

# Glossary

Computer and MIDI users have developed their own specific terms which can make it quite hard for a newcomer to take his first steps in home recording. This glossary lists some of the most important terms from both worlds.

The computer specific terms refer to the user interface, ie the part of the system that you as the user are confronted with every day. The musical terms listed mainly address MIDI issues (although we have added a few other interesting aspects, like synthesis and sampling). General musical terms will not be discussed here.

Additional information can be found in a great variety of computer and music magazines. Furthermore, Steinberg offer an online hypertext manual named MIDI EXPLAINED. This contains a wealth of additional information on the issue of MIDI.

This symbol ">>" is used as a cross-reference to another term explained in this Glossary.

**Arrangement:** In music theory: the way a composition is structured and orchestrated, here: a piece of music in the format used by this MIDI Recording program.

**Arrange window:** A >>window displaying the current >>Arrangement.

**Attack velocity:** The speed with which you press a key on your instrument. An electronic instrument can use this information to control various parameters (eg volume, pan position).

**Block:** A set of data that has been marked for further editing.

**Box:** Part of the computer's >>operating system, actually any rectangle on screen, often a data display.

**Button:** Part of >>Windows, emulation of a "switch" on the screen that can be operated with the >>mouse.

**Cancel:** Button in a >>Windows dialog box. Clicking on this button tells the program that you want undo anything that you have done in a >>window or >>dialog box. Opposite: >>OK/>>Keep.

**Click:** 1. Pressing the (left) >>mouse button. Often used for triggering functions or selecting data in >>Windows programs. 2. Acoustic signal, serving as a metronome during recording.

**Clipboard:** Temporary buffer that can be filled using >>Cut and >>Copy functions and read out using >>Paste.

**Clock:** Signal used for the synchronization of time-based systems (eg >>sequencers and >>drum computers). As MIDI Clock signal part of the >>MIDI standard.

**Control menu:** Part of a >>window in the >>Windows operating system, contains a number of functions to display and close a window.

**Compatibility:** An identical format which is required for data transfer between two systems.

**Computer memory:** The memory of the computer, where programs are executed. This memory is volatile, ie, when you turn off power, it is erased.

**Controller:** 1. Any part of an electronic device that can be used to control a function. 2. Fader or knob on a >>MIDI device controlling a function. 3. Data generated by such a controller ("Continuous Controller").

**Copy:** Standard computer command for copying a >>block of data into a temporary buffer, the >>Clipboard.

**Cue point:** Position on a tape or in a >>sequencer song that can quickly be found with a >>locator.

**Cueing:** Winding a tape or a >>sequencer song in forward direction while monitoring it.

**Cursor:** Position marker on the screen, either as a text cursor for entering text or as a mouse cursor that can be moved around freely on the screen using the >>mouse.

**Cursor keys:** The keys on an >>alphanumeric keyboard used for positioning the (text) >>cursor on screen.

**Cut:** Standard computer command for moving a >>block of data into a temporary buffer, the >>Clipboard.

**Cycle Mode:** A mode used for continuous playback or recording of a section of music. Useful for rehearsing or recording complex parts.

**Delay:** here: delay of musical information, either 1. as an editable parameter in a sequencer system or 2. as an undesired side effect when daisy-chaining >>MIDI devices.

**Desktop:** Simulation of a typical work space (office desktop) on the computer >>monitor.

**Dialog box:** Part of >>Windows, where the user either has to make a Yes/No decision or some more complex setting.

**Disk:** Data storage medium with a comparatively low storage capacity and slow access time. Data is read from and written to disk in a >>disk drive.

**Disk drive:** Used for reading from and writing onto >>disks, either integrated into the computer or as an external drive.

**Double click:** Pressing the (left) >>mouse button two times in short succession, in >>Windows programs often used for opening >>windows and >>dialog boxes.

**Driver:** A configuration file that converts the output of a computer program into the format of a >>peripheral device, eg a >>printer.

**Drum computer:** Combination of a >>sequencer and a >>sampler (sample playback unit) designed for playing drum and percussion parts.

