

IBM Jargon and General Computing Dictionary.
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The &pc. items in this dictionary have been selected from the enormous vocabulary of computer-related terms used in IBM. Those chosen are those which are believed to be used in a way unique to IBM, or which originated in IBM. Acronyms are generally not included unless they are used as a word in their own right (e.g. "APAR").

& (ampersand). Character used in many IBM macro and command languages in order to make them hard to read and to type. Helps add to the mystique surrounding programmers that use such languages. Sometimes used doubled, for double confusion. See Command Language.

ABEND (ab-end) 1. n. Undesirable termination of a program (or system). From 'ABnormal ENDing'. Invariably due to human error that the system was unable to overcome or ignore. Typically results in catch-all error messages (e.g: "syntax error") that rarely help determine the cause. 2. v. To end abnormally. See also Crash.

Account Situation n. Circumstances at a customer installation which could lead to IBM losing revenue, usually accompanied by accusations that IBM is not delivering adequate service. A "red alert" status for a branch office.

Action Plan n. Project management is never satisfied by just a plan. The only acceptable plans are Action Plans.

Adder n. An increment. "These costs won't look so attractive with the burden and inflation adders." Nominated for most obnoxious neologism of 1980. The word "Uplift" is now a common and equally obnoxious alternative.

Address v. Talk about. Used when a speaker cannot answer a question. e.g: "I shall address that subject another time". (This implies that, of course, the speaker has considered the subject in great depth, but sadly has not enough time now to give it the treatment it deserves...). See Offline.

Adjective v. To use a word as an adjective modifying some other word which in fact modifies the adjectived word. This avoids the normal use of prepositions and dependent clauses, as in "user effects" (instead of "effects on users" or "effects caused by users"). Another example is "That is a documentation hit" (rather than "That is a hit on the documentation"). See Verb.

Adtech n. Time put aside for a risk project (Advanced Technology). May mean: a) Play time (when someone else is doing it); b) Exciting, innovative system design with NO product deadlines (when speaker is doing it).

Aeroplane Rule n. 1. "When you are lost, climb and confess". 2. "A twin-engine aeroplane is more expensive and has twice the number of engine problems as a single engine aeroplane". As applied to the 308X Processor Complex, two power supplies (even at higher current output) driving two boards of logic are much more reliable than four power supplies of correct value with each pair driving each of two logic boards. When reliability is the stronger consideration a different design will result than when availability (with concurrent maintenance) is the major criteria. See Fence Out.

Aggressive adj. Optimistic, vigorous, very active. "We are moving into the new technology on a very aggressive schedule."

Announce n. The time at which a new product is described to customers. Before this time a product is known by a code-name, and specifications are strictly confidential. At Announce time, the product is assigned a number instead of a name, with the result that not even the developers know what it is anymore...

APAR (ay-parr) 1. n. 'Authorised Program Analysis Report'. This is an official report to IBM of an error in a program. The acronym is used so often that most people don't know what it means. 2. v. To make such a report. Note that only programs (and not Microcode) can be APARed. 3. n. A golf term (like ABIRDIE, ABOGIE).

APL Bigot n. APL ('A Programming Language') is a popular, mathematically oriented, unreadable, interactive language. Usage: 1: "An APL bigot does not know there are any other programming languages". 2: "She's an APL bigot - cannot speak English". See Bigot.

Architect v. To decide how something should work. Usage: "We will have that architected by year end".

Architectural Awareness n. Site Facilities' version of Feature. A popular variety is a column placed directly in front of a door, claimed to be deliberate. (Warning: At the Glendale Lab., Endicott, you will be offered attractive bets that this has never happened. DO NOT ACCEPT!)

Architecture 1. n. The way something works. Usage: "They are developing a new disk architecture". 2. adj. Documentation. Usually in the form "architecture group" that denotes a group of people who go around finding out how the most highly esteemed IBM products or planned products work and then document them. These documents then become the IBM "standard architecture" or "strategic architecture" which the rest of the (IBM) world has to follow. Note: You cannot spell "Architecture" without "hit"...

Award n. In Research, a cash prize often given to signify the end of a project (whether successful or not). Elsewhere, a cash prize placed for maximum political effect; often associated with (but not proportional to) merit.

Back Burner 1. v. To move something to a lower priority in the hope that it will go away or be solved by someone else. ("Let's back burner this item.") 2. n. Where things that should be done but are hard to do (or politically unpopular) end up.

Back-level adj. Not updated with the latest changes: "Your system is back-level, so there is no way you can run this new super-program!"

Back-to-Back Remote adj. A method for connecting two computers which have been set up so they can only communicate with each other over a long-distance line, using 3705's, modems, adapters etc.. If in fact the two machines are sitting in the same room then the line terminals of the two machines can simply be connected by short wires. Often useful in initial testing.

Bad Information n. 1. Lies. 2. The truth, expressed euphemistically. (An abbreviated version of the story that well illustrates this: Programmer to manager, "This is bullshit". Manager to second-level, "This is fertiliser". Second-level to third-level, "This makes plants grow". Third-level to Director, "Must be good stuff".) After an External Audit, middle management typically protects itself by saying, "My people gave me Bad Information". See also CYA.

Banana n. 1. Parenthesis. Term used especially when dictating computer language. e.g. "list fred splat splat left-banana label" for "LIST FRED ** (LABEL)". 2. One unit of skill in repairing equipment. IBM's avowed goal is to design machines so simple that the repair engineers can be replaced by trained monkeys. Hence, the lowest three levels of field repairs are sometimes jokingly called One, Two, or Three Banana tasks.

Banana Label adj. The curved label stuck to magnetic tape reels intended to identify the contents but usually only containing a large number and some arbitrary audit non-information.

Bean Counter n. 1. A person whose job is to find flaws in reports dealing with financial matters. According to popular lore, if no mistakes are detected then this person has the job of changing accounting procedures in order to generate some mistakes. 2. An individual who refuses to accept any proposal to improve a product (or the work environment) unless it can be quantitatively equated to a monetary reduction in corporate expenditures, or a short-term increase in corporate revenues.

Bells and Whistles n. Frills added to a product, to make it more exciting without making it much better.

Belly Up adj. Broken, not functioning (as for dead fish). Refers to a piece of hardware that was functioning, but has ceased to do so. Usually happens at the most critical point of the final test cycle. See also Casters Up Mode, Down.

Bible n. A master reference document (example: System/370 Principles of Operation). "I don't believe that Divide sets the condition code - I'll check it in the Bible."

Big Blue n. 1. IBM (when used by customers and competitors). 2. Data Processing Division (when used by GBG or GBG/I).

Big Blue Zoo n. The manufacturing plant and laboratory complex located at the junction of Highway 52 and 37th Street, Rochester, Minnesota, USA.

Big OS n. Pronounced "OZ". Popular in the late 60's when "OS" was THE operating system, and it was said to do and know everything.

Bigot adj. Person with a passionate or religious fervour for a language or system e.g: "APL Bigot", "REX bigot", "CMS Bigot". Implies an unwillingness to learn any alternative, except when the term is used by one bigot to another (of the same type), in which case the implication is almost affectionate.

Bit-bucket n. 1. The bottomless hole into which vital messages and files fall when some network machine accidentally destroys them. A useful excuse for anything one has forgotten to send ("Oh, it must have fallen into the bit-bucket. I'll send it again.") or did not feel like answering at the time ("Send it to me again ..."). 2. In hardware, the bit bucket collects all the leftover intermediate products of a calculation for disposal. In large high-performance machines, a "byte-bucket" or a "word-bucket" must be used because the bit-bucket cannot be emptied quickly enough.

Blank n. A character often mistaken for the absence of a character. This typically results in its being ignored or discarded. (If you can't see it, it isn't there, right?) See Virtual. VM was the first major IBM operating system to use the blank as its primary delimiter in its command language.

Blem n. Problem. Derived from Pro-blem (and possibly Blemish). Any bug or problem with something. For example: "We've encountered a number of blem's in the scheduler. We might have to do a total redesign".

Blivet n. Something becomes a blivet when it is out of control. Usually refers to a program that has been touched by so many incompetent programmers that it cannot be maintained properly.

Blow away v. Destroy. "The editor crashed and blew away all my files".

Blue Glue n. SNA (Systems Network Architecture). That which binds true blue boxes together (official definition). In fact, the way IBM chooses to bind its own boxes together is with bi-synchronous lines and VNET - with SNA avoided almost religiously.

Blue Letter n. The document once distributed by the Data Processing Division to announce a new product or education course. It contained the generalised product description, and the specifications that were used to make the marketing representatives experts. So named because it was printed on blue paper. When DPD became NAD (National Accounts Division), NMD (National Marketing Division), and ISG (Information Systems Group), the blue letters changed colour for some reason, and are now printed on ivory coloured paper (called buff by some). It is now fashionable to call the letters "Ivory Letters" to illustrate one's ability to change with the times, but real old-timers will invariably refer to them as Blue Letters. See also Announce.

Blue Sky n. An idea not inhibited by the practical, possible, political, or popular trends. For example: "A computer system that is actually Easy To Use? That's real Blue Sky!" See WIBNI.

Blue suiter n. 1. IBM marketing representative (when used by those at HQ).
2. IBMers at HQ (when used by those in a development laboratory).
3. IBMers not at Research (when used by those at Research).

Blue wire n. Hardware fix. Required to repair damage accidentally caused by deleting a pin while installing an Engineering Change. Also used if the EC team runs out of Yellow Wire. See also Purple Wire.

Board Games n. 1. Invisible decisions taken by members of the IBM Corporate Management Committee (CMC), usually with all-too-visible results. 2. Exercises played by the designers of any new IBM keyboard in order to retain an advantage over the End Users. The schemes employed are quite horrific in their subtlety.

Boiler Plate n. Content-free portions of a presentation included to capture the attention and otherwise distract the listener from any real issues. Also applied to standard parts of a document or program that contain little information (copyright notices, for example).

Bomb v. Synonym for Crash (in USA only - to real English speakers the word has the opposite meaning when used as an adjective. e.g. "that sports car goes like a bomb"...)

BOOF (rhymes with "hoof") n. Byte-Oriented Operand Feature". An extension to the System/360 architecture that permits references to data objects on arbitrary byte boundaries. A hardware "feature" introduced with System/370 that effectively removed an important debugging facility (a specification interruption for alignment errors) of the System/360 architecture. For a considerable performance penalty, program errors are now hidden from the programmer. Implemented ('tis said) for the convenience of programmers of Access Method modules who were faced with the problems of external data not falling on proper memory-aligned boundaries when read into main memory. This was sometimes called BOO, as on the Model 195 it was not a feature, and was therefore always available." See Feature.

Boondoggle n. 1. Conference with a large admixture of pleasure with business. To be a true Boondoggle, the trip must be paid for by IBM. To be a Super-Boondoggle, it should be to Southern France, Florida, or anywhere in the Caribbean. 2. A group of people getting paid but doing nothing productive for a related group or to corporate revenue. They may look and act and sound very busy.

Bottom line n. Term used (mostly by managers) to denote a strong desire to bypass understanding of a proposed solution in favour of a simplistic quantification of it - as in "I don't want all these pros and cons, just give me the bottom line". Higher level managers may interchange use of this term with "Net it out" (q.v.).

Bracket n. An invention in IBM communications, part of the Systems Network Architecture. A bracket is a group of messages exchanged between two communicating parties that is deemed to comprise a logically separate unit such as a "transaction". Marker flags are sent with certain messages to indicate the start or end of a bracket. This offers plenty of scope for getting out of step and producing nasty problems called "bracket violation".

Brain Dump n. Alternative term for Core Dump.

Branch to Fishkill n. Similar to Branch to Owego, but starting in Poughkeepie.

Branch to Owego n. A Branch to Owego is any unexpected jump in a program which produces catastrophic or just plain weird results. This phrase originated in Endicott, which is just down the road from the rival Owego (Federal Systems Division) site. For example: "Ah ha! My base register got clobbered: that made the program take a branch to Owego!"

Breakage n. The extra people that must be added to an organisation because the Plan has changed. Every plan change causes breakage.

Bubblegum n. The Boeblingen Lab. Americans have four alternatives in trying to pronounce 'Boeblingen': a) 'BO-BLINN-GEN' makes you sound as if you have never heard the word spoken and are clearly "out of it"; b) 'BER-BLING-EN' (the most popular variant) sounds like you KNOW what it sounds like but cannot pronounce it yourself (probably true); c) 'BOB-LIN-GEN' seems to be a favourite in New York State; d) the correct pronunciation leaves you open to accusations of intellectual snobbery by the first two groups. Calling it "Bubblegum" defuses the whole issue by making it a joke.

Bug n. A very broad term relating to a defect in either hardware or in software function. Some bugs can be detected and may interfere with customer use of the product. Other bugs may lie dormant and hatch for a Watson Law event. Much effort is and will continue to be spent forcing bugs to the surface and removing or otherwise eliminating any ill effects they cause. The ultimate management question is "Have you really removed the last bug from our product?". The required workers' reply is "Oh, surely we have found the last bug?!", delivered in unison. This is not an IBM term, but is included here for completeness and cross-references."

Bullet n. One of a list of items to be emphasised, usually marked by a blob (bullet) alongside it on a Foil. "And the next bullet is the most important...".

Bulletize v. Convert a proposal, argument, or result into a series of Foil items (which may or may not be preceded by Bullets). Implies extracting the essence of an argument, but in reality means extracting the most politically acceptable items from a proposal.

Bunch n. Since RCA and General Electric dropped out of the computer business, the Seven Dwarves have become the rather less romantic "Bunch". (Not to be confused with Baybunch - the San Francisco Bay IBM user group.)

Burn v. To make a copy. "If you have a minute, I'll burn a copy for you." Originating from the engineering term for copying a programmable read-only memory (PROM), this term also found favour with users of early models of IBM copiers.

