



Input and Output Devices

▶ INPUT DEVICES

An input device is a machine that feeds data into the computer. For example, a keyboard is an input device whereas, a display monitor is an output device. Input devices other than the keyboard are sometimes called alternate input devices. Mice, trackballs and light pens are all alternate input devices.

Keyboard



Fig. 2.1 Keyboard

Keyboard is an input device consisting of a set of typewriter-like keys that enable you to enter data into a computer. Computer keyboards, as you can see in Fig. 2.1 are similar to electric-typewriter keyboards but contain additional keys. The keys on computer keyboards are often classified as follows:

- Alphanumeric keys - letters and numbers.
- Punctuation keys - comma, period, semi-colon and so on.
- Special keys - function keys, control keys, arrow keys, Caps Lock key and so on.

The standard layout of letters, numbers and punctuation is known as the QWERTY keyboard because the first five keys on the top row of letters spell QWERTY. It was designed in the 1800s for mechanical typewriters and was actually designed to slow typists down to avoid jamming the keys. Another keyboard design, which has letters positioned for speed typing, is the Dvorak keyboard with a different layout designed by August Dvorak.

There is no standard computer keyboard, although many manufacturers imitate the keyboards of PCs. There are actually three different PC keyboards: the