**Editing:** Manipulating, modifying data.

**Editor:** here: Computer program used for manipulating data. Example: Text Editor, Score Editor.

**Event:** Any message received via >>MIDI can be recorded as a separate event in a >>sequencer for >>editing and playback. Examples: notes, program change messages.

**Expander:** A sound module (>>sampler or >>synthesizer) without a keyboard, often in 19" format for rack mounting.

**Extension:** The part of the >>file name that specifies the file type; often also called suffix. Example: ".TXT" is the Extension for text files, ".ALL" is the extension for a song file in Cubase.

**File:** A set of data on a mass storage medium, eg a text file on a floppy disk.

**File Selector:** A special >>dialog box used to display the "table of contents" of a >>mass storage medium. Files can be >>selected by >>clicking on them or by entering their names.

**Folder:** Sub-structure on a >>mass storage medium, allowing the user to store data in hierarchical order.

**Font:** A bitmap used to display standard characters on the >>monitor or printer.

**Function keys:** The keys on an >>alphanumeric keyboard reserved for program-specific commands.

**Groove:** Subtle variation of a given rhythmic pattern (in the millisecond range) To make a >>sequencer recording "groove", a high >>resolution is required.

**Hard disk:** Data storage device with high storage capacity and short access time. In contrast to the (removable) floppy disk, the hard disk uses a fixed medium for storage.

**Invert:** here: Inverting the display so that white dots on the screen become black, and vice versa.

**Keep:** see >>OK.

**Keyboard:** here: keyboard of a piano-style instrument in contrast to the >>alphanumeric keyboard.

**Keyboard, alphanumeric:** Keyboard of a computer with the letters of the alphabet, numeric and >>function keys.

**Locator:** 1. Device or function on a professional tape recorder used for marking and accessing positions on a tape. 2. Simulation of this function in a >>sequencer.

**Loop:** A loop made of tape material for cycled recording or playback of music or the emulation of such a loop in a >>sequencer.

**Mass storage medium:** In contrast to computer memory an external, non-volatile memory unit for storing programs and data.

**Menu:** Part of >>Windows, offering a group of functions or options belonging together. Menu items are selected using the >>mouse or the alphanumeric >>keyboard.

**MIDI:**[abbr. "Musical Instrument Digital Interface"]: 1. Serial interface on electronic musical instruments used to transfer musical data via >>IN, >>OUT and >>THRU sockets  
2. The data format used in a MIDI system.

**MIDI Channel:** A "software channel" that allows to address separate instruments or separate sections in a >>multimode instrument.

**MIDI device:** Any device equipped with >>MIDI (ie with at least one of the three sockets) that is capable of processing and/or sending >>MIDI data. Examples: >>synthesizers, >>samplers, >>drum computers.

**MIDI IN:** Socket on a >>MIDI device or computer used for receiving MIDI data.

**MIDI Instrument:** see >>MIDI device

**MIDI Message:** Message in the standard >>MIDI format.

**MIDI Mode:** Operation mode of a >>MIDI instrument.

**MIDI OUT:** Socket on a >>MIDI device used for sending MIDI data.

**MIDI THRU:** 1. Socket on a >>MIDI device used for thru-putting data received on the >>MIDI IN socket of the same device. 2. Simulation of this function using the >>MIDI OUT of a MIDI Interface connected to the computer. For instance used for daisy-chaining several >>MIDI devices.

**Modem:** >>Peripheral used for data transfer between computers via telephone.

**Monitor:** Most important "output device" in a computer system. Under the >>Windows >>operating system, a conventional office desktop or another typical workspace (eg a tape recorder for music applications) is displayed/emulated on the screen.

**Mouse:** Important input device in >>Windows based-systems. The mouse is used for positioning the cursor on the screen.

**Mouse button:** Switch on top of the >>mouse used for selecting and manipulating data on the screen. Normally, "the" mouse button refers to the left one.

**M•ROS:** [Abbr. >>MIDI Realtime Operating System] Operating system extension developed by Steinberg offering advanced features especially for musical applications.

