Windows Help Glossary

A
active
annotation
application
application window
arrow keys
associate
attributes

B
base-level synthesizer
batch program
binary-file transfer
branch
browse
buffer

C
check box
choose
clear
click
client application
Clipboard
close
collapse
color scheme
command
command button
communications settings
compound device
control codes
Control menu
Control-menu box
conventional memory
current directory
cutout

D
default button
default printer
desktop
desktop pattern
destination directory
destination document
device contention

V

W

active

The window or icon that you are currently using or that is currently selected. Windows always applies the next keystroke or command you choose to the active window. If a window is active, its title bar changes color to differentiate it from other windows. If an icon is active, its label changes color.

Windows or icons on the desktop that are not selected are inactive.

annotation

A note or comment that you add to a Help topic. You can add comments to a Help topic by using the Annotate command on the Edit menu.

application

A computer program used for a particular kind of work, such as word processing. This term is often used interchangeably with "program."

application window

The main window for an application, which contains the application's menu bar and work area. An application window may contain multiple document windows.

arrow keys

On your computer keyboard, you use the arrow keys to navigate around your screen. Each key is named for the direction the arrow points. There is an UP ARROW, DOWN ARROW, LEFT ARROW, and RIGHT ARROW key.

associate

To identify a filename extension as "belonging" to a certain application, so that when you open any file with that extension, the application starts automatically.

attributes

Information that indicates whether a file is a read-only, hidden, or system file, and whether the file has been changed since a backup copy of it was made.

Back button

Goes back to the Help topic you have just viewed. Use this button to backtrack through the topics you have viewed so far. The Back button is in the Help button bar near the top of the Help window.

base-level synthesizer

A synthesizer that can play a minimum of six notes on three melodic instruments and three notes on three percussive instruments simultaneously.

batch program

An ASCII file (text file) that contains one or more MS-DOS commands. A batch program's filename has a .BAT extension. When you run a batch program, the commands are processed sequentially.

binary-file transfer

A method of transferring binary files from Windows Terminal to a remote computer. Binary files consist of ASCII characters plus the extended ASCII character set. These files are not converted or translated during the transfer process.

branch

A segment of the directory tree, representing a directory and any subdirectories it contains.

browse

To look through files and directories. When using some dialog boxes, you can use the Browse button to view a list of files and directories and select the file you want.

buffer
A temporary storage place for information.

Help button bar

Contains the Help buttons you can use to move to topics. It is located near the top of the Help window.

check box

A small, square box that appears in a dialog box and that can be selected or cleared. When the check box is selected, an X appears in the box. A check box represents an option that you can turn on or off.

choose

To use the keyboard or a mouse to pick an item that begins an action in Windows. You often choose a command on a menu to perform a task, and you choose an icon to start an application.

clear

To turn off an option by removing the X from a check box. You clear a check box by clicking it, or by selecting it and then pressing the SPACEBAR.

click
To press and release a mouse button quickly.

client application
A Windows application that can accept linked or embedded objects.

Clipboard

A temporary storage area in memory, used to transfer information. You can cut or copy information onto the Clipboard and then paste it into another document or application.

close

To remove a window or dialog box, or quit an application. You close a window by choosing the Close command from the Control menu. When you close an application window, you quit the application.

collapse
To hide additional directory levels below a selected directory in the directory tree.

color scheme
A combination of complementary colors for screen elements.

command

A word or phrase, usually found on a menu, that you choose in order to carry out an action. You choose a command from a menu or type a command at the MS-DOS prompt. You can also type a command in the Run dialog box in File Manager or Program Manager.

command button

A button in a dialog box that carries out or cancels the selected action. Two common command buttons are OK and Cancel. Choosing a command button that contains an ellipsis (for example, Browse...) causes another dialog box to appear.

communications settings

Settings that specify how information is transferred from your computer to a device (usually a printer or modem).

compound device

A device that plays specific media files. For example, to run a compound device such as a MIDI sequencer, you must specify a MIDI file.

