



HARDWARE & SOFTWARE

A glossary of information about hardware and software that will come in handy when you decide to buy a computer or upgrade your current system.

Hardware...

CD-ROM (Compact Disk - Read Only Memory) A type of optical laser storage media. CD-ROM has a vast capacity to store data and programs. A single disk can store up to 680 MB -- about that of 477 high density 3.5" diskettes.

DVD (Digital VideoDisk) The successor technology to the CD-ROM that can store up to about 10 gigabytes.

DRAM (Dynamic RAM) A type of RAM technology that requires stored data to be refreshed hundreds of times per second.

EDO DRAM (Enhanced Data Output DRAM) Dynamic RAM which is up to 50 percent faster than conventional DRAM.

Expansion board These add-on circuit boards contain the electronic circuitry for many supplemental capabilities, such as fax modem, and are made to fit a particular type of bus. Also called expansion cards.

Expansion bus An extension of the common electrical bus that accepts the expansion boards that control the video display, disks, and other peripherals.

Expansion slots Slots within the processing component of a microcomputer into which optional add-on circuit boards may be inserted.

Fax modem A modem that enables a PC to emulate a facsimile machine.

Graphics adapter A device controller which provides the electronic link between the motherboard and the monitor.

Hard disk A permanently installed, continuously spinning magnetic storage medium made up of one or more rigid disk platters.

Hardware The physical devices that comprise a computer system.

Ink-jet printer A nonimpact printer in which the print head contains independently controlled injection chambers that squirt ink droplets on the paper to form letters and images.

Modem (Modulator-Demodulator) A device used to convert computer-compatible signals to signals that can be transmitted over the telephone lines, then back again to computer signals at the other end.

Monitor A televisionlike display for soft-copy output in a computer system. Monitors vary in their quality of output, or resolution. A monitor's resolution may be described in terms of its dot pitch, or the distance between the centers of adjacent pixels.

PCMCIA card A credit card sized module that is inserted into a PCMCIA-compliant interface to offer add-on capabilities such as expanded memory, fax modem, and so on.

Peripheral device Any hardware device other than the processor.

Computing Services

Platform A definition of the standards by which software is developed and hardware is designed. A platform is defined by two key elements: the processor and the operating system.

Port An access point in a computer system that permits communication between the computer and a peripheral device.

Processor The logical component of a computer system that interprets and executes program instructions.

PROM (Programmable Read Only Memory) ROM in which the user can load read-only programs and data.

RAM (Random Access Memory) The memory area in which all programs and data must reside before programs can be executed or data manipulated. Same as primary storage.

ROM (Read Only Memory) A memory chip with contents permanently loaded by the manufacturer for read-only applications.

Resolution Referring to the number of addressable points on a monitor's screen or the number of dots per unit area on printed output.

Scanner A device that scans hard copy and digitizes the text and/or images to a format that can be interpreted by a computer.

SCSI bus (Small Computer System Interface) This hardware interface allows the connection of several peripheral devices to a single SCSI expansion board.

SOFTWARE...

Applications software Software designed and written to address a specific personal, business, or processing task.

ASCII file A generic text file that is stripped of program specific control characters.

Browsers Programs that let you navigate to and view the various Internet resources.

Desktop publishing software Software that allows users to produce typeset quality copy for newsletters, advertisements, and many other printing needs. (PageMaker)

Device driver software Software that contains instructions needed by the operating system to communicate with the peripheral device.

OLE (Object Linking) The software capability that enables the creation of a compound document that contains one or more objects from other applications. Objects can be linked or embedded.

Operating System The software that controls the execution of all applications and system software programs. (Windows 95)

Photo illustration software Software that enables the creation of original images and the modification of existing digitized images. (PhotoShop)

Presentation graphics software User-friendly software that allows users to create a variety of visually appealing and informative presentation graphics. (PowerPoint)

Program Computer instructions structured and ordered in a manner that, when executed, causes a computer to perform a particular function.

Software The programs used to direct the functions of a computer system.

Software suite An integrated collection of software tools that may include a variety of business applications packages. (Office 97)

Virus A program written with malicious intent and loaded into the computer system of an unsuspecting victim. Ultimately, the program destroys or introduces errors in programs and databases.

VRAM The video RAM found on graphics adapters.

Windows 95 An operating system that provides a graphical user interface and multitasking capabilities for the PC.

Computing Services can be reached...

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