

# Course Introduction

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# Website

e-learning platform:

<http://moodle.unive.it/>

The name of the course is: [ET4018](#)

- You can access the platform by using the credentials of your personal area.
- To enroll in the course, a *keyword* is requested: `introcod`
- The information available on the moodle website are:
  - Lecture notes
  - News, Forum
  - Exam results
  - ...

# Office hours

Make an appointment by email ([orlando@unive.it](mailto:orlando@unive.it))

DAIS, Campus Scientifico, Zeta Building

Via Torino 155

Mestre Venezia

Room Zeta-B09

Wed afternoon (if compatible with the professor's schedule)

# Textbooks and other materials

- Think Python. How to Think Like a Computer Scientist (2e). Allen Downey. Green Tea Press.
  - <http://greenteapress.com/thinkpython2/thinkpython2.pdf>
  - The interactive version of the same book:  
<https://runestone.academy/runestone/static/thinkcspy/index.html>
- *(interactive) lecture notes.*

# Course contents

- A very small introduction on computer fundamentals:
  - How computers store and transmit data
  - How computer hardware and software operate on data
  - How humans use computers to solve problems
- The **main topics** of the course include
  - notion of computation and problem solving
  - the Python3 language
  - simple algorithms and data structures
  - development of funny software
- If we have time, some topics regarding history of computer science, and social/ethic issues in computing.

# Software for coding in Python3

- During the course, we will use several tools
- Install **Anaconda Navigator** and **Anaconda Prompt** on your computer:
  - <https://www.anaconda.com/download/>
  - **Install Python 3.6 version** (64 bit)
  - **Instructions:**
    - <https://docs.anaconda.com/anaconda/install/windows> (Windows)
    - <https://docs.anaconda.com/anaconda/install/mac-os#macos-graphical-install> (Mac-OS)
- Install also a text editor for coding
  - The multi-platform **Atom** (<http://atom.io>)
  - **Notepad++**, only for Windows (<http://notepad-plus-plus.org>)
- **Repl.it** provides a **cloud coding environment** (to write code stored and run on remote computer systems)
  - <https://repl.it/languages/python3>

# Exam

The exam will be **written** and organized into two parts:

- The first brief one is concerned with a set of open questions, aiming at testing the proficiency of the student with respect to the various topics of the course, and the specific technical terminology
- The second part of the exam is related to the skill assessment, through the solution of exercises on the course subjects, in particular by solving small problems by coding

# A Very Short Introduction to Computer Science

Minor: COMPUTER AND DATA SCIENCE

INTRODUZIONE ALLA PROGRAMMAZIONE [NS001A]

Prof. Salvatore Orlando - DAIS, Campus Scientifico – [orlando@unive.it](mailto:orlando@unive.it)



# Study Computer Science to Think Computationally

- Computer science is having a revolutionary impact on scientific research and discovery.
- Simply put, it is nearly impossible to do scholarly research in any scientific or engineering discipline without an ability to think computationally.
- The impact of computing extends far beyond science, however, affecting all aspects of our lives. To flourish in today's world, everyone needs computational thinking

# Computing systems

A dynamic entity that interacts with its environment

- **Hardware** The physical elements of a computing system (printer, circuit boards, wires, keyboard...)
- **Software** The programs that provide the instructions for a computer to execute
- **Information/Data** that the computing system manages

