

COMPUTER INPUT DEVICES

A variety of *input devices* can be connected to a computer to allow the user to input different kinds of data and to control the computer in different ways. Some common input devices and their functions are shown in the tables below:

Standard input device

<i>Device</i>	<i>Comments</i>
keyboard	Main input device controlling the computer and inputting text and numerical data.

Cursor control input devices

<i>Device</i>	<i>Comments</i>
mouse	Common input device for use with a graphical user interface. The mouse has a ball underneath that is rolled on a mousemat.
trackerball	It is like a mouse turned upside down. The trackerball remains in one position while the user rotates a small ball on top. Often used instead of a mouse on portable computers.
joystick	A vertical lever allows the user to control the cursor precisely and at high speed. Particularly good for playing fast action games.
touchscreen	The user interacts with the computer by lightly pressing their finger on a touch-sensitive area of the monitor screen.

Optical input devices

<i>Device</i>	<i>Comments</i>
lightpen	It detects differences in reflected light. It can be used for drawing directly on the monitor screen or for reading printed optical characters or barcodes.
graphics tablet	Used with a lightpen for drawing. The user draws on the tablet with a lightpen as if they were drawing on a sheet of paper.
barcode reader	A special kind of lightpen for reading barcodes. Barcodes are used to identify items for stock control and pricing.
scanner	Used to input text and graphics from a printed page.
digital camera	Used to take pictures of an object. The picture is stored electronically and can be edited using a computer.
Voice input device	
<i>Device</i>	<i>Comments</i>
microphone	Used to input sound.