**History of Computing**

Definition of computers

The definition of a computer before 1935 was a human who performed calculations. Between 1935 and 1945 it started to refer to a machine. The modern day definition is ***‘a device that accepts input, processes data, stores data and produces output’***.

How humans have developed methods of calculations through history

Throughout history, humans have developed different methods of calculation to help them solve more advanced problems and to help them handle more data easily and efficiently. Computers are the most recent form of this. The earliest known tool for calculation was the [abacus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abacus) and was probably invented in [Babylon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon) in [2400 BC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2400_BC). This type of abacus used lines in the sand and pebbles as counters and was very advanced for the time. Around 100BC the earliest known mechanical analog computer was invented to calculate astronomical positions; it was called the Antikythera mechanism and was developed in Greece. This was later developed by Muslim astronomers during the medieval period. Also, during the middle Ages, European philosophers tried to make analog computer devices too but these machines were never constructed.

In the 19th century there was a major break-through when Charles Babbage, a mathematician, philosopher, inventor and mechanical engineer, invented the first mechanical computer. This was the start of the computing era and during this time computers were hugely developed into the computers we know today.

Computers in the 20th and 21st Century

During the 20th and 21st century, computers have been developed and improved, revolutionising the world and meaning that we are able to have personal devices in our homes. In the early 20th century the first computers were the size of a house but now they are the size of your palm. Computers have changed quickly and dramatically as components have improved and developed with each inventor building on another’s ideas. For example, the century started with huge computers then to bring the size down scientists invented an electronic chip that brought down the size of the components and now we have micro-chips that allow us to have hand held computers such as smart watches and laptops. Maybe in the future we can have glasses that allow us to play games with holograms that scientists are also close to inventing.

Mobile Phones

Whilst many computers are still stationary, most are now hand held devices that we carry around with us. There are more simple mobile phones and more developed phones [smart phones]. Simpler phones allow us to text, phone, take pictures and maybe play the odd game. These may not sound like a lot but it is still a huge step forward from the big bold phones of the 1980s. The smart phones we now have enable us to do anything we like and even more than we can do on our desktop computers. These things may seem like part of our everyday lives but they have changed the way we live our lives massively.

Computers have moved from being a calculating device to a way of living. Scientists are even trying to invent computers that think like humans. It is impossible to imagine how computers will have developed in a 100 years’ time.