

Glossary

Buffer

A temporary storage area, usually in RAM. The purpose of most buffers is to act as a holding area, enabling CPU to manipulate data before transferring it to a device.

Bus

A collection of wires through which data is transmitted from one part of a computer to another. You can think of a bus as a highway on which data travels within a computer.

Chipset

A number of integrated circuits designed to perform one or more related functions. For example, one chipset may provide the basic functions of a modem while another provides the CPU functions for a computer.

CMOS

Abbreviation of *complementary metal oxide semiconductor*. Pronounced *see-moss*, CMOS is a widely used type of semiconductor. CMOS chips are particularly attractive for use in battery-powered devices, such as portable computers. Personal computers also contain a small amount of battery-powered CMOS memory to hold the date, time, and system setup parameters.

Com

In DOS system, the name of a serial communications port. DOS supports four serial ports: COM1, COM2, COM3, and COM4.

DIMM

Short for *dual in-line memory module*, a small circuit board that holds memory chips. A *single in-line memory module (SIMM)* has a 32-bit path to the memory

chips whereas a DIMM has 64-bit path.

IDE

Abbreviation of either *Intelligent Drive Electronics* or *Integrated Drive Electronics*, depending on who you ask. An IDE interface is an interface for mass storage devices, in which the controller is integrated into the disk or CD-ROM drive.

IrDA

Short for *Infrared Data Association*, a group of device manufacturing that developed a standard for transmitting data via infrared light waves. This enables you to transfer data from one device to another without any cables.

LED

Abbreviation of *light emitting diode*, an electronic device that lights up when electricity is passed through it. LEDs are usually red. They are good for displaying images because they can be relatively small, and they do not burn out.

LPT

A name frequently used by operating systems to identify a printer. Although LPT originally stood for *line printer terminal*, it is now used more generally to identify any type of printer.

PCI

Acronym for *Peripheral Component Interconnect*, a local bus standard developed by Intel Corporation. Most modern PCs include a PCI bus in addition to a more general ISA expansion bus.

PS/2 Port

A type of port developed by IBM for connecting a mouse or keyboard to a PC. The PS/2 port supports a mini DIN plug containing just 6 pins. Most PCs have a PS/2 port so that the special port can be used by another device, such as a modem.