Business case n. Economic (commercial) justification. Asking for the business case is an effective wet blanket to throw on a hot project.

Byte n. The IBM term used to describe one character of information, almost always consisting of eight binary digits (Bits). The term Byte originated in 1956 during the early design phase for the IBM Stretch computer. Originally it was described as consisting of from one to six bits (typical Input/Output equipment of the period used 6-bit chunks of information). The move to an 8-bit byte for Stretch happened in late 1956, and this was the size later adopted and immortalised by the System/360. The term was coined by mutating the word "bite" so it could not be accidentally misspelled as "bit". See also Nibble.

. Calendarize v. To put an appointment into one's calendar. This expression
replaces the more traditional idiom "let me pencil that in for Thursday".

. Candy-Striped adj. Registered IBM Confidential. Refers to the Red and
White diagonal markings on the covers of such documents. Also used
as a verb: "Those figures have been Candy-Striped".

| Career Develop v. To promote or change jobs, especially if the employee is
not too happy with the change ("This will develop your career...").

. Casters Up Mode adj. Engineers' equivalent of the term "all four feet in the
air" - i.e. a piece of hardware which is totally non-functional and of use
to neither man nor beast. See also Down, Belly Up.

. Cast in Concrete adj. Immutable. Used when specifications are "frozen" and
are therefore unchangeable. This takes place a few days before the first
prototype is available for general usability testing, so minimising the
work of the development group. Effectively acts as a wet blanket should
further urgently needed changes be proposed.

. Cast in Jello adj. 1. On some projects, describing any decision made without
management approval. 2. On some projects, any decision. See also
Cast in Concrete.

. Caveat n. A communication technique favoured in NAD that affords a
presenter the opportunity to give an illusion of speaking frankly and
candidly to an audience. Done well, the caveat (warning) will relax the
defences of an otherwise critical audience, lulling it into accepting the
token statement at face value. "The customer must first effect an oper-
ational SNA environment. This is not always an easy task, but has been
done in one day at several accounts."

. "Cave of the Winds" n. NAD (once DPD) HQ. The term refers to the famous
cave of the same name. The DPD HQ building was named for the cave
because of all the hot air alleged to circulate spontaneously therein.

| Central Electronics Complex n. CPU. (CEC sounds more impressive). This
term is now archaic, since it was prohibited by CYA enthusiasts in 1978.
The replacement term is Processor Complex, but not just Complex.

. Challenge n. A challenge is climbing a mountain (or bottoming a cave) and
is not related to work at all. In IBM this term is often mistakenly used
to mean "Big Problem".

. Change Control n. One of the System Management disciplines, from which
DP centre staff derive the warm feeling that they are in control of their
computer installation. Known sardonically by the users who must ac-
tually live with the insidious overheads generated by the various imple-
mentations of the discipline as "blame control".

| Charm School n. New Manager School. Ambitious careerpersons must learn
| to direct their friends instead of swill ale with them. It is observed that
| some Charm Schools teach "Ugly" instead of "Suave".

| Chauffeur Driven adj. A system developed using a standard product that has
| had a new (usually better) End User interface provided by an expert to
| hide the (usually appalling) original End User interface. Also used to
| hide the extraordinary number of options provided with much IBM
| software.

Check n. From "machine check". "The CPU took three checks before lunch".
Also used for software (program checks). See Hit.

. Checkbook Programming Systems n. A systems group that hires an outside
. vendor to produce software instead of having it written by IBM pro-
. grammers.

| Chiselled in Granite n. In Eastern USA, near the Granite Mountains of
| Vermont, this term means the same as Cast in Concrete.

Chocolate adj. Enhanced flavour, e.g. a modified version of a program. Rare.
See Vanilla, Mocha.

Clean up v. Improve a sloppy program, system, or procedure. "We have to
clean up the SPIE exit". A clean up should convert decadence to ele-
gance.

CLIP (klip) v. To change the pack label on a DASD volume. The term CLIP
stood for Change Label Information Program. Usually IPL'd from cards,
this program not only changed the serial number but also other items in
the volume label area. Of course, these other capabilities were never
used so CLIPping became synonymous with changing the volume serial
number.

. Closed Loop n. See Loop.

COBOL Programmer n. This is a very negative term. COBOL is not highly
regarded in IBM; almost no one in IBM can program in it. Generally
COBOL programmers are not regarded as programmers at all, if that is
all they can code.

. Coffee game n. (also, of course, used as a verb) A religious ceremony practiced at various IBM locations (notably the Glendale Laboratory at Endicott, NY) in which groups of people play a simple but skilful game of chance to stretch a five minute trip to the coffee machine into a half an hour break. Coffee Games often attract large followings, with the most addicted devotees refusing to drink coffee unless it has been properly played for. Games are usually played among a set group of people, with a game taking place every time anyone in the group develops a thirst. Coffee Gaming has developed its own special jargon. This is outside the scope of this dictionary, being a major research project in its own right, but some idea of its flavour may be gleaned from the following: A "dip" indicates that a person has lost a game, a "double dip" is when a person loses twice in one day. A "triple dip" is known as a "Pat Mitchell Special", in honour of the famous Endicott ice cream parlour.

Cold Pricklies n. A nagging suspicion that somewhere you have overlooked something critical, and will be punished for it. See Warm Fuzzies.

Command Language n. Set of magical incantations. Can bring great blessings on the user; but like all good spells, misuse or use by the ignorant (See Naive User) can bring great woe.

| Commit Plan n. See Fall Plan.

. Commonality n. The common ground between two plans or designs. "OK, what's the commonality between your proposal and his?"

Concern n. Formal indication from one group to another that the first is (very) worried about some action by the other. See Issue, Non-Concur.

Concur v. To give an irrevocable (often written) agreement. "Product Assurance concur that the product be shipped"

| Convergence n. A concept drawn from non-Euclidian geometry, wherein parallel (or even diverging) lines are seen to intersect. e.g.: "Let's keep both projects going and converge them in release 3".

. Cook-Book n. Some official document which exemplifies the bureaucracy involved in getting a product out of the door. For example, a CTP (Comprehensive Test Plan). Also used as an affectionate term (like Bible, q.v.) for some master reference document.

| Cook Chips v. To produce multilayer chips for use in complex modern computers.

Core n. An archaic term used to refer to the ferrite cores employed as the main storage medium for early computers. It is now something of a fad to studiously avoid this term in favour of the more meaningful and general terms "storage", "main store", and "backing store".

Core Dump n. Also "Brain Dump". A complete briefing consisting of all that a person knows about a subject. Usage: "Give me a five-minute core dump on SNA before the staff meeting". See Core, Dump.

Counter-strategic adj. 1. Applied to suggestions that one would like to ignore. "Not the basket in which IBM has placed its eggs". 2. Something that causes embarrassment to those who are responsible for what is strategic. See Strategic.

Crash 1. v. To halt in an unrecoverable manner unexpectedly. Almost never preceded by a warning message except when crash is deliberate. Usually indicates human error in hardware or software (or even firmware). "The system has crashed AGAIN". 2. n. The event of crashing. "That was a bad Crash".

. Creationism n. The principle that large systems are created from thin air in
. a single step. A religious belief devoutly held by many managers. See
. Evolution.

Critical service n. A hot bug fix. See Service.

CRU (crew) n. Customer Replaceable Unit. Part of a device (such as a keyboard) that is considered to be replaceable by a customer or End User. (Fix it yourself.) See FRU.

| Currency symbols n. In the EBCDIC character code two characters (X'5B' and X'4A') represent primary and secondary currency symbols respectively. In the USA these are represented externally by the dollar and cent signs. In the UK they are shown as the pound sterling sign and the dollar sign respectively. Expensive confusion results when a UK user receives a document from a USA location (or vice-versa), since dollar figures now appear in pounds, and cents magically become dollars. The Germans solve the problem by using both keys for totally different (non-currency) symbols.

Customer n. Any individual not currently working for IBM.

CYA (see-why-ay) v. To protect your rear (typically by generating Documents of Understanding and obscure memos and the like which will prove, if necessary, that the author knew all along that the project was doomed to failure). Various estimated to consume between 71% and 78% of all managerial resources at most development labs. See MFR.

DEBE (debbie) 1. n. "Does Everything But Eat" - general 360/370 utility for moving data from device to device. Originally a stand-alone program (i.e. it did not require an operating system) named after its authors. It is a fine example of the poor human interfaces provided by programs in the 1960's (not that they are much better now). 2. v. To try as a last resort. "Nothing else works, let's DEBE it".

| Decision Support System n. A computer program claimed to help those in
| power to make decisions. Any computer system used to justify anything
| to higher management that could not be justified in any other way -
| usually involves getting the computer to answer a question different
| from the one that ought to have been answered. Invariably a Mip-eater.

Deck n. A file usually in Fixed-80 (card) format, as in "text deck".

Decommit v. To slip your schedule for an indefinite period of time. A grave dishonour for project management.

. De-Concur v. Once having agreed the viability of a project, to remove your
. agreement from it. This ploy is most effective when used without
. warning and less than a week before Announce, and will then usually
. be devastating. A favourite weapon of Legal departments. See Concern,
. Issue, Non-Concur.

Delta n. List of changes (e.g. the differences between two programs). "Make me a Delta on that proposal". See also Diff.

Demo n. Demonstration. Exhibition of non-functioning or unfinished hardware or software to senior management or VIP visitors. Provides ideal conditions for disturbing unsuspected bugs.

Demonstration Application Program n. Game.

| Design n. 1. Preliminary sequence of events leading to the manufacture and
| delivery of a finished product. 2. Educated guess. 3. (common) Uneducated guess.

| Diagnostic n. A program written to test other programs or (more usually) the
| hardware of a system. It is intended to be used when a failure occurs
| to identify the failing unit or sub-assembly. It often seems that diagnostics
| are the only pieces of code that will run cleanly when the hardware starts to fail...

Dialogue 1. n. Pompous alternative to "conversation" or "chat". 2. v. Talk to, as in "Why don't you call Steve and dialogue with him about that project".

. Diff v. Make a list of changes. Refers to the widely used program DIFF that
. attempts to show the differences between two program or data files.
. See also Delta.

Disclaimer n. A boiler plate blanket statement that disassociates and relieves
a presenter of any responsibility from conclusions his audience may have
reached as a result of his statements, regardless of whether the conclu-
sions were intended or not. Commonly used in IBM customer hardware
or software proposals and performance presentations.

"Disneyland East" n. NAD (once known as DPD) Headquarters (see 1133
below). This term gained such widespread use that several years ago a
middle manager somewhere actually sent out a memo forbidding its use.

Distributed Data Processing n. 1. (Official IBM version) A methodology for
selling small CPUs for use at remote sites. 2. (Unofficial version) A
methodology for spreading competitors' minis and micros around remote
sites, as there is no 4311 (yet).

Divisions n. 1. Any territory outside New York State, or north of Interstate
84, or west of the Hudson River. 2. Derogatory term used in Yorktown
Research to describe the rest of IBM. "That idea came from the Divi-
sions". See also NIH.

Document Administrator n. Quote from GML manual: "One who is respon-
sible for defining markup conventions and procedures for an installation.
This involves defining the actual vocabulary of tags to be used and also
the nature of the processing required for each". Need one say more?

Document of Understanding n. A memo used to present one party's view of
a contract in the best possible light. Usually shows little or no under-
standing of the problems of the other party to the contract.

Dog and Pony Show n. A presentation designed to (over)impress. Implies
a certain amount of cynicism and deception, and contempt for the audi-
ence.

. Do It Right The First Time n. A Slogan that, of course, should read "Do It
. Correctly The First Time". Potentially synonymous with the slogan,
. "Let the customer do the debugging". Correctly deciding what to do
. next is perhaps even more important. See Creationism.

. Dollarize v. To express intangible assets (such as programmer creativity) in
. terms of U.S. dollars - hence allowing the concept to be grasped by the
. materialistic.

Domestic adj. The U.S. parts of IBM. Used by U.S. IBMers to imply all that really matters in IBM. Used by everyone else to describe an insular (provincial) approach to a problem. "He's Domestic - thinks everyone speaks American".

Dotted to v. 1. Describes a managerial relation that cannot be described as a tree. Refers to the (dashed) lines shown on organisation charts. Usually used for professionals (lawyers and accountants) whose managers do not understand what they do so they are "dotted to" someone in Armonk. An "abnormal but legitimate" relationship. 2. In electronics, a Dot is often a wire-ORed or wire-ANDed gate: the logical operation takes place by two gate outputs being connected, and the final output depends on which gate wins.

Doubleword n. 8 bytes (an IBM S/370 Word is 4 bytes, or 32 bits). A "Doubleword Boundary" is an address that is an exact multiple of eight. Many S/360 or S/370 instructions either require their operands to be aligned on a DW boundary, or work lots faster if the operands are so aligned. See also Fullword, Halfword.

Down n. Crashed. The state of the system when you need one more listing and you are already late for your plane.

Down-level adj. Applied to a person that is not up to date with some technical nuance. (Derived from FE terminology applied to software.)

| Drive v. To push a project along in spite of many objections and obstacles.
| "Sam, you will drive the water fountain replacement project to a successful conclusion by next Tuesday, won't you?"
|

| Driving a Brown Desk v. Referring to anyone achieving the technical rank
| of Advisory Engineer (or Programmer).
|

| Dual Ladder n. A personnel myth that claims that one can rise in the company
| at equal levels either in a managerial or technical job. Impossible outside
| the U.S.A., and even in the U.S.A equal levels cease at "Director"
| and "Wild Duck".
|

Dump n. Collection of all available information about a problem (and a vast amount of irrelevant information), usually deposited on the slowest printing device available. The "Garbage out" part of "Garbage In, Garbage Out". Some people still use dumps for debugging problems. (Equivalent to cracking an eggshell with a steamroller.) See Core Dump.

