UTILITY PROGRAM — A program that performs a single, useful task, for example, a program that restores an accidentally erased file on a hard disk. Compare with **application program**.

VAC (VOLTAGE, ALTERNATING CURRENT — Electrical force available at the wall outlet. The North American standard is 110 volts / 60 Hz, while the European usually is 200 volts / 50 Hz.

VGA (VIDEO GRAPHICS ADAPTER) — A video display standard that can display up to 256 colours simultaneously, in certain modes, and offers greater resolution (image sharpness) than the CGA or EGA standard.

WAIT STATE — A clock cycle during which the microprocessor executes no instructions because it is waiting for data or instructions. Placing the video and system BIOS in RAM minimizes wait states. See also **BIOS Shadowing**.

WAN (WIDE AREA NETWORK) — Two or more computers linked together via low-speed and medium-speed electronic communications within a specific geographic area or globally. Typical components of a **WAN** include **servers**, **modems** and **telecommunications lines**. See also **network operating system**. Compare with **LAN (Local Area Network)**.

WIDE AREA NETWORK — See **WAN**.

WILDCARD — A character that can be used to represent any other characters in a filename. In MS-DOS, the question mark (?) and Asterisk (*) are wildcards that can stand for any single character or any number of characters (including no characters), respectively. For example, the filename *.txt can be used to denote all files with an extension of .txt. See also **filename**.

WINDOWS — A way to access a portion of a larger entity on a video screen. For example, a word processor program might use the video display to show only a portion of a page at a time for a document that may span numerous pages. The display, then, acts as a window for the entire document. For **Microsoft Windows**, see **GUI**.

WORKSTATION — A microcomputer which is being used by a single individual at a time and which does not offer services to a **network**. Compare with **server**.

WRITE — To copy data that is currently in the computer's memory onto a diskette or hard-disk. See also **read.**

XT-COMPATIBLE — In general, a microcomputer which is compatible with the IBM-XT series of computers. **XT-compatible** computers typically combine the Intel 8088 **microprocessor** and the **MS-DOS operating system** but also offer a **hard-disk drive** which was not available with the original IBM-PC.