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Course: Computer Basics

Essay 2 – Defining Terms

1. Chip:
   1. A chip is a small component of a computer that is made of silicon and handles the transfer and storage of data. Also referred to as microchip these small components can be made up of millions of parts.
2. Circuit:
   1. Electrical circuits are made up of a power source and one or more items be powered by the power source. A circuit is usually a closed system the power leaves the power source travel through the circuit to the items needing power then is returned to the power source.
3. CPU:
   1. A CPU or central processing unit is a chip in your computer that manages all the tasks the user is requesting the computer to complete. This small chip only completes one task at a time but can handle millions of tasks per second. The CPU is main organizer of the computer’s tasks.
4. Data:
   1. Data is information that is stored by the computer. Data is stored in the computer’s memory.
5. Database:
   1. A database is a collection of similar data that is organized by categories. An example of data that would be stored in a database would be statistics for athletes or corporations stock prices.
6. Execute:
   1. Execute refers the commencement of a list of instructions or tasks that something will perform. For example when a user clicks on an icon to tell the computer to open a program the computer executes the instructions that allow it to open that program.
7. File:
   1. Files come in many forms but all files and a way of storing certain types of date. For instance a .txt file is a way of storing text while a .jpg file is file that stores a picture. Some files store a list of instructions that tell the computer to carry out task. These are often times called executable files.
8. Hard Drive:
   1. The hard drive of a computer is where the bulk of all the data on a computer is stored. A hard drive is usually made up of a spinning disk encapsulated in plastic or aluminum case. The hard drive stores information in sectors on its disk. One’s music library on their computer would be stored in the computer’s hard drive.
9. Hardware:
   1. Hardware of a computer is the actual physical components that make up the computer. For example if a computer was a bank the hardware would be the teller’s counter, the vault, the drive up window etc.
10. Programming Language:
    1. Programming languages come in many different variations but all do pretty much the same thing. They allow programmers to write code that gives the computer a specific list of instruction to carry out. Programming languages help allow programmers to communicate to the computer.
11. RAM:
    1. RAM or random access memory acts as short term storage for a computer. The RAM stores information that is needed to be accessed by the user immediately. RAM is often referred to a volatile memory because it is changing constantly and is erased when your computer shuts down or reboots.
12. Software:
    1. Software is a set of instructions that lets the user interact with the computer hardware. Software can be contained on disc or downloaded for the internet. Most software enhance the user’s experience.