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MEMORY

It is interesting to note that memory, one of the basic components of the computer, is often called storage. It stores calculation program, the calculation formulae, initial data, intermediate and final results. Therefore, the functions of the computer memory may be classified in the following way. Firstly, the computer memory must store the information transmitted from the input and other devices. Secondly, memory should produce the information needed for the computation process to all other devices of the computer.

Generally, memory consists of two main parts called the main, primary or internal, memory and the secondary, or external memory. The advantage of the primary memory is an extremely high speed. The secondary memory has a comparatively low speed, but it is capable of storing far greater amount of information than the main memory. The primary storage takes a direct part in the computational process. The secondary storage provides the information necessary for a single step in the sequence of computation steps.

The most important performance characteristics of a storage unit are speed, capacity, and reliability. Its speed is measured in cycle time. Its capacity is measured by the number of machine words or binary digits. Its reliability is measured by the number of failures (отказ) per unit of time.