# Understanding a computing system by abstraction

- **Abstraction** A mental model that removes complex details

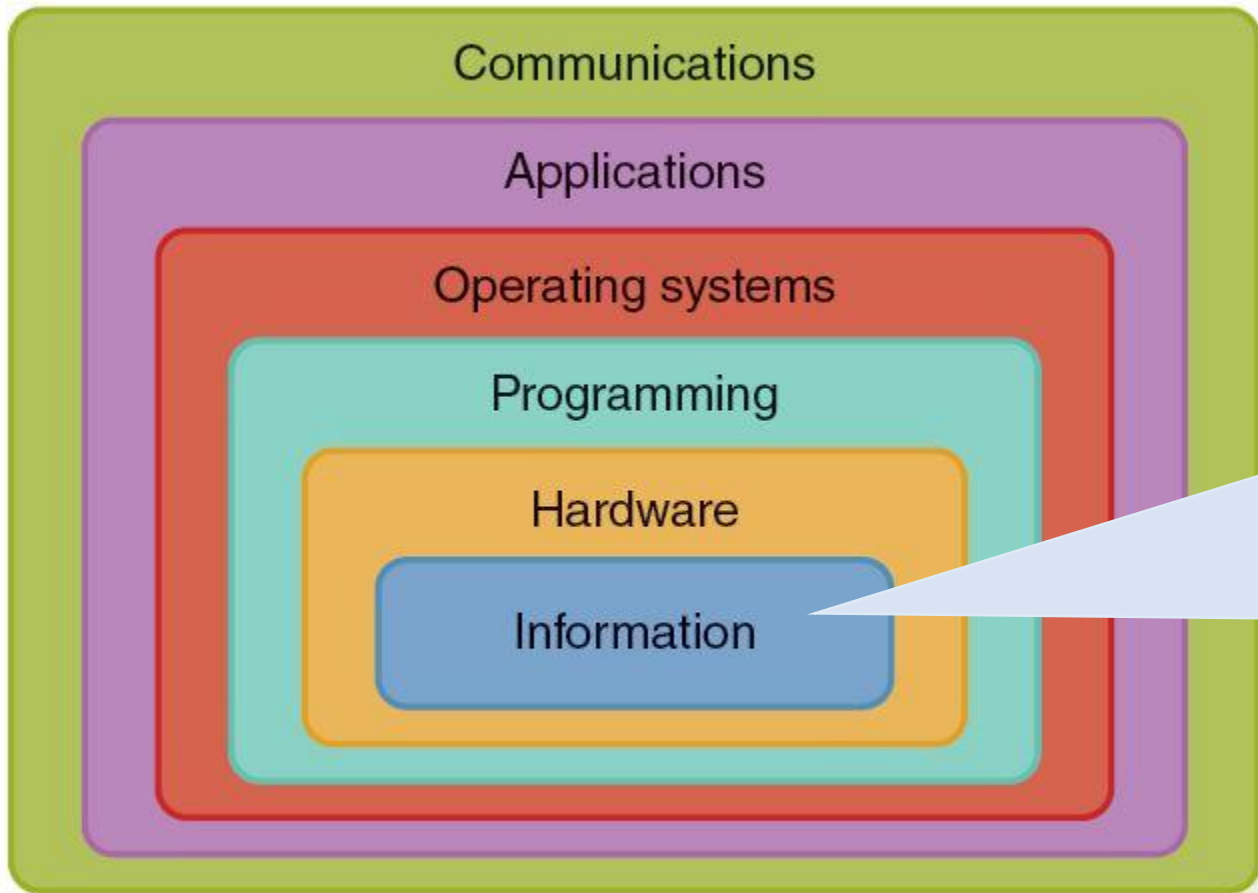


FIGURE 1.2 A car engine and the abstraction that allows us to use it

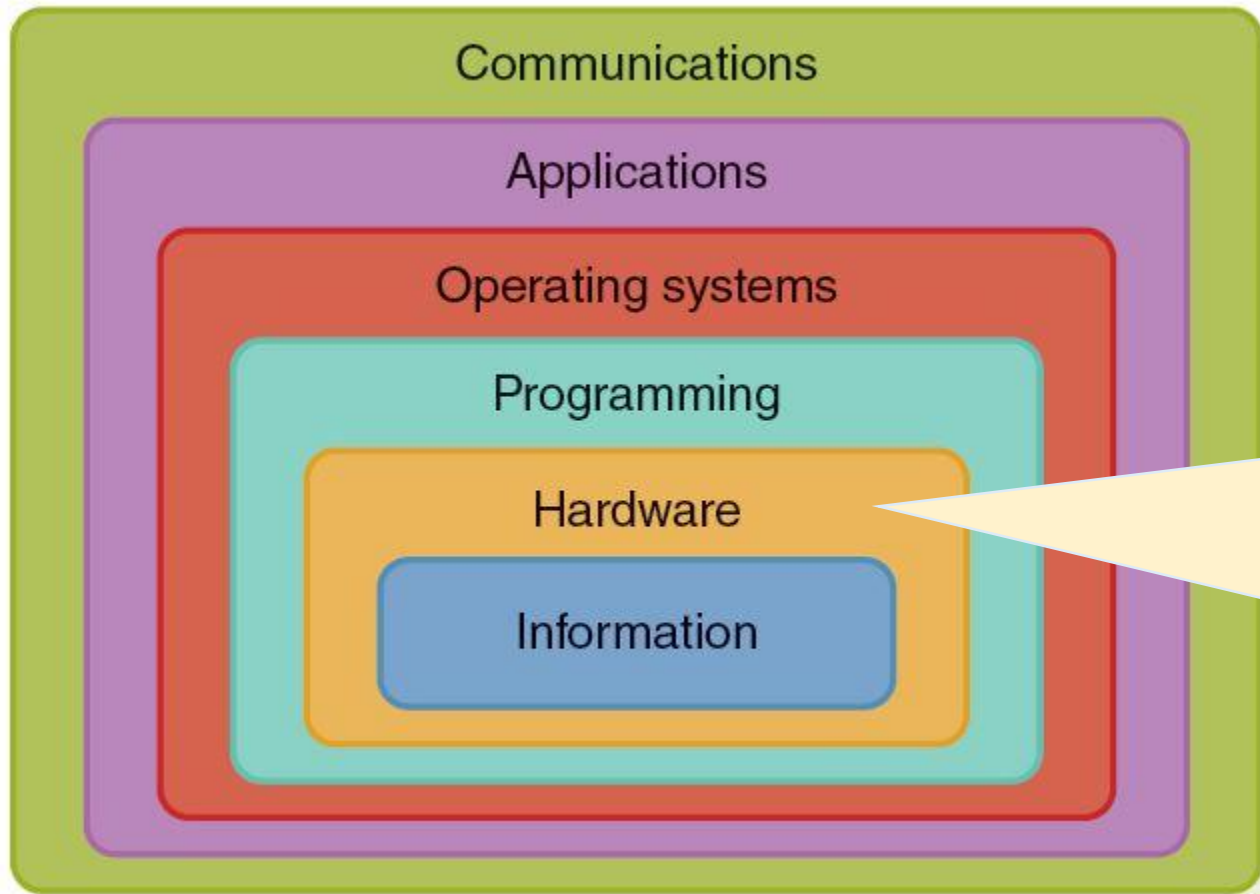
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- Computing systems are complex, and some kind of abstract models are needed to understand and manage them.
- The **six layers of computing system** is an **abstract model**

