

Competitive Exams Hardware Versus Software

What is the difference between computer hardware and software?

Hardware

In simplest terms, hardware is the physical parts associated with a computer-the electronic, magnetic, and mechanical devices monitor, keyboard, printer, micro chip boards, floppy drives, cables and physical pieces of a system. These INPUT/OUTPUT DEVICES allow the operator to interact with the computer.

Software

Sets of programs stored sets of instructions that govern the operation of the computer system and make the hardware perform. These programs instructions tell the hardware how to do a particular task such as word

processing, games, database management, etc. Although these instructions are usually stored inside a piece of hardware e. g. software instructions stored inside a circuit chip or floppy drive but they are nevertheless software.

In a way, Software refers to the instructions that enable an otherwise dead machine to understand your inputs and transform them into desired outputs. Computer hardware by itself lacks personality; this is determined by the software. Word processing software turns the computer into a word processor, accounting software turns the computer into an accounting tool, etc.

There are two major types of software: Operating system software and Applications software.

- Operating system software like DOS, UNIX or Windows 95 performs very elemental housekeeping instructions e. g. where is the monitor, how can I keep track of what data is on which track or sector of a floppy drive, whether more than user can work on the system at the same time e. g. UNIX. The operating system that all IBM and compatible PC's use is called DOS sounds like floss. DOS is software that allows the terminal, printer, computer and mass storage systems floppy disks to work together as a unit, and controls the execution of programs. It also allows you to do housekeeping chores regarding managing disks and files.
- Applications programs perform tasks on a higher level e. g. word processing Spreadsheet, Games, Database Management, Accounting, Payroll programs are applications. Generally an application software package uses the lower level operating system DOS to do routine tasks e. g. your word processing application uses the lower level DOS operating system frequently to write and store data on a disk.

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What is a Database?

A database is a collection of information that is organized for ease of reference. For example, your address book is a database, just as an inventory of goods, a list of all churches in your state or your staff list.

Before Electronic processing of information, databases had to be maintained on paper stored in file folders that were kept in filing cabinets. With Electronic DataBase Management Systems DBMS, information stored electronically and be recalled instantly and accurately.