The hardware

The *hardware* is composed of the physical elements that form a computer system. According to their function, these elements can be divided into input devices and output devices. All the units which are connected to the computer are generally called peripherals.

Input devices are the pieces of hardware that allow us to introduce information into the computer. Two of the most important input devices are the keyboard and the mouse. The keyboard is a set of keys that are used to introduce characters to write texts, much in the same way as the old typewriters used to do. Apart from the keys that are used for writing, a keyboard also has a set of other keys (called function keys) that give access to different options of the programmes.

The mouse is a hand device that allows you to move a pointer (also called 'cursor') and select elements on the screen. A mouse normally has two buttons (the left button and the right button) to communicate with the computer, and a wheel to move through web pages or documents. With a mouse you can perform different actions. You can click (press the left button), double-click (press the left button twice), drag (hold down the button, move the pointer and then release it) to change the position of certain elements, like files or images, and right-click (press the right button) to display a list of options. Both the keyboard and the mouse are usually connected to the computer through cables, but they can also be wireless (or cordless), which means that they have no cable. These send *data* to the computer *by using* infrared signals.

Other examples of input devices are the joystick, which is used to interact with video games; the microphone, which introduces sound into the system; the webcam, which allows us to send and receive video pictures through the Internet, and the scanner. The scanner is a peripheral used to capture and introduce images into the computer. We can also connect digital cameras to introduce photos and video into the system, where we can manipulate them with the appropriate software.

On the other hand, the **output devices** are those pieces of hardware that display the results obtained by the computer. The most obvious of these is the monitor (or screen), which sometimes is also called VDU (Visual Display Unit). The monitor is the place where we can visualize all the results sent out by the computer.

Another example of an output device is the printer, which prints text or images on paper. There are different types of printers: the dot-matrix printers create a group (matrix) of dots to make letters or images; the ink-jet printer creates the text and the images by spraying dots of ink onto the paper; the laser printer

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uses a laser to fix the ink on the paper, in the same way as a photocopier does. The plotter is a special type of printer with some fine pens that draw detailed designs. Plotters are normally used by designers and illustrators to print their work.

Speakers and headphones are two examples of audio output systems. Speakers are used to display sound; the speakers can be connected to a computer or they can be built-in speakers. Headphones have the same function, but they are used to display sound directly into our ears.

Anglès tècnic per a SMX. IOC

1-Writing remarks:

Skim the text and answer these questions:

A. How many paragraphs are there in the text?
B. How many lines does the introduction have?
C. After the introduction, what are the two main topics?
D. How many paragraphs do they have?
E. Write five different relative pronouns from the text and the word they replace.

2-Reading comprehension:

Read the questions and find the answers in the text. Write them in full sentences using your own words.

A. What are the "peripherals"?

B. Do we have another word for "pointer"?

C. What actions can you do with a mouse, according to the text?

D. What's the difference between a scanner and a digital camera?

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E. Write the three different terms to say "pantalla" that appear in the text.

F. How many different types of printers are mentioned in the text?
G. What do speakers and headphones have in common?

3-Writing a summary.

Write a short summary of the text (one paragraph with 5 to 8 lines). In order to prepare your summary, think about these three points:

- What words are especially important? Mark them
- A summary uses the most important ideas from the text
- A summary doesn't include examples

When you finish your summary, read it again and pay attention to possible mistakes: helpful title, spelling mistakes, capital letters, punctuation, plural / singular forms, verb forms ...

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