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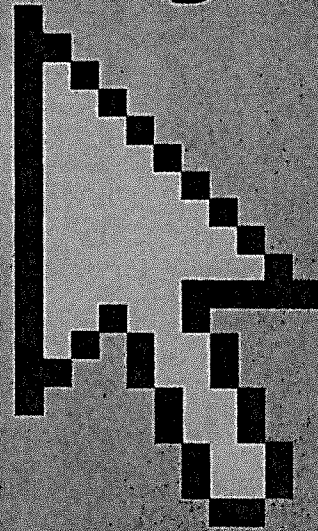
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Microsoft

# Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition

- Fully updated with the latest technologies, terms, and acronyms
- Easy to read, expertly illustrated
- Definitive coverage of hardware, software, the Internet, and more!



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

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Microsoft Computer Dictionary.--5th ed.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-7356-1495-4

1. Computers--Dictionaries. 2. Microcomputers--Dictionaries.

AQ76.5. M52267 2002

004:03--dc21

200219714

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 QWT 7 6 5 4 3 2

Distributed in Canada by H.B. Fenn and Company Ltd.

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

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Acquisitions Editor: Alex Blanton

Project Editor: Sandra Haynes

Body Part No. X08-41929

**Boolean operator** *n.* An operator designed to work with Boolean values. The four most common Boolean operators in programming use are AND (logical conjunction), OR (logical inclusion), XOR (exclusive OR), and NOT (logical negation). Boolean operators are often used as qualifiers in database searches—for example, *find all records where DEPARTMENT = "marketing" OR DEPARTMENT = "sales" AND SKILL = "word processing"*. Also called: logical operator. See also AND, exclusive OR, NOT, OR.

**Boolean search** *n.* A database search that uses Boolean operators. See also Boolean operator.

**boost** *vb.* To strengthen a network signal before it is transmitted further.

**boot<sup>1</sup>** *n.* The process of starting or resetting a computer. When first turned on (*cold boot*) or reset (*warm boot*), the computer executes the software that loads and starts the computer's more complicated operating system and prepares it for use. Thus, the computer can be said to pull itself up by its own bootstraps. Also called: bootstrap. See also BIOS, bootstrap loader, cold boot, warm boot.

**boot<sup>2</sup>** *vb.* 1. To start or reset a computer by turning the power on, by pressing a reset button on the computer case, or by issuing a software command to restart. Also called: bootstrap, boot up. See also reboot. 2. To execute the bootstrap loader program. Also called: bootstrap. See also bootstrap loader.

**bootable** *adj.* Containing the system files necessary for booting a PC and running it. See also boot<sup>2</sup>.

**bootable disk** *n.* See boot disk.

**boot block** *n.* A portion of a disk that contains the operating-system loader and other basic information that enables a computer to start up. See also block<sup>1</sup> (definition 5).

**boot disk** *n.* A floppy disk that contains key system files from a PC-compatible operating system and that can boot, or start, the PC. A boot disk must be inserted in the primary floppy disk drive (usually drive A:) and is used when there is some problem with starting the PC from the hard disk, from which the computer generally boots. Also called: bootable disk. See also A:, boot<sup>2</sup>, boot drive, hard disk.

**boot drive** *n.* In a PC-compatible computer, the disk drive that the BIOS uses to automatically load the operating system when the computer is turned on. Generally, the default boot drive is the primary floppy disk drive A: in PC-compatible computers with MS-DOS, Windows 3x, or Windows 9x operating systems. If a floppy disk is not found in that drive, the BIOS will check the primary hard disk next, which is drive C:. The BIOS for these operating systems can be reconfigured to search drive C: first by using the BIOS setup program. See also A:, BIOS, disk drive, hard disk.

**boot failure** *n.* The inability of a computer to locate or activate the operating system and thus boot, or start, the computer. See also boot<sup>2</sup>.

**boot files** *n.* The system files needed to start Microsoft Windows. The boot files include Ntldr and Ntdetect.com. See also partition boot sector.

**boot loader** *n.* See bootstrap loader.

**BOOTP** *n.* See Bootstrap Protocol.

**boot partition** *n.* The partition on a hard disk that contains the operating system and support files that the system loads into memory when the computer is turned on or restarted.

