

Hardware

CPU

“Brain” of computer; makes all the decisions and controls the computer. Also has a cache, which is a temporary store for data. The clock speed is how many decisions per second it can make. Our computers have a speed of 2 Gz, which means they can do 2 billion decisions per second!

Heat sink and fan

These are in place to keep the CPU cool. The CPU is working so hard it would over heat without any cooling, and the CPU would eventually fail.

Secondary Storage

The hard drive is a magnetic device (don't put magnets on your PC!) that you can store your work on. But it will only be stored locally on that individual computer.

In school we are on a network, so we store our work on our own little slot of the server, a big computer stored in the IT office. That's why we have a unique user number and password to access our slot. It means we can access our work anywhere in the school!

RAM (Random Access Memory)

Temporary stores our work and holds it until we save it somewhere permanent. Anything on the RAM is wiped if the computer is switched off, so save your work regularly! The more RAM we have, the faster our computer can do lots of things at the same time.

Motherboard

Circuit board that all the devices attach onto, which means they are connected.

ROM

Read only memory (which means that you can look at it but can't change it). Contains the start up instructions for the computer. Why would I want the boot up instructions to be read only...?

Ports

The correct term for the holes that devices are plugged into e.g. USB port.