DWIM Instruction (like swim) n. "Do What I Mean" - a mythical instruction invoked by a frustrated programmer to give acceptable results when in fact he could not define what he meant (but would recognise it if he saw it). Also invoked when the last instruction issued to the machine was disastrous: "Do what I mean, not what I say, you dumb machine!"

Earth n. The safety cable in a domestic power supply (term used by non-USA English speakers instead of "ground", perhaps reflecting the wider world view of such people?).

Ease-of-use n. 1. An ill-defined but positive quality only achieved by products of the speaker's company. 2. A quality claimed for all programming languages, to demonstrate superiority over machine languages or lower level languages. OS JCL is a fine counter-example to this claim.

Easter Egging v. Replacing unrelated parts and hoping the malfunction goes away. This is the only IBM-approved game of chance, except that Easter Egging is forbidden in the 308X Processor Complex.

The term derives from the USA Easter-time practice of hiding coloured eggs, chocolates, and other goodies around the house, the garden, or the town square. Children are invited in and usually then engage in a hurried scamper through the territory to collect goodies and win various prizes that may be awarded. The implication in the jargon usage is that the engineer did a similar search through his machine looking for the part that would fix the problem.

EC n. 1. Engineering Change. Yet another attempt to get a machine to meet customer expectations. 2. Literally "Extended Control". If, for example, a person is running an MVS system under VM/SP, then he has to be in EC mode, and is said to be "running EC".

End User n. A person at the end of the chain of hardware, systems, and interfaces. A hypothetical non-IBM person, probably of IQ less than 80, who is expected to represent the biggest group of users of IBM equipment in the future. It is not known whether the low IQ is the cause, effect, or is unrelated to this change of usage.

Enhancement n. fix for a problem that has been reported too often to be ignored. See Feature.

Entry-Level adj. A system which is simple enough for a naive user to start with. Sadly, many such systems are just toys - they do not have any of the facilities needed to do real work. (By contrast, a well designed entry-level system can be a useful tool and a pleasure to use for the experienced user, too.)

EPL (ee-pee-ell) n. Stands for European Program Library. The European equivalent of PID (q.v.), and even more inscrutable. Availability from EPL is always at least one month later than from PID, except in the rare cases that a program product is developed in Europe and sent to EPL first.

Escalate v. To take a matter to higher (managerial) authority. Very effective as a threat.

ESP (essp, ee-ess-pee) 1. n. Early Support Program. A procedure by which certain members of the lunatic fringe are given versions of a product after Announce but before FCS. The object of the exercise is to get the Bugs out of the product and confirm its Ease of Use without creating too many Account Situations. 2. n. Extra Sensory Perception. The technique by which ESP (1) customers learn the details of the product in the absence of any knowledge on the part of the IBM support staff or of any documentation. 3. v. To ship the ESP (1) version of a product to the brave customers.

ETN n. Equivalent To New. Parts that have been used somewhere, and have been burned-in and therefore, after testing, are more reliable than new parts. So it is hoped.

Europe n. that part of the (IBM) world that consists of Israel, South Africa, and the European countries - excluding the Eastern Bloc.

Evolution n. The process of implementing a large system by incremental improvements to a simple system. No other process has ever been known to work. See Creationism.

Exerciser n. A program written to intensively exercise a portion of a machine with hopes that an operation that occasionally fails can be forced to fail more often, and frequently enough to allow the CE to find and correct the fault.

Exposure n. 1. Some aspect of a project that looks as though it may become a problem. "That's a big exposure". 2. Danger, risk. A necessary synonym, since the words are not otherwise found in the IBM vocabulary.

External Audit n. Examination of the status and risks of a project by an outside group, followed by a report of its findings. The report usually tells upper management exactly what they were afraid that they would discover if they pulled their heads out of the sand. See Bad Information.

Facility n. 1. Being facile. IBM does not recognize this meaning, but speakers often demonstrate it. 2. The ability to make something easier (or even possible); incorrectly derived from the verb "to facilitate". Used in the titles of many IBM service functions and products which would otherwise not be polysyllabic enough to impress. See also Polysyllabic, System. 3. Usually a program or software package whose function is (by the definition of its authors) useful. Facility is usually a misnomer, however, as the programs that are accredited this grand description are often exceedingly complicated and difficult to use.

Fallback plan n. A plan to fall back upon should the first plan be rejected by higher management. This is often the plan preferred by the development manager - he can count on his management turning down the first plan (so demonstrating their power) but can be reasonably confident that the second one he proposes will be accepted. This strategy, of course, becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. Since the first plan is not the preferred plan, it is often not properly thought out or presented - and is hence guaranteed to be rejected.

Fall over v. Synonymous with ABEND, Crash. As in "One of the 2305s fell over last night and took CP with it".

Fall Plan (Now known as the Commit Plan) n. A period of three months occurring every autumn (Fall), when most productive work stops for a general free-for-all about which projects are to be considered strategic. Now known as "Interim Plan". The plan, once adopted, is ignored. See Spring Plan.

Family Dinner n. An evening meal paid for by IBM, usually before Christmas, for a department or group of departments. The term derives from the ancient concept of IBM being one big happy family of employees. This is supposedly an event to recognise the effort put in during the year, and can therefore be relied upon to introduce colleagues from work whom one has never met and did not know existed.

Fat, Dumb and Happy adj. Typically used of a project's management who think their project is competitive when it is not.

FCS (eff-see-ess) n. First Customer Ship. The time at which products are first delivered to customers, usually cause for celebration. ("Pub Time".) Also is the time at which FE starts fixing the bugs that were discovered too late in the development cycle to be corrected. (See also Announce.)

Feature n. 1. Bug for which no fix is going to be made available. 2. A correction to a publication. See Enhancement.

Fence 1. n. Some special sequence of characters (such as hexadecimal "FF") used to delimit other data. Usage: "You should put a fence at the end of the parameter list". 2. v. To protect storage so that it cannot be stolen by another user while you are not actually using it. An excellent mechanism for justifying a storage upgrade. See also Fence Out.

Fence Out v. To electronically disconnect an element from the operating configuration. In the 308X series, Fencing Out is done by Fence registers that are set and unset by the Processor Controller. This concept was devised by the original 308X RAS Engineering Department, and in doing so they discovered the Aeroplane Rule (see above). See also Granularity.

Ference Error n. An indexing error occurring when the IBM System 38 encounters a null or invalid index or subscript. (A message handling routine truncated the first two characters of the message - it should have read: "Reference Error". However, "Ference Error" conveys just as much information...)

Field n. 1. The IBM marketplace - where the profits come from. Anywhere outside the Development group. 2. (when used at HQ) The development laboratories.

Firefighter n. A person or group of people called in to put out a Forest Fire. A firefighter is too often totally unfamiliar with the fire being fought. Firefighters are famous for their interim patches or fixes. These patches, once implemented, become permanent and the tinder to spark off later Forest Fires.

Fix n. A correction for a software problem. "You need the following three fixes to correct the file system bug". Software equivalent of Engineering Change.

Fix it in Pubs v. Unfortunately nothing to do with the ancient art of Ale sampling, but is instead the way Product Development tries to correct any problem found within the six months before FCS. That is, "Change the product publications". See Feature.

Flatten v. To bring under control, to eliminate, or to make less conspicuous. "Gee, we've got bad problems with that new software from Yorktown. Shall we bring a bunch of them up to flatten the problem?" (The implication being that any problem can be trampled into the dust noise" by the application of hordes of programmers.)

Flipchart n. Large piece of paper used for drawing charts as a presentation aid. Often faintly marked with squares which are of length 1/7920 part of a furlong on a side (once known as "inch"). These 25.4mm squares help the presenter draw in straight lines. Favoured at Corporate HQ, but superseded elsewhere by Foils.

Floor System adj. The operating system used by the majority of people on a machine (as opposed to a test or private system). See Spin System.

FLOP (flop) n. Floating Point OPeration, more usually seen in the construct Megaflops (Millions of Floating Point Operations per Second), a measure of performance usually applied to scientific Vector Processors. The abbreviation FLOP has the added IBM advantage of sounding slightly derogatory about other manufacturers' Vector Processors. See also MIPS.

Foil n. Viewgraph, transparency, viewfoil - thin sheet or leaf of transparent plastic material used for "overhead" projection of illustrations (visual aids). Only the term 'Foil' is widely used in IBM. It is the most popular of the three presentation media - slides, foils, and flipcharts - except at Corporate HQ, where flipcharts are required. In Poughkeepsie, social status is gained by having one of the new, very compact, and very expensive foil projectors so it is easier for meetings to be held almost anywhere.

Follow-on n. A new release of a product, sufficiently different to merit a new product number but including all the bugs and problems of the previous product architecture. (This is the usual result of being Compatible with previous releases.)

| Footprint n. The floorspace taken up by some piece of computer equipment, such as a terminal or processor. As in "Our box has a smaller footprint than that of xyz". See also Visual Footprint.

Forecast n. A prophecy of the number of sales of a product as a function of price at which it will be offered, typically made by people who have never used or sold such products and based upon wild guesses by some people who have. The forecast has no relationship to either the quality of the product or the value as it might be perceived by the potential customer, since no one is allowed to discuss the product with the customer at this stage. Thus a forecast is either strikingly inaccurate for a low price and large number of sales, or a painfully self-fulfilling prophecy if it is high priced and low volume.

| Forest Fire n. Something important that happens, usually a manufacturing problem or a machine crash that receives an undue amount of attention from high-level management. This causes productive work to cease as all available personnel become Firefighters.

Fort Apache n. Building 300, East Fishkill. The term derives from the shape of the building, whose second story overhangs the first. The term is also applied to Building 707 in Poughkeepsie, where the windowsills are sloped at 45 degrees so that despairing managers will not hurt themselves or damage the building while going out of the windows.

Frank n. The chairman of the board in the late 1970's: Frank Cary. "If you don't like it, go talk to Frank". The term is still used to refer to the Exalted Ones At The Top. (The current correct term would be "John", but this has not found favour.)

Freezer n. Place where Task Force results are stored (e.g. a filing cabinet to which no one has the key). See Task Force.

Frozen adj. A term which when applied to an IBM project means that some higher level of management has cooled sufficiently to enable them to successfully quench any red-hot or innovative idea which might be relevant to the project. See Cast-in-Concrete.

FRU (frew) n. Field Replaceable Unit. Part of a device (such as a logic card) that is considered to require an IBM Field Engineer (FE) to replace. (The factory doesn't want to hear about your problems. They have enough of their own. Call the FE.) See CRU.

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FS (eff-ess) n. Future System. A synonym for dreams that didn't come true. "That project will be another FS". Note that FS is also the acronym for "Functionally Stabilised".

Full court press n. Instruction to an entire marketing team to press sales at an account at all levels possible. (From the basketball term.)

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Fullword n. An IBM S/370 Word is 4 bytes, or 32 bits, and is known as a Fullword (FW). Many S/370 instructions run faster when their storage operands are "aligned" on a fullword boundary, that is they start on an address which is an exact multiple of 4. See also Halfword, Doubleword.

Fun & Games n. Anything that does not directly result in short term revenue to the corporation.

Functionally Stabilised adj. Dead. A product that will receive no further enhancements.

Funny Money adj. Budget U.S. dollars. These have a hypothetical, play-money value - felt especially by those employees to whom the dollar is not the native unit of currency.

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Galactic Headquarters n. The old IBM building in New York City at 590 Madison Ave. was occupied by Corporate Headquarters before they moved to Armonk, and commonly was referred to as "Galactic Headquarters". It was distinguished by the old IBM logo on the front, which was a globe with the words "World Peace Through World Trade" on it. (This building has since been demolished, and has been replaced by a new building, also owned by IBM.) The term "Galactic HQ" now generally refers to the Armonk location.

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Gap n. The difference between "What The Customers Want" and "What We Can Produce". Used by the IBM planning community to indicate blind faith in the ability of the Development Divisions to come up with a product that will rectify Planners' Droop and keep the revenue growth going. Note that it is no part of the Planners' responsibilities to plan whatever product might be required, or be producible, to bridge the Gap.

Get in bed v. Work closely with. Usage: "You will just have to get in bed with those people in Raleigh".

Glass n. Silicon Chips. Usage: "We can't get the uplevelled hardware until the new glass gets through Fishkill". Originally Glass referred to the photographic masters for cards or chip transistors. The image on the glass was projected photographically onto photoresist on the base surface. The 3195 had several "glass expediters" during development and production. See Iron.

Glass Teletype n. Before the 3101 was announced: any non-IBM "dumb" CRT. After the 3101 was announced: the 3101.

Glitch A glitch is a pulse which is less than or equal to 50ns in duration. By definition (see Pulse) it cannot be observed, and it is therefore used as the perfect scapegoat to describe all hardware failures in electronic equipment. It is claimed that all glitches are caused by lightning strikes (or cosmic rays), and therefore such problems are unavoidable and inevitable.

Go Away v. To vanish inexplicably. Normally used in a kind of prayer or litany: "with a bit of luck, that problem will go away when we install Release XXX.."..

Go Faster Stripes n. Frills added to a hardware product, to make it appear to run better. IBM hardware does not need these, of course. See Bells and Whistles.

Go to the Mat v. fight it out by going to higher authority (from the wrestling term). See Escalate.

Granularity n. 1. A term with an indeterminate meaning. Perhaps "bittiness"? Usage (Quote from "MVS/XA: An Overview", GG22-9303, page 10): "Read-only protection is now on a page granularity". 2. A substitute for the word "specificity", in the sense "a specific item or detail". Usually coupled with descriptors such as "sufficient" or "a lack of", and in this case used mainly to discredit someone else's work. Not to be confused with granulated. 3. The concept of being able to fence off (out of the configuration) a failing element of a processor complex so the remaining elements can continue to do useful work. For example in the 3081 one of the two central processors can be Fenced Out and the other, in conjunction with the rest of the elements, can continue to run as a single processor system. Also on the 3081 processor, a pair of BSM's (Basic Storage Modules) can be fenced out, powered down, repaired, powered up, tested, and returned to the operating configuration. Thus High Granularity implies many elements that can be Fenced Out, and Low Granularity implies few elements that can be Fenced Out. (See Fence Out.)