Contents button

Displays the active application's Help Contents, where you can choose the Help topic you want. It is in the Help button bar near the top of the Help window.

control codes

Codes that specify Terminal commands or formatting instructions (such as linefeeds or carriage returns) in a text file. Control codes are usually preceded by a caret (^). You enter these codes when you are assigning Terminal commands or tasks to function keys.

Control menu

A menu that contains commands you can use to manipulate a window. To open the Control menu, you choose the Control-menu box at the left of the title bar in a window, or you select an application icon at the bottom of the desktop. Every application that runs in a window and some non-Windows applications have a Control menu. Document windows, icons, and some dialog boxes also have Control menus.

Control-menu box
The icon at the left of the title bar. This icon opens the Control menu for a window.

conventional memory

Up to the first 640K of memory in your computer. MS-DOS uses this memory to run applications.

current directory
The directory that you are currently working in.

cutout
An area of the drawing you select by using the Scissors or Pick tool.

default button

In some dialog boxes, the command button that Windows automatically selects. The default button has a bold border, indicating that it will be chosen if you press ENTER. You can override a default button by choosing the Cancel button or another command button.

default printer

The printer that is used if you choose the Print command without first specifying which printer you want to use with an application. You can have only one default printer; it should be the printer you use most often.

desktop
The background of your screen, on which windows, icons, and dialog boxes appear.

desktop pattern

A design that appears across your desktop. You can create your own pattern or select a pattern provided by Windows.

destination directory
The directory to which you intend to copy or move one or more files.

destination document
The document into which a package or a linked or embedded object is being inserted.

device contention

The way Windows allocates access to peripheral devices, such as a modem or a printer, when more than one application is trying to use the same device while Windows is running in 386 enhanced mode.

device driver

A program that enables a specific piece of hardware (device) to communicate with Windows. Although a device may be installed on your system, Windows cannot recognize the device until you have installed and configured the appropriate driver. Device drivers usually have a .DRV extension.

dialog box

A window that appears temporarily to request or supply information. Many dialog boxes have options you must select before Windows can carry out a command.

dimmed

Unavailable, disabled, or grayed. A dimmed button or command is displayed in light gray instead of black, and it cannot be chosen.

directory

Part of a structure for organizing your files on a disk. A directory can contain files and other directories (called subdirectories). The structure of directories and subdirectories on a disk is called a directory tree.

directory tree

A graphical display of a disk's directory structure. The directories on the disk are shown as a branching structure. The top-level directory is the root directory.

directory window

A File Manager window that displays the contents of a disk. The window shows both the directory tree and the contents of the current directory. A directory window is a document window that you can move, size, reduce, or enlarge.

drive icon

An icon in a directory window in File Manager that represents a disk drive on your system. Different icons depict floppy disk drives, hard disk drives, network drives, RAM drives, and CD-ROM drives.

document

Whatever you create with an application, including information you type, edit, view, or save. A document may be a business report, a spreadsheet, or a picture, for example.

document file

A file that is associated with an application. When you open a document file, the application starts and loads the file.

document-file icon

Represents a file that is associated with an application. When you choose a document-file icon, the application starts and loads the file.

document window

A window inside an application window. Each document window contains a single document or other data file. In some applications, there can be more than one document window inside an application window.

double-click

To rapidly press and release a mouse button twice without moving the mouse. Double-clicking carries out an action, such as starting an application.

downloaded fonts

Fonts that you send to your printer either before or during the printing of your documents. When you send a font to your printer, it is stored in printer memory until it is needed for printing.

Some PostScript printers do not support downloaded fonts. Instead, they use the fonts that are permanently stored in their read-only memory.

drag

To move an item on the screen by selecting the item and then pressing and holding down the mouse button while moving the mouse. For example, you can move a window to another location on the screen by dragging its title bar.

embedded object

Information created in one document and inserted into another document (most often the two documents were created with different applications). Embedded objects can be edited from within the destination document.

encapsulated PostScript (EPS) file

Files that print at the highest possible resolution for your printer. EPS files may print faster than other graphical representations. Some Windows and non-Windows graphical applications can import EPS files. Refer to your application's documentation to determine whether this capability is supported.

