

Unit 10 — Computer Types

Reading: Recognizing Different Types of Computers

In this unit you will learn about different types of computers and what makes them unique.

Computers were not always things you could carry around with you, or even have in your bedroom. Sixty years ago, computers (such as ENIAC) were as big as entire apartments. They were difficult to use and not very powerful by today's standards. They also cost a lot of money to build and operate. So computers were only used by large organizations such as governments, international corporations, and universities.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, computers captured the public's imagination in literature, films, and TV. More and more companies wanted computers, even if they didn't always have a good reason to own one. As a result, computers gradually became smaller, cheaper, and more practical to own. This was thanks in part to companies like IBM, which mass-produced computers for the first time and promoted them to medium and large businesses to do things like payroll, accounting, and other number-crunching tasks.

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Discussion Questions

What is meant by the term 'convergence'?

Why did companies in the 1980's shift away from mainframes and move towards personal computers?

Write a short essay discussing the following sentence. "Today's supercomputer is tomorrow's legacy system."