

**COMPUTER STUDIES, BY JOHN ONUNGA. MARIWA PUBLISHERS LTD,
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BOOK REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

We are living in the digital era which our computers can answer almost any question. This era has forced everyone to learn on how to use computers due to their applications and importance in our daily life. In responding to these, Onunga strived to write a book titled Computer Studies as a guideline to students and other learners. In the book, the author discussed computer in five chapters which are introduction to computer, computer hardware, computer software, safe use of computer and an introduction to Windows. The author attempted to put explanation clear through the uses of simple and straight forward English language as well as good arrangements of chapters which builds a base for the next chapter. The main weakness of this book is that the author failed to classify computers and to discuss issues related to causes of data loss as well as sources of virus in computers. Generally, the book is a very good resource for teachers who are teaching computer at secondary schools as well as the university lecturers and students.

Keywords: Computer, computer studies, computer classification, data loss, virus

1. SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOK

We are living in the digital era in which our computers can answer almost any question. This era has forced people to learn on how to use computers due to their applications and importance in our daily life. In responding to these, Onunga strived to write a book titled Computer Studies as a guideline to computer learners. In his book the author discussed computer in five chapters which are introduction to computer, computer hardware, computer software, safe use of computer and an introduction to Windows.

In the first three chapters, the author started by introducing computer to readers by giving its' definition. The author described computer as any electronic device which converts data into meaningful information (p.1). To the learners, especially beginners, this is an important part since they expect to know exactly what a computer is before going deep. After that, author discussed the importance of computer and parts which constitute the computer system. The author described that a computer system is made up of two parts which are software and hardware (p.2). All tangible parts of computer are hardware while intangible parts are software. To understand the general concept of computer, the author added an explanation on history and classification of computers and hardware. Computer were classified based on function, purpose, processing power and size (p.12&13) while hardware as peripherals and Central Processing Unit (CPU) (p.27). These three chapters are of a great importance to the readers since they expose them to a real concept of computers. By looking at a computer, it seems as a combination of different hardware only since software is not seen. But through these explanations, readers will be able to understand the general concept of a computer and how it works.

In chapter four and five, the author explained safe uses and care of a computer. The chapters explain that, for the computer to last longer and work properly, extra care must be taken. Most computer system malfunctions are caused by failure to follow correct instructions on the use of equipment, carelessness and neglect (p.109). Towards understanding this concept, the author discussed the behaviours in the computer room which lead into safe use and care of computers. Some of the discussed behaviours are during entering into computer room, powering on the computer and shutting down computer (p.110). These discussions help users of computers to

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avoid things which may results into computer malfunctions. Moreover, since one of the uses of computers is data storage, the author introduced to readers the possible causes of data loss in a computer. The author explained that, users can lose data from computer as a result of problems caused by viruses, power and hard disk failure (p.118). On viruses, the author explained not only on how virus cause data loss but also sources of viruses in our computers. The author claimed that, a computer can get virus from pirated software, infected proprietary software, fake games, freeware and shareware software (p.118).

2. CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE BOOK

This book is not for computer experts, rather an introduction to beginners. The book is a very good resource for teachers who are teaching computer at secondary schools as well as the university lecturers and students. The author strived to put his explanation clear as he used simple and straight forward English Language as well as a good arrangement of chapters which builds a base for the next chapter. However, author failed to classify computers properly as he classified computer based on size, purpose, processing power and functions and left behind one important class which is classification based on data it handles. Based on data it handles, computer can be sub classified as analogy, digital and hybrid computers. Analogy computers are the one which process continuously varying data while digital process digital data. Hybrid computers process both digital and analogy data (Gilbert, 2013 and Mfanga, 2018). Moreover, author classified hardware as peripherals and CPU though there is no such classification since all tangible part of computers are termed as hardware in the field of computer science (Charles *at el* 2015 and Hem, 2017).

Other weaknesses of this book among others include failure of the author to discuss all causes of data loss and sources of virus in computer. According to the author, users can lose data due to viruses, power and hard disk failure. However, users can also lose data due to carelessness, natural hazards, theft and physical damage of computers (Lores, 2006 and Rafay, 2014). Moreover, the author described that, a computer can get virus from pirated software, infected proprietary software, fake games, freeware and shareware. However, virus can also get into computer through file sharing, social engineering, e-mails attachments, networks, downloading from unknown sources and sharing of infected storage devices like flash disk (Angela, 2015 and Mfanga, 2018). Inclusions of these techniques will strength it and make it more valuable in this digital era. Therefore, it could be very interesting if this book could have included these missing discussions.

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