Green Card n. Quick reference summary information printed on a large folded sheet of heavy paper, usually yellow or white. Refers to the original (green) S/360 reference card which is an outstanding example of the genre. Some recent "cards" are in fact booklets - which of course entirely defeats the object of providing a quick reference. It is probable that all future cards will be booklets, of a different shape and size to any existing cards.

Green Lightning n. Apparently randomly flashing streaks written on the face of the 3278 and 3279 terminals while a programmable symbol set is being loaded. This hardware bug was not fixed, as some bright spark suggested that this "would let the user know that something is happening". It certainly does. See also Lightning Bolt.

Green Words n. A well known but now obsolete FORTRAN term for "parochial control words used to delimit spanned records in the absence of adequate data management support". During a presentation in which these words were first identified, they were diagrammed on a blackboard in green chalk, thus the name.

Guru n. A professional expert. Overtly a term of respect, but can convey an undertone of contempt for one who would invest large amounts of time in a subject which the speaker does not consider sufficiently important to learn well himself.

Halfword n. 2 bytes (an IBM S/370 Word is 4 bytes, or 32 bits). Especially confusing term when used to describe a 16-bit data item on a 16-bit machine whose "word-length" is 16 bits. See also Fullword, Doubleword.

"Hall of Winds" n. See "Cave of the Winds".

Hands On n. 1. Time spent in exploration of a new piece of equipment. "After the class we will go down to the DP Centre for some hands on."
2. Access to equipment. "I have the programs written, but I can't get any hands on until Thursday."

Hardwire v. When used with software, it means coding as a constant a parameter you would normally like to be changeable. "The Userid of the receiving machine is hardwired as DATASTAG". "The spool space constant is hardwired at 53%". (An alternative term is Hardcoded).

He n. A huge computer program (eg: MVS, HSM, JES) which does things on your behalf, usually without your knowledge, and sometimes without your control. This program takes on the charisma of an unnamed and devilishly cunning person when its side effects (the ones that are causing you problems) are being explained to you by someone who has more knowledge than you do. "He dynamically retrieves the datasets that you will need and puts them on a scratch pack". Sexist programmers slip in the term "She" from time to time, either for variety or when the action taken by the system seems especially fickle.

Headcount n. The number of personnel currently allocated to a manager or project. Headcount is the major measure of the size of a person's empire or the importance of a project, and is therefore increased whenever possible. Unfortunately most managers still believe that nine women can produce a baby in one month.

Head Crash n. The event in which a read/write head forgets how to fly over the surface of a disk, and gouges up priceless data.

Help n. An item provided by headquarters staff, especially during times of difficulty. See also External Audit. Often this term is used in conjunction with the observation that "If we don't improve this product plan, we will get more Help than we can imagine".

Highlight v. To emphasise, or make a point of. From the most common form of emphasis available on display terminals, in which the words to be emphasised are brighter than the other information on the display.

Hit 1. n. Error. May be hardware or software. "My system took 3 hits before it crashed". See Check. 2. n. A Slip caused by an unsatisfied external dependency. Usage: "I've got a schedule hit because of Dept. XYZ". A highly desirable way to Decommit while saving face. See also Bad Information. 3. n. A success in searching for something (or in similar tasks). "Every time a cache hit occurs, we save three cycles." 4. v. To press (a key or button), as in "Please Hit ENTER". Now discouraged, as it is considered to be a word which might disturb the sensitive user.

Hokey Dial n. (also called Pseudo-Leased). A means of connecting terminals over a switched-line network (usually the public telephone system), when the terminals concerned are only designed to work on a permanently connected ("leased") line. What happens is that the user manually dials the connection and then starts the communications, and the hardware at each end hopefully cannot detect the difference. Used as emergency fall-back in some cases where the dedicated lines fail; also used as a cheap substitute for proper lines. National communication authorities do not always approve.

Hook n. A piece of hardware or software which is added to a product to allow future extensions or additions, but which is not necessary for the basic function. Unless planned very carefully, Hooks can disclose planned but unannounced features. For example, many well labeled hooks in the System/370 Model 145 microcode revealed a thing called Virtual Memory. Now for Quality's sake, Hooks must be fully tested by manufacturing.

Hot Button n. Topic currently of great interest to someone who matters (i.e., some big shot). Implies impermanence, and some contempt. The hot button of today is likely to be of only passing interest tomorrow. Current examples: "Usability", "Quality".

How Hard Would It Be n. Plaintive litany used when venturing suggestions for changes. Immediately precedes some preposterously difficult proposal which to the requestor seems simple. From experienced users, a wry acknowledgement that the proposition may well be costly, but is nevertheless desirable. "How Hard Would It Be ... to remove the length restriction on Userids?" See also WIBNI.

IBM n. 1. Acronym for the name of a certain large Corporation. 2. A hypothetical 370 instruction, existence strongly suspected but not yet proven: "Insert Bug under Mask". 3. Itty-Bitty Machines. 4. Immense Blue Mountain/Monolith. 5. "I've Been Moved", alluding to the favourite game of departmental and divisional reorganisations. 6. "It's Better Manually" 7. Hudson River Valley Works (much of that valley, in New York State, is owned by IBM).

IBM Confidential adj. 1. Proprietary information relating to personnel or technical matters. 2. Information that is embarrassing to IBM.

IBM Internal Use Only adj. Information that is confidential but which the classifier does not wish to keep locked away.

IBMJARG n. A document which lists numerous "jargon" terms used internally to IBM.

Ibmox (ib-em-ox) v. To copy xerographically. "I Xeroxed a copy... sorry, I Ibmoxed a copy of that report on your desk." Also "Ibmrox".

. IC (eye-see) n. No, not Integrated Circuit! Now that Information Centres are replacing the DP shop as the place to go for programming assistance, it has been decreed that IC no longer means integrated circuit.

I didn't change Anything n. "Something has changed but I have no idea what". Plaintive cry preceding feelings of the Cold Pricklies.

In a ditch adj. Non-functional. As in "That program is on its back in a ditch". See Down, Crashed.

Incantation n. A small piece of source code that appears in most programs written in a given language. Most programmers will use the sequence out of habit, and often without thought or understanding in the hope that it will ward off evil spirits and bugs. One example (in S/370 Basic Assembler Language) is:

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BALR *,R12
USING R12,*
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This particular incantation is further complicated by many programmers writing for CMS (Conversational Monitor System) who insist on saving registers OS-style - even though CMS has just carefully saved the registers (and set up Register 12) for them!

This term is used for any piece of expert manipulation required of a user or reader to get access to privileged knowledge or function.

Incent v. To motivate with the carrot. A horrible term, but I suppose it is better than "Incentivize"...

Incredible adj. A famous memo issued by FE management suggested the word "Incredible" as a possible alternative to the term "Bullshit", which apparently was being overused in meetings. Thereafter, the exclamation "Incredible!" could be heard ringing through the halls, accompanied by laughter from those understanding the translation, and expressions of bewilderment from the others.

Information Support Staff n. Group of people alleged to exist in various locations to help other IBMers actually get computer access. Rule of thumb: if the telephone number is published, then whoever answers will most likely be unable to help. (There is a general truth here: someone with real skills will have moved on to something better. And he will not publicise his telephone number as then he would never get any work done.)

Innovate v. Change for the sake of change, preferably making previous programs or systems malfunction.

In-plan adj. What marketing wants (see Out-plan). In general: What somebody else wants.

Interactive adj. Modern. Usually associated with typing at CRT display terminals. Supposed to carry the connotation of fast, pleasant, and making full use of "modern" techniques and technology. Usage: "Of course, we will follow up with an interactive version".

Interface 1. v. (Of humans) talk. "I'm going to interface to Joe Bleh, the new DP Manager". 2. v. (Of machines) connect. "I'm going to interface the black box to the big blue box". 3. n. A legally defined and documented place on an IBM machine or program where someone can attach another machine or program, of any manufacture. Programmers often call this a "User Exit".

Interim Plan n. Two Interim Plans (Summer and Winter) are placed between the Spring Plan and the Fall Plan. These plans are placed in order to a) review and refine the hurried results of the previous Spring or Fall plan, b) to add project items "forgotten" in the previous plan (now that no one is looking), and c) to ensure full employment of bureaucrats responsible for devising the plans.

IPL (eye-pee-ell) v. Initial Program Load. Restart after operating system has crashed. Used to indicate starting anything from scratch: e.g. "She IPL's on coffee each morning". Also IML (Initial Microcode Load), or IMPL (Initial Micro Program Load - now an obsolete term).

Iron n. Computing machinery. Prevalent among hardware people to describe "boxes" (blue or otherwise).

Ironmonger n. Derogatory term used by some "pure" software people to designate hardware people. Generally indicates that the speaker is ignorant about hardware matters.

Iron Mountain n. Permanent document storage. "We'll send these files to Iron Mountain". Originally, a vendor specialising in securing backup documentation from nuclear attack; now any archival storage. Not a good place to put data you ever want to use again. See Wansdyke.

I/S n. Information Systems. The function that manages the computer installations at some IBM sites. Optimists thought it stood for "Information Services" until they became users.

Issue n. Formal indication from one group to another that the first is dissatisfied with some action by the other, and is prepared to take the matter to the next level of management to resolve the problem. See Concern, Non-Concur.

Ivory Letter n. See Blue Letter.

JCL (jay-see-ell) n. Job Control language. This was one of IBM's first attempts to make computing easy - JCL has only 5 command verbs. Unfortunately, one of these verbs has grown to have over 192 different modifiers. See Command Language.

Joint Study n. A way to get a customer to invest resources into IBM development, and so commit him to buying the IBM product when it becomes available.

Kahuna (ka-who-na) n. 1. Hawaiian witch doctor. 2. An expert in some narrow field of endeavour. See Guru. (Kahunas have much understanding of the conflict of 'K' versus 'k'.) See Guru.

K and k abbrev. The lower-case "k" is the internationally agreed abbreviation for the prefix "kilo" (as in kilometre, kilogramme, meaning 1000 metres or 1000 grammes). The upper-case "K" is never the correct abbreviation for "kilo", and has come to mean the number 1024 (two to the power of 10). Computer memory (storage) is addressed by binary encoding so this is a convenient unit, close to the familiar 1000. Hence 64K + 64K = 128K = 131k. See also M and m.

Key adj. Important. Derived from the old term "key part" in theatre, it is used when the speaker cannot explain why it is important. "It is absolutely Key to choose this strategy".

Kick-off meetings n. An epidemic of meetings early in the year in the marketing divisions, when senior managers seek to persuade their staff to face the year's increased sales quotas. Usually the only time such managers are actually seen in the flesh (apart from award conventions). Can be relied upon to provide a reasonable lunch.

In small countries Kick-offs take place in the first week of January. In larger countries there may be a delay of a month or more while the managers ensure they still have jobs, and find out who the customers are, following the latest annual reorganisation.

A modern trend is to have a minor show-business celebrity to comper the meeting, carefully selected for their total ignorance of IBM and its jargon. This is to encourage more attention to End Users.

King-Kong adj. Describes a large, unwieldy, and bug-infested program. See Mickey-mouse.

Kipper adj. Used to describe the speed of 370's and Mini-Computers that do not manage to achieve a million instructions per second. A "KIP" is a thousand (kilo-) instructions per second (see note under MIPS), hence a "300 Kipper" is a machine that runs at 0.3 MIPS.

KIPS (kipps) n. Thousands of instructions per second. Derivative of MIPS. See Kipper.

KISS principle n. "Keep It Simple, Stupid". Usually quoted when developing a product in restricted time, e.g. due to marketing pressures. Not usually adhered to by IBM software development teams.

Known adj. Almost ready for Announce. As in: "Yes, that's a KNOWN requirement" (emphasis on KNOWN). i.e: "We are working on that, but we can't announce it yet, so you'll have to read between the lines."

Layered Architecture n. An Architecture in which a set of sections is defined, each section ("layer") representing a distinct logical function. In theory each layer covers (and hides) the machinery of lower layers, so you only need to know the highest layers necessary to perform the function you require. In practice you still need to know about all the layers to get anything to work since all the interfaces are exposed, thus rather defeating the purpose.

Leading Edge adj. Used to describe technology that is five years out of date and is therefore mature enough to be used in a product.

Level One n. Level One is the lowest level of customer support. If a customer really has a problem, he has to somehow get the Level One person to refer the problem to a real Guru, the Level Two support. If IBM also considers the problem significant, the customer may then be "Level Two'd".

Level set v. To get everyone to the same level of knowledge to be used as a base for further progress. i.e. short pitch to define terms, etc. "Before you start, let's level set everyone".

Lightning Bolt n. A warning signal that looks like a flash of lightning. It is used on the IBM 3270 range of terminals to signify a communication error. For example "lightning bolt 505" probably means that the system to which you are (were) connected just crashed. See also Green Lightning.

Line Item n. Major part of a new release of a (usually software) product. One of the highlights.

Listing n. 1. Hardcopy print-out, usually of a program or algorithm. 2. The assembly- or machine- language part of such a print-out.

Load n. A person who stands in the way of production, and who generally slows down the work rate of everyone else. The term is derived from electrical engineering, and corresponds to the popular "weak link" concept. Most commonly heard in East Fishkill, as in "that person is a real Load".

Loop n. See Closed Loop.

LSD (ell-ess-dee) n. Acronym used (in Marketing Education classes) to refer to improper behaviour on business premises. Stands for Liquor, Sex, and Drugs. The LSD lecture usually comes in the second week of the first marketing class in Dallas. One happy anecdote refers to this item: "In 1964 my first manager was lecturing me about the proper conduct of an IBMer (not that I especially needed it). Referring to the 'S' of 'LSD', he said that this sort of activity was 'forbidden on company time or furniture'."

