

## Re: The ultimate luxury ?

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.physics/2004-08/0691.html>

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jmfahciv@aol.com writes:

> *But that isn't sorting. That is collating. The ref field contains*  
> *an ordered list of addresses or you can call them names. The code*  
> *then takes the first name on the list, calls other code to retrieve*  
> *the set of bits associated with that name and dumps the bit set*  
> *into a file. The code then takes the next name on the list, retrieves*  
> *the set of bits associated with that name, and appends the set*  
> *to the end of the first set of bits. This is not sorting. It's*  
> *actually not even a collation or a merge.*

My use of the word "sort" is perfectly consistent with the FOLDOC definition found at

<http://foldoc.doc.ic.ac.uk/foldoc/foldoc.cgi?query=sort&action=Search>.

My definition in terms of imposing a linear order on a set is abstract and corresponds not to the algorithm of sorting, but to the final line of the definition below. It is not literally the same as this definition, but it is the relevant approximation for us (since we're not concerned with the algorithm that does the sorting but only with the output.

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,-----[ sort ]
| 1. <application, algorithm> To arrange a collection of items in some
| specified order. The items – records in a file or data structures in
| memory – consist of one or more fields or members. One of these fields
| is designated as the "sort key" which means the records will be
| ordered according to the value of that field. Sometimes a sequence of
| key fields is specified such that if all earlier keys are equal then
| the later keys will be compared. Within each field some ordering is
| imposed, e.g. ascending or descending numerical, lexical ordering, or
| date.
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```

This dictionary does not include "merge", "collate" or "collation". It contains 13,000 definitions, but none for those words. If I were to guess, I'd say that is pretty good evidence that those terms are

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not commonly used by computer science researchers today, but I am not sure of that conclusion.

It is a free online source and it's certainly possible that the entries show the bias of its contributors.

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Jesse Hughes

"[I]f gravel cannot make itself into an animal in a year, how could it do it in a million years? The animal would be dead before it got alive." --The Creation Evolution Encyclopedia