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Microsoft Press

Computer Dictionary

Third Edition

Microsoft Press

PUBLISHED BY
Microsoft Press
A Division of Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, Washington 98052-6399

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary. -- 3rd ed.
p. cm.
ISBN 1-57231-446-X
1. Computers--Dictionaries. 2. Microcomputers--Dictionaries.
I. Microsoft Press.
QA76.15.M54 1997
004'.03--dc21 97-15489
CIP

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

4 5 6 7 8 9 QMQM 2 1 0 9 8

Distributed to the book trade in Canada by Macmillan of Canada, a division of Canada Publishing Corporation.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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large chunk of data is read and stored in the disk buffer. When the program wants information, it is copied from the buffer. Many requests for data can be satisfied by a single disk access. The same technique can be applied to disk writes. When the program has information to store, it writes it into the disk buffer area in memory. When the buffer has been filled, the entire contents of the buffer are written to the disk in a single operation.

disk cache \disk´ kash\ *n.* A portion of a computer's random access memory (RAM) set aside for temporarily holding information read from disk. A disk cache does not hold entire files, as does a RAM disk (a portion of memory that acts as if it were a disk drive). Instead, a disk cache is used to hold information that either has recently been requested from disk or has previously been written to disk. If the required information remains in a disk cache, access time is considerably faster than if the program must wait for the disk drive mechanism to fetch the information from disk. *See also* cache. *Compare* disk buffer.

disk cartridge \disk´ kär`trij\ *n.* A removable disk enclosed in a protective case. A disk cartridge can be used by certain types of hard disk drives and related devices, such as the external data storage units known as Bernoulli boxes.

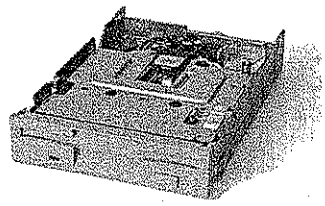
disk controller \disk´ kən-trō`lər\ *n.* A special-purpose chip and associated circuitry that directs and controls reading from and writing to a computer's disk drive. A disk controller handles such tasks as positioning the read/write head, mediating between the drive and the microprocessor, and controlling the transfer of information to and from memory. Disk controllers are used with floppy disk drives and hard disks and can either be built into the system or be part of a card that plugs into an expansion slot.

disk copy \disk´ kop`ē\ *n.* The process of duplicating a source disk's data and the data's organizational structure onto a target disk. *See also* backup.

disk crash \disk´ krash\ *n.* The failure of a disk drive. *See also* crash[1].

disk directory \disk´ dər-ek`tər-ē\ *n.* An index of the files on a disk, analogous to a card catalog. A disk directory includes information about the files, such as their names, sizes, dates of creation, and physical locations on the disk. *See also* directory.

disk drive \disk´ drīv\ *n.* An electromechanical device that reads from and writes to disks. The main components of a disk drive include a spindle on which the disk is mounted, a drive motor that spins the disk when the drive is in operation, one or more read/write heads, a second motor that positions the read/write head(s) over the disk, and controller circuitry that synchronizes read/write activities and transfers information to and from the computer. Two types of disk drives are in common use: floppy disk drives and hard disk drives. Floppy disk drives are designed to accept removable disks in either 5.25-inch or 3.5-inch format; hard disk drives are faster, high-capacity storage units that are completely enclosed in a protective case. See the illustration.



Disk drive. ***A 3.5-inch floppy disk drive.***

disk driver \disk´ drī`vər\ *n.* A device driver that is added to a system to support a specific manufacturer's disk device. *See also* device driver.

disk duplexing \disk´ dōō`pleks-ēng\ *n. See* disk mirroring.

disk envelope \disk´ en`və-lōp, än`və-lōp\ *n.* The paper container that holds a 5.25-inch floppy disk and its attached jacket. The disk envelope protects exposed surfaces of the disk from dust and other foreign material that can scratch and otherwise damage the surface, resulting in the loss of recorded data. *See also* disk jacket.

diskette \dis-ket´\ *n. See* floppy disk.

disk interface \disk´ in`tər-fās\ *n.* **1.** The circuitry that connects a disk drive to a computer system. **2.** A standard for connecting disk drives and computers. The ST506 standard for connecting hard disks to computers is a disk interface standard.

disk jacket \disk´ jak`et\ *n.* The protective plastic sheath that covers a floppy disk.

diskless workstation \disk`ləs wərk´stā-shən\ *n.* A station on a computer network that is not