Lunatic Fringe n. Used in Marketing to denote customers who will always take Release 1 of any new IBM product.

Macro n. A macro is usually a kind of in-line subroutine. In IBM it is still fashionable to write macros in outlandish and preferably unreadable languages, usually abounding with characters that are awkward to type on standard keyboards. This makes it appear very skilful to write Macros, when in fact the main attributes required are those of Good Humour and Patience. See &.

Manager n. 1. Within IBM, strictly defined to mean an individual who has other employees directly responsible to him/her. Thus: "Ms Smith is the Manager of Mr Jones". 2. A title used to denote someone who needs to sound important (to themselves or others) but who is not important enough to have anybody working for them. Thus: "Mr Fortescue-Smythe is the Manager of Corporate Tiddlywink Sponsorship Programmes".

M and m abbrev. The lower-case "m" is the internationally agreed abbreviation for the prefix "milli" (as in millimetre, meaning 1/1000th of one metre). The upper-case "M" is international abbreviation for "Mega", meaning 1000000. Confusingly, in the computer industry, the "M" is also used to mean 1048576 (1K times 1K - see K and k). When used in the form MByte then it almost always means the latter, but in other contexts its meaning is usually chosen to benefit the writer.

Man Month n. A mythical unit of work measure. Equivalent to the amount of work that an 'average' programmer could do in one calendar month. May or may not take into consideration time spent in meetings, technical exchanges, vacation, holidays, illness, traveling, paperwork and design flaws. It is of course assumed that if one person could complete a program in five months, then by putting another four people on the job it will be completed in one.

Meg n. Megabyte. As in "this program needs two Meg to run". See M and m.

MFR (em-eff-are) n. Memorandum For the Record. A generally secret broadside against some other party, which rationalises one's own position for posterity in local files. Where heavily used, the accumulated collection forms a remarkable work of fiction. MFR's are favoured CYA items since there is no possibility of refutation.

Mickey-Mouse adj. 1. Describes a program expected to be small, easy to write and usually of only temporary importance; for example, to fix an error in a data file caused by a bug in another program. Naturally Mickey-mouse programs tend to last longer, get bigger, and in their turn do more damage than the official programs written in the first place, thus turning into "King Kong" programs. Use of this term is inadvisable in the Emerald Isle. See Toy. 2. Bureaucratic harassment (unnecessary forms to fill out, reports to complete, etc.).

Microcode n. Any software the customer cannot get his hands on.

| Micro Iron n. Any 370 architecture machine hiding under the covers of a
| personal computer. This term has arisen mainly due to the announce-
| ment (on 18th October 1983) of the XT/370 - a System 370 machine
| plugged into an IBM PC-XT. See also Pig Iron.

Migration n. The term used to specify how a customer is to change to a new hardware or software package, replacing currently installed packages which are probably viewed as being completely satisfactory. "Incentives", such as, "If you do not migrate we will not support anything else", are usually applied to prod a customer into making the change.

Mini-Computer n. Any machine with a non-370-compatible architecture that runs under 3 MIPS. Also Mini. See Vector processor.

| Mip-eater n. Any program that uses more than 10% of a shared CPU on be-
| half of a single user. Corrupt usage - it should of course be "Mips-eater".

MIPS (mipps) n. 1. Millions of Instructions Per Second (although often used, the term "1 MIP" is incorrect "One Million Instructions Per..". what? year?) 2. Misleading Indication of Processor Speed.

| Mission n. A strange word used by IBM powercrats instead of job, function,
| strategy, or responsibility. Thus: "It is this Division's Mission to
| produce low-cost widgets". Fighting over the ownership of Missions is
| a favourite (and in some cases the only) activity of many Senior IBM
| Executives. "Mission" has the advantage over more mundane descrip-
| tive words of implying a certain level of spiritual righteousness about
| the share-out of the spoils of the fight.

Mixed Case adj. Describes commentary, system messages, etc. that are easy to read and understand. Usage: rare.

| Mocha adj. Enhanced flavour, e.g. a modified version of a program. Ap-
| proximately equivalent to Chocolate, though some rate it more highly.
| See also Vanilla.

Modulate v. Change. "Let's modulate our approach to this problem."

Module n. General purpose noun, can mean almost anything. Some current favourites: a section of code; a package of circuitry containing 1 or more chips; a unit of instruction; or a temporary building.

Moletown n. The Yorktown Heights location (The T.J.Watson Research Center). A reference to the fact that none of the offices or laboratories there have windows. The disease has recently spread to Poughkeepsie and has there been incorporated in the 1982 Office Design Standard. See Outside Awareness.

Motherhood n. Used to describe a common attitude of software development groups toward their underlings (i.e. the users of their software). It is attributable to the fact that designers often believe their creations to be the 'final solution', to which no possible improvement could be conceived. "Why don't they distribute source code?" ... "Motherhood, pure motherhood".

MSG v. (message) To communicate via a computer-transmitted message, rather than by telephone. Usage: "MSG me when you are ready to go to lunch".

Multiwrite n. An especially powerful way of accessing data on VM disks. Since it allows more than one user to arbitrarily write on a disk, without any cooperation or heed for the other users, it invariably results in mislaid, destroyed, or subtly corrupted data files.

MVS (em-vee-ess) n. Man Versus System.

Naive User n. 1. Someone new to the computer game, viewed with a mixture of sympathy and pity. 2. (when applied to someone not-so-new to the game) A person who cannot chew gum and walk in a straight line at the same time.

Nathan Hale n. An asterisk (*). Reportedly from Nathan Hale's remarks before being hanged: "I regret that I have but one asterisk for my country". Only used by those with a Neu Yawk or Noo Joisey accent, for obvious reasons.

Need to know n. Phrase wielded when someone wishes to avoid passing on a piece of information, usually because the information would be embarrassing. "Do you have a need to know?"

Net v. To send by computer network (as opposed to tape or mail). "I'll net you the files tomorrow". See also VNET.

Net it out n. Term used (mostly by managers) to denote a strong desire to bypass understanding of a proposed solution in favour of a simplistic quantification of it - as in "I don't want to understand all the reasoning behind it, just net it out for me". Higher level managers may interchange use of this term with "Bottom line" (q.v.).

Net-net v. To summarise a presentation into less than 20 words. Usually used by executives to stop a meandering presentation and find out what resources the speaker is really asking for.

Nibble n. A group of 4 binary digits (Bits) which make up a single hexadecimal digit. Four bits is half a Byte (q.v.), so Nibble seems an appropriate term for this unit. Also sometimes spelt Nybble.

NIH (en-eye-aich) adj. "Not Invented Here" or "Not In-House". Possibly more common inside IBM than outside, though of course IBM's house is larger than most.

Noddy Program n. A simple program to perform some basic function missing from a larger program. "I have written a Noddy Program to display the time the system was IPLed." Named from the simple-minded hero of a popular series of books for very young children (now banned in many educational establishments, having been accused of promoting racism and other undesirable practices). Unlike properly designed and tested programs, Noddy Programs always work correctly. (Sometimes also known as "back of an envelope" programs, from the original source document. They used to be written on the back of punch cards until these were made obsolete by virtual cards.)

Non-Concur v. The ultimate threat. Makes any project management quake - grown men have been known to cry when threatened with this. Formal indication from one group to another that the first is convinced that the second is about to cause a major disaster, and that therefore the first group is prepared to escalate the matter as high as necessary to resolve the problem. See Concern, Issue, and the subtle variation De-Concur.

Non-strategic adj. Embarrassingly superior to what is strategic. It is permissible to attribute defects to a non-strategic project even when nothing is known about it. In GBG (General Business Group) it is automatically non-strategic to have a Big Blue solution to Office Systems needs. See Strategic, Big Blue.

Noodle v. To think or ponder. Often used to hint that there is no politically comfortable solution, and a creative approach or a joke is appropriate. "Noodle on this tonight?"

NO-OP, NOP (no-op) 1. n. No-operation. An instruction to do nothing (used to fill up space or time during execution of a program). Often used to allow space for later insertion of a break point or Hook. 2. n. Implies ineffectiveness. Usage: "He's the biggest no-op I have ever seen". 3. v. To make ineffective: "I'll no-op it".

No Problem Found n. Colloquialism used by Software/Hardware maintenance people to indicate that they were unable to reproduce the users' problem. A gentle way of asking for more information. Also No Trouble Found.

Not Obvious n. Publication Editor's benign but ill-considered re-wording of "Transparent". As in "The operation of the cache is not obvious rather than transparent" to the programmer". This kind of rewording tends to cause major riots in the programming halls.

NUCON (new-con) adj. Originally a CMS term for the NUcleus CONstant area. Static area in 370 page zero. Now used as a term for a programmer who will not write reentrant code: "He has NUCON mentality".

Nums n. Short for Numbers. Salesmen, branch managers, region managers and sometimes even division presidents consider Nums their end that justifies any means. Represents the quotas arbitrarily derived at the beginning of a year to motivate the aforementioned people. To "make the nums" is to make quota or (if spoken enthusiastically with gestures of the face: wriggles of the mouth and the eyebrows) to surpass it. It may display the speaker's envy.

OEM (oh-eee-em) n. From "Original Equipment Manufacturer". Inside IBM it means "Other Equipment Manufacturer". See Vendor.

OEMI (oh-emmy, or oh-ee-emm-eye) adj. This is used to precisely identify the S/370 channel to control unit interface (also known by the name FIPS60 - a standard which is at least 10 years out of date). The word is derived from the channel to control unit interface OEMI Manual (GA22-6974), in which OEMI means "Original Equipment Manufacturer's Information". (The "I" in OEMI is often misconstrued to mean 'interface', however, "interface" is defined by the United States Supreme Court to mean a physical place where Other Equipment Manufacturers are legally entitled to attach their "Plug Compatible Units".)

Offering n. A product release: "the next offering will have that feature".

Offline n. Means "later, in private" e.g: "let's take that offline". Used by speakers when a question has been asked and a) the speaker does not know the answer; or b) he has a detailed answer which is probably not of interest to most of the audience; or c) the speaker does know the answer, and it is of interest, but he does not want to state it publicly.

Old Iron n. Obsolete IBM equipment, as seen by marketing. In customers' shops, it is barely obsolescent; within IBM internal functions (except marketing demonstration centres) it is the standard equipment. Applied particularly to the 3277 Visual Display Unit (still unsurpassed for speed of alphanumeric information transfer to the user); in IBM UK it is traditional to have a mixture of these with English and American keyboards, usually connected to the wrong display units. See also Iron.

Open Kimono v. 1. Reveal everything to someone. Once you have gone open kimono, you have nothing more to hide. (This is the more common meaning.) 2. To give someone a tantalising glimpse of a project (i.e., enough to get him interested but not enough to give any secrets away). This is an interesting example of the same jargon having two rather different meanings. This can cause amusing misunderstandings at times.“

Opportunity n. 1. A menial task your manager wants you to do, as in "I have an opportunity for you". 2. Problem ("This company doesn't have Problems, it has Opportunities"). See also Challenge.

Orchard n. The Orchard means Armonk. Corporate Headquarters was built on the site of an apple orchard. Some fruit trees still remain, but it is understood that they have (appropriately?) been chemically treated to produce flowers but no fruit.

Organic Debugging n. A paranormal method for improving the Quality of software. The output from a compilation or assembly of the suspect program is placed on the floor, with a large flat dish on top of it, and an indoor plant in a pot is placed in the centre of the dish. The dish is then filled with water. The principle is that any bugs in the program will be attracted towards the house plant and drown as they try to cross the intervening water. From statistical evidence this seems about as effective a technique as many others currently in use. It is hypothesised that the technique would be even more effective if the house plant were first marinated in Kirsh, but of course it has been impossible to test this on IBM Domestic (USA) premises.

OS (oh-ess, oss) n. Any of the operating systems MVS, SVS, MFT, MVT, or VS1. These operating systems all grow from "OS/360", the first widespread 360 Operating System. See Big OZ. The term OS excludes such operating systems as CP/67, VM/370, TSS, ACP.

Out-plan adj. What development wants (see In-plan). In general: What you want to be In-plan.

Outside Awareness n. 1. Window. Some IBM offices and (especially) laboratories are totally lacking in windows, but at last someone has noticed that people work better with a view. So new offices are specified to have Outside Awareness. 2. The Santa Theresa Laboratory concept (that Programmers require at least 3 hours of direct sunlight every day or their hexadecimals cease to function) is not universal within IBM. In Poughkeepsie and Yorktown, engineers are not allowed to see the light. As a reflection of this, a number of signs, (with a variety of creative artwork) have appeared on the walls. They usually state "My job must be to grow mushrooms, because they keep me in the dark, and feed me lots of horse manure". See Moletown.

Paged out v. Not paying attention, distracted. "What did you say? I'm sorry - I was paged out." Refers to the state of a task in a multi-tasking system whose storage chunks (pages) have been moved out of the computer onto some other kind of storage, such as disks. The program is just not all there.

Paper Chase n. (also Paper Game) An officially sanctioned version of the infamous chain letter. E.g. person A sends a letter to person B, copying persons C and D. Persons B, C as well as D may reply, copying each other and incidentally persons E, F, G, H and I. Person A, in self-defence, responds to all, this time via a distribution list including persons B through I and anyone else he can think of who might be remotely interested. The next step is usually a meeting, to which the persons on the distribution list each invite one or more members of their respective departments. The process usually runs down when the list of players gets large enough that the secretary attempting to book the meetings which follow cannot find a time-slot acceptable to all.

Parallel adj. A similar path, drawn using a jagged edge, and only slightly divergent from some other path. Usage: "The new documentation will be consistent and parallel to the existing documentation". See also Transparent.

