

DEC: PDP

DEC (Digital Electronic Corporation) produced the first commercially successful minicomputer, PDP-8, in the year 1964. PDP stands for Programmable Data Processor. DEC had begun designing computers as early as 1959! The computer that you are using read this information is a result of approximately 5 decades of evolution!

The initial PDP models such as the PDP-1 and PDP-5 were almost as big as a refrigerator! DEC advanced so rapidly that within 5 years, they managed to produce a computer that was a 1/3 in size of its predecessors!

The range of PDP computers started from 18 bit systems and as time progressed had various models falling under the 8 bit, 12 bit, 16, 24 bit and 32 bit systems. Below is table with brief information about each;

Model	Date	Price	Bits	Number
PDP-1	1960	\$120,000	18	50
PDP-2		N/A	24	
PDP-3		N/A	36	
PDP-4	1962	\$60,000	18	45
PDP-5	1963	\$27,000	12	1000
PDP-6	1964	\$300,000	36	23
PDP-7	1965	\$72,000	18	120
PDP-8	1965	\$18,500	12	50,000
PDP-9	1966	\$35,000	18	445
PDP-10	1967	\$110,000	36	700
PDP-11	1970	\$10,000	16	>600000
PDP-12	1969	\$27,900	12	725
PDP-13		N/A		
PDP-14		N/A		
PDP-15	1970	16,500	18	790
PDP-16	1972	N/A	16-Aug	

Out of all these models, PDP-8 is what set the DEC on confident grounds. Being the first minicomputer, PDP-8 found many uses in various fields such as railways, science labs and industrial applications. For more intensive research, PDP-8 was used as the brains of various projects. One prominent example of this is the 'Durrum Instruments 500 Amino Acid Analyzer'.

Later on, as other computer companies sprout up, the PDP series faced heavy competition especially from portable computers made by Compaq.

With most of the PDP models produced in small numbers, it has become increasingly difficult for collection hobbyists on those systems. A part from PDP-5 and PDP-11, should get your hands on any other computers, consider yourself blessed!