PORT — A connector on a computer that allows data exchange with other devices, such as a printer, a mouse, or an external modem. See also **parallel port, serial port.**

POST (POWER-ON SELF-TEST) — A series of diagnostic tests which are performed automatically by the computer when you turn it on or restart it. See also **boot/reboot**.

POSTSCRIPT — A de facto standard language for describing the layout and form of text and graphics in desktop publishing applications. The word processing or graphics application automatically translates what is on the screen into a **Postscript** program, which is then executed by a **microprocessor** within the laser printer. Among other features, **Postscript** enables text and graphic images to be scaled and rotated to whatever degree is specified by the user.

POWER SUPPLY — Electrical circuit that supplies all operating voltage and current to the unit.

PRINTER — A peripheral output device that is connected to computer systems to print computer generated letters, forms, lists, reports, graphics, and a wide range of other documents. A tremendous number and variety of printers are manufactured today. The types of printers being used in this environment are:

1) **Laser**

   These printers are basically modified photocopying machines. Working under software control, a laser beam electrostatically forms characters in a dry ink (toner) on a print drum and then a sheet of paper is passed over the drum causing the characters to be transferred to the paper.

2) **Dot-matrix**

   Dot-matrix printers employ a row of pins. These pins are forced against a ribbon in various combinations to form the images.

3) **Daisywheel**

   Daisywheel printers use a printing element with petal-like projections resembling a daisy. Each character to be printed is positioned over the paper and forced against a ribbon, transferring the image to the paper.

4) **Line**

   Printer: more expensive printers used on minicomputer and mainframe computer systems.