**boot record** *n.* The section of a disk that contains the operating system.

**boot sector** *n.* The portion of a disk reserved for the bootstrap loader (the self-starting portion) of an operating system. The boot sector typically contains a short machine language program that loads the operating system.

**bootstrap<sup>1</sup>** *n.* See boot<sup>1</sup>.

**bootstrap<sup>2</sup>** *vb.* See boot<sup>2</sup>.

**bootstrap loader** *n.* A program that is automatically run when a computer is switched on (booted). After first performing a few basic hardware tests, the bootstrap loader loads and passes control to a larger loader program, which typically then loads the operating system. The bootstrap loader typically resides in the computer's read-only memory (ROM).

**Bootstrap Protocol** *n.* A protocol used primarily on TCP/IP networks to configure diskless workstations. RFCs 951 and 1542 define this protocol. DHCP is a later boot configuration protocol that uses this protocol. The

C

screen together make up the console and represent the primary sources of input and output in an MS-DOS computer system.

**concatenate** *vb.* To join sequentially (for example, to combine the two strings "hello" and "there" into the single string "hello there"). *See also* character string.

**concatenated data set** *n.* A group of separate sets of related data treated as a single unit for processing.

**concentrator** *n.* A communications device that combines signals from multiple sources, such as terminals on a network, into one or more signals before sending them to their destination. *Compare* multiplexer (definition 2).

**conceptual schema** *n.* In a database model that supports a three-schema architecture (such as that described by ANSI/X3/SPARC), a description of the information contents and structure of a database. A conceptual schema (also known as a *logical schema*) provides a model of the total database, thus acting as an intermediary between the two other types of schemas (internal and external) that deal with storing information and presenting it to the user. Schemas are generally defined using commands from a DDL (data definition language) supported by the database system. *See also* internal schema, schema.

**concordance** *n.* A list of words that appear in a document, along with the contexts of the appearances.

**concrete class** *n.* In object-oriented programming, a class in which objects can be created. *See also* class (definition 1). *Compare* abstract class.

**concurrent** *adj.* Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a computer operation in which two or more processes (programs) have access to the microprocessor's time and are therefore carried out nearly simultaneously. Because a microprocessor can work with much smaller units of time than people can perceive, concurrent processes appear to be occurring simultaneously but in reality are not.

**concurrent execution** *n.* The apparently simultaneous execution of two or more routines or programs. Concurrent execution can be accomplished on a single process or by using time-sharing techniques, such as dividing programs into different tasks or threads of execution, or by using multiple processors. *Also called:* parallel execution. *See also* parallel algorithm, processor, sequential execution, task, thread (definition 1), time-sharing.

**concurrent operation** *n.* *See* concurrent.

**concurrent processing** *n.* *See* concurrent.

**concurrent program execution** *n.* *See* concurrent.

**Concurrent Versions System** *n.* *See* CVS (definition 2).

**condensed** *adj.* Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a font style, supported in some applications, that reduces the width of each character and then sets the characters closer together than their normal spacing. Many dot-matrix printers have a feature that causes the printer to reduce the width of each character and print them closer together, resulting in more characters fitting on a single line. *Compare* expanded.

**condition** *n.* The state of an expression or a variable (for example, when a result can be either true or false, or equal or not equal).

**conditional** *adj.* Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of an action or operation that takes place based on whether or not a certain condition is true. *See also* Boolean expression, conditional statement.

**conditional branch** *n.* In a program, a branch instruction that occurs when a particular condition code is true or false. The term is normally used in relation to low-level languages. *See also* branch instruction, condition code.

**conditional compilation** *n.* Selective compilation or translation of source code of a program based on certain conditions or flags; for example, sections of a program specified by the programmer might be compiled only if a DEBUG flag has been defined at compilation time. *See also* comment out.

**conditional expression** *n.* *See* Boolean expression.

**conditional jump** *n.* In a program, a jump instruction that occurs when a particular condition code is true or false. The term is normally used in relation to low-level languages. *See also* condition code, jump instruction.

**conditional statement** *n.* A programming-language statement that selects an execution path based on whether some condition is true or false (for example, the IF statement). *See also* case statement, conditional, IF statement, statement.

