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By Dan Gookin & Wallace Wang

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flag

Pronunciation: *fla-ga.*

Meaning: A term used by programmers for a status indicator within a program (or hardware). Most flags use Boolean (true or false, yes or no) values. For example, a flag may be used to keep track of whether or not a certain input has been received from a user, and, if it has been received, to output an error message.

Sentence: "Dorothy wrote a program that she feels is very patriotic: All it does is to raise all the microprocessor's *flags*. Now if she could just program the modem to whistle a salute."

flame

Pronunciation: *flay-ma.*

Meaning: An angry, often nasty, brutal, and unsportsmanlike letter found only on electronic mail messages.

Sentence: "Ignore any on-line *flame* that links you to the Nazis or compares you to Adolf Hitler."

flame wars

Pronunciation: *flay-ma wars.*

Meaning: A series of angry electronic mail messages, usually between two people who sincerely hope the other person gets run over by a train as soon as possible. (See also *flame.*)

Sentence: "The first time I got a flame, I ignored it. But the guy pestered me so much that I got into a *flame war* with him. Trust me, it's worse than paintball."

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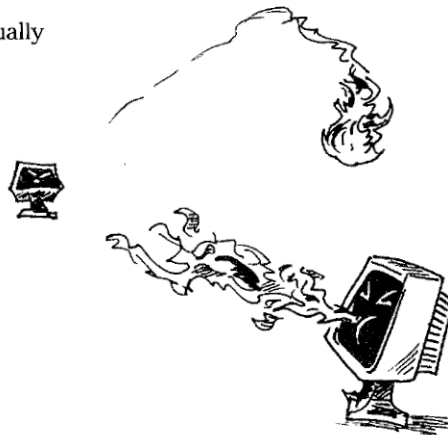
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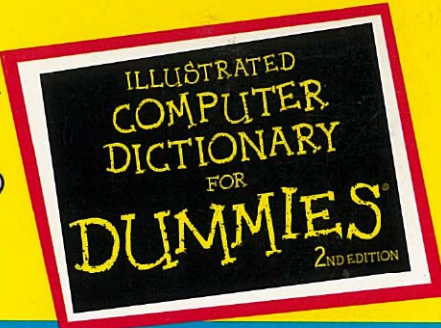Look inside for plain English explanations of terms such as PCX, BBS, and TIFF, and suggestions for properly using them, plus keys to pronunciation and word history. Never again will you mispronounce terms and acronyms like ASCII and SCSI!

Illustrated by Drew R. Moore

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Printed in the U.S.A.

Sample entry: algorithm
Pronunciation: *Al-Gore-rhythm.*
Meaning: A step-by-step set of instructions that actually does something worthwhile. Often used to describe the instructions written in a programming language such as C, BASIC, or Pascal. (See also *billclintonrithm.*) Sentence: "Johnson claims his program works perfectly because his algorithms are flawless. And as long as nobody uses his program, it will keep on working perfectly too."

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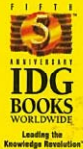
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