

# INF-2201

## 01- Booting

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# Note: these lectures are "work in progress"

- The general pattern will be:
  - Identify problem with solution so far
  - What can we do to solve it?
  - How can we build that solution?
  - Identify abstractions
- Then iterate towards a modern computer and operating system

# Starting from scratch

Before we define what we mean by an operating system, let's look at what leads to building one and why we need it

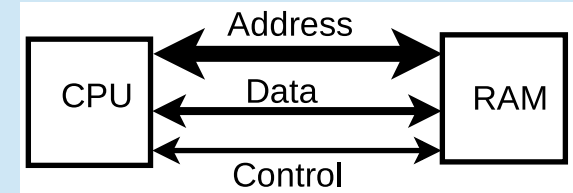
- Slightly rewriting history to show how modern computers and operating systems can be developed from following simple systems, problems and solutions to these problems.
- Will contain references to real computers (work in progress)

# We will skip some part of history

- Mainframes and minicomputers: we mainly use microcomputers as examples here
- CPU instructions, the idea of computing, ... : we assume some basic computer architecture background
- Some historical side notes (rabbit holes):
  - Jacquard loom (interchangable punch cards inspiring early computing and binary)
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzYucg3Tmho>
  - Babbage and the differential engine (see also Ada Lovelace)
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBuJqUfO4-w>
  - Turing Machine (think about this when we run from paper tapes)
    - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DILF8usqp7M&list=PLzH6n4zXuckrEzV0CB1xXbSdsP\\_a7VUoK&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DILF8usqp7M&list=PLzH6n4zXuckrEzV0CB1xXbSdsP_a7VUoK&index=3)
    - The above is a one video from a playlist

# Running your first program

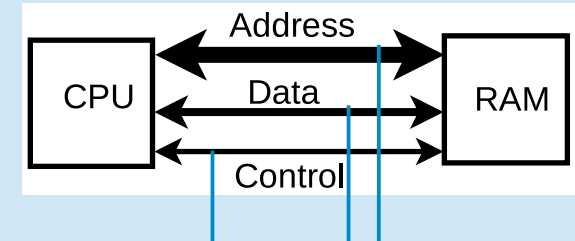
- Simple computer (CPU and memory)
- Turn on computer. What does it do?
  - Needs instructions somewhere the CPU can fetch
  - Needs a clock that can tick to drive the internals of the CPU (memory fetches, Program Counter (PC) updates, ...)
  - How do we get instructions and data into the computer?



# Running your first program

How do we get instructions and data into the computer?

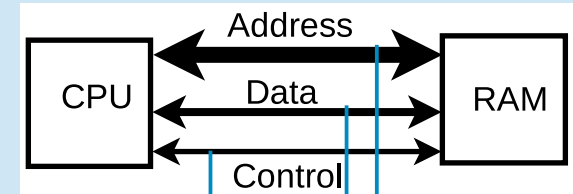
- One method: add a device to read and write directly into computer memory
- Here: Altair 8800 front panel



# Running your first program

First attempt: write program into memory before starting clock

- Altair 8800 or IMSAI 8080 front panel, switches.
- Punch in address with switches (binary code), press "store to location register"
- Punch in 1 byte, press store (possibly automatically updating the location register)
- Continue until you have put your data into memory



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altair\\_8800](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altair_8800)

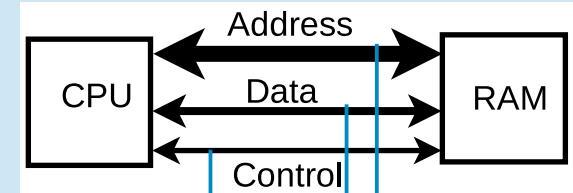
# Running your first program

## Issues:

- Manually punch in
- Takes time
- Have to convert data and programs to binary
- Easy to make mistakes

## A good thing:

- You get a single-step debugger for free!