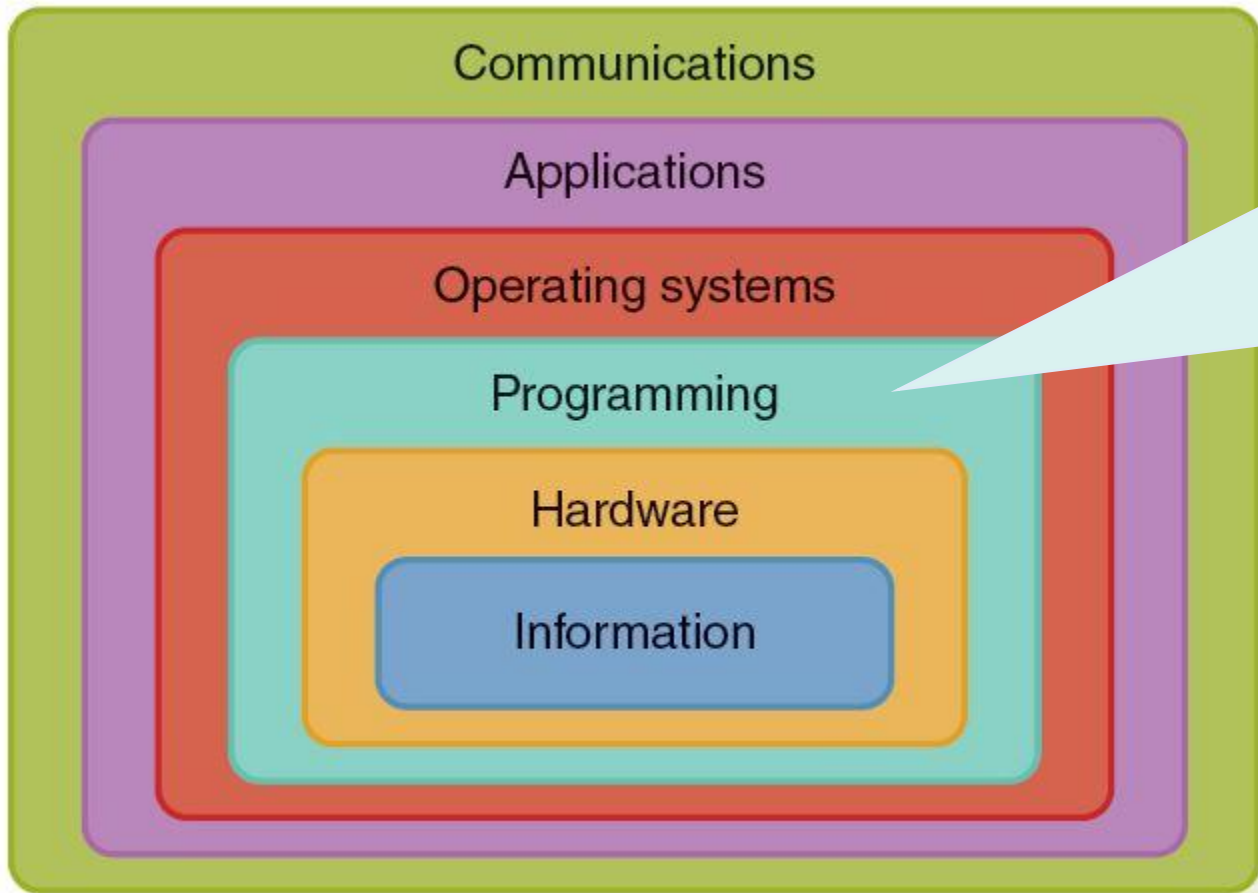
# Layers of a computing system



# Layers of a computing system



# Layers of a computing system

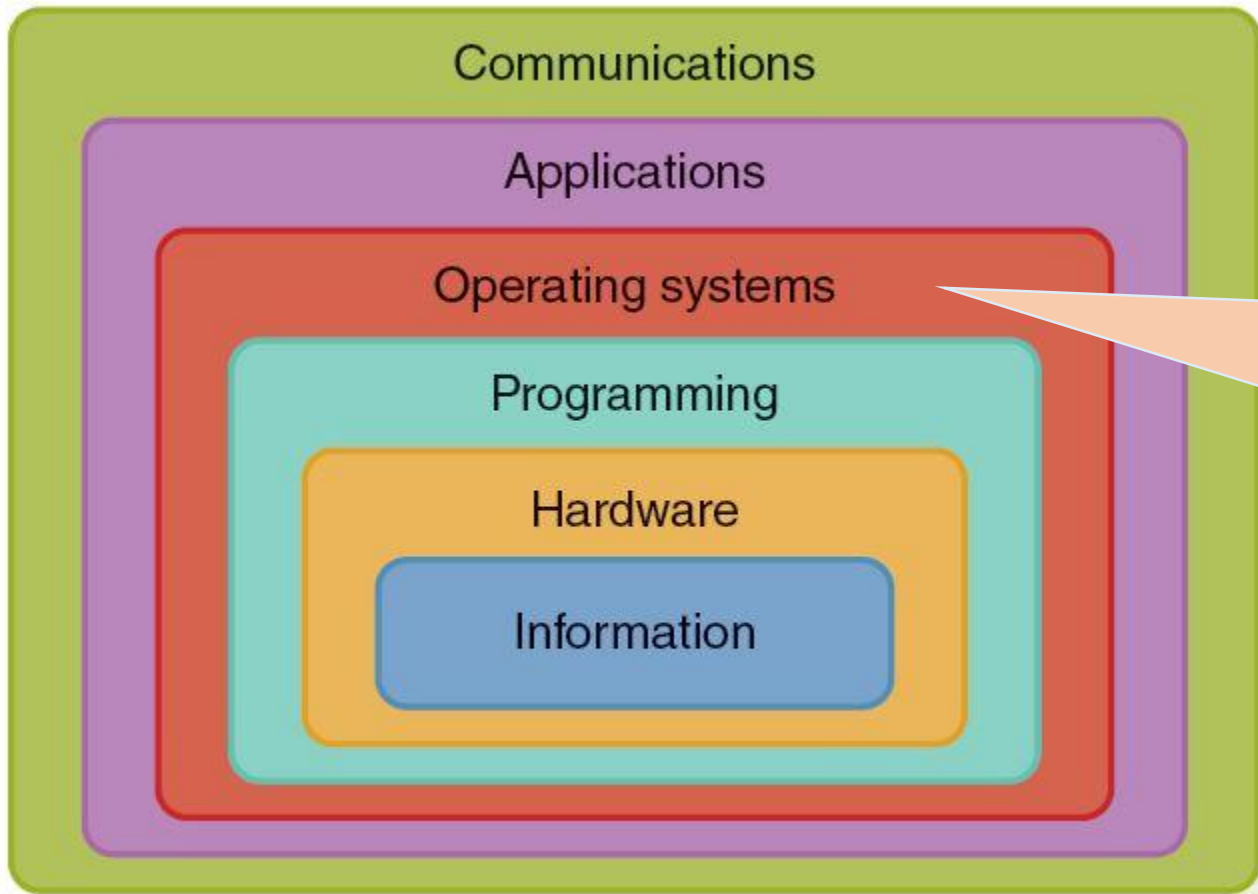


This layer deal with **software**, the instructions that the system executes to accomplish computations and manage data.

**Learning how to program or code is the main goal of this course.**

**Coding** can be done at various levels, from a **low level** very close to the hardware (assembly), to **higher levels**, much easier for humans (Python, Java, C, etc.)

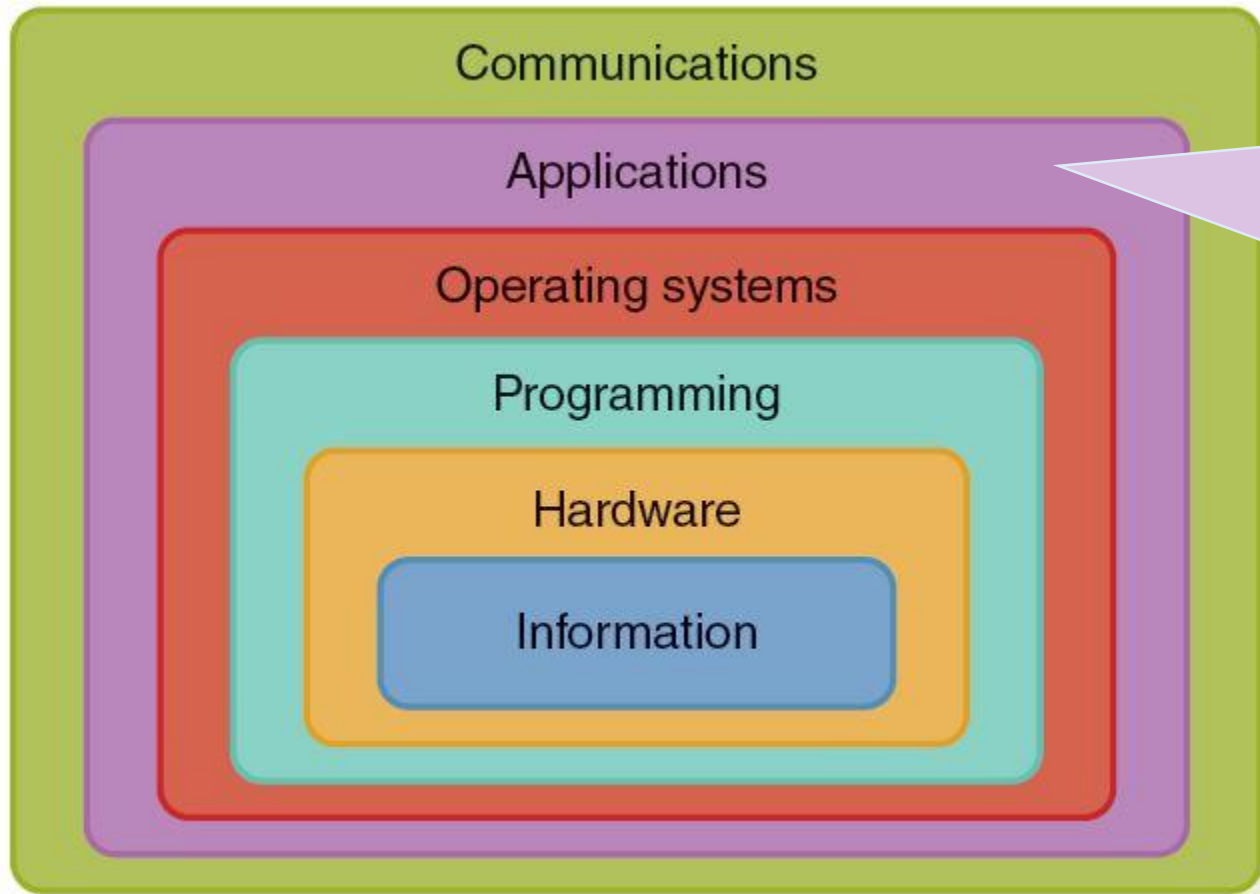
# Layers of a computing system



Every computer has an operating system (OS) to help manage the computing system's resources

Microsoft Windows 10, Mac OS, Linus, Android, etc.

# Layers of a computing system

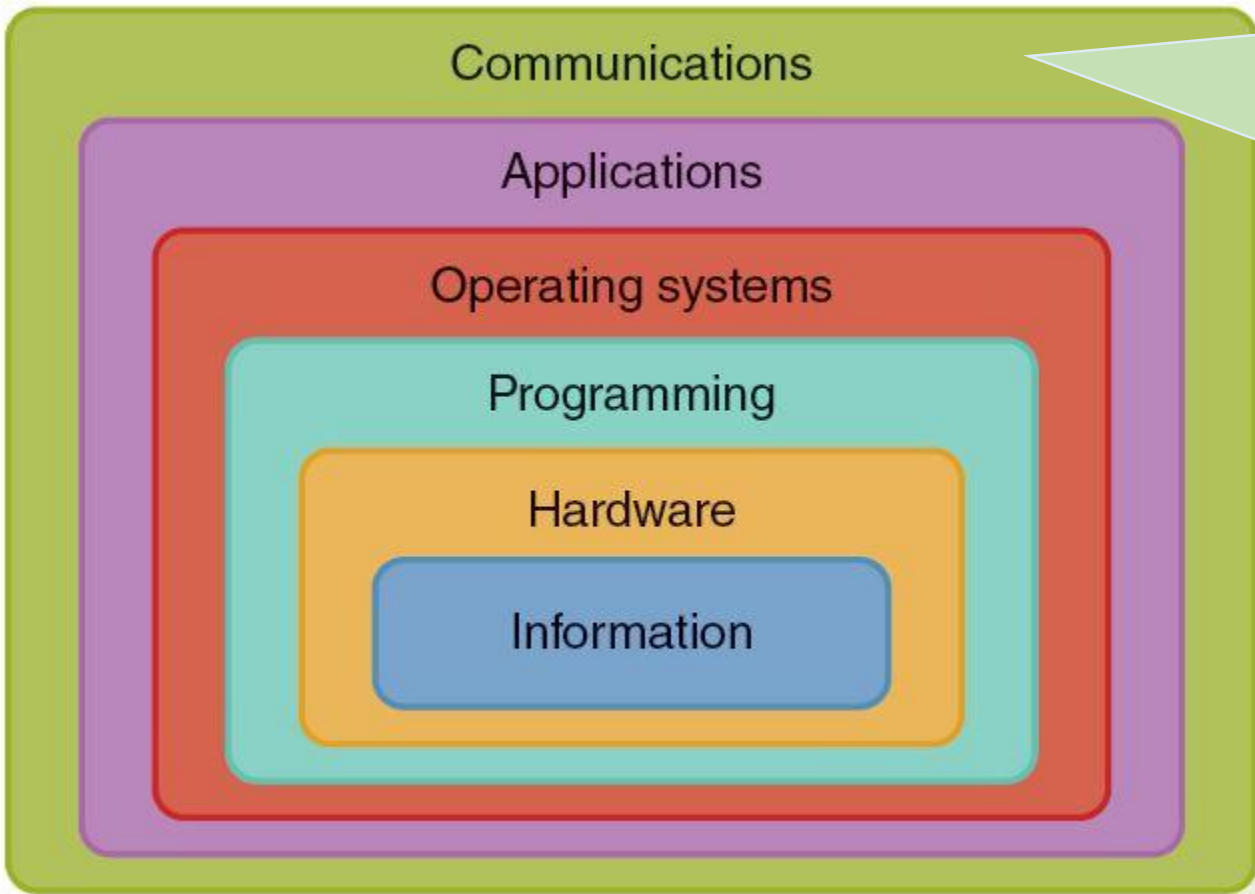


Computing systems users run **application programs** to perform real-world problems, for example - write a text document, draw a picture or play a game.

