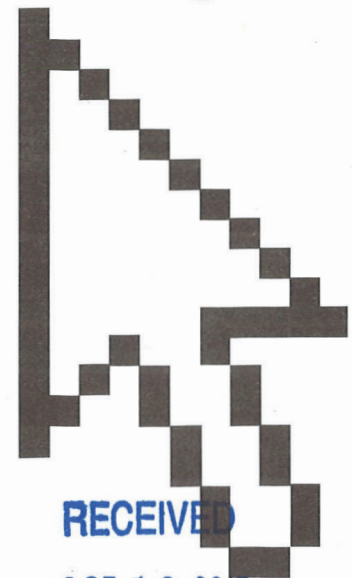


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# Computer Dictionary

Fifth Edition



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without affecting the programs. *See also* pointer. **2.** Any token that a program can use to identify and access an object such as a device, a file, a window, or a dialog box. **3.** One of several small squares displayed around a graphical object in a drawing program. The user can move or reshape the object by clicking on a handle and dragging. *See the illustration.* **4.** In online communication, such as chats and bulletin boards, the name a person uses to identify himself or herself. A handle is comparable to an alias or a nickname and is like those used with CB radio. **5.** A unique alphanumeric identifier of up to 10 characters assigned by InterNIC to the domain names, contacts, and network records in its domain name database. The NIC handle is used as a shorthand means of finding records and ensuring accuracy in the database. *Also called:* NIC handle.



**Handle.** *A computer graphic's handle.*

**handler** *n.* **1.** A routine that manages a common and relatively simple condition or operation, such as error recovery or data movement. **2.** In some object-oriented programming languages that support messages, a subroutine that processes a particular message for a particular class of objects. *See also* message, object-oriented programming.

**handoff** *n.* The process of transferring a wireless telephone signal between cell towers as a caller travels from one cell to another. A caller will not notice a smooth hand-off, but an abrupt handoff can interfere with reception, with results ranging from momentary static to a disconnected call. *Also called:* handover. *See also* cell.

**hands-free kit** *n.* Wireless phone accessory that allows users to make calls without holding the phone. A basic kit includes a headset or an earpiece with a microphone. More elaborate sets for use in automobiles may include a power amplifier, dashboard microphone, phone cradle, and speakers.

**handshake** *n.* A series of signals acknowledging that communication or the transfer of information can take place between computers or other devices. A hardware handshake is an exchange of signals over specific wires (other than the data wires) in which each device indicates its readiness to send or receive data. A software handshake consists of signals transmitted over the same wires used to transfer data, as in modem-to-modem communications over telephone lines.

**hands-on** *adj.* Involving interactive work with a computer or a computer program. A hands-on tutorial, for example, would teach a skill (such as the use of a program) by means of practice sessions and question-and-answer dialogues.

**handwriting input device** *n.* A tool, such as a digital pen and tablet, used to enter text by writing instead of typing. Along with writing tablets, additional devices include 3-D drawing or computer-aided design (CAD) tablets, a tablet PC, or moving a mouse on the mouse pad.

**handwriting recognition** *n.* **1.** The ability of a computer to identify a user by recognizing features of handwriting, especially a signature. **2.** The ability of a computer to translate handwritten text into character data for input. This technology is still under considerable development, and most handwriting recognition programs require users to form letters and words in a very consistent and clear manner to work adequately. The development of handwriting recognition programs has been spurred by PDAs, which frequently have keyboards that are too small for data entry, and software designed for Asian markets that have languages with numerous characters, which makes keyboards a cumbersome method for entering text. *See also* PDA. *Compare* optical character recognition.

**hang** *vb.* To stop responding. A hung program or computer system does not respond to user input, but the screen looks as if everything is running normally. The program or system might be waiting for something—for example, information from a network—or it might have terminated abnormally. It might resume running normally on its own, or the user might need to terminate and restart the program or reboot the computer. A hung computer system is said to be locked up. *See also* crash<sup>2</sup> (definition 1).

**hanging indent** *n.* Placement of the beginning of the first line of a paragraph farther to the left than the subsequent lines. *Also called:* outdent. *Compare* indent.

**haptics** *n.* The study of the sense of touch. This study has extended to the study of human interaction with computer technology through tactile means. Haptics technology is central to virtual reality gaming settings, in which computers could sense and respond to finger, hand, body, or head movements. The computer could also re-create the sense of touch by altering texture, increasing resistance, or other simulations appropriate to the user's virtual reality experience. *See also* force feedback.

**hard** *adj.* **1.** Permanent, fixed, or physically defined; unchangeable by the ordinary operation of a computer system. *See also* hard copy, hard error, hard return,

