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double-dereference

density disks increased that capacity to 360 KB. Double-density disks use modified frequency modulation encoding for storing data. *See also* floppy disk, microfloppy disk, modified frequency modulation encoding. *Compare* high-density disk.

- **double-dereference** \də`bl-dē-ref´ər-əns, -dēref´rəns\ vb. To dereference a pointer that is pointed to by another pointer; in other words, to access the information pointed to by a handle. *See also* dereference, handle (definition 1), pointer (definition 1).
- **double-precision** \də`bl-prə-sizh´ən\ *adj*. Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a number stored in twice the amount (two words—typically 8 bytes) of computer memory that is required for storing a less precise (single-precision) number. Double-precision numbers are commonly handled by a computer in floating-point form. *See also* floating-point number. *Compare* single-precision.
- **double-sided disk** \də`bl-sī-dəd disk' n. A floppy disk that can hold data on both its top and bottom surfaces.
- **double-strike** də'bl-strik' n. On an impact printer, such as a daisy-wheel printer, the process of printing twice over a word, producing text that appears darker and heavier, or bolder, than it normally appears. On dot-matrix printers, double striking with a slight offset can be used to fill in the space between the dots, producing smoother and darker characters.
- **double word** \də`bl wərd'\ *n*. A unit of data consisting of two contiguous words (connected bytes, not text) that are handled together by a computer's microprocessor.
- **doubly linked list** \də`blē lēnkd list $\ n$. A series of nodes (items representing discrete segments of information) in which each node refers to both the next node and the preceding node. Because of these two-way references, a doubly linked list can be traversed both forward and backward, rather than in a forward direction only, as with a singly linked list.
- **down** \doun\ *adj.* Not functioning, in reference to computers, printers, communications lines on networks, and other such hardware.
- **downlink** \downlenk\ *n*. The transmission of data from a communications satellite to an earth station.

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- **download** \download \vb. 1. In communications, to transfer a copy of a file from a remote computer to the requesting computer by means of a modem or network. 2. To send a block of data, such as a Post-Script file, to a dependent device, such as a PostScript printer. *Compare* upload.
- **downloadable font** \downlo-də-bl font`\ *n*. A set of characters stored on disk and sent (downloaded) to a printer's memory when needed for printing a document. Downloadable fonts are most commonly used with laser printers and other page printers, although many dot-matrix printers can accept some of them. *Also called* soft font.
- **downsizing** \down'sī'zēng\ *n*. In computing, the practice of moving from larger computer systems, such as mainframes and minicomputers, to smaller systems in an organization, generally to save costs and to update to newer software. The smaller systems are usually client/server systems composed of a combination of PCs, workstations, and some legacy system such as a mainframe, connected in one or more local area networks or wide area networks. *See also* client/server architecture, legacy system.
- **downstream** \doun-strēm \ *n*. The direction in which a news feed for a newsgroup is passed from one news server to the next. *See also* news feed, news server, newsgroup.
- **downtime** \down'tim\ *n*. The amount or percentage of time a computer system or associated hardware remains nonfunctional. Although downtime can occur because hardware fails unexpectedly, it can also be a scheduled event, as when a network is shut down to allow time for maintenance.
- **downward compatibility** \doun'wərd kəmpat`ə-bil`ə-tē\ *n*. The capability of source code or programs developed on a more advanced system or compiler version to be executed or compiled by a less advanced (older) version. *Compare* upwardcompatible.

DP \D-P'\ *n. See* data processing.

dpi \D`P-I'\ n. See dots per inch.

- **DPMA** \D`P-M-A`\ *n*. Acronym for **D**ata **P**rocessing **M**anagement **A**ssociation. A trade organization of information systems (IS) professionals. DPMA was founded in 1951 as the National Machine Accountants Association.
- **DPMI** \D`P-M-I'\ *n*. Acronym for **D**OS **P**rotected **M**ode Interface. A software interface, originally

DPMI

Pentium

- Pentium \pen'te-um\ n. A microprocessor introduced by Intel Corporation in March 1993 as the successor to the i486. The Pentium is a superscalar, CISC-based microprocessor containing 3.3 million transistors. The Pentium has a 32-bit address bus, a 64-bit data bus, a built-in floating-point unit and memory management unit, two built-in 8-KB L1 caches, and a System Management Mode (SMM), which provides the microprocessor with the ability to slow or halt some system components when the system is idle or performing non-CPU-intensive tasks, thereby lessening power consumption. The Pentium also employs branch prediction, resulting in faster system performance. In addition, the Pentium has some built-in features to ensure data integrity, and it supports functional redundancy checking (FRC). See also branch prediction, CISC, functional redundancy checking, i486DX, L1 cache, microprocessor, P5, superscalar. Compare Pentium Pro (definition 1).
- **Pentium Pro** \pen`tē-um prō`\ *n.* **1.** Intel's 150–200 MHz family of 32-bit processors, released in November 1995. The Pentium Pro is considered the next generation of processors in the 8086 family, following the Pentium, and is designed for running 32-bit operating systems and applications. *See also* 32-bit application, 32-bit operating system, 8086, microprocessor, Pentium. **2.** A PC that has a Pentium Pro processor.
- Pentium upgradable \pen`tē-um up-grā´də-bl\
 n. 1. An i486 motherboard capable of being adapted to run a Pentium-class processor. See also i486DX, microprocessor, motherboard, Pentium.
 2. A 486 PC that can be upgraded to Pentium class by adding a Pentium processor. See also i486DX.
- **perfboard** \pərf bord\ *n*. Short for **perf**orated fiber **board**. *See* breadboard.
- **performance monitor** $par-for mans mon^-tar$ *n*. A process or program that appraises and records status information about various system devices and other processes.
- **period** $\bar{e}-\partial n$. The length of time required for an oscillation to complete one full cycle. For an oscillating electrical signal, the period is the time between waveform repetitions. If *f* is the frequency of oscillation in hertz, and *t* is the period in seconds, then t = 1/f. See the illustration.

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permanent storage

Period. The period of an oscillating signal.

- **peripheral** \pər-if´ər-əl\ *n*. In computing, **a** device, such as a disk drive, printer, modem, **or** joystick, that is connected to a computer and **is** controlled by the computer's microprocessor. *Also called* peripheral device. *See also* console.
- **Peripheral Component Interconnect** \pər-if`ərəl kəm-pō`nənt in`tər-kə-nekt'\ n. See PCI local bus.
- **peripheral device** per-if er-al de-vis' n. See peripheral.
- **peripheral power supply** \pər-if`ər-əl pou´ər suplī`\ *n*. An auxiliary source of electricity used by a computer or a device as a backup in case of a power failure. *Acronym:* PPS (P`P-S´).
- **Perl** \pərl\ *n*. Acronym for **P**ractical **E**xtraction and **R**eport **L**anguage. An interpreted language, based on C and several UNIX utilities. Perl has powerful string-handling features for extracting information from text files. Perl can assemble a string and send it to the shell as a command; hence, it is often used for system administration tasks. A program in Perl is known as a script. Perl was devised by Larry Wall at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.
- **permanent storage** \pər`mə-nənt stōr´əj\ n. A recording medium that retains the data recorded on it for long periods of time without power. Ink on paper is by far the most widely used permanent storage, but data can be transferred from paper to a computer only with difficulty. Typically, some form of magnetic medium, such as floppy disk or tape, is preferable. Magnetic media are generally accepted as permanent, even though the magnetic fields that encode data in the media tend to fade

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