

## INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERS

### Definition of a computer

A computer is an electronic device that accepts user input (data) and transforms it under influence of sets of special instructions (Program) to produce decision e.g. Numbers, letters etc.

### Processing

Refers to the way data is manipulated to turn into information e. g. Arithmetic operation e.g. Addition, subtraction etc.)

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### Information

Refers to data, which has been processed.

## PARTS OF A COMPUTER

### i. System Unit

This part houses the brain of the computer called Central processing unit (CPU) and other devices called drives that store, record and read data.

### ii. Peripheral devices

They are connected to system unit using cables called data *interface cables* that carry data and information to and from the devices.

#### Examples of peripheral devices are:

- Keyboard - Enables the user to enter data and instructions in the computer by pressing keys.
- Mouse - Enables user to issue instructions to computer by controlling the mouse pointer displayed on screen.
- Monitor - Enables the user to see information (output).
- Printers
- Scanners etc.

## DEVELOPMENT OF COMPUTERS

### i. First generation computers (1940 - 1958)

These computers were huge, expensive and often broke down. They were slow compared to today's computers; their internal storage capacity was limited. Cards were used to enter data into the computer. They used vacuum tubes to control internal operations. They were used for payroll processing and billing e.g. IBM 650 and UNLAC.

#### Advantages of first generation computers

- a) Vacuum tube technology made possible the advent of electronic digital computer.
- b) These computers were the fastest calculating devices at their time.

# Introduction To Computers Study Guide Doc

**Sabine Zange**



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