

A datagram is, to quote the Internet's Request for Comments 1594, "a self-contained, independent entity of data carrying sufficient information to be routed from the source to the destination computer without reliance on earlier exchanges between this source and destination computer and the transporting network." The term is used in several well-known communication protocols, including the User Datagram Protocol and AppleTalk.

A very similar term, packet, is used in the Internet Protocol and other protocols related to the Internet.

A datagram or packet needs to be self-contained without reliance on earlier exchanges because there is no connection of fixed duration between the two communicating points as there is, for example, in most voice telephone conversations. (This kind of protocol is referred to as connectionless.)

This was last updated in April 2007

Related Terms

802.3

802.3 is a standard specification for Ethernet, a method of physical communication in a local area network (LAN), which is ... See complete definition 10

OSI model (Open Systems Interconnection)

OSI (Open Systems Interconnection) is a reference model for how applications communicate over a network. See complete definition 1

Wi-Fi 6 (802.11ax)

Wi-Fi 6 is a standard for wireless internet that replaces the 802.11ac (concurrently renamed Wi-Fi 5) standard. See complete definition 10

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