

processor itself) that is used for temporary storage.

Remark. A statement included in a program, usually in the form of a comment written in plain English, that is not executed by the computer but which is included to provide assistance to the user.

Reserved word. A command word forming part of a computer language which, therefore, cannot be used, for example, as a name for a *Variable*.

Resolution. The amount of detail in which images can be displayed, determined by the number of squares into which the display grid is divided. High-resolution graphics give a lot of detail, while low-resolution graphics are 'chunky' and less detailed, the component parts of the image being more in evidence.

Reverse Polish notation. A notation for writing arithmetic expressions in which operators (plus, minus, multiply and divide signs) follow the values to which they apply. For example, $A + B$ is entered $A B +$.

RF Modulator. A device that converts the video output from a computer into a form suitable for feeding into the aerial socket of a TV.

ROM. Read-Only Memory. Memory in which information is stored permanently. Its content can only be examined, or read; it cannot be altered. ROM is used typically to provide facilities that are always needed by the computer. The BASIC ROMs that are found in many microcomputers, for example, enable them to 'understand' BASIC.

Routine. A sequence of instructions for carrying out a well-defined and frequently encountered task.

RS232C. One of the standard *Interfaces* used in the transfer of data between a computer and a peripheral device.

RUN. The command in BASIC that instructs the computer to begin executing a program.

S

Screen editor. Software that permits editing of text displayed on the screen.

Scrolling. The automatic upward movement of the information on a

screen to allow new information to be displayed at the bottom of the screen. Sideways scrolling is used in some graphics so that a scene can be 'scanned'.

Serial interface. A data transmission device through which bits are sent sequentially.

Simulation. Representation by means of a computer program of a physical system or process, e.g. flight simulation.

Soft key. A key on the keyboard that, by use of software, can be made to perform a specific function, defined by the user, each time it is pressed.

Software. The programs run by or associated with the operation of a computer.

Software engineering. The disciplines involved in writing software.

Sound generator. The facilities possessed by many home computers for producing sounds.

Speech recognition. The identification of commands and other messages by a computer from an operator's spoken words.

Speech synthesis. The production of simulated speech by a device under the control of a computer.

Spreadsheet. A program intended primarily for forecasting and financial planning. It provides an electronic representation of a large table of numbers, entered by the user, that show, say, financial results and projections. The screen becomes a 'window' through which any part of the sheet may be viewed.

Sprite. A character, or group of characters, that can be displayed and kept moving at a specified speed by the computer.

Stack. A part of memory where data can be stored continually, but where only the last item stored can be retrieved at any one time.

Statement. An instruction, or sequence of instructions, in a computer program.

String. See *Character string*.

String handling. The manipulation of character strings.

Structured language. A computer language that, if used properly,

constructs programs that are easily understood and modified.

Structured programming. The discipline of writing computer programs that are compact, efficient and easy to understand and thus easy to modify and correct.

Subroutine. A self-contained part of a program that can be called up and run by other parts of the program. It is usually written to perform a task that is needed frequently by the main program.

Syntax error. An error that occurs when a program statement has been incorrectly written.

T

Terminal. An I/O device, generally a display screen plus keyboard, connected to a central computer.

Text. The alphanumeric characters making up a document or conveying a message.

Truth table. A table that specifies the operation of a *Gate* by showing its output for all possible combinations of inputs.



The printer displays text, results and program listings.

Turtle. A wheeled mechanical robot (floor turtle) or a (usually triangular) shape on the screen (screen turtle), the movements of which can be controlled by commands from a computer.

Turtle trail. A floor *Turtle* can draw a line with a pen to mark the path it has been programmed to describe, while a screen turtle can leave a trace showing the line it has been made to take on the video display unit. Both of these may be called a turtle trail.

U

ULA. Uncommitted Logic Array. A type of integrated circuit suitable for many different applications, the actual functions of which can be specified comparatively late in the design of the device.

Utility. Any complete program used to perform a common operation, such as sorting data or copying files.

V

Variable. An item included in a computer program that can be identified by name, but whose actual value may be made to vary during the execution of a program.

VDU. Visual Display Unit. The piece of equipment that provides the screen display for a computer. It is usually any ordinary television set or a specially designed unit called a monitor. The latter, though more expensive, will offer greater clarity and definition of picture.

Video. The electronic signals and circuitry producing the display on a *VDU*.

W

Winchester. A rigid magnetic *Disk* that is housed in a hermetically sealed container for greater protection of data.

Word. A collection of binary units treated as one unit that can be stored in a single memory location.

Word processor. A combination of software and hardware for writing, editing and printing out letters and documents.