Exercise: What is a Computer?

- divide your cards into two stacks: “computer” and “not a computer”
- write a clear 1-2 sentence definition of a computer (i.e., the definition that you used to create your stacks); this is your conceptual model

- Based on this definition, how should we classify these as computers (or not)…
  Discuss in your group, write down your answer, along with a brief justification.
Exercise: What is a Computer?

ENIAC (developed in 1944 by Mauchly, Eckert, et al.)
- An electronic device which used vacuum tubes, electrical relays, and other components to perform calculations.
- Operators wired together some of ENIAC’s electrical devices to represent the commands it should execute.
- It then executed those commands, performing literally thousands of additions in a single second. It could not decide what commands to execute next based on the results of previous calculations.
- ENIAC was over 150 feet in width and took up a large room.

Exercise: What is a Computer?

Abacus (developed ca. 3000BC in Asia Minor)
- A device consisting of rows of beads mounted on rods. The beads can slide along the rods, and different bead positions represent different numerical values.
- The operator of an abacus can follow certain well-defined procedures to perform calculations surprisingly quickly.
- In the mid-20th century, an abacus outperformed an electric calculator in exciting, head-to-head, calculating competition.

Exercise: What is a Computer?

Course definition of a computer: A device that receives a list of instructions (drawn from a well-defined set of possible instructions) and interprets them to perform some process in the world, such as physical activity or transformation of information.
- This definition isn’t “the right one”. It’s just a useful one.

Exercise: What is a Computer?

- Based on this definition, how should we classify these as computers (or not)…

Discuss in your group, write down your answer, along with a brief justification.
**Exercise: What is a Computer?**

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**Course definition of a computer:** A device that receives a list of instructions (drawn from a well-defined set of possible instructions) and interprets them to perform some process in the world, such as physical activity or transformation of information.

**RQ1:** Would you say that the human brain works similarly as computers given the fact that they both store information in an organized manner?

(Submitted by Tiffany)
Other Information

- course web page is at:
  
  cs.ubc.ca/~hoos/cpsc101
  cs.ubc.ca/~hoos/wmst201

- make sure to follow up on To-Do’s listed on the web page and read announcements

- check the web page to learn about course staff, labs, quizzes and exams and more

Connecting with Computer Science

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Course web page

www.cs.ubc.ca/~hoos/cpsc101

Administrative details

- Labs start next week

- Submit RQs (for now) as plain text e-mail (not .doc, .docx, …) – later, we will use Vista

- Office hours will be posted by Monday

- Things you need: textbook, i>Clicker
Some questions you asked (RQ1):

- Bring laptops to labs or classes?
- Are we allowed to use Dreamweaver for designing our websites?
- Will we get our marks for our reading questions to judge whether I am asking reasonable questions?

Some questions you asked (RQ1):

- How many reading questions are we expected to ask in order to be given marks?
- What makes a good question (i.e. in order to get a 2)?
- What mark do we give for answering questions from the readings instead of asking new questions?