

Input Hardware: Keyboard & Mouse

KEYBOARD is an input device that converts letters, numbers, and other characters into electrical signals readable by the processor.

MOUSE is a nonkeyboard input device (“pointing device”) that is used to manipulate objects viewed on the computer display screen.

Processing & Memory Hardware: Inside the System Cabinet

CASE & POWER SUPPLY Also known as the *system unit*, the *case* or *system cabinet* is the *box that houses the processor chip (CPU)*, the memory chips, and the motherboard with power supply, as well as some secondary-storage devices —harddisk drive, and CD or DVD drive.

PROCESSOR CHIP (CPU, for central processing unit) is a tiny piece of silicon that contains millions of miniature electronic circuits.

MEMORY CHIPS, also known as **RAM** (random access memory) chips, represent primary storage, or temporary storage; they hold data before processing and information after processing, before it is sent along to an output or storage device.

MOTHERBOARD is the main circuit board in the computer. This is the big green circuit

Storage Hardware: Hard Drive & CD/DVD Drive

A computer system's data/information storage capacity is represented by bytes, kilobytes, megabytes, gigabytes, terabytes, and petabytes.

HARD-DISK DRIVE is a storage device that stores billions of characters of data on a nonremovable disk platter.

CD (compact-disk) DRIVE, or its more recent variant, a ***DVD (digital video-disk) drive***, is a storage device that uses laser technology to read data from optical disks.

Output Hardware: Video & Sound Cards, Monitor, Speakers, & Printer

VIDEO CARD converts the processor's output information into a video signal that can be sent through a cable to the monitor.

SOUND CARD, *which enhances the computer's sound generating capabilities by allowing sound to be output through speakers.*

MONITER is the display device that takes the electrical signals from the video card and forms an image using points of colored light on the screen.

SPEAKER are the devices that play sounds transmitted as electrical signals from the sound card.

PRINTER, an output device that produces text and graphics on paper.

Communications Hardware: Modem

Modem is a device that sends and receives data over telephone lines, or wirelessly via network to and from computers.

Software

There are two types— *system software and application software*:

System software helps the computer perform essential operating tasks and enables the application software to run.

Application software enables you to perform specific tasks—solve problems, perform work, or entertain yourself.