache** Intercepts, makes a copy of, and places into memory the file that has been read. When a program makes a request, Windows checks to see if the data is already in the read-cache. Read-cache is used to optimize performance.
- read-only attribute** Prevents a file from being changed or deleted.
- read-only memory (ROM)** Memory that contains programs written on ROM chips, retained when the computer is turned off. ROM often controls the startup routines of the computer.
- real mode** A single-task working environment. DOS runs in real mode.
- real time** The actual amount of time the computer uses to complete an operation.
- rebooting** Reloading the operating system from a disk.
- redirection** A process in which a character-based operating system or the command line in Windows takes standard input or output from devices and sends it to a nonstandard input or output device. The redirection symbol is >.
- Registry** A mechanism in Windows that stores user information, application program information, and information about the specific computer. The Registry centralizes and tracks all this information. It is critical to the running of Windows.
- relative path** The path from where you are to where you want to go in relation to the directory tree hierarchical structure.
- required parameter** See *mandatory parameter*.
- resident font** A font stored in a printer.
- resolution** The sharpness and clarity of detail attained by a printer or a monitor in producing an image.
- resources** In a network environment, resources are what are provided by the server. Resources are the parts of the computer you share, such as a device or file.
- Restore button** A button on a window's title bar that returns the window to its previous size.
- restoring** Copying some or all of your files to your original disk, another disk, or another directory from your backup media.
- Rich Text Format (RTF)** A file format that allows different applications to use formatted text documents.
- right-clicking** Pressing the secondary mouse button, usually the right mouse button.
- right-dragging** Dragging while holding the secondary mouse button, usually the right mouse button.
- ROM** See *read-only memory (ROM)*.
- ROM-BIOS (read-only memory–basic input/output system)** A chip built into the hardware of a system. Its functions include running self-diagnostics, loading the boot record, and handling low-level system tasks.
- root directory** The directory that Windows creates on each disk when the disk is formatted. The backslash symbol (\) is used to represent the root directory.

router A device that connects networks. A router can make intelligent decisions about which network to use to send data.

RTF See *Rich Text Format (RTF)*.

sample box In a dialog box, an area where a preview of your selections can be seen.

sans serif font A typeface with no serifs.

scale Various sizes a font can be made to print in.

scanner A device that enables a computer to read a handwritten or printed page.

screen capture A picture of a screen. To capture the screen to the Clipboard, you press the **Print Screen** key. To capture the active window, you press **Alt** + **Print Screen**. See also *screen dump*.

screen dump A transfer of the data on the monitor to a printer or another hard-copy device. See also *screen capture*.

screen font A font that is used to display text and graphics on the monitor.

screen saver An image that prevents screen burn-in and provides a modicum of security if passwords are used.

scroll bar A feature used to move through a window when the entire contents will not fit.

scroll box The box in a scroll bar that shows you your relative position in a window or document. It can be dragged with the mouse to move rapidly through the window or document.

scrolling Vertical movement through text.

search criteria The instructions or limitations for a search for files or folders.

search path The set path for searching for program files.

secondary storage media Data storage media other than RAM. Typically disks, tapes, or removable drives such as Zip drives.

sector Data is stored on a disk in concentric circles (tracks) that are divided into sectors. A sector is a portion of a track. A sector is 512 bytes long, based on industry standards.

Serial Line Internet Protocol (SLIP) An older protocol that provides a temporary dial-up connection for full access to the Internet as long as you are online.

serial port A communications port to which a device, such as a modem or a serial printer, can be attached. Data is transmitted and received one bit at a time.

serif font A font with thin lines (serifs) at the ends of each letter.

server On a network, a computer that provides shared resources to network users. It is also used to refer to an application that provides data or an object in object linking and embedding.

server application An application program that provides data (an object) in object linking and embedding. It is also known as the source application.

server-based network A network model in which security and other network functions are provided by a dedicated server.

services A way to allow you to share files and devices on a network. There are other services such as being able to remotely administer a network.

shareware Software that is free on a trial basis with the option to either purchase it or remove it from your hard disk.

shortcut An icon that is created to represent commonly used objects. The icon is placed on the desktop or another location for easy access. A shortcut provides a pointer to the actual

object, and it can usually be recognized by a right-bent arrow on top of the object's normal icon or by the word *shortcut*.

shortcut menu A menu that opens with a right-click of the mouse. It is also referred to as a *pop-up* or *context menu*.

single point of failure Describes how, if the hub in a star topology fails, the entire network goes down.

sizing buttons Allow the user to minimize or maximize a window.

slider A control that allows you to adjust or set values when there is a range of values. You move the slider with the mouse.

