

Auxiliary Memory

This is an external storage device which is associated with the computer and which is not usually a core memory as previously described. It is rather a permanent or semi-permanent type storage where the information is stored for long periods of time, such as payroll information, accounting information, inventory control information. It is possible to go back into this main store and retrieve the information; do some work on it, possibly a payroll for example, and then restore the same information back into this mass storage device. The mass store can consist of rotating magnetic devices, magnetic strips or even photographic film type devices. These are strictly permanent or semi-permanent stores.

Peripheral Equipment

This is any piece of equipment external to the main frame; e.g., it could be a typewriter in which information can be typed into the computer and if the typewriter is so constructed information can be typed automatically from the computer. This is commonly known as an input/output device. Another such type device would be a card reader; that is, a unit that can read punched cards, such as those that are key punched. These can be read directly into the computer and by the same token it is possible for the computer to punch cards out if such a device is attached. It is also an input/output device. Another type device which is considered only an output device is referred to as a line printer. This can print; e.g., pay checks, inventory control lists, etc. at a very high rate of speed although it is much slower than the computer can operate at. In other words, these will print-out on an average of a thousand lines per minute as opposed to a typewriter which is capable of possibly 150 characters per minute. A mass storage device is considered a computer peripheral, (this has been discussed above) however, it requires an interface to the computer in order for it to be effective. A data terminal is considered an I/O (input/output) device. This will allow somebody remotely located to interrogate the computer and to receive information back. This is used in what is called the time-sharing systems; that is, where a lot of people are sharing the same computer and it is not wholly one person.

Electronic Interface

This is an interface determined by an electronic voltage levels and signals which determine exactly where the connections are being made for the input/output devices or the various inter-connections between the peripheral equipment and the main frame.

Software

This word is contrasted to hardware. The software is in effect all of the paperwork that is necessary in order that the computer can operate. In other words, a computer programmer must outline in extreme detail all of the steps or functions which the computer must go through in order to perform a certain operation. This operation is referred to as a program. The program itself is referred to as software. Now this can be in a form of punched cards which are inputted into the computer; a punched paper tape which can be inputted into the computer or even a magnetic tape which has been programmed which in turn will operate the computer. The term software usually refers to the complete programming and routines which are necessary in order to use the computer's capabilities to the fullest extent. Various other terms which are used in conjunction with software are compilers, assemblers, narrators, etc. There are assemblers which will change from one computer language to another computer language since many times computers do not operate with the same coding structure. The words FORTRAN, ALGOL and COBOL are methods of programming the computer and many times you want to convert from FORTRAN to ALGOL because the computer will recognize ALGOL but not FORTRAN, therefore, an assembler or an emulator, or a compiler is necessary.

Hardware

This word refers to the physical equipment. It refers to the main frame, input/output devices, in other words, to the computer itself, to the physical units as opposed to the word software which is really the operating controls for the computer.