environment variable

A string consisting of environment information, such as a drive, path, or filename, associated with a symbolic name that can be used by MS-DOS and Windows. You use the **set** command from the MS-DOS prompt or in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file to define environment variables.

expand

To show hidden directory levels in the directory tree. With File Manager, you can expand a single directory level, one branch of the directory tree, or all branches at once.

expanded memory

A type of memory, up to 8 megabytes, that can be added to an 8086 or 8088 computer, or to an 80286, 80386, or 80486 computer running MS-DOS in real (8086 emulation) mode. The use of expanded memory is defined by the Expanded Memory Specification (EMS). Because it is a type of memory not normally accessible to applications running with MS-DOS, expanded memory requires the use of an expanded memory manager.

extended-level synthesizer

A synthesizer that can play a minimum of 16 notes on nine melodic instruments and 16 notes on eight percussive instruments simultaneously.

extended memory

Memory beyond one megabyte in 80286, 80386, and 80486 computers. To use extended memory with Windows running in 386 enhanced mode, you need to have an extended-memory manager installed.

extension

The period and up to three characters at the end of a filename. An extension usually indicates the type of file or directory. For example, program files have default extensions of .COM or .EXE.

Many applications use a default extension when you save a file the first time. For example, Windows Notepad adds .TXT to all filenames unless you specify otherwise.

file

A collection of information that has been given a name and is stored on a disk. This information can be a document or an application.

filename
The name of a file. Windows uses MS-DOS naming conventions.

flexible box

A square box that changes shape as you move the mouse. Use a flexible box to define an area of the picture you want to change, cut, copy, or move.

floppy disk
A disk that can be inserted in and removed from a disk drive.

font

A graphic design applied to a collection of numbers, symbols, and characters. A font usually comes in different sizes and styles.

font set

A collection of font sizes for one font, customized for a particular display and printer. Font sets determine what text looks like on the screen and when printed.

footer
Text that appears at the bottom of every page of a document when it is printed.

full-screen application

A non-Windows application that is displayed in the entire screen--rather than a window--when running in the Windows environment.

General MIDI

A MIDI specification controlled by the MIDI Manufacturers Association (MMA). The specification provides guidelines that authors of MIDI files can use to create files that sound the same across a variety of different synthesizers.

>> button

Displays the next topic in a series of topics. Use this button to move forward from topic to topic in the order they are organized in Help. It is in the Help button bar near the top of the Help window.

group

A collection of applications within Program Manager. Grouping your applications makes them easier to find when you want to start them.

group icon

The icon that represents a group in Program Manager when the group window is minimized (reduced). To open a group and view its contents, you choose the group icon.

group window

A window that displays the items in a group within Program Manager. These items can be applications, files associated with applications, or a combination of both.

header
Text that appears at the top of every page of a document when it is printed.

header information

Information that contains PostScript instructions required for printing documents correctly on a PostScript printer.

high memory area
The first 64K of extended memory (often referred to as HMA).

History button

Displays a list of Help topics you have viewed. Use this button to revisit any of the last 40 Help topics you have viewed. The most recent topic appears first. The History button is in the Help button bar near the top of the Help window.

hue

The position of a color along the color spectrum. For example, green is between yellow and blue.

icon

A graphical representation of an element in Windows, such as a disk drive, directory, group, application, or document. You can enlarge an application icon to a window when you want to use the application.

import

To create a package by inserting an existing file into Object Packager. When you import a file, the icon of the application you used to create the file appears in the Appearance window, and the name of the file appears in the Contents window.

index line

The bar at the top line of each card that contains the title of the card. Entering text in the index line is optional. In List view, the index line of every card in the file is displayed in alphabetic order.

information area
The area of the text, below the index line, into which you type information.

input/output activity

Read or write actions that your computer performs. Your computer performs a "read" when you type information on your keyboard or you select and choose items by using your mouse. Also, when you open a file, your computer reads the disk on which the file is located to find and open it.

