

# Information technology

Information technology (IT) is the application of computers to store, study, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data, or information, often in the context of a business or other enterprise.

IT is considered a subset of information and communications technology (ICT). In 2012, Zuppo proposed an ICT hierarchy where each hierarchy level “contain[s] some degree of commonality in that they are related to technologies that facilitate the transfer of information and various types of electronically mediated communications”.

The term is commonly used as a synonym for computers and computer networks, but it also encompasses other information distribution technologies such as television and telephones. Several industries are associated with information technology, including computer hardware, software, electronics, semiconductors, internet, telecom equipment, and e-commerce.

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Since the introduction of information technology, health care has made a significant progress. The advantages of IT are manifold, especially helping in managing the ever growing masses of data that are produced every day. However, whenever large quantities of information are gathered, the issue of privacy and confidentiality arises. Organisations such as insurance companies or employers are highly interested in gathering health-related information on potential customers or employees, thus leading to the introduction of several legal regulations such as the European Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC) <sup>1)</sup>, or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

<sup>1)</sup>

Union European (1995) Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. Off J Eur Commun L281:31-50

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