Paren n. 1. Short for parenthesis. Many people have forgotten that parenthesis is the real word. CMS users seldom bother to balance them. Many user-written CMS programs flag the presence of a closing right parenthesis as an error. 2. The character "(", used in conversation to pair with "Thesis", e.g. the string "A(B)" might be described as "A Paren B Thesis". Especially favoured by LISP programmers, burdened by many such. See also Banana.

Pass-through n. The name for a variety of methods by which one computer which is receiving messages from a terminal passes them on to a second computer as though the terminal were directly connected to it (and similarly relays messages coming in the opposite direction). This requires a program in the first computer to pretend to be a terminal. Having to write such a program is very helpful in making computer buffs experience something of the effect of their work on real people, but unfortunately the architects and planners who design the data streams never have to dirty their hands and write such a program.

PDB (pee-dee-bee) n. Pastel Denim Binder. One of the few pieces of truly IBM jargon associated with the IBM Personal Computer. Refers to the boxes and binders in which the documentation for the PC is shipped.

Penalty Box n. When an executive is transferred from a position of power to one of less power, he is said to be "going to the penalty box". This usually occurs as a result of being visibly associated with a failed project (see FS). Favoured penalty boxes are Research (see Sandbox), Group Staff, or Branch Manager of a remote or moribund location. Another technique is to keep the offender at the same location, but put him in charge of a meaningless project (e.g. "Productivity" or "Standards"). Variation: "He got five years for fighting." See Walk in the Woods.

Perfect Programmer Syndrome n. "Since my program is right, there is no need to test it". Or: "Yes, I can see there may be a problem here, but I'll never type SHUTDOWN on the RSCS console when there is a CP read up".

| Permanent Home n. Any IBM building or office in which you will reside for
| less than one year.

. Permanent move n. Temporary assignment. (q.v.)

| Permanent Recording n. The data that remains on a disk after a Head Crash.
| Readable by only one or two Gurus in San Jose.

Personal Computer n. 1. Before 12 August, 1981: A computer intended to be used by one person, who is local to it and does not time-share it. A catch-all for home computers, hobby computers, professional workstations, and probably a few Cray-1's. 2. After 12 August, 1981: The IBM 5150. This has had the predicted major impact on the industry, and an even bigger impact on IBM itself. 3. A way to continue business work at home. 4. A way to continue game playing when at work.

| Person Month n. Fashionable term for Man Month.

Phase 0 adj. From "Phase 1 review" which is the first official review of a project. A "Phase 0 review" is a preliminary review, often conducted as a trial run for the real Phase 1. Hence, "do a Phase 0 estimate" means "do a preliminary estimate".

PID (pidd) adj. The version of a program as shipped to customers. From Program Information Department. "Unfortunately, we have to run the PID version". See Vanilla.

. Pig Iron n. Any very large, very fast, mainframe computer (of at least 5 MIPS
. - say a 3081). Used as: "Sure that software is slow, but it will sell a lot
. of pig iron that way." See also Rusty Iron, Micro Iron.

Pitch n. Presentation. "Are you going to the XYZ pitch in the auditorium?"

| Planners' Droop n. A chronic symptom demonstrated by most of the planning
| community. It describes the tendency of revenue projection graphs for a
| given product to show a steep rise for the next 3 years followed by a
| steep decline. Since falling graphs are anathema to any self-respecting
| planner, the situation is usually remedied by postulating a Gap product
| which will appear in 3 years and keep the revenue graph going upwards.
| This has the added advantage that the product manager has a superb
| excuse to explain his need for a further cast of thousands to develop this
| (hypothetical) product.

Plan of Record n. Plan. A "Plan of Record" has by implication extra solidity - though in fact it is the least reliable plan of all, since product plans always change. It sounds better in memoranda, to some ears. See Action Plan.

Play v. To spend one's own time on a project. e.g. "I'm staying this evening to play with the new XYZ program". It seems that most really usable software derives from such play.

Play Pen n. Room where programmers work.

Plist (pee-list) n. Parameter list. A programming mechanism for passing the arguments (parameters) from one environment or program to another.

Point n. A measurement of the IBM list price of a product, equivalent to a monthly rental of one U.S. dollar.

Pokieland n. The Poughkeepsie area. The term is mainly used by people outside Pokieland.

Polysyllabic n. Any word of two or more syllables, although in IBM a minimum of four is preferred. "IBM conventional methodology involves the utilisation of polysyllabic utterances to the maximal degree", especially in documents for announcements.

Polysyllabics are also popular in product reviews because they make life harder for the reviewers: the documents take longer to read, the authors' meaning is less clear, and therefore harder to refute, and above all it discourages any comments from foreign IBM laboratories. In skilled hands, the technique can even be used between English and American speakers.

Example: "CICS/VS offers a functionally superior alternative to CICS-Standard" is longer, more dazzling, and less clear than "CICS/VS works better than CICS-Standard". After all, it might not actually work at all.

Pony n. Something good that may (hopefully) come out of a bad situation. It refers to an apocryphal story about the hopelessly optimistic boy who was given a barn full of horse manure by his father on his birthday. He immediately grabbed a shovel and started to dig, while chanting "There must be a Pony in here somewhere!".

POP (pops) n. Principles of Operation (for the S/360 and later the S/370). Probably one of the best DP documents ever written. The source of the Ultimate Truth for DPD (Data Processing Division, now NAD (National Accounts Division)).

Pound Sign n. 1. A name for the symbol "#" (two horizontal lines crossed by two vertical lines) used in some (but not all) areas of the USA (elsewhere known as "the number sign", or simply as "hash" or occasionally "hatch"). 2. The name most often used for the English (Sterling) currency symbol. This is an antique capital L (standing for "libra", the Latin for "pound"), a cursive "L" crossed horizontally by one or two small dashes. Unfortunately it cannot be illustrated here because of the unpredictability of IBM printing fonts. See Currency symbols.

Power Eraser Dispenser n. The ultimate unnecessary feature. See Bells and Whistles.

Pre-announce v. To discuss in public hardware or software which has not been announced.

Precurse v. 1. To precede in the manner of a precursor; to act as a forerunner or harbinger of an advancing technical evolution; e.g: "It is for us to precurse that technology for the rest of the corporation". See Leading Edge. 2. To offer a brief incantation prior to divulging an innovative approach (e.g: "may the fleas of a thousand diseased camels inhabit your armpits"). See NIH.

Problem State n. The System/360 (and 370) architecture recognises two basic "states". One is "Supervisor State" in which the machine is doing work for the supervisor - usually an operating system; and the other is "Problem State" in which the machine is conceptually solving problems for the user. This is a rather narrow view of the S/370 world, however, as (for example) the VM/SP product makes both states accessible to the user by a little sleight-of-virtual-machine.

Production System n. 1. Floor System. 2. The version of the operating system that you get when you don't do anything special (don't take any risks). This is usually the system being used by the people who are sitting around at terminals and actually being productive. Compare with Floor System.

Product Tester n. Those who have been to the mountain; keepers of the word; interpreters of the Specifications. Used interchangeably with sophist. Research has shown that most were given chemistry sets or electronic kits at an impressionable age by well meaning but misguided parents.

Prototype 1. n. The first implementation of some idea in the form originally envisioned for it by the original innovator. Generally unrelated in form, function, and cost to the final production version. 2. v. a) To implement a working system fast, i.e. by "unconventional" methods. b) To implement a 'model' system that has to be replaced by a "proper" system later - in case anyone realises how simple computer programming is.

PSE (pee-ess-eee) n. Preliminary Sales Estimate. Qualified guess (i.e. a random number) at how many units of a product will be sold. Nobody except a forecaster can explain why this is different from a forecast. See Forecast.

PTF (pee-tee-eff) n. "A Program Temporary Fix". This is an official IBM temporary fix. The acronym is used so often that most people don't know what it means. PTF's are permanent fixes in some systems.

PTM (pee-tee-em) n. "Program Trouble Memorandum". The same as an APAR, but generated internally, before a program is shipped.

Pulse n. A temporary change in the level of a logic signal of at least 50ns duration. (Pulses narrower than this cannot exist, as they cannot be detected by the standard issue FE logic probe. Naturally this makes it difficult to design modern high performance equipment.) See Glitch.

Punch v. To transmit data electronically from one disk pack to another. Often these disk packs can be around the world from one another but just as often can be the exact same one. A VM/370 term. Usage: "Punch me that jargon file".

| Purple wire n. The wire shipped with a feature change to the IBM 1130 and
| 1800 Systems. Also referred to as Personality wire. Required to tell the
| software about the hardware installed on a system and its address. A
| change here is Most Frightening to the "Sensor based" Customer Engi-
| neer. See also Yellow Wire, Blue Wire.

| Puzzle Palace n. A building in which the computer room has expanded be-
| yond its original boundaries. Buildings 701, 702, 703, 920, and 921 in
| Poughkeepsie are prime examples: some aisles dead-end at an output
| box-room, and then resume on the other side of the room. Probably
| derived from the FSD (Federal Systems Division) term for NSA (U.S.
| Secret Service) locations.

Qualified adj. Vendor part that has been tested six ways from Sunday and approved for use in IBM products. Generally a well known product whose identity is subsequently disguised behind a twelve digit IBM part number. Since the original part number is no longer available, the only specifications available are those produced by Fishkill testing lab which tend to give no hint of what the part really is.

Quality n. A popular hot button characterised by the slogan: "Do it right, first time". A laudable aim, pounced on with glee by product managers who claim that they do their design right, first time, and that therefore testing with real users is obviously a waste of time.

Rattle Some Cages v. To do things, (writing memos, making phone calls, sending VNET messages etc.) that will make someone unhappy. Generally done because he has made you unhappy. "I'm going to rattle some cages and see if I can get this spec. changed."

Reach-around n. Communication which does not just go up the management chain or down it, but rather goes up the chain and then returns to the original level as a response. Usage: very rare.

Read v. To move data from one disk pack on your system to another. A VM/370 term. Usually the source disk is owned by the spooling system and the destination disk is dedicated to a user. Usage: "Please read that new file onto your disk".

Reader n. 1. A temporary place on a disk pack to place data until a user decides exactly what he wants to do with it. 2. Also used as a place on a disk pack where one user puts data so that another user has a good chance of finding it.

Recursive adj. An object that refers to itself. See Recursive.

Reference n. A document which contains a minimum of information and is quite useless to a new user. As in: "This document is not a tutorial, it is a Reference".

Registered IBM Confidential adj. Designates information which is a) technically (and totally) useless, but whose perceived value increases with the level of management observing it; or b) is useful, but which is now inaccessible because everyone is afraid to have custody of the documents. See Candy-Striped.

Regression Bucket n. Set of test cases to run against a product during development to check that functions that used to work still do, or to measure any change in performance.

Reinvent the Wheel v. A derogatory phrase used to prevent someone from writing a system correctly now that he has become familiar, through experience, with what should have been done in the past.

Release n. The software prepared for shipment to customers. All the code that a development group has produced by some arbitrary date, regardless of whether it works.

Release x (Where x is some number larger than that of the current release). n. Never-never land. "Well that's a nice function, we'll put it in Release 3". Cynically assumes no Release 3 is coming.

Remap n. A machine whose logic design has been entirely or largely taken from an earlier machine and re-implemented in a newer (usually denser) technology. The 370/148 is a remap of the 370/145.

Rep 1. n. Short for "Marketing Representative". The Rep is IBM's prime contact with the customer. IBM holds him responsible for the account, hence he has final say on everyone else's contact with the customer. An IBMer in a laboratory, for example, would never call a customer without the Rep's approval. Unlike an SE (system engineer), he is paid on commission and is seldom very technical. 2. n. Incurable (but rich) optimist. 3. n. For Systems, the Lead Account Rep. is the System Architect, designing and assembling a system for his customer from the various boxes and programs found in his Sales Manual. If successful in beating great odds doing this, he is rewarded handsomely in his bank account and Company sponsored trips. If unsuccessful, he (or she) may just disappear like the Cheshire Cat. 4. v. To directly alter the compiled version of a program. Derived from the "REP" (replace) command used in object code card decks. Examples include system load decks, Super Zap, and System/360 object code. See also ZAP.

Requirement n. 1. A feature that must be included in a product or else someone will non-concur. (See Non-concur, Feature.) 2. A function or quality that must be included in a product or it will be considered unsaleable to some portion of End Users.

Retread n. Re-trainee. Not a nice term. Usually refers to a planner who has become a programmer after 90 days of programming school.

Retrofit v. 1. To add a needed feature to a piece of software or hardware rather later than it should have been added. Usually results in inelegant architecture. 2. Merge. A standard procedure in some divisions: laboratories A and B work along somewhat independently for a time, then each "retrofits" their updates to the other's work performed in the meantime. A sensitive political situation arises when one group's updates must be "retrofitted" because of changes made to lower-level updates by another group.

Revival Hour n. A weekly meeting with the purpose of getting Engineering and Programming functions talking to each other. The term is a reference to the essentially religious (superstitious) nature of the discussions that take place during these meetings.

Road n. Normally used in NAD to signify where the action takes place. "... where the rubber meets the road". See also Sky.

Rococo n. Describes a program or machine that has many fancy frills and curlicues that really add no function. (A reference to the highly ornamental style of art prevalent in Europe circa 1730-1780. The word also means antiquated, or out of date.) Similar to "Bells and Whistles".

ROJ (rodge) adj. Retired On the Job. Very common designation for petty bureaucrats and others simply marking time. Some of these can actually tell an enquirer the number of days they have before their official retirement.

RPQ (are-pee-queue) n. Request for Price Quotation (for an infrequently requested feature, such as upper/lower case, or compatibility with earlier products).

Rusty Iron n. Out-of date, hard-to-repair equipment that, when it works, does the job better and cheaper than anything to be found in the current sales manual. Especially true of non-IBM electrical tools. See also Pig Iron.