Every program you run on your computer's operating system is an application program that help you to reach you goals or solve a certain problem.



# Layers of a computing system



Communication layer is a layer where two computer system can operate and exchange data.

Computers are connected into a network to share information and resources.

We use **internet** to exchange data, access the Web, or simply chat.

# Information layer

# Data representation

- Computers are **multimedia** devices, dealing with a vast array of information categories
- Computers store, present, and help us modify
  - Numbers
  - Text
  - Audio
  - Images and graphics
  - Video

All information is stored as patterns of **binary digits (bits)**: **0** or **1**

- Why a **binary alphabet**?
  - Will be clear in a while

# Analog vs. Digital Information

Computers are finite!

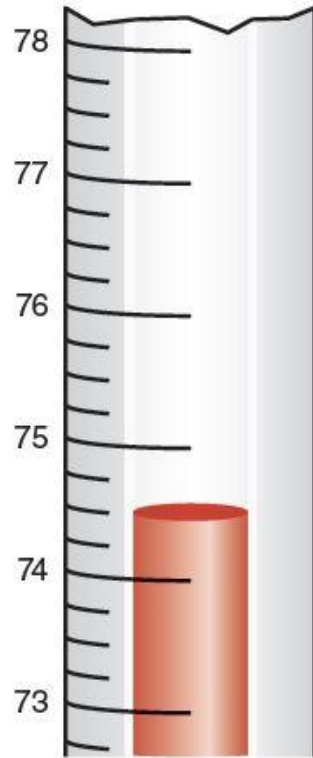
*How do we represent an infinite world?*

- We represent **enough** of the world to satisfy our **computational** needs and our senses of **sight** and **sound**
- Two possible way to represents data
  - Analog:** A **continuous** representation, analogous to the actual information it represents
  - Digital data:** A **discrete** representation, breaking the information up into separate elements

# Analog vs. Digital Information

A mercury thermometer is an analog device

Actually, we have a continuous quantity (temperature) which is measured continuously along the time (another continuous value)



**FIGURE 3.1** A mercury thermometer continually rises in direct proportion to the temperature

Computers cannot work well with **analog continuous** data, so we **digitize** the data

**Discretization:** Read an analog signal at regular time intervals (frequency), sampling the value of the signal at the point.

**Quantization:** Sampled values (*samples*) are rounded to a fixed set of numbers

Computers store (and transmit) units called **binary digits** or **bits**

Low Voltage = 0  
High Voltage = 1

A **digital signal** thus becomes

- a **sequence of discrete numbers**, in turn represented as **binary patterns of fixed length**

# Electronic signals used to store (discrete) values

Important facts about electronic signals

- An **analog signal** continually fluctuates in voltage up and down
- A **digital signal**, if we use **binary numbers**, has only a **high state** or a **low state**, corresponding to the two binary digits 0/1



FIGURE 3.2 An analog signal and a digital signal

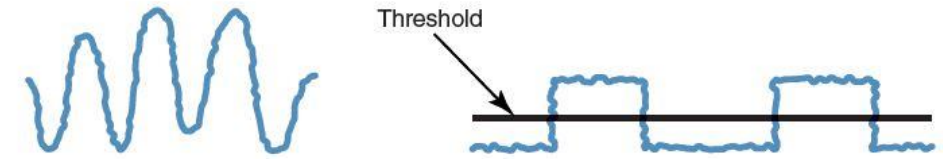


FIGURE 3.3 Degradation of analog and digital signals

All the **electronic signals** (both analog and digital) degrade as they move down a wire. The **voltage** of the signal fluctuates due to environmental effects.

**Digital signals** can be easily **reshaped**, and are **less error-prone** than **analog signals**.

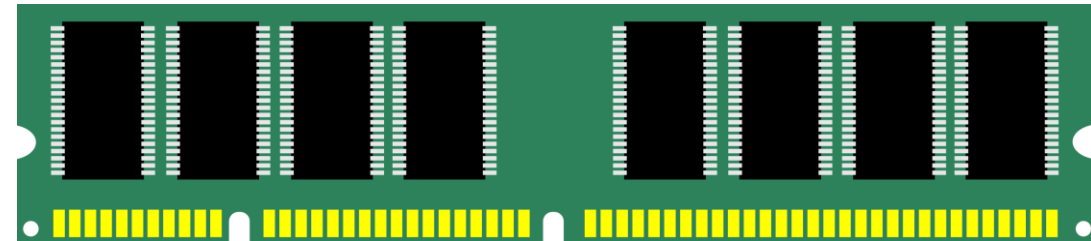
# Binary numbers and computers

- Computers have storage units called **binary digits** or **bits**

Low Voltage = 0  
High Voltage = 1

- Computer memory stores digital information as **multiple of bytes**, where a **byte** is composed of **8 bits =  $2^3$  bits**
- A volatile memory to store data with *byte* and *word* addresses:

	bit 31.....bit 0			
Address 0	byte 3	byte 2	byte 1	byte 0
Address 4	byte 7	byte 6	byte 5	byte 4
Address 8	byte 11	byte 10	byte 9	byte 8
Address 12	byte 15	byte 14	byte 13	byte 12
	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮



# Binary representation

- *How many things can n bits represent?*
- With 1 bits:  $2^1$  things
- By doubling the bits, that is 2 bits:  $2^2$  things
- In general, with n bits we thus represent:  $2^n$  things

1 Bit	2 Bits	3 Bits	4 Bits	5 Bits
0	00	000	0000	00000
1	01	001	0001	00001
	10	010	0010	00010
	11	011	0011	00011
		100	0100	00100
		101	0101	00101
		110	0110	00110
		111	0111	00111
			1000	01000
			1001	01001
			1010	01010
			1011	01011
			1100	01100
			1101	01101
			1110	01110
			1111	01111
				10000
				10001
				10010
				10011
				10100
				10101
				10110
				10111
				11000
				11001
				11010
				11011
				11100
				11101
				11110
				11111

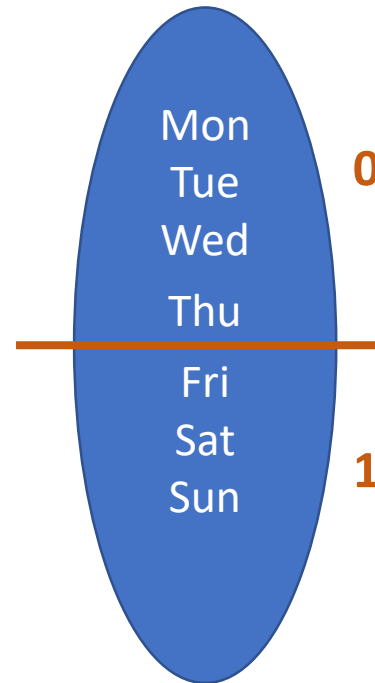
FIGURE 3.4 Bit combinations



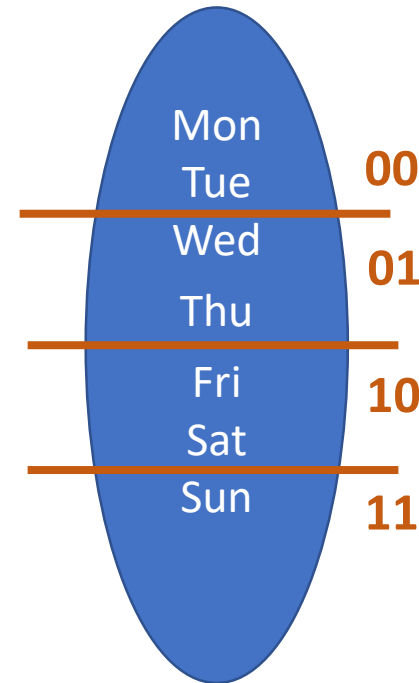
# Example to represent 7 things (days of a week)

