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Microsoft

Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition

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start/stop transmission *n.* *See* asynchronous transmission.

startup *n.* *See* boot¹.

startup application *n.* On the Macintosh, the application that takes control of the system when the computer is turned on.

STARTUP.CMD *n.* A special-purpose batch file stored in the root directory of the startup disk in OS/2—the OS/2 equivalent of an MS-DOS AUTOEXEC.BAT file.

startup disk *n.* *See* system disk.

startup ROM *n.* The bootstrap instructions coded into a computer's ROM (read-only memory) and executed at startup. The startup ROM routines enable a computer to check itself and its devices (such as the keyboard and disk drives), prepare itself for operation, and run a short program to load an operating-system loader program. *See also* boot¹, power-on self test.

startup screen *n.* A text or graphics display that appears on the screen when a program is started (run). Startup screens usually contain information about the software's version and often contain a product or corporate logo.

star-wired ring *n.* A network topology in which hubs and nodes connect to a central hub in typical star fashion, but the connections within the central hub form a ring. Star-wired ring is a combination of star and ring topologies.

state *n.* *See* status.

stateful *adj.* Of or pertaining to a system or process that monitors all details of the state of an activity in which it participates. For example, stateful handling of messages takes account of their content. *Compare* stateless.

stateless *adj.* Of or pertaining to a system or process that participates in an activity without monitoring all details of its state. For example, stateless handling of messages might take account of only their sources and destinations but not their content. *Compare* stateful.

statement *n.* The smallest executable entity within a programming language.

state-of-the-art *adj.* Up to date; at the forefront of current hardware or software technology.

static¹ *adj.* In information processing, fixed or predetermined. For example, a static memory buffer remains invariant in size throughout program execution. The opposite condition is *dynamic*, or ever-changing.

static² *n.* In communications, a crackling noise caused by electrical interference with a transmitted signal. *See also* noise (definition 2).

static allocation *n.* Apportionment of memory that occurs once, usually when the program starts. The memory remains allocated during the program's execution and is not deallocated until the program is finished. *See also* allocate, deallocate. *Compare* dynamic allocation.

static binding *n.* Binding (converting symbolic addresses in the program to storage-related addresses) that occurs during program compilation or linkage. *Also called:* early binding. *Compare* dynamic binding.

static buffer *n.* A secondary sound buffer that contains an entire sound; these buffers are convenient because the entire sound can be written once to the buffer. *See also* streaming buffer.

static electricity *n.* An electrical charge accumulated in an object. Although generally harmless to humans, the discharge of static electricity through an electronic circuit can cause severe damage to the circuit.

static RAM *n.* A form of semiconductor memory (RAM) based on the logic circuit known as a flip-flop, which retains information as long as there is enough power to run the device. Static RAMs are usually reserved for use in caches. *Acronym:* SRAM. *See also* cache, RAM, synchronous burst static RAM. *Compare* dynamic RAM.

static routing *n.* Routing based on a fixed forwarding path. Unlike dynamic routing, static routing does not adjust to changing network conditions. *Compare* dynamic routing.

static Web page *n.* Web page that displays the same content to all viewers. Usually written in hypertext markup language (HTML), a static Web page displays content that changes only if the HTML code is altered. *See also* dynamic Web page.

station *n.* **1.** In the IEEE 802.11 wireless LAN specification, a single, often mobile, node. **2.** *See* workstation.

stationery¹ *adj.* Describing a type of document that, when opened by the user, is duplicated by the system; the copy is opened for the user's modification while the original document remains intact. Stationery documents can be used as document templates or boilerplates. *See also* boilerplate, template (definition 5).

stationery² *n.* A stationery document. *See also* stationery¹.

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volatile memory *n.* **1.** Memory, such as RAM, that loses its data when the power is shut off. *Compare* nonvolatile memory. **2.** Memory used by a program that can change independently of the program, such as memory shared by another program or by an interrupt service routine.

volt *n.* The unit used to measure potential difference or electromotive force. One volt is defined as the potential across which 1 coulomb of charge will do 1 joule of work, or the potential generated by 1 ampere of current flowing through 1 ohm of resistance. *See also* electromotive force.

voltage *n.* *See* electromotive force.

voltage regulator *n.* A circuit or circuit component that maintains a constant output voltage despite variations in input voltage.

volts alternating current *n.* The measure of the peak-to-peak voltage swing of an electrical signal. *Acronym:* VAC.

volume *n.* **1.** A disk or tape that stores computer data. Sometimes, large hard disks are divided into several volumes, each of which is treated as a separate disk. **2.** The loudness of an audio signal.

volume label *n.* A name for a disk or tape. MS-DOS systems, which seldom use disk names except in directory listings, use the term *volume label*. Apple Macintosh systems, which often refer to disks by name, use the term *volume name*.

volume name *n.* *See* volume label.

volume reference number *n.* *See* volume serial number.

volume serial number *n.* The optional identifying volume number of a disk or tape. MS-DOS systems use the term *volume serial number*. Apple Macintosh systems use the term *volume reference number*. A volume serial number is not the same as a volume label or volume name. *Compare* volume label.

VON *n.* Acronym for **voice on the net**. A broad category of hardware and software technology for real-time voice and video transmission over the Internet. The term was coined by Jeff Pulver, who formed a group called the VON Coalition, which opposes regulation of VON technology and promotes VON to the public.

von Neumann architecture *n.* The most common structure for computer systems, attributed to the mathematician John von Neumann. It uses the concept of a program that can be permanently stored in a computer and manipulated or made self-modifying through machine-based instructions. Sequential processing is characteristic of von Neu-

mann architecture. Parallel architectures have evolved to improve on the encumbrances of sequential instructions. *See also* parallel computer.

von Neumann bottleneck *n.* Competition between data and instructions for CPU time. Mathematician John von Neumann was the first to show that a computer based on architecture linking a single processor with memory will actually spend more time retrieving data from memory than processing it. The bottleneck arises when the processor has to trade off between executing a large number of instructions per second and reading in a large amount of data in the same time. *See also* CPU.

VPD *n.* Acronym for **virtual printer device driver**. *See* virtual device driver.

VPN *n.* *See* virtual private network.

VR *n.* *See* virtual reality.

VRAM *n.* *See* video RAM.

VRC *n.* Acronym for **vertical redundancy check**. A method for checking the accuracy of transmitted data. VRC generates an extra bit (parity bit) for each character transmitted. The parity bit indicates whether the character contains an odd or an even number of 1 bits. If its value does not match the type of the character, that character is assumed to be incorrectly transmitted. *See also* parity. *Compare* LRC.

VRML *n.* Acronym for **Virtual Reality Modeling Language**. A scene description language for creating 3-D interactive Web graphics similar to those found in some video games, allowing the user to “move around” within a graphic image and interact with objects. VRML, a subset of Silicon Graphics’ Inventor File Format (ASCII), was created by Mark Pesce and Tony Parisi in 1994. VRML files can be created in a text editor, although CAD packages, modeling and animation packages, and VRML authoring software are the tools preferred by most VRML authors. VRML files reside on an HTTP server; links to these files can be embedded in HTML documents, or users can access the VRML files directly. To view VRML Web pages, users need a VRML-enabled browser or a VRML plug-in for Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator. *See also* 3-D graphic, HTML document, HTTP server (definition 1).

v-root *n.* *See* virtual root.

V series *n.* The series of ITU-T (formerly CCITT) recommendations relating to modems and modem communications over the public phone system, including signaling, coding, and circuit characteristics. See the table.

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