

Some Commonly Used Terms in Computers

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Programme: It is a set of instructions given to the computer in a particular sequence for solving a given problem. In other words, it contains a set of actions to be performed by the computer on the data to produce necessary result. Programming is done in one of the computer languages.

Software: It is a collection of programmes written to bring the hardware of a computer system into operation. We cannot do any thing useful with the computer hardware on its own. It has to be driven by certain utility programmes called software which are stored in the computer system. There are two types of software:

1. **Application Software:** It refers to programmes or sets of programmes that perform a specific processing application, e.g., payroll and inventory control.
2. **System Software:** It consists of sets of programmes that act as an interface between the user and hardware, e.g., operating system like Windows, Mac OS, and UNIX etc.

Hardware: It is the term given to the machinery itself and to the various individual pieces of electronic equipment.

Liveware: The users working on the system are termed as ?liveware?.

Firmware: It is defined as software embedded into the hardware, e.g., ROM, which has the basic input-output system (BIOS).

Compiler: A programme which translates a high-level language programme into machine language.

Interpreter: A programme that translates each instruction of high level language and executes it before passing on to the next instruction.

Assembler: A programme which converts assembly language programme into machine language programme. It is system software.

Multiprocessing: In this of processing, the CPU has a number of processors which operate in parallel, thereby allowing simultaneous execution of several programmes.

Multiprogramming: This type of processing enables more than one programme to reside in the central memory at the same time, and share the available processor time and peripheral units.

Distributed Data Processing: It is also called decentralized processing. This approach involves using a network of computers interconnected by or minicomputer lines where each remote location has a small computer or minicomputer for input-output communication with a central computer and some local processing.

Bit: It is the basic unit of digital information. It can have only two values- one and zero.

Nibble: combination of four bits.

Byte: Combination of eight bits.

- 1 Kilobyte = 1024 bytes
- 1 Megabyte = (1024)x(1024) bytes
- 1 Gigabyte = (1024)x(1024)x(1024) bytes

Word: Combination of two or more than two bytes.

Database: It is a general collection of data shared by a variety of users. In particular, it has the following features:

- Redundancy of data is eliminated.
- Data is independent of any programme.
- Date is usable by many users, simultaneously.

Time Sharing: It is the concurrent use of a single computer system by many independent users. In time sharing, many terminals can be attached to a central computer. The terminal users can thus share time on the computer, that is, time sharing. The operating system can allocate the CPU time of the various users by giving each a time slice, each operating independently without awareness of use by others.

Microprocessor: It is a single chip based device, which is a complete processor in itself and is capable of performing arithmetic and logical operations.

Modem: An electronic device used to convert computer (digital) electronic signal to communication channel (analog) electronic signals and vice-versa. It is used in distributed data processing where terminals are joined by a telecommunication link to the host computer.