- To represent 7 distinct items we need *at least* 3 bits
  - 3 bits, by which we can represent  $2^3 = 8$  distinct objects, is the minimum number of bits we can use

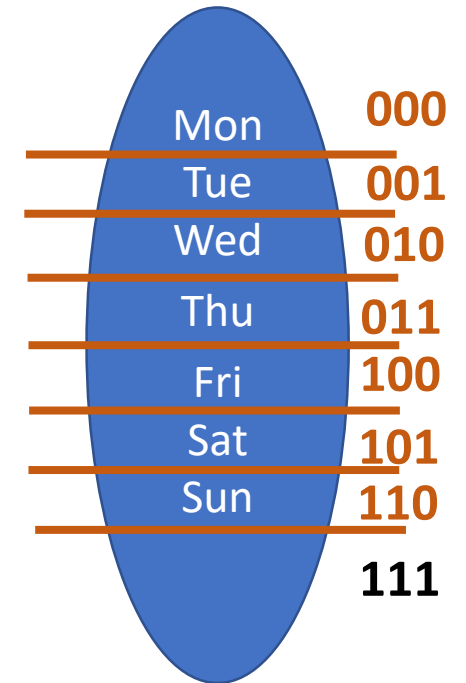
000	Mon
001	Tue
010	Wed
011	Thu
100	Fri
101	Sat
110	Sun
111	<i>Non used</i>



1-BIT code  
Only 2 groups



2-BIT code  
Only 4 groups



3-BIT code  
8 groups

# Representing text

Fortunately the **number of characters** to represent is **finite** (whew!), so list them all and assign each a binary string

## Character set

A list of characters and the codes used to represent each one.  
Computer manufacturers agreed to standardize

## ASCII character set

American Standard Code for Information Interchange  
7 bits version allows 128 unique characters

# ASCII Character Set Mapping

Left Digit(s)	Right Digit	ASCII									
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0		NUL	SOH	STX	ETX	EOT	ENQ	ACK	BEL	BS	HT
1		LF	VT	FF	CR	SO	SI	DLE	DC1	DC2	DC3
2		DC4	NAK	SYN	ETB	CAN	EM	SUB	ESC	FS	GS
3		RS	US	□	!	“	#	\$	%	&	'
4		(	)	*	+	,	-	.	/	0	1
5		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	:	;
6		<	=	>	?	@	A	B	C	D	E
7		F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
8		P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y
9		Z	[	\	]	^	_	`	a	b	c
10		d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
11		n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w
12		x	y	z	{		}	~	DEL		

FIGURE 3.5 The ASCII character set

# Digital images



The image is **sampled**:

- subdivided in points called **pixel** (pixel element)

Each pixel is **quantized** by encoding as a discrete number corresponding to:

- a specific color
- a particular grey tone for b/w images

Image represented as a grid/matrix of numbers

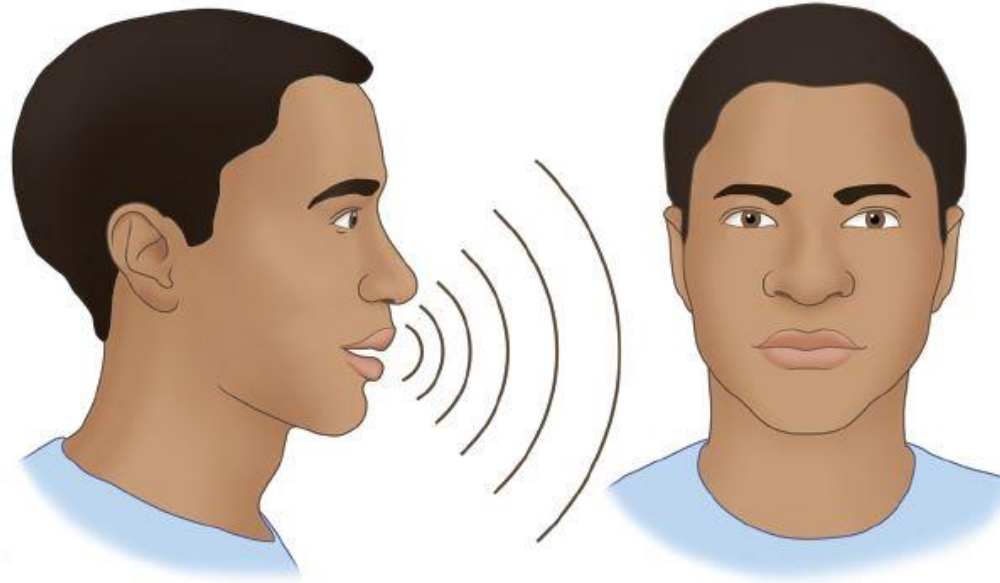
Usually numbers associated with pixels have a fixed length (a multiple of a byte)

For color images, a common method is to represent each pixel with 3 numbers, each corresponding to a fundamental color (**RGB** – Red, Green, Blue)

Along with the pixel values we have to store the **size** of the image (no. of rows and columns) and the resolution (**dpi**, “dot per inch”)

Images are finally stored in files as sequences of numbers, one row of pixels after the other.

# Representing Audio Information



**FIGURE 3.7** A sound wave vibrates our eardrums

We perceive sound when a series of air pressure waves vibrate a membrane in our ear, which sends signals to our brain

# Representing Audio Information

- Digital audio systems includes microphones converting **sound** to an **analog electrical signal**
  - Then an **analog-to-digital converter** converts the analog signal into a digital signal.
- **Digitize** the analog electric signal by
  - **Sampling**: periodically measure the voltage
  - **Quantization**: represent the voltage as a number using a finite number of bits

*How often should we sample?*

A sampling rate of about **40,000 times per second** is enough to create a reasonable sound reproduction.

