

COMPUTER CLASSIFICATIONS

Computers can be generally classified by size and power as follows:

- **Personal computer:** A small single user computer based on a microprocessor. In addition to the microprocessor, a personal computer has a key board for entering data, a monitor for displaying information, and a storage device for saving data.
- **Workstation:** A powerful, single user computer. A workstation is like a personal computer, but it has a more powerful microprocessor and a higher quality monitor.
- **Minicomputer:** A multi-user computer capable of supporting from 10 to hundreds of users simultaneously.
- **Mainframe:** A powerful multi-user computer capable of supporting many hundreds or thousands of users simultaneously.
- **Supercomputer:** An extremely fast computer that can perform hundreds of millions of instructions per second.
- **Laptop computers:** A laptop is a battery powered personal computer that can be easily carried and used in a variety of locations. Many laptops are designed to have all the functionality of a desktop computer, which means they can generally run the same software and open the same types of files.

However, some laptops such as net books sacrifice some functionality in order to be even more portable.

- **Net book:** This is a type of laptop that is designed to be even more portable. Net books are often cheaper than laptops or desktops. They are generally less powerful than other types of computers, but they provide enough power for email and internet access, which is where the “net book” comes from.
- **Mobile device:** This is basically any hand held computer. It is designed to be extremely portable, often fitting in the palm of your hand or in your pocket. Some mobile devices are more powerful, and they allow you to do many of the same things you can do with a desktop or laptop computer. Examples are tablet computers, e-readers and smart phones
- **Tablet computers:** Like laptops, tablets computers are designed to be portable. However, they provide a very different computing experience. The most obvious difference is that they don’t have key boards or touch pads. Instead, the entire screen is touch-sensitive allowing you to type on a virtual keyboard and use your finger as a mouse pointer. Tablet computers are mostly designed for consuming media, and they are optimized for tasks like web browsing, watching videos, reading e-books and playing games.
- **Smart phones:** This is a powerful mobile phone that is designed to run a variety of applications in addition to phone service. They are basically small tablet computers and they can be used for web browsing and all that a tablet can do.