Your computer performs a "write" whenever it stores, sends, prints, or displays information. For example, your computer performs a write when it stores information on a disk, displays information on your screen, or sends information through a modem or to a printer.

insertion point

The place where text will be inserted when you type. The insertion point usually appears as a flashing vertical bar in an application's window or in a dialog box.

interrupt request lines (IRQ)

Hardware lines over which devices can send signals to get the attention of the processor when the device is ready to accept or send information. Typically, each device connected to the computer uses a separate IRQ.

i/o addresses

Locations within the input/output address space of your computer, used by a device, such a printer or modem.

jump

Text, graphics, or parts of graphics that provide links to other Help topics or to more information about the current topic. The pointer changes shape whenever it is over a jump. If you choose a jump that is linked to another topic, that topic will appear in the Help window. If you choose a jump that is linked to more information, the information will appear in a pop-up window on top of the main Help window.

keyboard buffer

A temporary storage area in memory that keeps track of keys you typed, even if the computer did not immediately respond to the keys when you typed them.

key map

A mapping assignment that translates key values on synthesizers that do not conform to General MIDI standards. Key maps ensure that the appropriate percussion instrument is played or the appropriate octave for a melodic instrument is played when a MIDI file is played.

<< button

Displays the previous topic in a series of topics. Use this button to move backward from topic to topic in the order they are organized in Help. It is in the Help button bar near the top of the Help window.

linked object

A representation or placeholder for an object that is inserted into a destination document. The object still exists in the source file and, when it is changed, the linked object is updated to reflect these changes.

list box

In a dialog box, a type of box that lists available choices--for example, a list of all files in a directory. If all the choices do not fit in the list box, there is a scroll bar.

local printer
A printer that is directly connected to one of the ports on your computer.

luminosity

The brightness of a color on a scale from black to white.

maximize

To enlarge a window to its maximum size by using the Maximize button (at the right of the title bar) or the Maximize command on the Control menu.

Maximize button

The small button containing an up arrow at the right of the title bar. Mouse users can click the Maximize button to enlarge a window to its maximum size. Keyboard users can use the Maximize command on the Control menu.

Media Control Interface (MCI)

A standard control interface for multimedia devices and files. Using MCI, a multimedia application can control a variety of multimedia devices and files.

memory
A temporary storage area for information and applications.

menu

A list of available commands in an application window. Menu names appear in the menu bar near the top of the window. The Control menu, represented by the Control-menu box at the left end of the title bar, is common to all Windows applications. You open a menu by selecting the menu name.

menu bar

The horizontal bar containing the names of all the application's menus. It appears below the title bar.

MIDI

Acronym for Musical Instrument Digital Interface, an interface that enables several devices, instruments, or computers to send and receive messages for the purpose of creating music, sound, or lighting.

MIDI setup

Specifies the type of MIDI device you are using, the channel and patch settings needed to play MIDI files, and the port your device is using.

minimize

To reduce a window to an icon by using the Minimize button (at the right of the title bar) or the Minimize command on the Control menu.

Minimize button

The small button containing a down arrow at the right of the title bar. Mouse users can click the Minimize button to reduce a window to an icon. Keyboard users can use the Minimize command on the Control menu.

nonsolid color

A pattern of dots (pels) of different colors that simulate a solid color.

non-Windows application

"Non-Windows application" is used as a shorthand term to refer to an application that is designed to run with MS-DOS but not specifically with Windows and that may not be able to take full advantage of all Windows features (such as memory management).

object

Any piece of information, created by using a Windows application, that can be linked or embedded into another document.

object linking and embedding
A way to transfer and share information between applications.

open
To display the contents of a directory, a document, or a data file in a window.

option button

A small, round button that appears in a dialog box. Within a group of related option buttons, you can select only one button.

package

A small drawing (or icon) that represents an embedded or linked object. When you choose the package, the application used to create the object either plays the object (for example, a sound file) or opens and displays the object.

patch map

The part of a channel-map entry that translates instrument sounds, volume settings, and (optionally) key values for a channel.

path

Specifies the location of a file within the directory tree. For example, to specify the path of a file named README.WRI located in the WINDOWS directory on drive C, you would type **c:\windows\readme.wri**.

