

# What is a computer?

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LISA Works-In-Progress  
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# RTFM



Webster says  
“one that computes;  
specifically : a  
programmable  
usually electronic  
device that can  
store, retrieve, and  
process data”

# Does the interweb say?

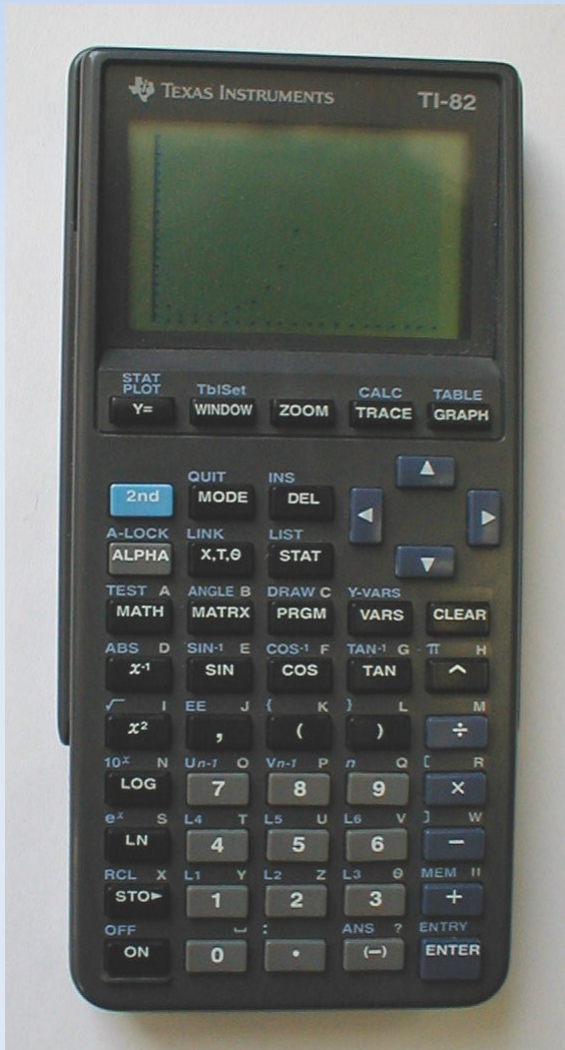
- A programmable machine that inputs, processes and outputs data
- A multi-function electronic device that can execute instructions to perform a task
- A device that monitors nitrogen in the body during a dive through mathematical algorithms.

Of course we KNOW what a computer is



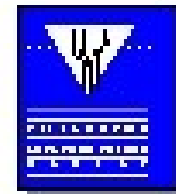
- Riku Itapuro said “memory, cpu, applications, network connection”
- Moose said “It's your microwave. It's your cell phone. Some days it's your oven”
- Pat Wilson “It's whatever I'm working on”
- Jonathan Billings “The Turing Machine”

# Ambiguous devices



- programmable
- storage and retrieval
- recalls state
- ability to network with other such devices and PCs

# Ambiguous hardware



My other computer was a 12 node  
Beowulf cluster!

# What about PDAs?



- Flash-able firmware
- QWERTY keyboard
- Tons of applications
- 33.6 modem
- PCMCIA slot
- MIPS R4000

short plug

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