# Representing Audio Information

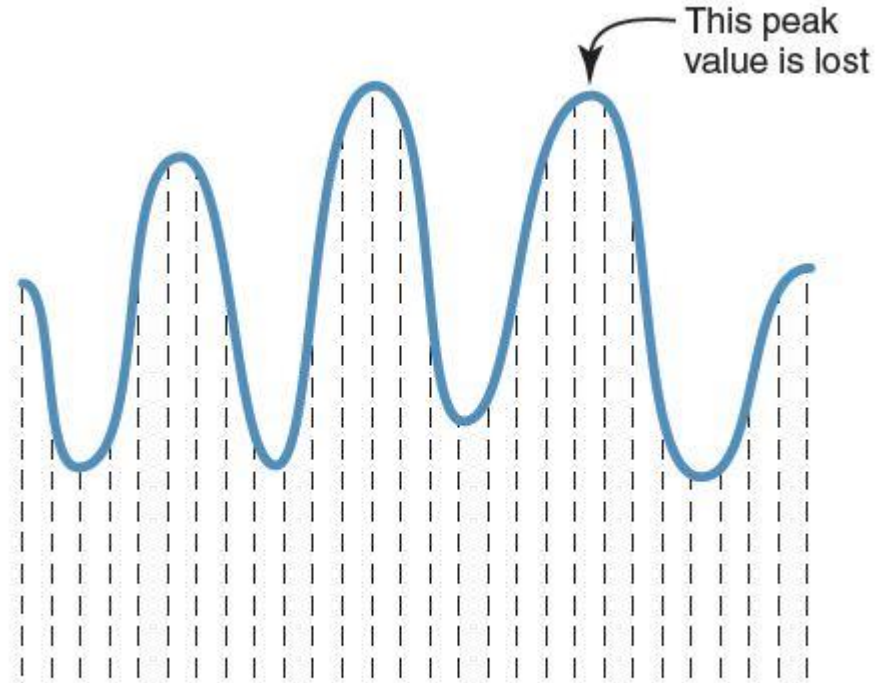


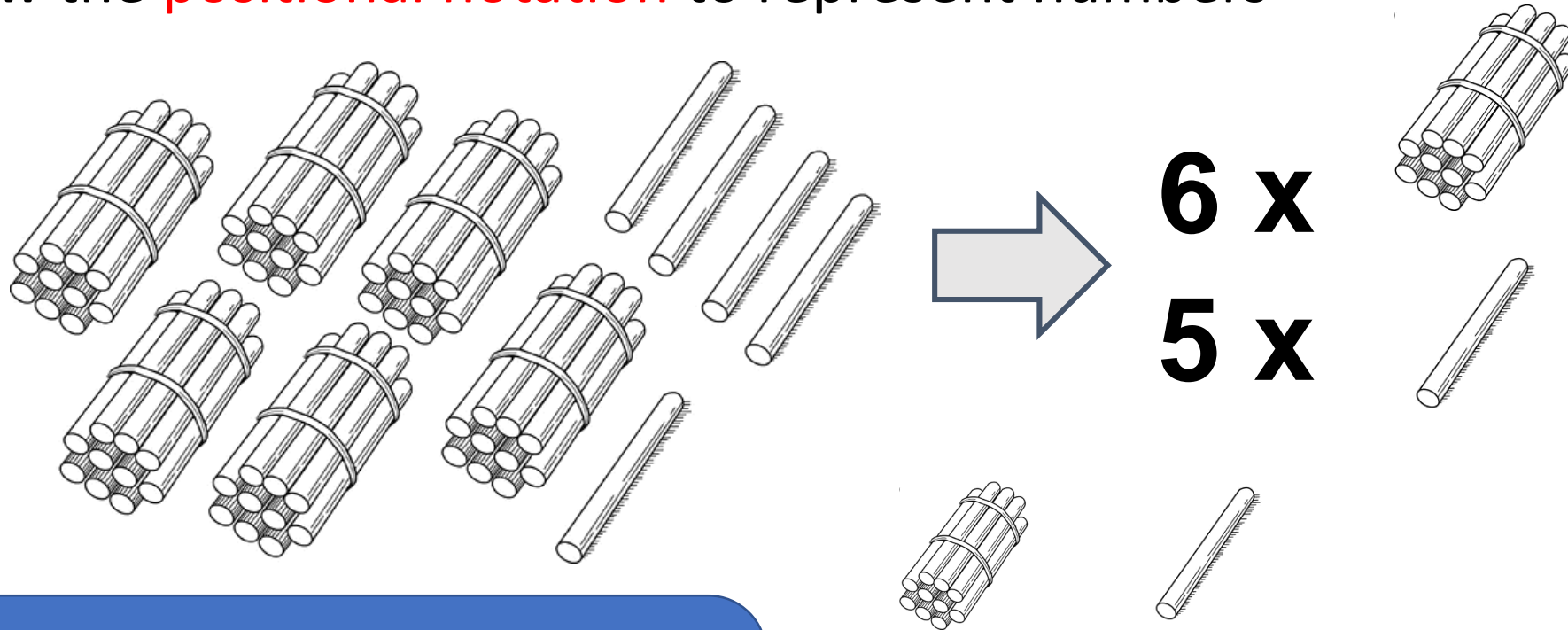
FIGURE 3.8 Sampling an audio signal

Some data is lost, but a reasonable sound is reproduced



# Integer numbers

Review the **positional notation** to represent numbers



10 is the **base** of this representation

We need **10 symbols**, whose **value** depends on the **position**

6	5
---	---



# Positional notation

- Value of a number represented in a **generic base B** with **symbols used for digits representing quantities: 0,1, ..., B-1**

$$d_n * B^{n-1} + d_{n-1} * B^{n-2} + \dots + d_2 * B^1 + d_1 * B^0$$

**B** is the base of the number

**n** is the number of digits in the number

$d_i$  is the digit in the  $i^{\text{th}}$  position in the number

**642** ( $d_3d_2d_1$  expressed in base **B=10**) is equal to:

$$6 * 10^2 + 4 * 10^1 + 2 * 10^0 = 600 + 40 + 2$$

# Binary integer numbers

- Decimal numbers have **base 10** and need **10 digit symbols**:  
0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
- Exadecimal numbers have **base 16** and need **16 digit symbols**:  
0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,A,B,C,D,E,F

Binary numbers have **base 2** and only need **2 digit symbols**:  
0,1

*For a number to exist in a given base  $B$ , it can only contain the **digits in that base**, which range from 0 up to  $B-1$*

# Converting from binary to decimal

- *What is the decimal equivalent  $N_{10}$  of the binary number  $N_2 = 1101110$ ?*

$$\begin{array}{rcll} 1 \times 2^6 & = & 1 \times 64 & = 64 \\ + 1 \times 2^5 & = & 1 \times 32 & = 32 \\ + 0 \times 2^4 & = & 0 \times 16 & = 0 \\ + 1 \times 2^3 & = & 1 \times 8 & = 8 \\ + 1 \times 2^2 & = & 1 \times 4 & = 4 \\ + 1 \times 2^1 & = & 1 \times 2 & = 2 \\ + 0 \times 2^0 & = & 0 \times 1 & = 0 \\ \text{Sum} & = & \mathbf{110} & \text{in base 10} \end{array}$$

# Converting from decimal to binary

Given a natural number  $N_{10}$ , where its representation in base 2 is:

$$N_2 = d_{n-1} \dots d_1 d_0$$

we have:

$$N_{10} = d_{n-1} * 2^{n-1} + \dots + d_1 * 2^1 + d_0 * 2^0$$

We determine the various  $d_i \in \{0,1\}$  with the **division-by-2** method :

- N is divided by two.
- The **remainder** is the least-significant bit  $d_0$ .
- The **quotient** is again divided by 2
- The **remainder** is the next least significant bit  $d_1$ .
- And so on, until a quotient of zero is reached.
- NOTE: each remainder must be either 0 or 1 when dividing by 2

# Converting from decimal to binary

Binary equivalent  $N_2$  of the binary number  $N_{10} = 110$  :

	$N_{10}$	Reminder
	110	$0 = d_0$
quotient	55	$1 = d_1$
quotient	27	$1 = d_2$
	13	$1 = d_3$
	6	$0 = d_4$
	3	$1 = d_5$
	1	$1 = d_6$

$N_2 = 1101110$

# Converting from decimal to binary (alternative way)

How to store the number 57 with 8 bits?

We need to find the 0/1 coefficients of  $2^0, 2^1, 2^2, 2^3, 2^4, 2^5, 2^6, 2^7$  so that their sum is 57.

Subtractions method:

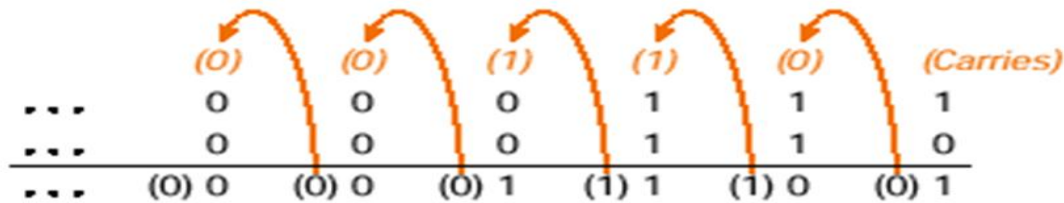
Input	Powers of 2	Is larger than or equal to $2^i$ ?	Coefficient
57	$2^7 = 128$	$57 - 128 < 0$	0
57	$2^6 = 64$	$57 - 64 < 0$	0
57	$2^5 = 32$	$57 - 32 = 25 \geq 0$	1
25	$2^4 = 16$	$25 - 16 = 9 \geq 0$	1
9	$2^3 = 8$	$9 - 8 = 1 \geq 0$	1
1	$2^2 = 4$	$1 - 4 < 0$	0
1	$2^1 = 2$	$1 - 2 < 0$	0
1	$2^0 = 1$	$1 - 1 = 0 \geq 0$	1

The binary representation of 57 is **00111001**.