pel

The smallest graphic unit that can be displayed on the screen. Pel is the abbreviation for picture element. Also known as a pixel.

plotter font

A font created by a series of dots connected by lines. Plotter fonts can be scaled to any size and are most often printed on plotters. Some dot-matrix printers also support plotter fonts.

pointer

The arrow-shaped cursor on the screen that follows the movement of a mouse (or other pointing device) and indicates which area of the screen will be affected when you press the mouse button. The pointer may change shape during certain tasks.

port

A connection or socket used to connect a device, such as a printer, monitor, or modem, to your computer. Information, such as printing instructions, is sent from your computer to the device through a cable.

The most common ports are serial (COM) and parallel (LPT). Serial ports are used for devices that accept information one bit at a time. Parallel ports are used for devices that accept information eight bits at a time and are generally faster than serial ports. You can assign network paths to a port; for example, if you are printing to a network printer.

printer driver
A program that controls how your computer and printer interact.

printer fonts

Fonts that are built into your printer. These fonts are usually located in the printer's read-only memory (ROM).

program file

A file that starts an application or program. A program file has an .EXE, .PIF, .COM, or .BAT filename extension.

program information file (PIF)
A file that provides information about how Windows should run a non-Windows application. PIFs contain such items as the name of the file, a start-up directory, and multitasking options for applications running in 386 enhanced mode.

program item
An application or document represented as an icon in a group window.

program-item icon

The icon that represents an application or document in Program Manager. You can start an application by choosing its program-item icon.

queue
A list of documents that have been sent to a printer for printing.

quick format

Deletes the file allocation table and root directory of a disk but does not scan the disk for bad areas.

RAM

An acronym for random-access memory. RAM can be read from or written to by the computer or other devices. Information stored in RAM is lost when you turn off the computer.

reduce

To minimize a window to an icon by using the Minimize button or the Minimize command. A minimized application continues running, and you can select the icon to make it the active application.

Restore button

The small button containing both an up and down arrow at the right of the title bar. The Restore button appears only after you have enlarged a window to its maximum size. Mouse users can click the Restore button to return the window to its previous size. Keyboard users can use the Restore command on the Control menu.

sample MIDI files

Files that can be played by a MIDI sequencer when you are using Media Player. The sample MIDI files included with Windows have been provided by Passport Designs, Inc.

saturation
The purity of a color's hue, moving from gray to the pure color.

screen elements

The parts that make up a window or dialog box, such as the title bar, the Minimize and Maximize buttons, the window borders, and the scroll bars.

screen fonts

Fonts displayed on your screen. Soft-font manufacturers often provide screen fonts that closely match the soft fonts for your printer. This ensures that your documents look the same on the screen as they do when printed.

screen saver

A moving picture or pattern that appears on your screen when you have not moved the mouse or pressed a key in Windows for a specified period of time.

scroll

To move through text or graphics (up, down, left, or right) in order to see parts of the file that cannot fit on the screen.

scroll arrow

An arrow on either end of a scroll bar that you use to scroll through the contents of the window or list box. Click the scroll arrow to scroll one line at a time, or continue pressing the mouse button while pointing at the scroll arrow to scroll continuously.

scroll bar

A bar that appears at the right and/or bottom edge of a window or list box whose contents are not completely visible. Each scroll bar contains two scroll arrows and a scroll box, which enable you to scroll through the contents of the window or list box.

scroll box

In a scroll bar, a small box that shows the position of information currently visible in the window or list box relative to the contents of the entire window.

scroll buffer

The area in memory that holds information that does not fit on the screen. You can use the scroll bars to scroll through the information.

