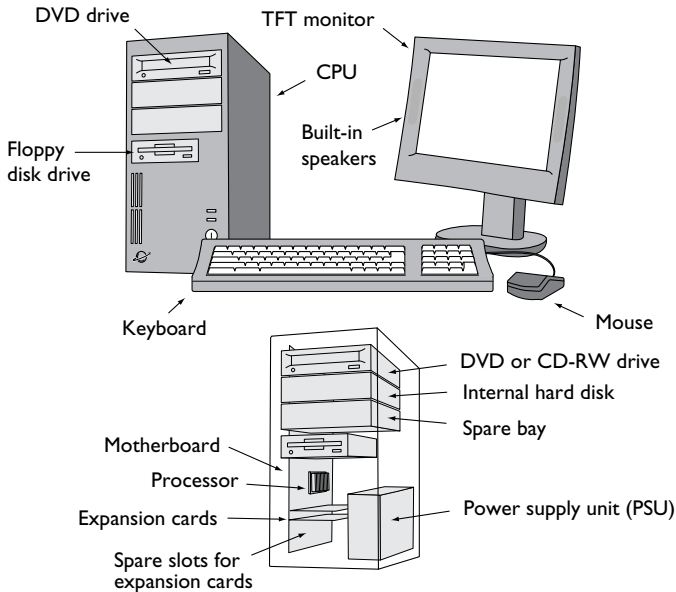


# Anatomy of a PC

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The following pages describe a typical computer system known as a PC (personal computer) which is found in homes, schools and businesses. It is a type of microcomputer.



*A modern desktop PC with cut-away showing internal features*

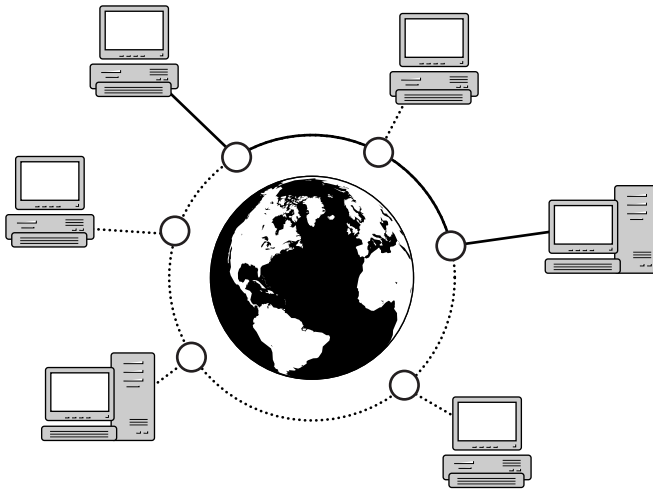
A PC is a small desktop microcomputer, typically built around a single printed circuit board called a motherboard. The PC consists of three basic parts: a base unit (containing the processor, memory and disk drives), a keyboard (and mouse), and a monitor. Additional devices (known as peripherals) can be connected to increase its functionality.

Modern technology has allowed portable equivalents of desktop computers to be made. These portable (notebook) computers combine the basic parts into a single unit. Although notebooks have the advantage over desktop microcomputers in size, weight and portability, they are usually not as powerful, they are more expensive and will not allow standard interface cards to be slotted in.

# The Internet

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The Internet is a huge international network made up of many smaller networks linked together like a spider's web. It started as a 'self-healing' communication system for the US government in case of nuclear disaster. It was then taken up by the academic community to exchange research material. It grew to include business and personal networks and is now a vast network spanning the globe.



The Internet is made possible by a collection of protocols which allow different computer systems to communicate with each other, regardless of the type of system being used. The main protocol which underpins the Internet is called TCP/IP (transmission control protocol/Internet protocol). Important protocols relying on TCP/IP include:

- SMTP (simple mail transfer protocol) – defines the way in which email (see page 51) is handled
- FTP (file transfer protocol) – enables users to transfer or download files to their computer
- HTTP (hypertext transfer protocol) – allows the browsing of World Wide Web pages (see page 54).

# Word processing

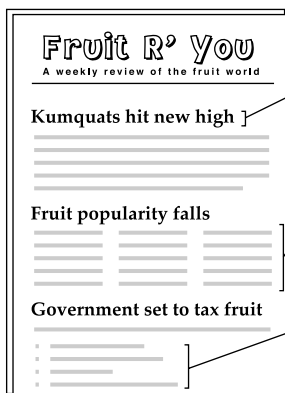
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A word processor can be used to write letters, reports, essays, projects, memos, curriculum vitae, theses – in fact, any form of written work. When text is entered at the keyboard, the characters and words are displayed on the screen and held in the computer's memory. This work can be saved to disk and printed.

The advantage of using a word processor is that the text can be changed (edited) onscreen and reprinted if mistakes are made. The word processor also has many features which can be used to format the document.

## Formatting

When we format a document we choose the way it looks. Characters can be **bold**, *italic*, underlined or CAPITAL letters. The spacing between letters and lines can be altered or the writing can be set out in columns or tables.



### **Bold**

Emboldening titles, sub-titles, words or phrases will make them stand out.

### **Columns**

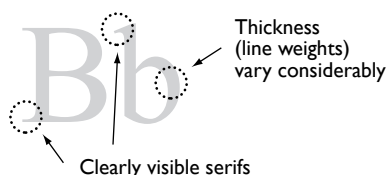
Text can be placed in columns like those of a newspaper.

### **Bullets**

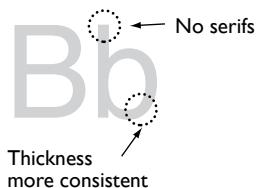
Bullets are used to highlight a series of statements or a list in the document. The most common bullet is the filled circle.

## Fonts

Font is the name we give to a style of print. There are many different fonts. Two quite common ones are Times and Helvetica:



*Times – A serif font*



*Helvetica – A sans serif font*