CSC104 winter 2013

Why and how of computing

week 3

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Text: Picturing Programs

how to solve it

it being a new problem

Clearly there's no fool-proof method, but there's some techniques that often make progress. It helps to write down the whole process:

- Understand the problem
- Devise (one or more) plan(s)
- Try the plan
- Look back

paper folding?

try it out

- Understand the problem (what's given, what's required)?
- Devise a plan
- Try at least one plan (be ready to abandon it too)
- Look back

In media res

racing with Alice

Representing even simple information is hard. Let's race through this table:

b_7 →				0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
b_6 →				0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
b_5 →				0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Bits	b_4 ↓	b_3 ↓	b_2 ↓	b_1 ↓	Row ↓ / Column →	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	0	0	0	0	0	NUL	DLE	SP	0	@	P	`	p
	0	0	0	1	1	SOH	DC1	!	1	A	Q	a	q
	0	0	1	0	2	STX	DC2	"	2	B	R	b	r
	0	0	1	1	3	ETX	DC3	#	3	C	S	c	s
	0	1	0	0	4	EOT	DC4	$	4	D	T	d	t
	0	1	0	1	5	ENQ	NAK	%	5	E	U	e	u
	0	1	1	0	6	ACK	SYN	&	6	F	V	f	v
	0	1	1	1	7	BEL	ETB	'	7	G	W	g	w
	1	0	0	0	8	BS	CAN	(	8	H	X	h	x
	1	0	0	1	9	HT	EM	)	9	I	Y	i	y
	1	0	1	0	10	LF	SUB	*	:	J	Z	j	z
	1	0	1	1	11	VT	ESC	+	;	K	[	k	{
	1	1	0	0	12	FF	FC	,	<	L	\	l	|
	1	1	0	1	13	CR	GS	-	=	M	]	m	}
	1	1	1	0	14	SO	RS	.	>	N	^	n	~
	1	1	1	1	15	SI	US	/	?	O	_	o	DEL

Early devices

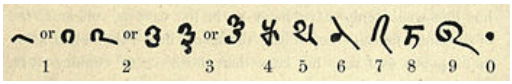
tally systems

Clay tablets, read-only when baked,
read/write when sundried,
havebeen in use for at least 5,000 years.

Abacuses, or abaci, have been
in use for nearly as long

Number systems and gears

ancient world

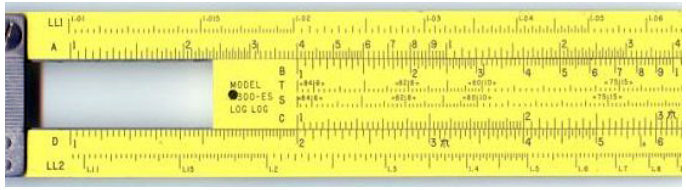


Hindu-Arabic numbers: positional notation, and zero over 2000 years ago
slick algorithms, e.g. long multiplication

Antikythera mechanism
make us re-think
ancient technical skills

Gears and rules

machine age



Add powers (logs) to multiply quickly, extract roots

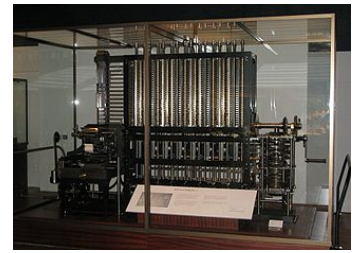
Read the gears to extract taxes — Pascaline

Looms and engines

industrial revolution

Jacquard loom combined
steam and punch cards
for automatic patterns

Babbages difference engine
would have evaluated
polynomials like $3x^3 + 5x^2 - 7x + 9$



gears, pins, and electricity

digital and analog before tubes

data stored in punched cards
manipulated by pins and
electricity last for decades

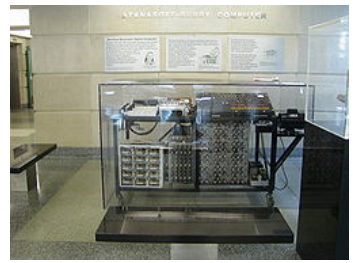
analog computers model world
using smoothly-varying quantities
such as water

programmable or electronic...

