

# Introduction to Computers

## Personal Computer (PC)

computer designed for general use by a single person

## Light-Emitting Diode (LED)

semiconductor light source used in various applications; in the world of computers, LED technology is used to make optical mice and LED displays

## Touchpad

computer pointing device which takes advantage of a tactile sensor to detect a user's finger movement

## Liquid Crystal Display (LCD)

thin, light electronic display which employs the light modulating properties of liquid crystals

## Universal Serial Bus (USB) connector

interface designed to connect computer and peripheral devices, such as printers, mice, keyboards, USB flash drives and external hard drives

## Motherboard

main circuit board inside personal computers which holds the majority of computer components and provides connectors for peripherals

## Central Processing Unit (CPU)

microprocessor which calculates all the data going through a personal computer

## Clock Rate

common measurement of CPU speed; tells how fast the CPU can process data; the higher the clock rate, the faster the CPU

## Megahertz (MHz)

unit of measurement of CPU clock rate; one megahertz refers to a clock rate of one million cycles per second

## Gigahertz (GHz)

unit of measurement of CPU clock rate; one gigahertz refers to a clock rate of one billion cycles per second.

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## Random Access Memory (RAM)

type of computer memory, which temporarily stores computer information such as the operating system, application programs and data so they can be immediately accessed by the CPU

## Binary Digit (Bit)

smallest unit of computer storage capacity

## Read-Only Memory (ROM)

type of computer memory which stores the Basic Input/Output System (BIOS); data stored in ROM cannot be changed

## Basic Input/Output System (BIOS)

built-in program which initializes computer hardware and launches the operating system when the computer starts

## Serial Advanced Technology Attachment (SATA)

type of cable inside the computer connecting the mother board and internal storage devices, such as the hard drive, CD- or DVD-ROM

## Compact Disc Read-Only Memory (CD-ROM)

pre-pressed compact disc storage in which data can only be accessed, not modified

## Digital Video Disc Read-Only Memory (DVD-ROM)

high capacity optical disc storage, in which data can only be read, not written

## Driver

computer program allowing the computer to communicate with a hardware device

## Power Supply

computer hardware converting alternating current or AC electric power to a low-voltage power for the internal components of the computer

## Hard Drive

main storage device of a computer; commonly referred as an internal device and used to permanently store data

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## External Hard Drive

removable hard drive located outside of the main computer tower

## Input Device

any piece of computer hardware used to provide data to the computer

## Output Device

any piece of computer hardware used to communicate the data processed by the computer

## Monitor

output device which displays graphics and images from the computer

## Digital Visual Interface (DVI)

video and audio interface connecting the monitor and the computer

## High-Definition Multimedia Interface (HDMI)

compact video and audio interface transmitting digital data between the high-definition monitors and the computer

## Ethernet Cable

cord connecting the computer to the Internet

## Power Cord

cable connecting the computer to the electrical supply; aids in delivering electrical power to the main computer

## Power Connector

cable inside the computer connecting the power supply to the internal devices

## Storage Device Cable

cable inside the computer transferring data between the mother board and storage devices

## Surge Protector

appliance designed to protect computer electronics from electrical damage

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## Hardware

physical parts of a computer, such as the hard drive, video card, monitor and other substantial computer parts

## Software

set of computer programs designed to enable computers to accomplish certain tasks; major types of software include programming software, system software and application software

## Defragmentation

software maintenance process which reduces the amount of fragmentation between files