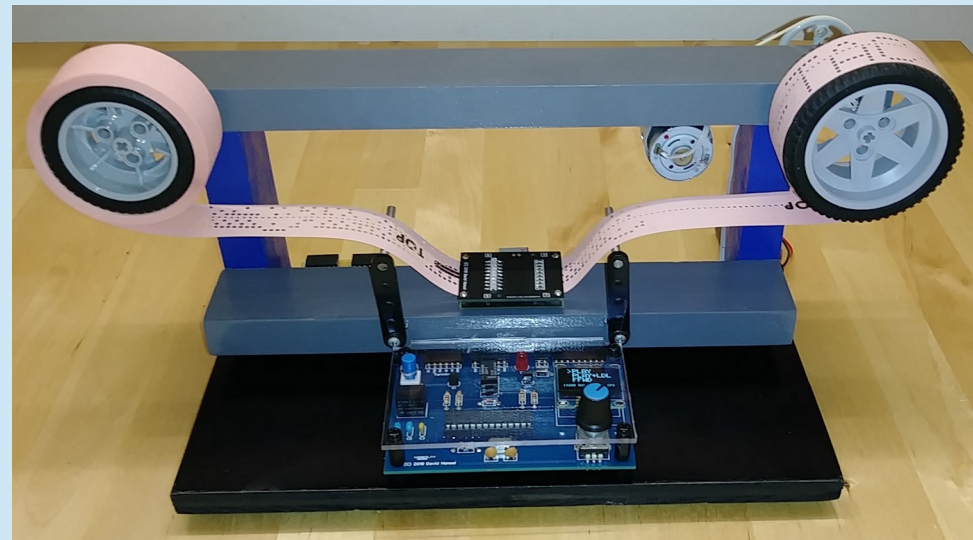
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altair\\_8800](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altair_8800)



# Enter the paper tape reader

Problem: too cumbersome to punch in everything, and very easy to make mistakes

- Solution: wire up the data input to a paper tape reader
  - Can read the bytes much faster
  - Reuses the "address counter" that was used previously
- A paper tape writer can be used to store programs (and data)



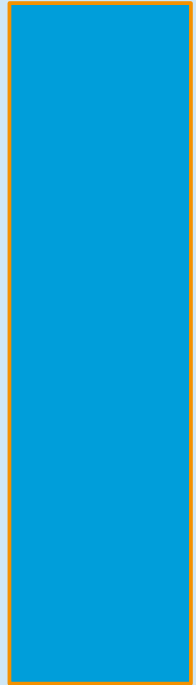
<https://github.com/dhansel/PaperTapeReader>

# Portability and simpler programming

- Problem: portability.
  - New revisions of computers change hardware slightly or introduce new features
  - Every program needs common routines (print, input, I/O devices, self-check of computer, ...)

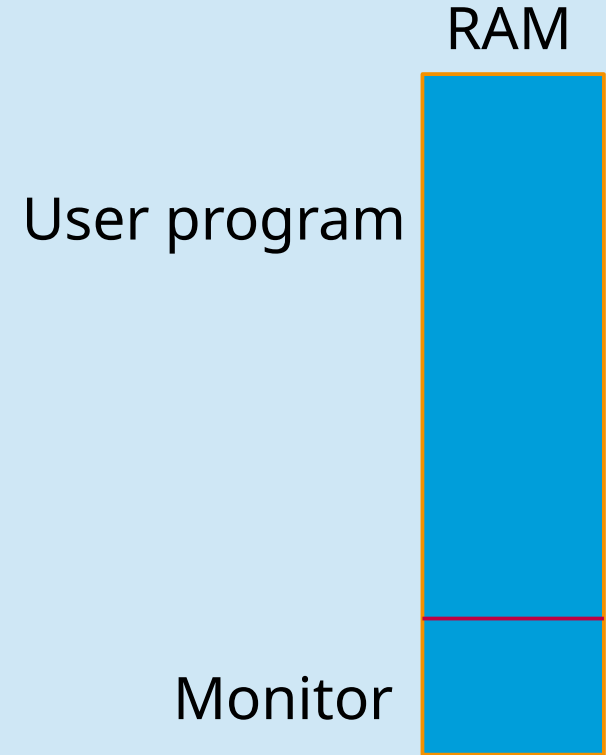
User program

RAM



# Portability and simpler programming

- Problem: portability.
  - New revisions of computers change hardware slightly or introduce new features
  - Every program needs common routines (print, input, I/O devices, self-check of computer, ...)
- Solution: provide a compatibility layer
  - Load a small program first in a fixed location in memory that takes care of interfacing with hardware
  - Then load your actual programs from a separate tape.
    - These can then call functions in fixed memory locations / entry points to use the functions from the first tape
  - Early computers would call this first program a "monitor"
  - Think about this as an early Hardware Abstraction Layer (HAL)