SLIP See *Serial Line Internet Protocol (SLIP)*.

soft return A code that is automatically inserted when the end of a line is reached in a document. Unlike a hard return, if text is inserted or removed, software will automatically adjust the text to fit within the margins.

software Programs that tell the computer what to do.

software package See *application package*.

spin box A control that allows you to either key in a number or click on the up or down arrow to increase or decrease a quantity. Usually a control that has numeric quantities to choose will be a spin box.

spinner A synonym for a *spin box*. See also *spin box*.

splash screen The first screen that appears when you boot the system or load a program. It is often a decorative screen to look at while the program or system is loading.

split bar In Explorer, a bar that divides the window to enable the user to see the structure of a disk on the left and the contents on the right.

spool file Stores a data document in a queue while it waits to be printed. The Windows print manager intercepts a print job on its way to the printer and sends it to disk or memory instead, where the print job is held until the printer is ready for it. The term *spool* comes from "simultaneous peripheral operations online."

spreadsheet program A program for budget management and financial projections.

standard A set of detailed technical guidelines used to establish conformity in software or hardware development.

standard error A process in which a character-based operating system or the command line in Windows writes error messages to the screen.

standard input A process in which a character-based operating system or the command line in Windows expects to receive information, usually from the keyboard.

standard output A process in which a character-based operating system or the command line in Windows expects to send information, usually to the screen.

star topology A local area network (LAN) design in which each device (node) is connected to a central point.

Start button The first button on the taskbar. Clicking the Start button opens the Start menu, which opens further menus for the user to access programs and data.

static RAM (SRAM) Memory chips that can hold data until the computer is turned off. See also *dynamic RAM*.

status area An area located at the right side of the taskbar that is used by Windows and other programs to place information or notification of events. If you were printing, for example, an icon of a printer would appear in the status area.

status bar A bar that supplies information about the current window.

string A string of data is a variable-length set of characters. String values are always enclosed in quotation marks.

stroke weight The thickness of a font.

subdirectory The location or container where documents, program files, devices, and other folders are stored on a disk. The terms *subfolders*, *folders*, *directories*, and *subdirectories* are used interchangeably.

subfolder A folder beneath a folder. The terms *subfolders*, *folders*, *directories*, and *subdirectories* are used interchangeably.

subscription Sets up a Web browser to check a Web page for new content. The program can then either notify the user about the new content or automatically download it to the user's computer.

supporting Describes a program's ability to read from and write to a specific file format.

surfing the Net Exploring the Internet by moving from topic to topic.

surge protector A device that prevents surges from reaching a computer or other kinds of electronic equipment. It is also called a *surge suppressor*.

surge suppressor See *surge protector*.

switch A modifier that controls the execution of a command. Typically the forward slash (/) is used to indicate a switch. See also *parameter*.

synchronizing files Updating files and folders that are duplicated. It is used with My Briefcase.

syntax The proper order or sequence of a computer's language and commands.

syntax diagram A graphic representation of a command and its syntax.

sysing a disk Placing the operating system files on a disk without removing the data that is there. The command is SYS.

system board Also known as a *motherboard*, it is the main circuit board controlling the major components of a computer system.

system configuration The components that make up a specific computer system.

system date The current date kept by the computer system.

system disk See *bootable disk*.

system prompt A symbol on the screen that tells the user that the computer is ready for the next command. It is used in the command line interface and usually consists of the current drive letter followed by the greater-than sign, as in C:\>.

system resources An area in memory that Windows uses for critical operating system tasks, such as drawing windows on the screen, using fonts, or running applications.

system software A set of programs that coordinates the operations of the hardware components.

system time The current time kept by the computer.

taskbar The bar on the screen that lets you move between any open programs, files, folders, or windows by displaying a button for each open item. The taskbar includes the Start button as well as the status area where Windows and other programs can place notification of events.

taskbar button The button on the taskbar that indicates an open program, file, or window. Clicking the specific button on the taskbar will activate that choice.

T-connector A device used in a network which has one end plugged into the network card and two open ends (like a T) for connecting the cables that go to the computers.

terminator plug A device used with T-connectors so that there is no unplugged end in a network.

text box A place where the user can key in information.

text editor A program that is similar to a word-processing program but is unable to perform any special editing. No embedded codes are inserted into documents. ASCII editors can only edit ASCII text files, also called *text files* or *unformatted text files*. Text editors are also called *ASCII editors*.

text file A file that contains text. It consists of data that can be read, such as letters and numbers, with an ASCII editor such as Notepad or in the DOS window.

Thinnet A single coaxial cable.

tiled A display mode that divides the screen equally among the open windows.

title bar A bar located at the top of a window that contains the name of the program.

toggle switch A switch that turns a function on or off like a light switch.

token A binary shorthand for repetitive words or phrases. When a file is decompressed, the tokens are read and the original characters are restored.

toolbar A toolbar appears in a window or on the desktop and provides shortcuts for entering menu commands. Rather than access the menu, you click a button on the toolbar.

ToolTip A brief description of a button. The user activates a ToolTip by pausing the mouse pointer over a button on a toolbar or the taskbar.

topology A design or configuration formed by the connections between devices on a local area network (LAN).

track A concentric circle on a disk where data is stored. Each track is further divided into sectors. All tracks and sectors are numbered so that the operating system can quickly locate information.

trackball A device used to move the cursor on the monitor. It usually consists of a stationary box that holds a ball that the user rotates to move the cursor.

tracking speed The rate at which the mouse pointer moves across the screen.

transparent to the user Describes a program or process that works so smoothly and easily that it is invisible to the user.

tree structure The organizational properties of a tree that relate to the structure of a disk from the root directory down.

troubleshooter A step-by-step guide to assist you in analyzing and solving a problem.