Salary Plan n. Document explaining why Managers get paid more than technical personnel.

Sammy Cobol n. See Susie Cobol.

Sandbender n. Person actually involved with silicon lithography and the physical design of chips. Not to be confused with logic designers, most of whom (it is said) would not recognise a transistor if they stepped on it with bare feet.

Sandbox adj. A location or department where the immediate goal is not a product, or product support. The "Sandbox" Division is the "Research Division". Always used in a derogatory sense. Also see Adtech, Fun & Games, Trivial.

SCIDS (skids) n. A 6-hour cocktail party, held every night of SHARE and GUIDE meetings, during which customers (sometimes successfully) ply IBMers with alcoholic beverages in plastic cups to try to find out what's coming next. Originally informally known as "Share Committee for Imbibers, Drunkards, and Sots", but now officially stands for "Social Contact and Informal Discussion Sessions" or "SHARE Committee for Informal Discussion Sessions". More familiarly known as the "Society for Cultivation of Indiscretions via Drinking Sessions."

Scientific Centre n. 1. A research (not Research) laboratory dedicated to performing computing research of interest to people outside IBM. Projects are justified solely on their relevance to the non-IBM wider technical community. 2. A major tourist attraction where any Senior IBM Executive wishing to impress the outside world can show off the most acceptable (and comprehensible) face of the Corporation. 3. Scene of some of the most exciting projects happening in the corporation - especially in the area of man-machine interfaces. (Note: Potential tourists to the Winchester Scientific Centre should arrange their visit well in advance with the compiler of this Dictionary: places are booked up well in advance.)

Scratch v. Erase. "Please scratch the tape". Scratch is always a deliberate action, rather than an accident. Also used as an adj. "This is a Scratch Tape".

| Secretary of Task Forces n. A person within a laboratory, site, division, or other operating unit, who takes on the tasks of keeping interim and final reports or all Task Forces in their domain. A second function is advising leaders and providing minutes about previous Task Forces on similar subjects. If used by high management, the Secretary would save many many person hours.

Service v. 1. To handle an interrupt. Interrupt handlers seldom appear in AI programs. 2. Fix bugs. See Critical service.

Seven Dwarves n. Originally the expression "IBM and the Seven Dwarves" described the entire computer industry. The Dwarves were Burroughs, Honeywell, NCR, Univac, RCA, General Electric, and the new upstart, CDC. Since then RCA and GE have dropped out. Some consider DEC to have become sufficiently respectable to constitute a sixth, but no present-day seventh comes to mind. Dwarves are at least in principle exempt from the definitions of Minicomputer and Vector Processor since they are deemed to produce "ordinary" computers like IBM. Of course, the term should really be "Seven Dwerrows"? See also Bunch.

Ship v. used to signify movement of a product from a point A to a point B even though the vehicle or mode of transport would inevitably sink if placed on the surface of the ocean. It is possible to ship items by road, rail, plane or even by electronic networks. See FCS.

Showstopper n. 1. Unfixed bug. Likely to cause a Crash. 2. Unsurmountable problem that may kill a project. 3. Something that became a non-CYA event of the year in someone's life.

Shriek n. Exclamation point, popular among APL users. See also Splat.

| Silver Fox n. 1. A member of the IBM Quarter Century Club. 2. An old-timer.

. Skrog v. (also Skrag) To destroy irrevocably without hope of restoration, as in "I skrogged my A-disk today".

. Sky n. As in "Where the rubber meets the sky". A place where something is supposed to happen, but never quite seems to. Used by business personnel to refer to Armonk, and by engineers and programmers to refer to the Research Division. "Well, now that we have developed the action strategy, lets take it to where the rubber meets the sky and see if they approve of it." See also Road.

Slash n. The character "/". Also Slashslash - the JCL identifier, as in "Slashslash deedee splat" (// DD *).

Slip n. An extension to a schedule deadline. A slip implies that the developer intends to complete the project, but was too aggressive in his schedule. As a rule of thumb, if a schedule slip of one month is announced, the project is likely to be ready after two extra months.

Slot n. 1. Position to be filled. "I have a slot for a Project Programmer." See Headcount. 2. Order to be filled.

SMOP (smop) Simple/Small Matter Of Programming. Commonly used as a quick answer to questions such as, "Why isn't that function available in the program?" "It's just a Simple Matter Of Programming." (The implication being that, given a few man-centuries, all things are possible.) See also How Hard Would It Be.

Softcopy adj. Machine readable.

Software Engineer n. 1. A person whose goal it is to construct large, complex programs without actually having to write any code. 2. A person who engineers others into writing code.

Softy adj. Affectionate term used by engineers to describe a software expert who knows very little about hardware. Software experts seem to have no affectionate terms for engineers.

Solution v. (Very popular at South Road Labs, Poughkeepsie.) Same as "solve": "We must solution this problem". The form "solutioned" is also used for "solved".

Speak To v. Talk about. "Will you speak to these foils, please?"

Speak Up! n. A well-administered programme which allows employees to make a genuinely anonymous complaint to any level of management about any IBM-related subject. Replies to Speak Up!'s range from (occasional) positive acceptance of the complaint and a resultant change to (usually) a patronising brush-off which may aggravate the original feeling of dissatisfaction. The program does, however, provide a mechanism whereby employees can get the autograph of senior members of the Corporation on a personal letter to them.

Special assistant to adj. Idle. A manager for whom no use can be found any longer is made "Special Assistant to" some higher echelon. His activities from then on are completely without consequence. See also Staff.

Speculate v. To tell secrets. "Q: Why does the IBMPC Documentation refer to an assembler, when there is none announced?" "A: I'm sorry, but I cannot speculate on that in public."

Spec-Writer n. The person who writes the functional specifications for a product. Since this is a boring unimaginative job, it is often given to boring unimaginative people. Since this person effectively has the final say in what goes into the spec., this often leads to "you've guessed it" products.

Spin system n. 1. The term "Spin" was originally used by OS developers (around 1970) in the form "spin nn" to identify a particular development level of a release prior to its FCS. Thus 'spin 11' might become the PID release version of, say, MVT release 19. 2. The system that FE are prepared to fix bugs on. (Pre-FCS systems are not spin systems, from this point of view.) The term probably refers to the system that is actually spinning on the system disk drive. See Floor System.

Splat n. Asterisk, as in the JCL statement "// DD *" (pronounced "slashslash deede deede splat").

Spool v. To move data from one disk pack to another. Usage: "Please spool that new file to me". See Punch, Net. From the term Spool meaning to put data in temporary storage while awaiting delivery to its final destination. "SPOOL" has become a common verb, but originally was itself an acronym (in IBM 705 days) signifying Simultaneous Peripheral Output On Line.

Spring Plan (now known as the Strategic Plan) n. A period of three months occurring every spring, when most productive work stops. The plan, once adopted, is ignored. See Fall Plan.

Stack n. Alternative (incorrect) name for a Queue. Probably originally from Cambridge (MA).

Staff n. A person with no responsibility but an amount of power correlated with his personal charisma. It is usually very hard to determine how seriously one should deal with a staff person. A staff person is usually supposed to be helping the workers accomplish their jobs but more often is asking about something or asking for something. He can usually be ignored completely. However, occasionally someone with a great deal of charisma lands in a staff job and carries great weight with higher management (usually yours). (This particular breed of "staff" is difficult to detect.)

Statement of Direction n. 1. IBM's commitment to a comprehensive (e.g. text processing) strategy incorporating all current products. 2. A phrase used to cover up the absence of any strategy.

Strategic adj. Used to designate a major IBM product, to which IBM is prepared to commit significant resources. A project manager will do ANYTHING to get his product classified "strategic".

| Strategic Plan n. See Spring Plan.

| Sub-System. n. A word to describe any IBM product which has already been grouped with another as a System. Also applied to any IBM product to imply it ought to work in conjunction with some other product, e.g. CICS may be described as a "sub-system" in "a VTAM environment".

Suggestions Programme n. Lottery whereby an employee can (by wasting IBM time filling in a form) get cash for ideas which someone else will have to implement. Indeed, sometimes a whole Task Force can be set up to consider the suggestion.

. Super adj. (used in the Marketing Division and possibly elsewhere in the company) to mean Bullshit. "Super" is an excellent example of dialectal and idiolectal variation within IBM. Its meanings vary from "Wonderful" to "Bullshit" via "Incredible" (normal or alternative meaning) depending on cultural sub-group. Alternative phrases with the same meaning include "Fantastic", "Horse Apples", etc. etc. See Incredible.

| Supervisor State n. See Problem State.

Surface v. To bring to someone's attention. "We should surface that issue at the next staff meeting."

Susie Cobol n. A programmer straight out of training school who knows everything - except the benefits of remarks in (plain) English. Also (fashionable among personkind these days to avoid accusations of being sexist) Sammy Cobol.

'SYNTAX ERROR' n. 1. General message put out by compilers and interpreters when a) the error was never expected to occur; or b) the programmer got tired of dreaming up new error messages for trivial cases; or c) the compiler failed, but it was easy to blame the error on the user. 2. An expletive used to cover a speaker's embarrassment when he has made a gaffe.

| System n. A word appended to any group of two or more IBM modules or products which are announced or developed together. The intention is to give an impression that the products result from a careful, unified, design process. For example "3270 Information Display System" may give some people a feeling of assurance that the 3278 keyboard really was carefully designed for use under the VM operating system. See also Sub-System.

Talk to v. 1. Discuss. "I will talk to that detail later". Usually means that the speaker hopes his audience will drop the subject. 2. The act of communicating with another (usually of machines). e.g: These machines talk to each other, but do they understand? Is one talking French and the other listening in German?

Tandem Memos n. A phrase to worry middle management. Refers to the widely distributed computer conference in which many technical personnel expressed dissatisfaction with the tools available to them, and also constructively criticised the way in which IBM does business. If you have not seen the memos, try reading the November 1981 Datamation summary.

| Target n. 1. A goal (usually a date) toward which the members of a project
| work. 2. A termination flag (again, usually a date) arbitrarily affixed
| to the end of a project. See Slip.

| Task Force n. 1. (Official Definition) High powered group of experts ap-
| pointed to solve some problem of pressing urgency. 2. (Unofficial De-
| finition a“) A group of people with nothing better to do, with plenty
| of time to generate arguments and (sometimes) reports. 3. (Unofficial
| Definition b“) A useful place for management to hide people who have
| nothing better to do than natter on about things. (Note: It is said that
| Task Forces have occasionally produced (useful) results. There exists
| no evidence to support this hypothesis.) 4. (Unofficial definition c“) A
| group of friends and one or two experts gathered to again affirm the
| predefined conclusions of the leader. The gathering can be convivial fun
| or a crashing bore. The activity may benefit the leader's CYA position.
| See also Secretary of Task Forces.

Technology n. A particular flavour of silicon manufacturing process. "We can't put the whole channel on one chip until we go to the next technology."

. Temporary assignment n. Permanent move. (q.v.)

| Temporary Building n. A prefabricated building designed as temporary office
| space. Temporary buildings usually have a life span that far exceeds that
| of more permanent structures. This is a definition internationally agreed
| in IBM - some of Hursley's 5-year temporary buildings are still standing
| after 15 years. See Temporary Assignment, Module.

. Terminate v. This deadly verb is used to describe the action of losing an
. employee. "He his employment“ will be terminated." Rumour has it
. that (ex-) employees do survive this process, if not from the point of
. view of IBM. Interestingly, even loyal employees are terminated should
. they happen to transfer between IBM companies.

Test v. 1. In a bad development laboratory, the process of getting a few bored people to try one or two of the things mentioned in the product specification (i.e. to try the things the developers had already considered). 2. In a good development laboratory, the process of allowing real users to use a product for a significant amount of time before announcement. This may have occurred once.

Test Bucket n. Set of test cases to run against a product during development to check that it performs basic functions correctly.

| The Mark of Kloomok adj. Describes a product that has been officially released from PID, after one M. Kloomok, the signatory to shipping letters for many years. (The letters are no longer signed.) In one customer memo, a person who was trying to emphasise the legitimacy of a product he was referring to stated that it bore "the mark of Kloomok".

| The Silent Majority n. End Users with an IQ of less than 70. Also called "discretionary users".

Thesis n. See Paren.

| THINK (ponder) 1. n. A well-established IBM acronym which is so well-established that no one can remember what it originally meant. Said to exemplify an ideal that IBM employees are prevented from achieving. 2. v. Perhaps the most famous IBM slogan. This was originally used by the first Mr. Watson to convey the idea of complete staff work. That is: given a problem or a challenge, time should be taken to reason the problem through and cover all involved aspects carefully, and to consider all repercussions and (of course) all financial considerations. This is not unlike the more recent "Make Sure" and "Do It Right The First Time" (see above) slogans now used with the Quality Program. The THINK sign is now quite commonly replaced by one exhorting the reader to SCHEME.

Think small Hardware/software test strategy. Technique is to exercise the most primitive function to prove to yourself it works before trying more complex (and presumably failing) function. When people forget this basic strategy, they are gently reminded to "think small".

. Thin slicing baloney v. Hair splitting, but starting from an indefensible and absurd position.

| Thrashing v. To think very hard but not accomplish much. "John needs some help on this problem - he's thrashing." Refers to the computer malaise in which the system uses more time organising the resources available than it gives to the users.

TIE System n. Technical Information Exchange system. A computerised Bulletin Board system, as might be operated by a PC Club. Since the essence of such a system is the public exchange of information by the subscribers, and since posting information to anything called a "bulletin board" is a management prerogative, a different name had to be found.

Tired Iron n. Data processing equipment that is perfectly functional (because most of the bugs have been fixed) but has been superseded by a new line of devices.

