

Title:

Why Is Computer Software Soft?

Word Count:

404

Summary:

Have you ever wonder (I'm sure you have at least about other similar words) where a word like software comes from. I mean were floppy disks soft and malleable at one time. Or were the protective sleeves for the old hard diskettes made of some velvety material that made them "soft"ware. Well I love this sort of thing and would like to explore with you in the following several paragraphs the origin of this word and why it is so commonplace in our computer software age.

In or...

Keywords:

computer software

Article Body:

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In order to understand the derivation of the term software, as in computer software, you must first understand that there is hardware as well. The meaning of hardware probably has a lot of levels of meaning and most were probably serendipitous over a lunch or other social gathering.

Hardware refers to the "guts of the computer machine, the actual physical reality of a disk drive and a hard disk and a monitor and the like. These are actual physical entities that make them "hard." You can hold them, carry them, etc. Software on the other hand is more theoretical than physical. Sure the code is "hard" composed of 1's and 0's for bits and bytes but it is not hard in the sense that you can actually touch the ones and zeros with your hand, chew on them, and anything else that you might be able to do with hardware.

Software is the program that does things in more of a virtual or abstract level. It will save information as something that is unseen but totally retrievable and capable of with the help of hardware, produce an image that can be seen with the eyes.

There are two points to be made here. First the sensation of site does not make something hard or soft. Never has. It is touch that determines this description and this is a useful way to determine the hardness or softness of computer software and hardware.

A good example of this test is the phrase hard copy or soft copy of a document. The hard copy is on the document in actual paper page form and the softcopy is all of the ones and zeros that make up in a theoretical sense (more representative than actual) the writing on the page. Thinking about it this way may help you to sort out what is computer software and what is computer hardware.