# Default Condition Encyclopedia Article

## Default Condition

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# Default Condition

A default condition specifies the state to which a system or program returns when an unspecified condition is the result of an **operation**, program, or configuration.

Default conditions serve as the **baseline** for computer operations. Given the multiplicity of variables involved in normal program operations, it is not unusual for a result or condition to occur that was not anticipated by the original programmer. So that operations do not halt, the program moves to a default condition wherein critical components are specified by pre-set values or states.

A typical default can occur when **data** input exceeds the anticipated operational range. If, for example, a mathematical **function** programmed to handle input in the range of 0-100 and the input was, instead, 101, an error condition exists. Instead of the program halting, the program may be designed to generate and error **message** "Input out of range" and then default to the initial input state or prompt (i.e., to start over with a fresh prompt for data).

In networking, there are variations of default conditions termed default routes that direct packets not specified in the routing table to pre-set hosts or networks.

Default conditions also describe the state of a computer **hardware** configuration before modification by operation. Computer crashes often return the hardware and operating systems to a default condition preset by the manufacturer or system designer.

Default conditions differ from default values that are simply preset (default) **variable** values substituted for unspecified values.