# Historical sidenote

- Altair 8800 (1974)
  - Intel 8080
  - Serial interface for console (typically teletype or terminal)
  - 1KByte or 4KByte memory cards
  - Various cards for I/O, BASIC (programming language) etc.
  - Origin of the S-100 bus
- IMSAI 8080
  - Altair clone
  - Used in the movie "War Games" (1983)



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altair\\_8800](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altair_8800)

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IMSAI\\_8080](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IMSAI_8080)



# A note about abstractions

- Terms to consider
  - Abstraction
  - Layer of indirection (you can often use this when you implement an abstraction)
- Some abstractions up to this point
  - Instruction set: (abstracts away the construction of the CPU to a "virtual CPU")
    - Side note: look at retro computing and emulation (both CPU and systems)
  - Monitor: abstracts away some of the functionality of a computer
    - Serial port for I/O
    - Other I/O devices
    - One way to look at the Monitor: it creates a "virtual machine"
      - Not to be confused with Virtual Machines (VM) that will be introduced later.

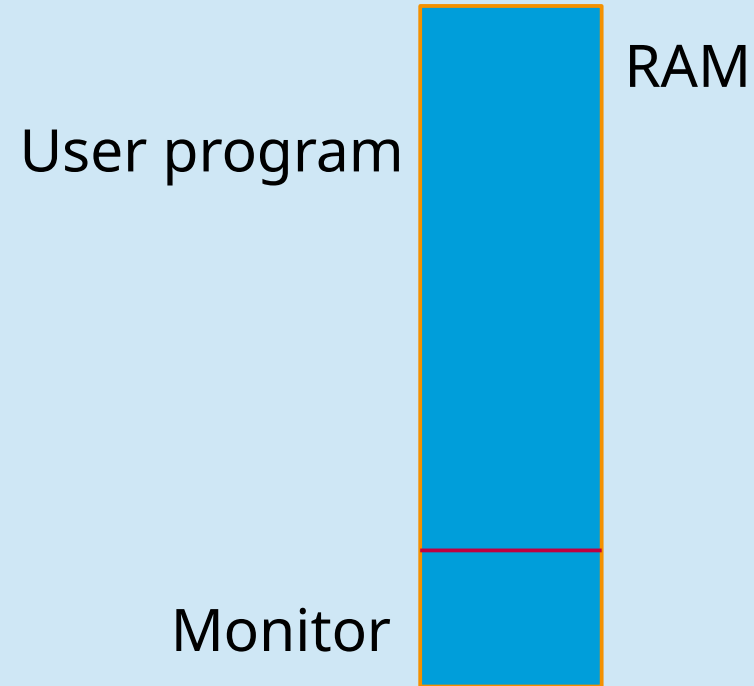
User programs

Monitor

Instruction set

# Next question: how to load monitor

- From tape: need two tapes (monitor + program) every time you want to run a program



# Next question: how to load monitor

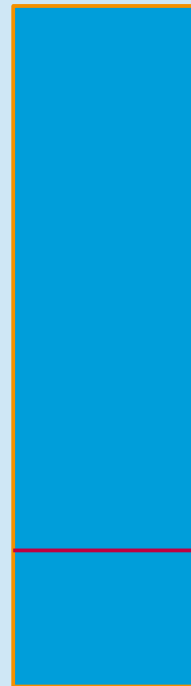
- From tape: need two tapes (monitor + program) every time you want to run a program
- Solution:
  - Use a read-only memory that does not lose information when powered off (ROM vs RAM).
  - Map the ROM into a fixed location in memory (instead of RAM)
  - Computer starts executing (8080 and Z80 : at addr 0) from ROM, sets up the computer
  - Monitor can provide a simple menu
  - Monitor could also support loading from external devices (Floppy disk, cassette tape, external tape readers, ...)
    - No longer need to always load from tape reader