Search button

Displays the words you can use to search for related topics. Use this button to look for topics related to a particular word. It is located in the Help button bar near the top of the Help window.

select

To mark an item so that a subsequent action can be carried out on that item. You usually select an item by clicking it with a mouse or pressing a key. After selecting an item, you choose the action that you want to affect the item.

selection cursor

The marking device that shows where you are in a window, menu, or dialog box and what you have selected. The selection cursor can appear as a highlight or as a dotted rectangle around text.

server application

A Windows application that can create objects for linking or embedding into other documents.

shortcut key

A key or key combination, available for some commands, that you can press to carry out a command without first selecting a menu. Shortcut keys are listed to the right of commands on a menu.

simple device

A device that you use without specifying a related media file. An audio compact-disc player is a simple device.

source directory
The directory that contains the file or files you intend to copy or move.

source document

The document that contains the information being linked or embedded.

split bar

Divides a directory window in two parts: The directory tree is displayed on the left, and the contents of the current directory are on the right.

static object

Information that has been pasted into a document. Unlike embedded or linked objects, static objects cannot be changed from within the document. The only way you can change a static object is to delete it from the document, change it in the application used to create it, and paste it into the document again.

status bar

A line of information usually located at the bottom of a window. In File Manager, the status bar shows the number of bytes available on the disk and the total disk capacity. Not all windows have a status bar.

swap file

A hidden file on a hard disk or network drive that Windows uses for swapping information from memory to the disk or drive.

system disk
A disk that contains the MS-DOS system files necessary to start MS-DOS.

Task List

A window that shows all running applications and that enables you to switch between them. You can open Task List by choosing Switch To from the Control menu or by pressing CTRL+ESC.

text box

In a dialog box, a box in which you type information needed to carry out a command. The text box may be blank or may contain text when the dialog box opens.

text file

A file containing only letters, numbers, and symbols. A text file contains no formatting information, except possibly for linefeeds and carriage returns. A text file is an ASCII file.

text-file transfer

A method for transferring files from Terminal to a remote computer. With this method, files are transferred as ASCII files with minimal formatting characters, such as linefeeds and carriage returns. All font-formatting information is removed.

text-only
An ASCII file that contains no formatting.

timeout

If a device is not performing a task, the amount of time the computer should wait before detecting it as an error.

time slice
The amount of processor time allocated to an application, usually measured in milliseconds.

title bar

The horizontal bar (at the top of a window) that contains the title of the window or dialog box. On many windows, the title bar also contains the Control-menu box and Maximize and Minimize buttons.

topic

Information in the Help window. A Help topic usually begins with a title and contains information about a particular task, command, or dialog box.

TrueType fonts

Fonts that are scalable and sometimes generated as bitmaps or soft fonts, depending on the capabilities of your printer. TrueType fonts can be sized to any height, and they print exactly as they appear on the screen.

virtual memory

The space on your hard disk that Windows uses as if it were actually memory. Windows does this through the use of swap files. The benefit of using virtual memory is that you can run more applications at one time than your system's physical memory would otherwise allow. The drawbacks are the disk space required for the virtual-memory swap file and the decreased execution speed when swapping is required.

virtual printer memory

In a PostScript printer, a part of memory that stores font information. The memory in PostScript printers is divided into two areas: banded memory and virtual memory. The banded memory contains graphics and page-layout information needed to print your documents. The virtual memory contains any font information that is sent to your printer either when you print a document or when you download fonts.

wallpaper

A picture or drawing stored as a bitmap file (a file that has a .BMP extension). Bitmaps can be simple drawings or elaborate scanned photographs.

warning beep

The sound that your computer makes when you encounter an error or try to perform a task that Windows does not recognize.

wildcard

A character that represents one or more characters. The question mark (?) wildcard can be used to represent any single character, and the asterisk (*) wildcard can be used to represent any character or group of characters that might match that position in other filenames. For example, *.EXE represents all files that end with the .EXE filename extension.

window

A rectangular area on your screen in which you view an application or document. You can open, close, and move windows, and change the size of most windows. You can open several windows at a time, and you can often reduce a window to an icon or enlarge it to fill the entire desktop.

Windows application

"Windows application" is used as a shorthand term to refer to an application that is designed to run with Windows and does not run without Windows. All Windows applications follow similar conventions for arrangement of menus, style of dialog boxes, and keyboard and mouse use.

wrap

To continue to the next line rather than stopping when the cursor reaches the end of the current line.