

Types of computer devices

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It may feel that there is a massive range of computer devices available, and that it is hard to know where to start. In general, devices are broadly split into handheld devices that don't have keyboards such as tablets and smartphones, and larger desk-based computers.

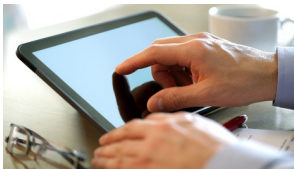
The type of device that is most appropriate for you will depend on how and where you would like to use it. In this guide we will cover each type of device and when they are best used. Before buying a device, we would recommend seeing a few in action, either by asking friends and family to show you, or by visiting a local computer store.

Types of devices:



Smartphones

A smartphone is a handheld mobile phone with a touch screen, that can be used to access the internet. A smartphone is a great way to access the internet when you are out and about, but the small screen size means it is hard to do prolonged or detailed tasks on them.



Tablets

Tablets are portable computers, that look almost like a large smartphone. They operate through their touch screen which can vary in size, there is no physical keyboard. Tablets are a good option for looking at the internet when you are out and about, or when sitting in a comfy chair, but can be frustrating to write long messages on!



Laptops

Laptops are computers that fold down flat so they can be transported easily- great for using on the train or if you don't have a permanent desk space. They vary in size from about 8 - 17inch screens, and they have keyboards, which makes them most suited to using at a desk. Some laptops have touch screens as well as keyboards, which allows them to be used in a similar way to a tablet.



Desktops

These are perhaps the device people think about when they hear the word computer. They are non-portable devices with a screen and keyboard. They are great if you want a home computer that doesn't move, as you can have a large screen, keyboard and a mouse. In some desktops the computer screen contains the computing device- these are called all-in-ones.

Every device works differently. For more support with a specific device, it is best to head to the help pages on the manufacturer's website. We also have other guides below that can help you!

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Next steps

- ▶ [What is a tablet computer?](#)
- ▶ [What is an iPad?](#)
- ▶ [What is a smartphone?](#)
- ▶ [How to choose a computer or tablet](#)
- ▶ [How to choose a smartphone](#)
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