**Multimode:** Operation mode of a >>synthesizer or a >>sampler that allows you to address sections of this instrument independently from other sections. Not implemented in all >>MIDI devices.

**Multitasking:** Operation mode of computer where a number of independent programs (tasks) are running in parallel.

**Multitrack:** Recording system allowing the user to record on several independent parallel tracks.

**Mute:** Temporarily defeating all output from a >>track.

**Non-destructive:** Operation mode or feature of a program where data is not manipulated, but only modified *during output*. This has the advantage that changes can be reversed at any time.

**OK:** Button in a >>Windows dialog box. Clicking on this button tells the program that you want keep everything that you have done in a >>window or >>dialog box. Opposite: >>Cancel.

**Operating system:** A program that determines the specifications of the computer system and all programs running under this operating system.

**Overdubbing:** Recording mode where a second recording is added to an existing one, nothing is erased.

**Part:** here: A section on a >>track containing >>MIDI data which can be moved around, cut, copied and otherwise edited.

**Paste:** Standard computer command for copying a >>block of data from the >>Clipboard into a larger set of data (eg a text or a piece of music).

**Peripheral:** Device connected to a computer system.

**Preset:** Settings stored either by the user or the manufacturer of a device, eg >>synthesizer sounds.

**Printer:** >>Peripheral used to print out text or graphics.

**Punch In:** Switching into Record mode during playback.

**Punch Out:** Quitting Record mode without stopping playback.

**Quantizing:** The process of correcting the timing of a >>sequencer recording, >>non-destructive in high-end systems.

**Release velocity:** The speed with which you release a key on your MIDI keyboard. An electronic instrument can use this information - similar to attack velocity - to control various parameters. However, Release velocity is not available on many instruments.

**Reset:** Function that is used to set a computer system to its default condition - eg after a serious malfunction.

**Resolution:** here: the timing resolution of a >>sequencer, ie the number of steps into which a metric unit (beat) is divided. The higher the resolution, the more authentic a recording will be (see >>groove, >> ticks).

**Sampler:** Electronical musical instrument which uses digitized sounds as basic material. Also available as sample player without recording function.

**Scrolling:** Moving the visible content of a >>window.

**Scroll bar:** Part of >>Windows, used for moving the data displayed in a >>window, when it contains more data than currently visible. The scroll bar is operated with the >>mouse.

**Security backup:** A backup of a file or a storage medium (disk) that can be used when the original is lost or damaged.

**Select:** Marking a set of data for further processing, often indicated by the fact that it is displayed >>inverse.

**Sequencer:** Computer program or a special computer designed for recording, processing and playing back music, mostly in >>MIDI format. Sequencer programs often emulate high-end >>multitrack tape recorders.

**Solo:** Function for >>muting all >>tracks but one.

**Split-Function:** Function or operation mode of a >>keyboard where notes below and above a certain key (the split point) are sent out on separate MIDI channels.

**Step by step:** >>Sequencer recording mode for inputting notes and chords one at a time in contrast to "realtime recording".

**Synthesizer:** Electronical musical instrument with a wide range of functions for the generation and manipulation of sound.

**Ticks:** Measuring unit for the >>resolution of a >>sequencer.

**Toolbox:** In better Windows programs, a group of functions that can be assigned to the >>mouse cursor. The cursor will take on the shape of the selected tool (eg a pair of scissors or an eraser).

**Track:** here: Track on a tape recorder or sequencer that allows recording music independently from other tracks.

**Undo:** Reverting a function.

**User interface:** The part of the computer systems intended for the communication between user and machine.

**Utility:** A program that is supposed to make life with a computer a little easier by providing a special function.

**Voices:** The number of notes that can sound simultaneously in an electronic instrument, often 8, 16 oder 32.

**Window:** here: Part of >>Windows, rectangular space on screen, serves for displaying data, either as text or graphics. >>Windows include other >>Windows elements: >>Control menu, >>Scroll bars, etc.

**Windows:** >>Operating system offering graphic elements for the display and manipulation of data, eg >>windows and >>dialog boxes.

**Windows program:** A program that requires >>Windows.

**Work disk:** A >>backup of the original disk used for daily work.