

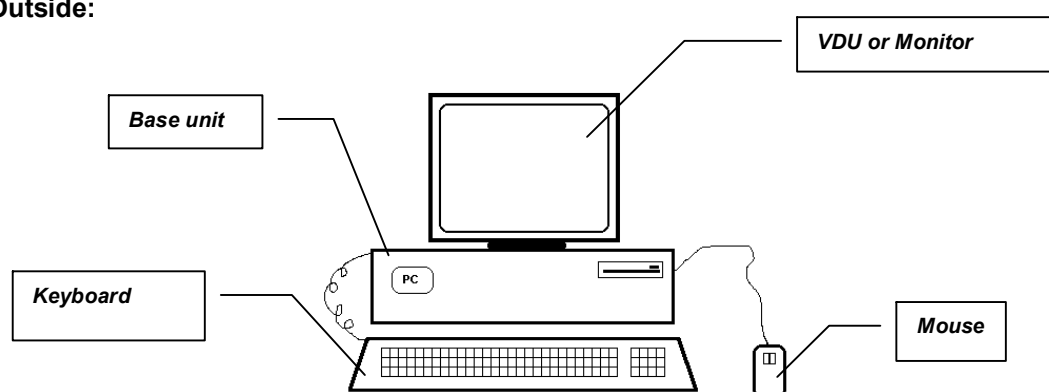
## 3.2 Computer Hardware

### 3.2.1 Computer Types

- **Tower:** A tower-style PC is slightly larger than a normal one, and usually stands on its end. Network servers are usually tower PCs.
- **Desktop:** A desktop-style PC is one that sits flat on a desk.

### 3.2.2 Parts of a Computer

Outside:



- **Base unit:** this is the square box that all the other parts plug into. It contains all the components that make the PC work.
- **VDU or Monitor:** The screen/monitor/visual display unit (VDU) is the part of the computer that shows you what is going on, and what you are doing. For example, in a word processing program, you would see the letters you type appearing on the screen. Different monitors have different resolutions – the higher the resolution the clearer the image on the monitor.
- **Keyboard:** This is what you use to type information into the computer.
- **Mouse:** The mouse is used to point and click on things on the screen - when you move the mouse, a pointer on the screen moves as well. If you press the mouse button while the pointer is on certain icons or buttons, you can run programs or press buttons.
- **Trackerball/Touchpad:** Often it isn't practical to use a mouse with a laptop. If you are using one while you are travelling, e.g. on the train, there might not be enough room to move a mouse around. Instead, laptops often come with a trackerball which you can move around to move the cursor on the screen. Alternatively they may have a touchpad which you can move your fingers across to move the mouse.

**Inside:**

- **CPU:** The CPU, or Central Processing Unit, is the brains of the computer. All the "thinking", calculating and processing is done here. It is made up of three parts:-
  - **The Arithmetic Logic**, which performs the calculations and logical operations within the computer
  - **The Control Unit**, which fetches, decodes, executes data from the memory.
  - **Memory**, which stores data.

The speed of the CPU is measured in megahertz (MHz), which measures the amount of complete circuits a signal can travel around the processor in one second, or the millions of simple calculations it can make in a second. If it has a speed of 600 MHz, this means it can do 600 million things in one second. It is the speed of the CPU which most affects the computer's performance.

- **Hard disk:** The hard disk drive is used to store programs and information. When you save a file, it is saved onto your hard disk.
- **Floppy disk:** A floppy disk drive is like a hard disk, but with removable disks called floppies or floppy disks. Floppies can be used to transfer small files from one PC to another. Older floppies really were floppy, as they came in soft plastic or card cases. Today's floppies are a bit more sturdy, although the disk itself is very floppy and wobbly, which is why it comes in a strong plastic case.
- **Memory:** When a program is run, it is loaded into the computer's memory. The more memory a PC has, the more things it can do at one time.