# Binary Arithmetic

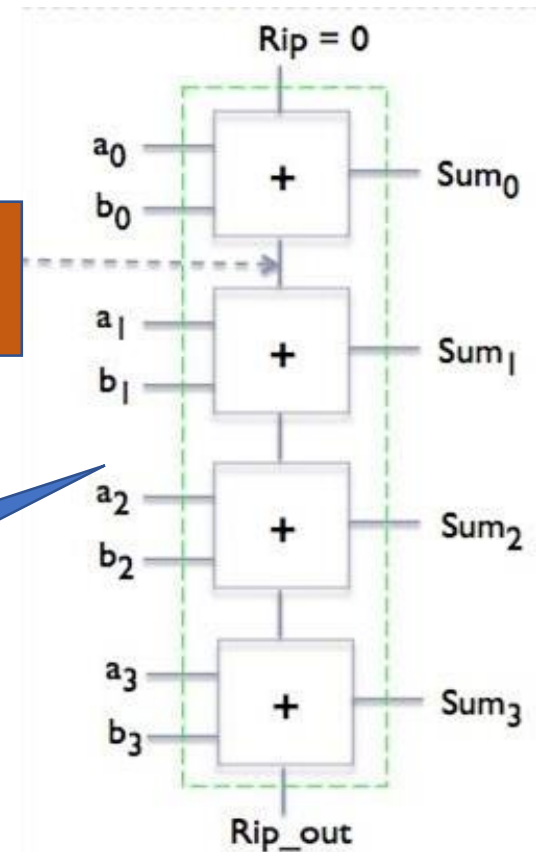
- Remember that there are only 2 digit symbols in binary, 0 and 1.  
Therefore  $1 + 1 = 0$  with a *carry*
- This is analogous to decimal arithmetic:  $5 + 5 = 0$  with a *carry**

Example of  $7 (111) + 6 (110) = 13 (1101)$ :



Carry propagation

Arithmetic Logic Unit (ALU)  
made of Single-bit Adders



# Real numbers to binary

- Using a Byte (8 b), we can use a simple approach (**Fixed-point representation**):
  - **4 bits** for the **integer part**, and **4 bits** to represent the **fractional part**
- **Warning !!** The smallest number we can represent is  $2^{-4}=1/16=0.0625$
- **Warning !! Even worse!!** We can represent only  $2^4$  numbers between 0 and 1.
- Not only are we limited to a **smallest** and **largest** representable number, but since real numbers are infinite while bit configurations are finite, we can only represent a limited set of number in between the **smallest** and **largest** values.



# Real numbers to binary

- Since any binary number can be represented as  $\pm 1.????...?? \times 2^N$ , computers most commonly use:
- **Single precision** (32 bits) **Floating-point representation:**
  - 1 bit for the **sign** (negative vs. positive)
  - 8 bits for the **exponent**  $N$  of  $2^N$
  - 23 bits for the significand **????..??**
- **Double precision** uses 64 bits, and it is therefore more accurate (but more expensive)

# Different Binary Units

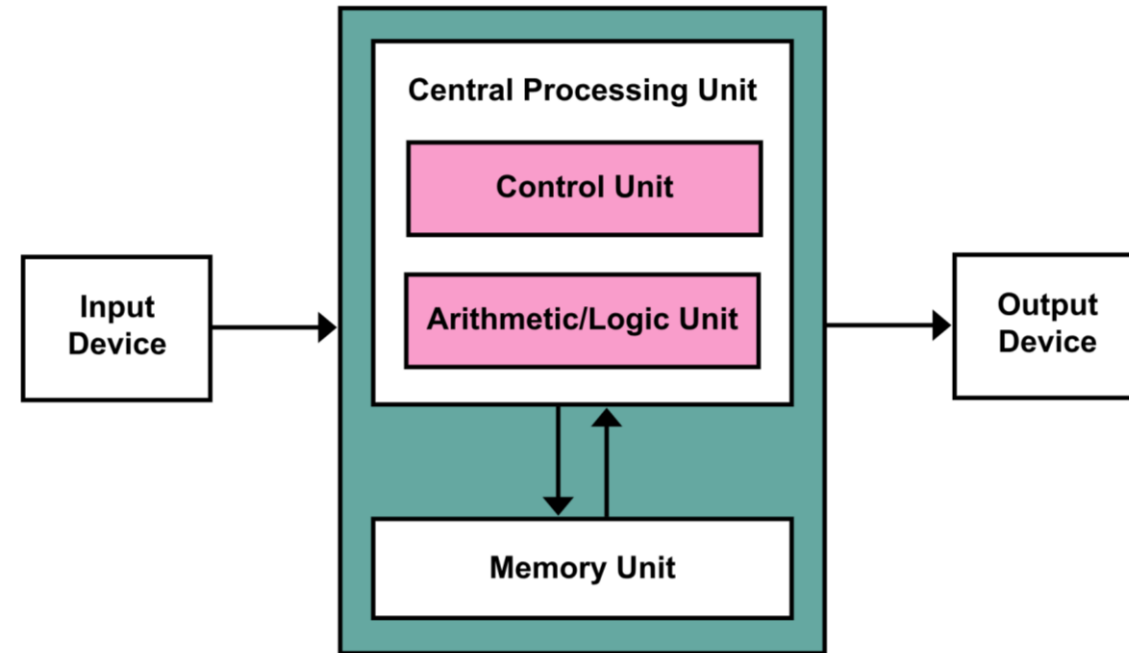
Note that  
 $1024 = 2^{10} \approx 10^3 = 1000$

UNIT	VALUE	STORAGE
Bit	1 or 0	
Byte (B)	8 Bits	Character
Kilobyte (KB)	1024 Bytes = $2^{10}$ Bytes	Half page of text
Megabyte (MB)	1024 Kilobytes = $2^{20}$ Bytes	About 2 mins MP3 file
Gigabyte (GB)	1024 Megabytes = $2^{30}$ Bytes	About one hour Movie
Terabyte (TB)	1024 Gigabytes = $2^{40}$ Bytes	128 DVD Movies
Petabyte (PB)	1024 Terabyte = $2^{50}$ Bytes	7 billion Facebook photos
Exabyte (EB)	1024 Petabyte = $2^{60}$ Bytes	50,000 years of DVD
Zettabyte (ZB)	1024 Exabyte = $2^{70}$ Bytes	Global internet traffic per year (2016)

# Hardware layer

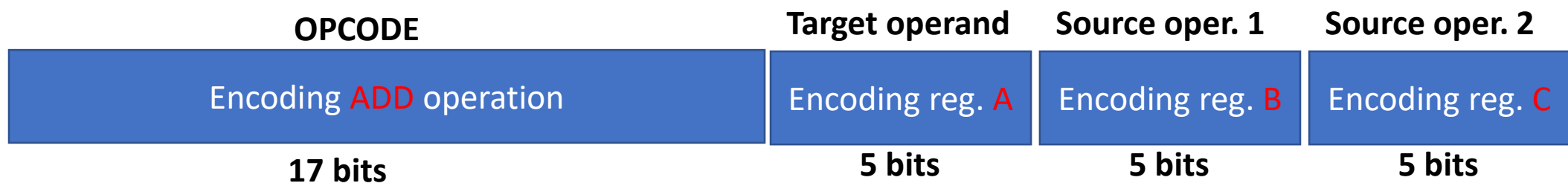
# Von Neumann architecture of a computing system

- Architecture composed of
  - CPU: Central processing unit
    - ALU to perform arithmetic/logic operations
  - Memory to store
    - Programs (stored-program)
    - Data accessed by program
  - Input/Output (I/O) devices
    - including disks and SSD



# Machine languages

- CPU are designed to recognize **machine instructions** stored in memory as sequences of bits
- The (short) list of **instructions** with their **binary encoding** is called **machine languages**
- Example of machine language
  - **ADD A,B,C** where A,B, and C are operands, and the semantics is:  $A \leftarrow B + C$
  - Encoding on 4 Bytes, where A, B and C are fast memory registers in the CPU



# Program execution

- The order in which instructions are fetched/executed **(control flow)** corresponds to the sequential order in which instruction are stored in memory
- So the flow of control of the CPU is guided by an *address in memory*
  - The Program Counter (**PC**) maintain for a running program the address of the next machine instruction to execute

# Program execution

- The CPU continuously **repeat** the following 3 steps:
  1. Fetch from memory the next instructions pointed by the PC
  2. Decode the instruction
  3. Execute the instruction, and update the PC to the next instruction to fetch
- The sequential **control flow can be modified** by the program, executing special instruction of JUMP/BRANCH.