TrueType font A font that is provided with Windows and is capable of printing on any printer. The font usually looks on the screen like it will when it is printed. See *WYSIWYG*.

tweaking a system Making final changes and fine-tuning a system to improve performance.

twisted-pair cable A type of cable also known as 10BASET, 10BT, Ethernet, TPE, or RJ-45.

typeface The design of a group of letters, numbers, and punctuation, such as Arial or Times New Roman.

typeover The process of deleting existing characters as you key in new ones.

typing replaces selection The process of deleting existing characters by selecting them and keying in data. What you key in replaces your selection.

UNC See *universal naming convention (UNC)*.

unformatted text file See *text file*.

Unicode A 16-bit character set intended to accommodate all the commonly used characters in all languages.

uniform resource locator (URL) A standard format for identifying locations on the Internet. URLs specify three types of information needed to retrieve a document: the protocol to be used, the server address with which to connect, and the path to the information. The URL syntax is *protocol/servername/path*; an example of a URL address is **http://www.netscape.com**.

uninterruptible power supply (UPS) A device that ensures electrical flow to the computer is not interrupted because of a blackout and that protects the computer against potentially damaging events, such as power surges and brownouts. All UPS units are equipped with a battery and a loss-of-power sensor; if the sensor detects a loss of power, it switches over to the battery so that the user has time to save his or her work and shut off the computer.

universal naming convention (UNC) A convention used to locate the path to a network resource. It specifies the share name on a particular computer. The computer name is limited to 15 characters, and the share name is usually limited to 15 characters. It takes the format of *\\computername\sharename[optional path]*.

universal serial bus (USB) The latest bus standard. It is an external bus standard for the computer that brings plug-and-play capability. It eliminates the need to install cards into dedicated computer slots and to reconfigure the system.

upgrading Purchasing the latest version of software and replacing your existing version with it.

uploading Sending a file to another computer while connected by a modem, another outside connection, or a network.

UPS See *uninterruptible power supply*.

URL See *uniform resource locator*.

user profiles In Windows, enabling profiles allows more than one user to use the same computer and retain his or her own personal settings on the desktop.

utility A program for carrying out specific, vital functions that assist in the operation of a computer or software.

utility program See *utility*.

variable parameter Value/information provided by the user.

vector font A font in which the characters are drawn using arrangements of line segments rather than arrangements of bits.

version A numbering scheme that indicates the progressive enhancements and improvement of software.

VFAT (virtual file allocation table) file system An extension of the file allocation table, with which it is compatible. It provides the ability to handle long file names. See also *file allocation table (FAT)*.

video card A circuit board that controls the capabilities of the video display.

virtual Describes a device, service, or sensory input that is perceived but is not real.

virtual machine (VM) An environment in memory that, from the application's point of view, looks like a separate computer, complete with all the resources available on the physical computer.

virus A program that has damaging side effects. Sometimes the side effects are intentionally damaging, other times not.

volume label An electronic label for a disk that the user can assign when it is formatted.

volume serial number A number randomly assigned to a disk when it is formatted.

wallpaper A graphic image file that serves as a background on the desktop, behind all open windows.

WAN See *wide area network (WAN)*.

Web A colloquial expression for the World Wide Web (WWW).

Web browser A software program for navigating the Internet. Two popular programs are Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Web page On the Internet, a single screen of text and graphics that usually has hypertext links to other pages.

Web site Both the physical and virtual location of a person's or an organization's Web page.

What's This? A feature that allows the user to right-click an item to obtain a brief description of it.

wide area network (WAN) A network that consists of computers using long-range telecommunication links.

wildcards The symbols * and ?, also called global file specifications, that are used to represent a character (?) or a group of characters (*) in a file name.

window A defined work area (rectangular frame) on the screen that is moveable and sizeable; information with which the user can interact is displayed in it.

Wintel A computer that uses the Microsoft Windows operating system and an Intel central processing unit (CPU).

wizard A program that uses step-by-step instructions to lead the user through the execution and completion of a Windows task.

word-processing program Software that allows the user to write, edit, and print any type of text.

word wrap A feature in software that automatically moves text to the next line when the current line is full.

workgroup Another name for a peer-to-peer network.

World Wide Web (WWW) A virtual space accessible from the Internet that holds pages of text and graphics in a recognizable format. These pages are linked to one another and to individual files. The Web is a collection of standards and protocols used to access information on the Internet.

wrapping Continuing a movement, with the cursor or a search operation, to the beginning or to a new starting point rather than stopping when the end of a series is reached. In a window, a title or an icon label would have additional lines created for the text to be displayed, if necessary.

write-protected disk A floppy disk that can be only read from, not written to.

WWW See *World Wide Web (WWW)*.

WYSIWYG An acronym for *what you see is what you get*. It is displayed on the screen in the manner in which it will be printed.

zip A type of file. Its contents have been compressed by a special utility program, usually PKZIP or WinZip, so that it occupies less space on a disk or other storage device.