...but not both?

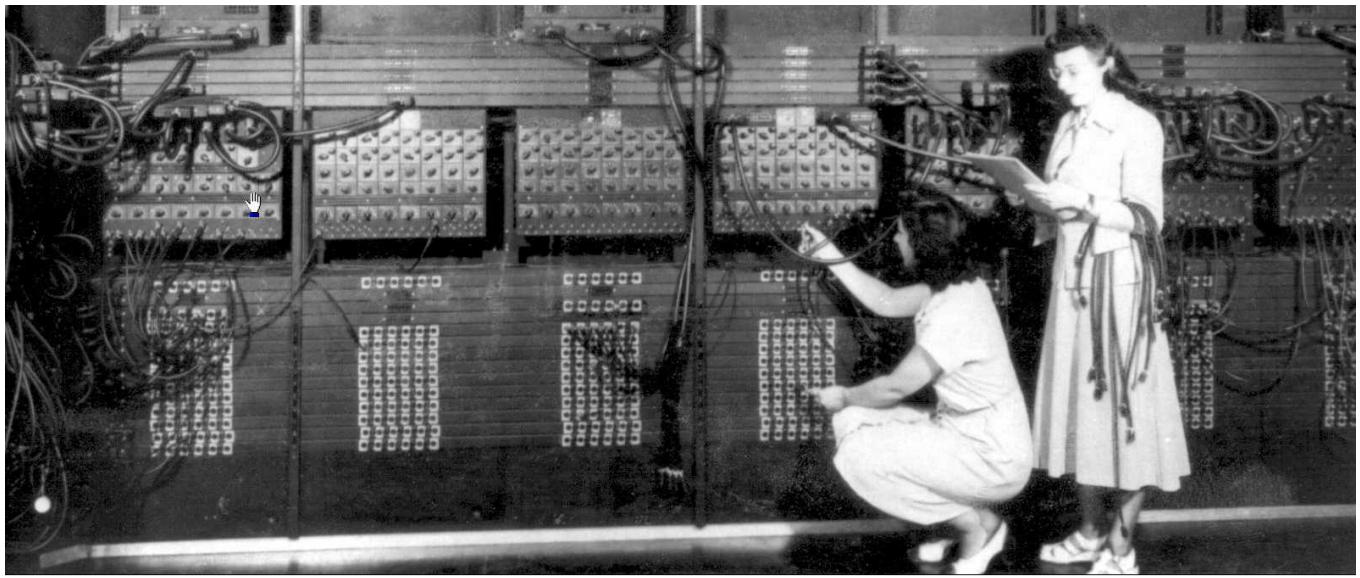
"programmable" (cards) but
not electronic (relays)
the Zuse Z1

electronic but not programmable
dedicated to one calculation
the Atanosoff-Berry



when computers were women

for a while



Eniac's first programmers were women

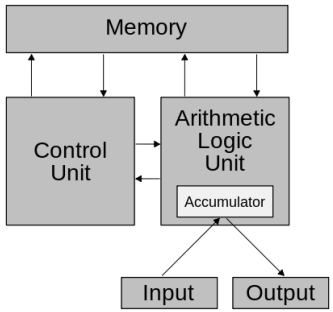
known for clear-thinking, manual dexterity, and speed

. . . human labour was cheaper than computer cycles

dozens of cubic metres, programmed by connecting pins

stored programs, faster switches

getting modern

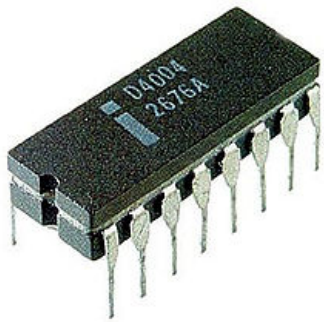


the same memory for data
and programs is now
the typical design

tubes were big, hot, slow
compared to transistors
. . . which just keep shrinking

your (grand)parent's computer

smaller, faster ...



perhaps thanks to sputnik
the computing power of eniac
fits in your hand by 1970

mass-produced desktops
landed with a clunk
by 1980s

Notes