# Programming layer



# What is a program?

- A **program** is a **sequence of instructions** that specifies how to perform a computation.
  - Examples: finding the roots of a polynomial (math), searching and replacing text in a document (symbolic), or processing an image (graphical)

*Programming as the process of breaking a large, complex task into smaller and smaller subtasks until the subtasks are simple enough to be performed by combining basic instructions.*

- The program is **run/executed** by the computer to realize a given application, following the **control flow**
  - Luckily, we can avoid to write programs in **machine language !!**

# What is a program?

- We can program in **different languages**, and generally we have ways to do:
  - **input**: Get data from the keyboard, a file, the network, or some other device.
  - **output**: Display data on the screen, save it in a file, send it over the network, etc.
  - **math**: Perform basic mathematical operations like addition and multiplication.
  - **conditional execution**: Check for certain conditions and run the appropriate code.
  - **repetition**: Perform some action repeatedly, usually with some variation.

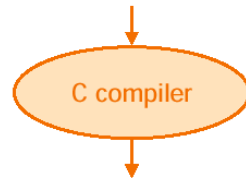
# Languages for programming?

- **Natural languages:** languages that people speak, such as English, Italian, or French, and they evolved naturally.
- **Formal languages:** particular languages designed for specific applications. Example: *math notation*.
  - **Strict syntax** rules concerning **tokens** and **structure**
  - **No ambiguity**
- Programming languages are **formal languages** that have been designed to express computations.

# Abstracting the machine to ease the programming job

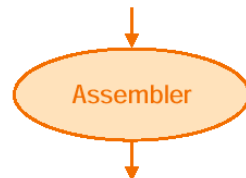
High-level  
language  
program  
(in C)

```
swap(int v[], int k)
{int temp;
  temp = v[k];
  v[k] = v[k+1];
  v[k+1] = temp;
}
```



Assembly  
language  
program  
(for MIPS)

```
swap:
    muli $2, $5, 4
    add  $2, $4, $2
    lw   $15, 0($2)
    lw   $16, 4($2)
    sw   $16, 0($2)
    sw   $15, 4($2)
    jr   $31
```



Binary machine  
language  
program  
(for MIPS)

```
000000001010000100000000000011000
000000001000111000011000000100001
100011000110001000000000000000000
100011001111001000000000000000100
101011001111001000000000000000000
101011000110001000000000000000100
00000011111000000000000000001000
```

- On the left, an example of language hierarchies

- **High-level language**

- Productivity
- Code portability because of translators, such as compiler or assembler

- **Assembly language**

- Mnemonic representation of machine instructions

- **Machine language**

- Binary digits (bits)
- Encoding of machine instructions and data

# Learning to code with Python

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Python** is a widely used high-level programming language for general-purpose programming, created by Guido van Rossum and first released in 1991. Guido was a fan of the TV series *Monty Python's Flying Circus* :-)

An **interpreted language**, Python has a design philosophy that emphasizes **code readability** (notably using whitespace indentation to delimit code blocks rather than curly brackets or keywords), and a syntax that allows programmers to express concepts in **fewer lines of code** than might be used in other high-level languages such as C++ or Java.

An **interpreter** is a computer program that directly executes, i.e. performs, instructions written in a programming or scripting language, without previously compiling them into a machine language program

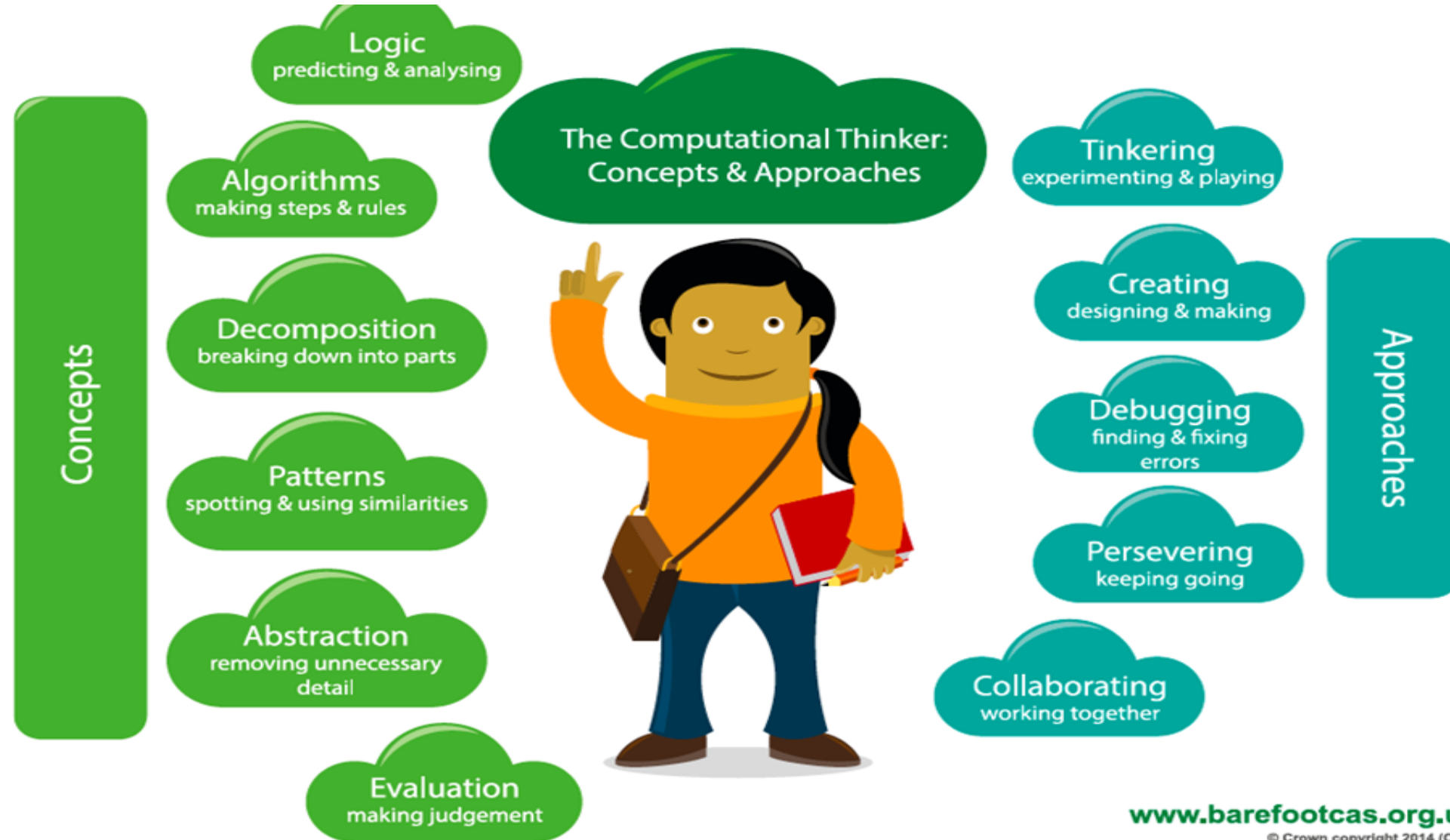
# Computational thinking

# What is Computational Thinking

*Computational thinking is the thought processes involved in formulating problems and their solutions so that the solutions are represented in a form that can effectively be carried out by an information-processing agent.*

Cuny, Snyder, Wing

# Important elements of computational thinking



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# Problem solving and programming

- The single most important skill for a computer scientist is thus **problem solving**
  - the ability to formulate problems,
  - think creatively about solutions, and
  - express a solution clearly and accurately.with solutions that can be carried out by an information-processing agent
- Learning how to **code/program** is an excellent opportunity to practice **problem-solving skills**

**Programming for problem solving is funny and creative**