**conditional transfer** *n.* A transfer of the flow of execution to a given location in a program based on whether a particular condition is true. The term is usually used in relation to high-level languages. *See also* conditional statement.

**condition code** *n.* One of a set of bits that are set *on* (1, or true) or *off* (0, or false) as the result of previous machine instructions. The term is used primarily in assembly or

**octal** *n.* The base-8 number system consisting of the digits 0 through 7, from the Latin *octo*, meaning "eight." The octal system is used in programming as a compact means of representing binary numbers. *See also* base (definition 2).

**octet** *n.* A unit of data that consists of exactly 8 bits, regardless of the number of bits a computer uses to represent a small amount of information such as a character. *Compare* byte.

**OCX** *n.* Short for OLE custom control. A software module based on OLE and COM technologies that, when called by an application, produces a control that adds some desired feature to the application. OCX technology is portable across platforms, works on both 16-bit and 32-bit operating systems, and can be used with many applications. It is the successor to VBX (Visual Basic custom control) technology, which supported only Visual Basic applications, and is the basis for ActiveX controls. OCXs have, in fact, been superseded by ActiveX controls, which are much smaller and therefore work much better over the Internet. *See also* ActiveX control, COM (definition 2), control (definition 2), OLE, VBX, Visual Basic.

**ODBC** *n.* Acronym for Open Database Connectivity. In the Microsoft WOSA (Windows Open System Architecture) structure, an interface providing a common language for Windows applications to gain access to a database on a network. *See also* WOSA.

**ODBC driver** *n.* Short for Open Database Connectivity driver. A program file used to connect to a particular database. Each database program, such as Access or dBASE, or database management system, such as SQL Server, requires a different driver.

**ODBMG** *n.* *See* Object Database Management Group.

**odd parity** *n.* *See* parity.

**ODI** *n.* Acronym for Open Data-link Interface. A specification developed by Novell to enable a network interface card (NIC) to support multiple protocols, such as TCP/IP and IPX/SPX. ODI also simplifies development of device drivers by eliminating concern about the particular protocol to be used in transferring information over the network. ODI is comparable in some ways to the Network Driver Interface Specification, or NDIS. *See also* NDIS, network adapter.

**ODMA** *n.* Acronym for Open Document Management API. A specification for a standard application program interface that enables desktop applications, such as

Microsoft Word, to interact seamlessly with specialized document management systems (DMS) installed on network servers. The ODMA specification is the property of the Association for Information & Image Management (AIIM). *See also* API, document management system.

**OEM** *n.* *See* original equipment manufacturer.

**OFC** *n.* *See* Open Financial Connectivity.

**Office** *n.* Microsoft's family of individual and business application software suites for the Windows and Macintosh platforms. Office is built around three core products: Word for word processing, Excel for spreadsheets, and Outlook for e-mail and collaboration. Office XP, the most recent version for the Windows platform, is available in several versions: the Office XP Standard or Standard for Students and Teachers version, which includes Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint; the Office XP Professional version, which adds Access; Office XP Developer, which includes Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Access, FrontPage, Microsoft's new SharePoint Team Services collaboration and team Web solution, and Developer Tools; and finally, Office XP Professional Special Edition, which offers all the programs in Office XP Professional plus FrontPage, SharePoint Team Services, Publisher, and IntelliMouse Explorer. Office v. X for Mac is the most recent version for the Macintosh and includes Word, Entourage (for e-mail and collaboration), Excel, and PowerPoint. *See* the table.

Table O.1 Application Specifications

Product	Function	Platform
Word	Word processing	Windows, Macintosh
Excel	Spreadsheets	Windows, Macintosh
Outlook	E-mail, collaboration	Windows
Entourage	E-mail, collaboration	Macintosh
Publisher	Desktop publishing	Windows
Access	Database management	Windows
PowerPoint	Presentation graphics	Windows, Macintosh
FrontPage	Web site creation	Windows
SharePoint		
Team Services	Team Web solution	Windows

**office automation** *n.* The use of electronic and communications devices, such as computers, modems, and fax machines and any associated software, to perform office functions mechanically rather than manually.