**HISTORY OF COMPUTERS**

The history of computer development is a computer science topic that is often used to reference the different generations of computing devices.

Each one of the five generations of computers is characterized by a major technological development that fundamentally changed the way computers operate. Most major developments from the 1940's to present day have resulted in increasingly smaller, cheaper, more powerful and more efficient computing devices.

SECOND GENERATION

The world would see transistors replace vacuum tubes in the second generation of computers. The transistor was invented at Bell Labs in 1947 but did not see widespread use in computers until the late 1950s. The transistor was far superior to the vacuum tube, allowing computers to become smaller, faster, cheaper, more energy-efficient and more reliable than their first-generation predecessors. Though the transistor still generated a great deal of heat that subjected the computer to damage, it was a vast improvement over the vacuum tube. Second-generation computers still relied on punched cards for input and printouts for output. Second-generation computers moved from cryptic [binary](https://webopedia.com/TERM/B/binary.html) machine language to symbolic, or [assembly](https://webopedia.com/TERM/a/assembly.html), languages, which allowed programmers to specify instructions in words. [High-level programming languages](https://www.webopedia.com/TERM/H/high_level_language.html) were also being developed at this time, such as early versions of [COBOL](https://www.webopedia.com/TERM/C/COBOL.html) and [FORTRAN](https://www.webopedia.com/TERM/F/FORTRAN.html). These were also the first computers that stored their instructions in their memory, which moved from a magnetic drum to magnetic core technology. The first computers of this generation were developed for the atomic energy industry.

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