TNL (tee-enn-ell) 1. n. Technical Newsletter. Replacement pages containing miscellaneous technical changes to an existing IBM manual, often published between editions or releases. Considered to be synonymous with the phrase, "We forgot to tell you about this," or "This is how it really works". (See Fix it in Pubs.) The TNL's binding, size, and three-ring binder holes must be just slightly different to those of the base manual. 2. v. To issue a technical newsletter, as in, "We can always TNL it later".

Token n. (in CMS) 8-character alphanumeric operand which just happened to fit the size of one of the 370 basic atoms of storage (the Doubleword). CMS used to (and in part still does) insist on parsing all input and truncating any words longer than 8 characters. Especially annoying to those with 9-letter names.

Topside n. The higher management echelons of a project or group. "We'll go in Topside with that problem" means to attack a problem from top management downwards.

Touch Base v. To talk to someone about something. Usage: "I shall go touch base with management about that problem". This term is understood to have been derived from usage during a tribal ritual (called "baseball").

Toy 1. n. A computer program that can be understood. 2. n. A project in which the coding is a significant part of the effort (in a "real" project, coding is a negligible portion of the costs). 3. adj. Describes a tool which is great for teaching but lacks basic facilities needed for doing real work. See Mickey-Mouse.

Trailing Edge adj. Slow to change. Used in marketing to denote an account who are not interested in SNA, IMS, MVS etc. Usage: "XYZ are a real trailing edge account". (Note that "account" describes people in this usage.)

Translucent n. 1. A change which is supposed to affect a user or system very slightly. Used when a claim of Transparency would not be believed. 2. A change which requires a huge effort to adapt to.

Transparent 1. n. A change which is not supposed to affect a user or system. Used when talking to Change Control to clinch the argument. "It's transparent!". Sadly, transparency seems a relative thing (relatively rare) - after all, if truly transparent, why make the change? 2. v. (To go transparent) To avoid responsibility for something by putting the blame on someone else. As in "When they found out that a GPD person caused the problem, they went transparent on it".

Trick 1. adj. Code that cannot be understood by a newly trained programmer. The term is used during programming phase reviews: "The use of the translate instruction to reverse the string is a neat trick, but it can be made clearer and more understandable by the use of a DO Loop". 2. n. On an engineering model, a quick design change made to Flatten a Bug. If good, it will eventually go into the official design. If bad (the bug is still there, or another bug appears) then another Trick will be tried.

Trickological adj. Written more to glorify the tricks than to get the function performed. A trickological program of the highest order can be comprehended only by its author. It is especially easy (indeed, almost trivial) to write one of these in APL.

Tri-lead n. A wire. Consists of a central conductor with an earth (ground) wire each side. Effective as a signal carrier, but contacts have been known to be less than ideal.

Tri-lead trichinosis n. A condition in which the silver signal (centre) conductor of a Tri-lead causes a short-circuit between that conductor and one or both of the adjacent ground conductors due to chemical migration. Nothing to do with the worm infestation resulting from the eating of infected and insufficiently cooked pork.

Trivial adj. 1. Possible. Used to convey the impression that the speaker is an expert in a subject and that the method of solution should be immediately obvious to everyone else in the room. Normally used when no one in the room (including the speaker) can think of a solution. 2. Easy. Used to imply that if the speaker had the responsibility of carrying out the task, it would be done in a matter of minutes. But, alas, it is someone else's job... Also 3. Non-trivial anything the speaker does not really want to do. "That's a non-trivial change".

Trouble Came Back n. (TCB) Colloquialism used by maintenance people to describe an intermittent or difficult-to-reproduce problem which has failed to respond to neglect. See No Problem Found and Go Away.

True Blue adj. An account that uses only IBM equipment.

Twin-Tail n. A method for connecting an IBM communications controller to two different computers so that they share access to a common communications network. Carries all the usual human problems and implications of trying to serve two masters. (From the electronics term for a balanced two-transistor amplifier, a twin-tailed-pair.)

Unit n. By U.S. law, something that can be purchased separately. Note that for this reason, IBM no longer manufactures CPUs (Central Processing Units), but CPs (Central Processors).

User Error n. 1. Documentation error. 2. Poor design.

User Friendly adj. 1. Used to describe a program that was used by more than one person before being distributed. 2. Also used to describe hardware or software that is not easy to use, but needs to be sold.

Vanilla adj. Standard flavour, e.g. as shipped to Customers. e.g. "You mean it is possible to run Vanilla CP?". See Chocolate, Mocha. Often used in a somewhat deprecating way.

Vector Processor n. Any machine with a non-370 compatible architecture that runs over 3 MIPS. There is an implicit slight here that it is not a real "commercial" machine, since vector processors typically are used for scientific applications. Presumably, when a "vector processor" is given a commercial job stream, it will not run any faster than the fastest 370. See Mini-Computer.

Vehicle n. Indirect means to achieve some result (usually in the marketplace). "We will focus on the F machines as the key vehicle for the new user interface ..".

Vendor n. A company that either supplies something to IBM, or supplies something to IBM customers. See OEM.

Vendor Technology n. Semiconductor technology produced outside IBM. The implication is that any variety of technology can be produced by IBM, but "out there" they can only manage one type.

Vend Out v. To contract out some item to an outside vendor. A favourite way to avoid security restrictions - recently the contract for making the foils for a presentation describing the IBM corporate five-year plan was vended out...

Verb n. Any word (i.e. any noun may be misused as a verb). "There is no word in the English language that cannot be verbed".

Verbage (ver-bij, ver-bedge) n. A term used to refer to any kind of documentation. The similarity of this word to "garbage" does not seem accidental. It has the effect of belittling the documentation, either because one wants to under-emphasise its importance, as in "I have the design flowchart all done. All I have to do is add the verbage", or because the documentation is wordy, as in "That user's manual sure has a lot of verbage in it".

Virgin adj. Unmodified version of a program (e.g. as received from PID). It is interesting to note that the first modification to such code is usually that which is most desired. Also used to refer to a silicon chip before the first etching to place transistors or other components on it. See also Vanilla.

Virtual adj. a term used to indicate that things are not what they seem to be. Generally means that you can see it, but it is not really there. (As opposed to something that is Transparent: It's really there, but you can't see it.)

Visibility n. A project that has "visibility" is much in the eye of others. This makes it high (political) risk - the workers involved may find themselves showered with awards, or may find themselves the scapegoats for others. The latter is the more likely, of course.

Visionary n. Someone who reads the outside literature.

Visual Footprint n. The apparent size of a piece of computer equipment - such as a terminal - as perceived by a user. For example, many televisions have acres of wasted space each side of the screen: others with a smaller visual footprint generally look more elegant.

Vital records n. Records which are supposed to enable a project to restart with minimal loss in the event of disaster. Usually three to six months out of date, and often suffering from inconsistency, it is just as well that they have never really been needed.

VM n. Virtual Machine. Used universally within IBM to refer to the VM/370 Operating System, now known as VM/SP (Virtual Machine System Product). VM is the most general IBM operating system for the System/370, since it alone allows all the other operating systems to be run under it (including itself). It is the operating system of choice within IBM for almost all development work, since its single-user Conversational Monitor System (CMS) is far better than the alternatives.

VMITE (vee-might) n. VM Internal Technical Exchange. Gathering of most of the IBM VM System Programmers, once each year, in San Jose. With the increasing number of VM systems, this meeting has maintained its vitality in a way unusual for this kind of regular conference. The meeting is hosted by the General Products Division VM System Support group at the Santa Teresa Lab.

VMNews (vee-em-news) v. To submit an item to the VM Newsletter. The VM Newsletter, edited by Peter Capek, is the most useful communication newsletter within IBM. Therefore to VMNews a piece of information is to ensure its wide distribution.

VNET (vee-net) 1. v. To send by computer network (as opposed to tape or mail). "I'll VNET you the files tomorrow". The verb derives from the name of the original VM communication network set up within IBM during the 1970's, and now linking over 1100 computers. The V, incidentally, means nothing - the name was chosen to look like all the other familiar acronyms of the time (VSAM, VTAM, and so on). See also Net. 2. n. Gripenet. See Tandem Memos.

Walk in the Woods n. Put on the shelf, as in "the product was a disaster, so they sent him for a walk in the woods". See Penalty Box.

Wall follower adj. Simpleton. An early robot-building contest which involved running a maze was won by a mechanism which only sensed and followed the right-hand wall. It was called Harvey Wallbanger. Robots which tried to learn as they traversed the maze did not do as well.

Wansdyke n. Mysterious caverns in England, "somewhere" near the ancient Saxon earthwork known as Wansdyke, where vital records are stored. UK equivalent of Iron Mountain.

Warm Fuzzies n. The kind of feeling it is alleged that you get when you think you are proceeding in the right direction, or when you are being treated well by your manager. This state of mind is usually of short duration, and is succeeded by "Cold pricklies". See Cold Pricklies.

War Room n. (Archaic) A room in or near to a development project, filled with display tubes, telephones, specifications, wiring diagrams, microcode listings and the like. The purpose is to employ the cream of the crop of engineers associated with a project to "make war" on failing machines. Almost any solution can be used, but the best ones can be translated immediately into EC's (Engineering Changes). Now called "Support Center".

Water n. Orders for equipment which the customer does not intend to accept. "The first-day orders set a new record, but they must be at least a third water". Major causes include: place-holding orders while the customer tries to figure out what has been announced; dropout due to multi-year delivery schedules; and Christmas presents to deserving salesmen.

Watson Freeway n. The sections of Interstates 684 and 287 which connect Corporate HQ (Armonk) with NAD HQ (1133, see below) via Harrison.

Watson's Law n. The reliability of machinery is inversely proportional to the number and significance of any persons watching it. (This is a well-known rule that applies to all demonstrations of new equipment, software, etc.)

Weenie n. The ";" (semi-colon) character on a keyboard. "To get back to the first screen, type in a 2 comma 7 weenie and hit ENTER".

White socks type n. Anyone in CSD or FED. (IBM engineers traditionally wear white socks. "Anyone for tennis?")

WIBNI (wib-knee) n. Acronym for "Wouldn't It Be Nice If", usually used to describe useful but difficult to implement additions to software systems. "I have a WIBNI for the zorch function."

Wild Duck n. Creative technical person who does unconventional things, or at least does things in an unconventional way. Implies respect, and a feeling that many of his ideas turn out to be valuable. Usually applied only to males. It is said that IBM does not mind having a few wild ducks around - so long as they fly in formation.

Winchester disk n. Hard disk whose head actually rests upon the surface of the disk when stationary. The name "Winchester" was first used as the code name for a disk storage device being developed at the IBM San Jose engineering laboratories around 1973, and has since become the industry generic term for that disk technology. The rationale for the name was the original size of the twin storage modules, which were 30 megabytes each, matching by analogy (30+30) the calibre of a Winchester 30/30 rifle. Winchester was the first device whose read/write head could actually rest upon the surface of the disk without disastrous consequences. The head assembly mass was reduced from 300 grams for the 3330 disk to a feathery 18 grams, thus successfully fulfilling the original aim of eliminating the costly head-unloading mechanism. The direct cost of the head dropped from \$28 to \$8 as a consequence of this. The capacity of the disk which was actually released as the 3340 later grew to 35 and 70M, but the name stuck.

Window n. A timing problem due to a logic error. An unlikely set of circumstances which were not allowed for, although probably understood. Usually the amount of code required to "close the window" is inversely proportional to the size of the window opening. Murphy's Law normally prevails, and the problem caused by the window will not appear until after FCS - by which time the person who left the window open is nowhere in sight.

Wing-it v. 1. Just go and do it any old way: "In this location, we design the hardware, software, and microcode for a project. When no one can figure out why it doesn't function, we then spend many months writing specifications of what was thought to be developed. When compared, it is always discovered that the result of winging-it is not what was intended."

Woof and Whinny n. A high level and perhaps rather theatrical "Show and Tell" with a lot of yelling and screaming. See Dog and Pony Show.

Work-around n. 1. A technique supplied by an engineering or programming department for getting around a major blunder until a more permanent repair can be made. "We are aware that the real-time clock will give ambiguous date/time readings at midnight. If your customer MUST run his on-line applications 24 hours a day, he should instruct his machine operators to put the machine in STOP for the minute or so around midnight. This work-around will have to be employed until 1992, when we plan to release a new feature that corrects this minor imperfection". 2. A design change installed in a machine under test. The work-around usually lets testing continue by bypassing a failing function. The bypassed functions must be fixed (all work-arounds removed) before the machine design can be accepted. This method can also be applied while debugging programs.

Yellow brick road n. Route 9, Poughkeepsie. The road on which you travel to see the Wizard of OZ. See OS.

Yellow Wire 1. n. Hardware fix (the reliability of a product is inversely proportional to the number of yellow wires). 2. v. To wire-wrap. See also Blue Wire, Purple Wire.

Zap v. 1. To alter the machine code of a program by storing directly into main storage, or by running a program known as SuperZap to have a similar effect on the disk resident copy of a program. This practice started in the days when a proper change to program source followed by reassembly was task measured in hours. Now a term for shoddy, incomplete work which is likely to cause trouble in future because the running version of a program no longer agrees with its source - a situation which guarantees problems. "We'll just zap it for now and hope tomorrow never comes". Nowadays Zapping is a dying art, and can itself take hours. 2. To use a "Zapper" to discharge static electricity near various sensitive parts of a computer. Determines whether the machine will survive a visit in the dry wintertime by an active young woman wearing a silk blouse, silk slip, and wool skirt.

Zipperhead n. One who has a closed mind. Said to be most frequently used in Development Laboratories.

1133 n. 1. The multiplexor enclosure for the 1130 Mini-Computer. 2. NAD Headquarters, Westchester Avenue, White Plains, NY.

80-column mind n. Always derogatory. Usually applied to people who, conceptually at least, would prefer to be able to lay their hands directly on their data, and to whom the transition from cards to tape was a traumatic experience. Nobody has dared tell them about disks yet. (It is said that these people will be buried "9-EDGE-FORWARD-FACE-DOWN".)

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