

Microsoft Press  
**Computer  
Dictionary**

Third Edition

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**General Protection Fault** \jen`ər-əl prə-tek`shən fält, fölt\ *n.* The error condition that occurs in an 80386 or higher processor running in protected mode (such as Windows 3.1) when an application attempts to access memory outside of its authorized memory space or an invalid instruction is issued. *Acronym:* GPF (G`P-F`). *See also* protected mode.

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**general-purpose computer** \jen`ər-əl-pur-pəs kəm-pyoo`tər\ *n.* A computer that can perform any computational task. Each task depends on specific software.

**general-purpose controller** \jen`ər-əl-pur-pəs kən-trō`lər\ *n.* A controller that is designed for multiple uses. *See also* controller.

**General-Purpose Interface Bus** \jen`ər-əl-pur-pəs ín-tər-fās bus\ *n.* A bus developed for the exchange of information between computers and industrial automation equipment. The electrical definition of this bus has been incorporated into an IEEE standard. *Acronym:* GPIB (G`P-I-B`). *See also* IEEE 488.

**general-purpose language** \jen`ər-əl-pur-pəs lang`wəj\ *n.* A programming language, such as Ada, Basic, C, or Pascal, designed for a variety of applications and uses. By contrast, SQL is a language designed to be used only with databases.

**general-purpose register** \jen`ər-əl-pur-pəs rej`ə-stər\ *n.* **1.** A register within a microprocessor that is available for any use rather than being reserved, like a segment selector or stack pointer, for a specific use by the processor design or operating system. **2.** Any digital circuit capable of storing binary data.

**generation** \jen`ər-ā`shən\ *n.* **1.** A concept used to distinguish stored versions of a set of files. The oldest is called the grandfather, the next oldest is the father, and the newest is the son. **2.** A concept used to distinguish among a process, another process that it initiates (its child), and the process that initiated it (its parent or the child's grandparent). *See also* process<sup>1</sup>. **3.** A category that distinguishes products, such as computers or programming languages, according to the technological advances they represent. *See also* computer.

**generic icon** \jə-nā`r'ík ī`kɔn\ *n.* An icon on a Macintosh screen that identifies a file only as a document or an application. Ordinarily the icon for an application will be specific to that application, and the icon for a document will be specific to the application that opens it. If a generic icon appears instead, the information that the Macintosh Finder uses to identify the application has been damaged. *See also* Finder, icon, Macintosh.

**GENie** \jē`nē\ *n.* Acronym for **General Electric network for information exchange**. An online information service developed by General Electric (GE) Information Services. GENie provides business information, forums, home shopping, and news and can exchange e-mail with the Internet.

**geographic information system** \jē-ə-graf'ík ín-fər-mā`shən sí`stəm\ *n.* An application or suite of applications for viewing and creating maps. Generally, geographic information systems contain a viewing system (sometimes allowing users to view maps with a Web browser), an environment for creating maps, and a server for managing maps and data for real-time online viewing. *Acronym:* GIS (G`I-S`).

**geometry** \jē-om`ə-trē`\ *n.* The branch of mathematics that deals with the construction, properties, and relationships of points, lines, angles, curves, and shapes. Geometry is an essential part of computer-aided design and graphics programs.

**GeoPort** \jē`ō-pōrt\ *n.* A fast serial input/output port on a Macintosh Centris 660AV, Quadra 660AV, Quadra 840AV, or PowerMac computer. Any Macintosh-compatible serial device can be connected to a GeoPort, but with GeoPort-specific hardware and software the GeoPort can transmit data at up to 2 megabits per second (Mbps) and can handle voice, fax, data, and video transmission.