Sultan Moulay Slimane University

Higher School of Technology. Beni Mellal

English Module(First Year/Fall Semester

Prof. Hamid Masfour

Notes on Computer History

The computer as we know it today had its beginning with a 19th century English mathematics professor named Charles Babbage. He designed the Analytical Engine and it was this design that the basic framework of the computers of today are based on.

Generally speaking, computers can be classified into three generations. Each generation lasted for a certain period of time, and each gave us either a new and improved computer or an improvement to the existing computer.

First generation: 1937 – 1946 - In 1937 the first electronic digital computer was built by Dr. John V. Atanasoff and Clifford Berry. It was called the Atanasoff-Berry Computer (ABC). In 1943 an electronic computer named the Colossus was built for the military. Other developments continued until in 1946 the first general– purpose digital computer, the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer (ENIAC) was built. It is said that this computer weighed 30 tons, and had 18,000 vacuum tubes which was used for processing. When this computer was turned on for the first time lights dimmed in sections of Philadelphia. Computers of this generation could only perform single task, and they had no operating system.

Second generation: 1947 – 1962 - This generation of computers used transistors instead of vacuum tubes which were more reliable. In 1951 the first computer for commercial use was introduced to the public; the Universal Automatic Computer (UNIVAC 1). In 1953 the International Business Machine (IBM) 650 and 700 series

computers made their mark in the computer world. During this generation of computers over 100 computer programming languages were developed, computers had memory and operating systems. Storage media such as tape and disk were in use also were printers for output.

THE DICTIONARY IS RELIABLE- GOOD FRIENDS SHOULD BE RELABLE/HELPFUL OPP. UNRELIABLE

Third generation: 1963 - present - The invention of integrated circuit brought us the third generation of computers. With this invention computers became smaller, more powerful more reliable and they are able to run many different programs at the same time. In1980 Microsoft Disk Operating System (MS-Dos) was born and in 1981 IBM introduced the personal computer (PC) for home and office use. Three years later Apple gave us the Macintosh computer with its icon driven interface and the 90s gave us Windows operating system.   MORE SOPHISTICATED

As a result of the various improvements to the development of the computer, we have seen the computer being used in all areas of life. It is a very useful tool that will continue to experience new development as time passes.

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Computer Basics

A computer is an electronic machine that accepts data, stores and processes them into information. The computer is able to work because there are instructions in its memory directing it.

The parts of the computer that you can see and touch, such as the keyboard, monitor and the mouse are called hardware. The instructions that direct the computer are called software or computer program.

Data which is raw facts that you the user enter into the computer is called input. This includes; words, numbers, sound and pictures. When the data is entered into the computer, the computer processes the data to produce information which is output. For example, you enter 2+2 into the computer as data, the computer processes it and the result is 4 which is information.

Computers are usually categorized into three general categories:

1.**Supercomputer** – The fastest, largest, most powerful and most expensive computer.

2.**Mainframe Computer** – This is a little smaller and less powerful than the supercomputer, but, like the supercomputer it is also expensive.

3.**Personal Computer** (PC)- This is the computer that most people use in their daily lives. This computer is much smaller, less powerful and less expensive than the supercomputer and the mainframe computer. There are two main types of personal

computers. Macintosh (Macs) and the PC compatibles (PC). The main differences between the two are the operating systems and the processor they use. This category of computer has two additional types of computers. These are mobile computer and handheld computer. The most popular type of mobile computer is the notebook or laptop computer, and the handheld computer is a very small PC that you can hold in your hand.

It is important to note that, any computer; regardless of its size has an input device, output device and a system unit.