User program

Monitor

RAM

ROM



# Side note: game consoles and game cartridges

Image: Fairchild Channel F

<https://www.fastcompany.com/3040889/the-untold-story-of-the-invention-of-the-game-cartridge>

- A game cartridge can be a basic ROM chip that is mapped into the address space of the CPU when it is slotted into the game console
  - It could also provide flash storage and extra RAM
- Think about it as a replaceable ROM
- Some history about the Atari 2600
  - <https://spectrum.ieee.org/atari-2600>

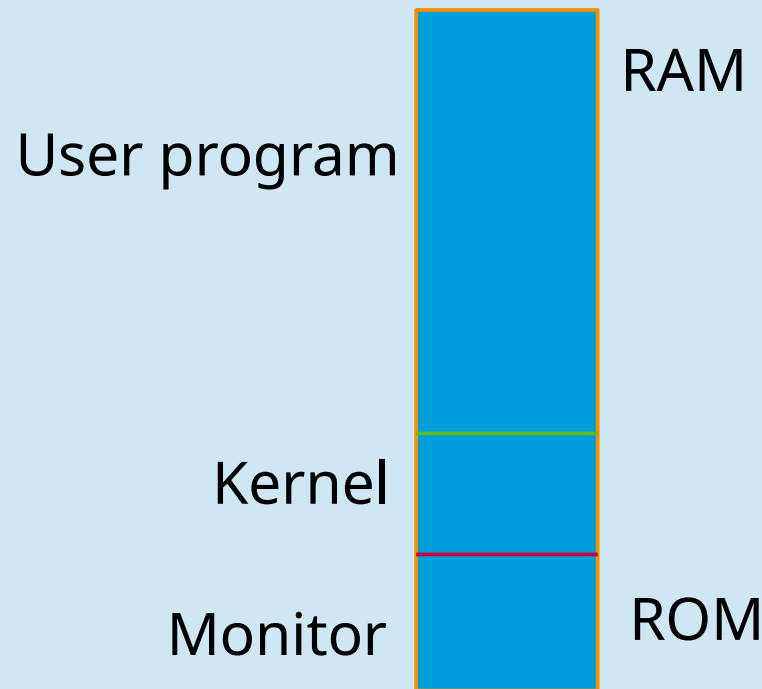


Image: <https://spectrum.ieee.org/atari-2600>



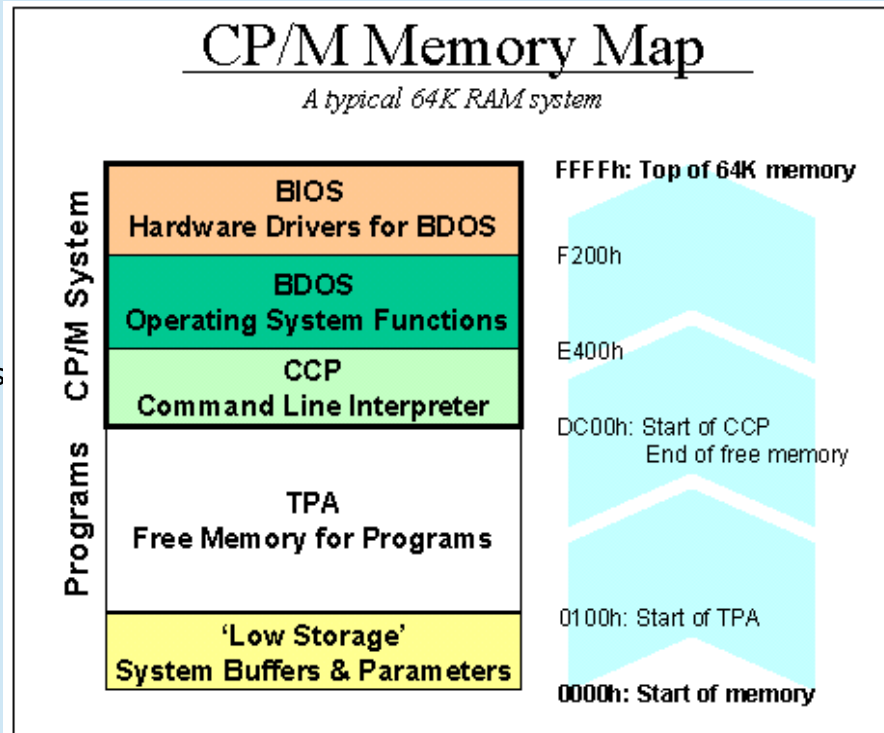
# Next question: is the monitor enough?

