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DATA AND INFORMATION

Chapter Summary

To a user, the computer is a black box. Users input data and they, or a co-worker, extract information.

The data input requirement varies according to the application. In the case of a word processor it will be free text; in the case of a payroll system the input is strictly defined. Whatever the data requirement, the data capture method needs to be carefully designed for ease of use and, as far as possible, to ensure the accuracy of the data.

The output from the computer system can be a business transaction or management information. A business transaction could, using the payroll example, be the payslip or the payment into the employee's bank account. Management information might, for example, be an analysis of payroll costs by department. Management information must be accurate, timely and appropriate.

The computer system also holds data on secondary storage – this is examined in **Chapter 8**.

All these elements – input, output (and storage) – are designed in the system analyst and design process by the IS specialist.

