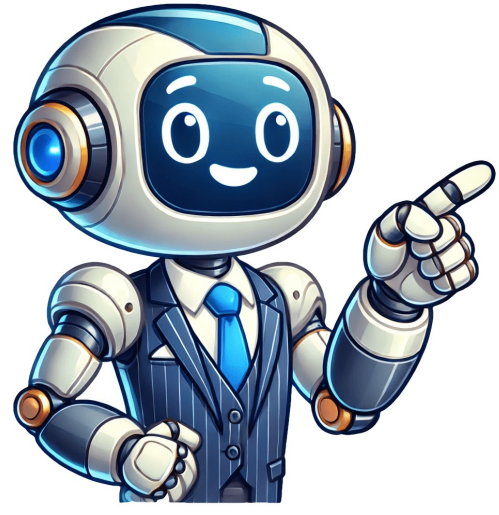


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Technology Computers Ask the Chatbot a Question computer, device for processing, storing, and displaying information. Computer once meant a person who did computations, but now the term almost universally refers to automated electronic machinery. The first section of this article focuses on modern digital electronic computers and their design, constituent parts, and applications. The second section covers the history of computing. For details on computer architecture, software, and theory, see computer science. The first computers were used primarily for numerical calculations. However, as any information can be numerically encoded, people soon realized that computers are capable of much more than simple calculations. They can store and retrieve information, and they can be programmed to perform a wide range of tasks. Computers are also cheap enough to be embedded in everyday appliances and to make clothes dryers and rice cookers "smart." Computers have allowed us to pose and answer questions that were difficult to pursue in the past. These questions might be about DNA sequences in genes, patterns of activity in a consumer market, or all the uses of the world's tools that have been stored in a database. Increasingly, computers can also learn and adapt as they operate by using processes such as machine learning. Computers also have limitations, some of which are theoretical. For example, there are undecidable propositions whose truth cannot be determined within a given set of rules, such as the logical structure of a computer. Because no universal algorithmic method can exist to identify such propositions, a computer asked to obtain the truth of such a proposition will (unless forcibly interrupted) continue indefinitely—a condition known as the "halting problem." (See Turing machine.) Other limitations reflect current technology. For example, although computers have progressed greatly in terms of processing data and using artificial intelligence algorithms, they are limited by their incapacity to think in a more holistic fashion. Computers may imitate humans—quite effectively, even—but imitation may not replace the human element in social interaction. Ethical concerns also limit computers, because computers rely on data, rather than a moral compass or human conscience, to make decisions. Computers and Technology Quiz Analog computers use continuous physical magnitudes to represent quantitative information. At first they represented quantities with mechanical components (see differential analyzer and integrator), but later they used electronic devices, such as resistors and capacitors, and analog computers are now almost entirely digital. Analog computers are used in some specialized applications, such as in the control of a model airplane. They are also used in some scientific and engineering applications, such as in the control of a model airplane. Another advantage is that analog computers can frequently represent and solve a problem in "real time," that is, the computation proceeds at the same rate as the system being modeled. By the same token, the major disadvantages are that analog representations are limited in precision, typically a few decimal places but fewer in complex mechanisms—and general-purpose devices are expensive and not easily programmed. In contrast to analog computers, digital computers represent information in discrete form, generally as sequences of 0s and 1s (binary digits, or bits). The modern era of digital computers began in the late 1930s and early 1940s in the United States, Britain, and Germany. The first devices used switches operated by electromagnets (relays). Their programs were stored on punched paper tape or cards, and they had limited internal data storage. 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artificial intelligence, big data analysis, and automation. Innovations like cloud computing have transformed how software and data are accessed. Overall, the continuous improvement of computers has reshaped society, economy, and culture, enabling innovations that were once unimaginable. Computer usage impacts the environment through energy consumption, electronic waste, and resource extraction. Data centers and personal devices require significant electricity, often generated from fossil fuels, contributing to carbon emissions. Manufacturing computers involves mining rare earth metals and other materials, which can cause habitat destruction and pollution. Electronic waste, if improperly disposed of, releases toxic substances harmful to ecosystems and human health. To reduce environmental impact, efforts focus on energy-efficient hardware, recycling programs, and sustainable manufacturing practices. Consumers can help by extending device lifespans, supporting green technology, and responsibly recycling electronics.

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