- Monitor can load programs, but hard to update
- Solution:
  - CPU starts executing from a small monitor in ROM
    - Basic functionality for I/O and hardware abstractions
    - In later systems, the monitor is replaced with a BIOS (Basic Input/Output System)
  - Monitor then loads a part 2 with more functionality for dealing with hardware, I/O, resources etc
    - Can load from any storage system
    - Easily updated to new versions
    - This is basically what we later will develop into an Operating System Kernel.



# Historical note: CP/M and BIOS

- Basic Input/Output System (BIOS)
  - The portability layer of CP/M
  - Porting to new computers: in principle, only the BIOS would need to be specific for the computer.
- Complexity
  - The BIOS must be mapped into addr 0 from the start (CPU starts executing there)
  - The operating system stores information from addr 0
  - => need to move the BIOS before executing the operating system
    - One option: let the BIOS
      - boot computer
      - load CP/M.
      - Then the relevant part of the BIOS can be copied to higher addresses before switching out the BIOS ROM.



<https://obsolescence.wixsite.com/obsolescence/cpm-internals>

# Booting on an old PC

- Computer turns on in **16-bit mode** and starts running BIOS
- BIOS loads a "Boot Loader" from a designated storage device (typically your first hard disk)
  - The boot loader is a tiny piece of code that has one task: find and load the operating system kernel
  - After the kernel is loaded, the boot loader jumps to a predefined start location in the kernel and the operating system is running
  - The operating system can choose to use the BIOS to handle I/O, but can also choose to interface directly with hardware
- This is similar to CP/M, but adds the boot loader
- To get to 64-bit mode, the operating system has to (see next foil)

# Booting a newer PC through legacy mode

Here be dragons:

- Load and start 16-bit operating system using BIOS
  - Real mode
  - Limited address space
    - Segmented memory: 16 bit addr => 64KB segments. Combine with segment register to create 20-bit addrs (1MB).
- Kernel switches to 32-bit mode. Rough description:
  - Protected mode (introduced with 80286)
  - Historical baggage: need to fiddle with keyboard driver to enable pin 20 on the address bus
  - Set up memory mapping (more about this later in the course): global descriptor table (GDT).
  - Enable 32-bit by setting Protection Enable bit in control register 0 (CR0).
  - Execute "long jump" (ljmp)
- Kernel can now switch to 64-bit mode:
  - Long mode
  - [https://wiki.osdev.org/Setting\\_Up\\_Long\\_Mode](https://wiki.osdev.org/Setting_Up_Long_Mode)
- Problems:
  - Complicated due to old baggage (backwards compatibility) – it's actually much more convoluted than the description above
  - Modern computers are dropping support for this (can no longer boot like this on many computers)
    - Booting directly using UEFI instead of BIOS
    - Future: dropping support for 16 and 32-bit mode:
      - <https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/developer/articles/technical/envisioning-future-simplified-architecture.html>
    - Or maybe not.. see updated note above on X86S

# Booting a modern PC - implications

Implications for our OS kernel

- P1 has to change – it no longer boots on modern hardware
- UEFI takes care of initialisation: our kernel can start directly from 64-bit mode
  - Security mechanisms may cause issues
- Newer hardware is more complicated and may require more drivers (ACPI, ...)
- May need to consider switch to simpler architectures