

Computer - Ports

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A port is a physical docking point using which an external device can be connected to the computer. It can also be programmatic docking point through which information flows from a program to the computer or over the Internet.

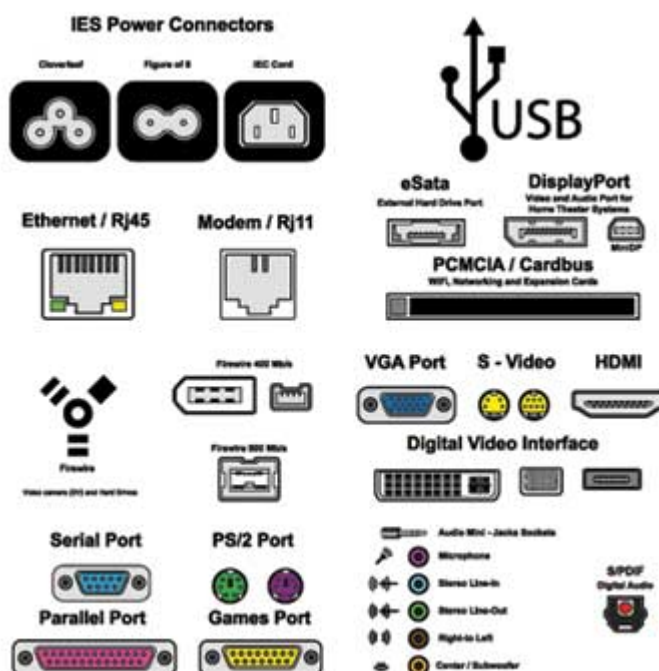
Characteristics of Ports

A port has the following characteristics –

External devices are connected to a computer using cables and ports.

Ports are slots on the motherboard into which a cable of external device is plugged in.

Examples of external devices attached via ports are the mouse, keyboard, monitor, microphone, speakers, etc.



Let us now discuss a few important types of ports –

Serial Port

Used for external modems and older computer mouse

Two versions: 9 pin, 25 pin model

Data travels at 115 kilobits per second

Parallel Port

Used for scanners and printers

Also called printer port

25 pin model

IEEE 1284-compliant Centronics port

PS/2 Port

Used for old computer keyboard and mouse

Also called mouse port

Most of the old computers provide two PS/2 port, each for the mouse and keyboard

IEEE 1284-compliant Centronics port

Universal Serial Bus (or USB) Port

It can connect all kinds of external USB devices such as external hard disk, printer, scanner, mouse, keyboard, etc.

It was introduced in 1997.

Most of the computers provide two USB ports as minimum.

Data travels at 12 megabits per seconds.

USB compliant devices can get power from a USB port.

VGA Port

Connects monitor to a computer's video card.

It has 15 holes.

Similar to the serial port connector. However, serial port connector has pins, VGA port has holes.

Power Connector

Three-pronged plug.

Connects to the computer's power cable that plugs into a power bar or wall socket.

Firewire Port

Transfers large amount of data at very fast speed.

Connects camcorders and video equipment to the computer.

Data travels at 400 to 800 megabits per seconds.

Invented by Apple.

It has three variants: 4-Pin FireWire 400 connector, 6-Pin FireWire 400 connector, and 9-Pin FireWire 800 connector.

Modem Port

Connects a PC's modem to the telephone network.

Ethernet Port

Connects to a network and high speed Internet.

Connects the network cable to a computer.

This port resides on an Ethernet Card.

Data travels at 10 megabits to 1000 megabits per seconds depending upon the network bandwidth.

Game Port

Connect a joystick to a PC

Now replaced by USB

Digital Video Interface, DVI port

Connects Flat panel LCD monitor to the computer's high-end video graphic cards.

Very popular among video card manufacturers.

Sockets

Sockets connect the microphone and speakers to the sound card of the computer.

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