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Microsoft

Computer Dictionary

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Apple Extended Keyboard.

Apple Filing Protocol *n.* See AFP.

Apple key *n.* A key on Apple keyboards labeled with an outline of the Apple logo. On the Apple Extended Keyboard, this key is the same as the Command key, which functions similarly to the Control key on IBM and compatible keyboards. It is generally used in conjunction with a character key as a shortcut to making menu selections or starting a macro.

Apple Macintosh *n.* See Macintosh.

Apple Newton *n.* See Newton.

AppleScript *n.* A script language developed by Apple Computer, Inc., for Macintosh computers running under the Mac OS to execute commands and automate functions. *See also* script.

AppleShare *n.* A file server software developed by Apple Computer, Inc., that works with the Mac OS and allows one Macintosh computer to share files with another on the same network. *See also* file server, Mac OS.

applet *n.* A program that can be downloaded over the Internet and executed on the recipient's machine. Applets are often written in the Java programming language and run within browser software, and they are typically used to customize or add interactive elements to a Web page.

AppleTalk *n.* An inexpensive local area network developed by Apple Computer, Inc., for Macintosh computers that can be used by Apple and non-Apple computers to communicate and share resources such as printers and file servers. Non-Apple computers must be equipped with AppleTalk hardware and suitable software. The network

uses a layered set of protocols similar to the ISO/OSI reference model and transfers information in the form of packets called frames. AppleTalk supports connections to other AppleTalk networks through devices known as bridges, and it supports connections to dissimilar networks through devices called gateways. *See also* bridge, frame (definition 2), gateway.

AppleTalk Phase 2 *n.* The extended AppleTalk Internet model designed by Apple Computer, Inc., that supports multiple zones within a network and extended addressing capacity.

AppleWorks *n.* A suite of productivity applications, formerly known as ClarisWorks, distributed by Apple Computer, Inc., and shipped on the iMac computer. AppleWorks/ClarisWorks is an integrated product that includes support for word processing, spreadsheets, databases, drawing, painting, charting, and the Internet.

appliance *n.* **1.** *See* server appliance. **2.** *See* information appliance. **3.** A device with a single or limited purpose with functionality. This functionality is similar to a simple consumer appliance.

appliance server *n.* **1.** An inexpensive computing device used for specific tasks including Internet connectivity or file-and-print services. The server is usually easy to use but does not possess the capabilities or software of a typical server for general office use. **2.** *See* server appliance.

application *n.* A program designed to assist in the performance of a specific task, such as word processing, accounting, or inventory management. *Compare* utility.

application binary interface *n.* A set of instructions that specifies how an executable file interacts with the hardware

bursts of four items in order to speed the process of returning data to a computer's CPU. BEDO DRAM takes advantage of the fact that memory requests typically refer to sequential addresses. BEDO DRAM does not function well with bus speeds above 66 MHz. However, once it has accessed the first memory address, it can process the remaining three items in the burst at 10 ns (nanoseconds) each. *Also called:* BEDO RAM. *See also* dynamic RAM, EDO DRAM.

Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code *n.* *See* Basic.

beginning-of-file *n.* **1.** A code placed by a program before the first byte in a file, used by the computer's operating system to keep track of locations within a file with respect to the first byte (character) in it. **2.** The starting location of a file on a disk relative to the first storage location on the disk. A data directory or catalog contains this location. *Acronym:* BOF. *Compare* end-of-file.

Bell communications standards *n.* A series of data transmission standards originated by AT&T during the late 1970s and early 1980s that, through wide acceptance in North America, became de facto standards for modems. Bell 103, now mostly obsolete, governed transmission at 300 bits per second (bps) with full-duplex, asynchronous communications over dial-up telephone lines using frequency-shift keying (FSK). Bell 212A governed modem operations at 1200 bps with full-duplex, asynchronous communications over dial-up telephone lines using phase-shift keying (PSK). An international set of transmission standards, known as the CCITT recommendations, has become generally accepted as the primary source of standardization, especially for communications at speeds greater than 1200 bps. *See also* CCITT V series, FSK, phase-shift keying.

Bell-compatible modem *n.* A modem that operates according to the Bell communications standards. *See also* Bell communications standards.

Bellman-Ford distance-vector routing algorithm *n.* An algorithm that helps to determine the shortest route between two nodes on a network. The Routing Information Protocol (RIP) is based on the Bellman-Ford distance-vector routing algorithm. *See also* RIP (definition 2).

bells and whistles *n.* Attractive features added to hardware or software beyond basic functionality, comparable to accessories such as electric door locks and air conditioning added to an automobile. Products, especially com-

puter systems, without such adornments are sometimes called "plain vanilla."

benchmark¹ *n.* A test used to measure hardware or software performance. Benchmarks for hardware use programs that test the capabilities of the equipment—for example, the speed at which a CPU can execute instructions or handle floating-point numbers. Benchmarks for software determine the efficiency, accuracy, or speed of a program in performing a particular task, such as recalculating data in a spreadsheet. The same data is used with each program tested, so the resulting scores can be compared to see which programs perform well and in what areas. The design of fair benchmarks is something of an art, because various combinations of hardware and software can exhibit widely variable performance under different conditions. Often, after a benchmark has become a standard, developers try to optimize a product to run that benchmark faster than similar products run it in order to enhance sales. *See also* sieve of Eratosthenes.

benchmark² *vb.* To measure the performance of hardware or software.

benign virus *n.* A program that exhibits properties of a virus, such as self-replication, but does not otherwise do harm to the computer systems that it infects.

BeOS *n.* An operating system developed by Be, Inc., that runs on PowerPC systems and, until they were discontinued, the company's original BeBox computers. Designed as a "media OS," the BeOS was created to support the large file sizes and high-performance processing demands of digital media and the Internet. It is an object-oriented, multithreaded operating system and can be run on symmetric multiprocessing systems containing two or more processors. Like many other operating systems, the BeOS provides preemptive multitasking, virtual memory, and memory protection. It also provides high-performance input/output capabilities, a 64-bit file system that can support terabyte-sized files, and a number of Internet-related features including built-in mail and Web services. *See also* BeBox.

Beowulf *n.* Name for a class of virtual supercomputer created by linking numerous PCs through network connections into a single high-performance unit based on inexpensive, x86-based hardware and publicly available software, such as some versions of UNIX. This clustering technique can provide performance comparable to a traditional supercomputer at approximately 10 percent of the