A pointing device is an input device. It is used to control the movement of the pointer or cursor on the screen. It can also be used for:

1. Sending command signals to the computer.
2. Selecting items on the screen.
3. Selecting commands from commands menu.
4. Drawing graphs etc.
Most Important Pointing Devices

The most important pointing devices are as follows:

1. Mouse
2. Trackball
3. Pointing Stick
4. Joystick
5. Touch Pad
6. Touch Screen
7. Light Pen
8. Digitizer/Graphic Tablet
1. Mouse

Mouse is the most commonly used pointing input devise. It is used to control the cursor or pointer on the screen and to give commands to the computer. The mouse is attached with the computer by a cable or wireless connection.

The top of mouse contains one wheel and 2 or 3 buttons. These buttons can be clicked or double clicked to perform different tasks.
Types of Mouse

There are Two most popular types of mouse are as follows:

(i) Mechanical Mouse: It has a small ball at the bottom. The ball rotates as the mouse is rolled over a flat surface. Usually, a rectangular rubber pad (known as mouse pad) is used as flat surface. As the mouse is rolled over the flat surface, the pointer moves in the same direction on the screen.

(ii) Optical Mouse: It has no ball at the bottom. It uses the laser technology to detect the mouse movement. Nowadays, it is commonly used in personal computers (PCs).
2. Trackball

It performs functions like a mouse but it is a stationary device. It has moveable ball on its top. The ball is rotated or rolled with fingers or palm to move the pointer on the screen. Like mouse, a trackball also has buttons used to send the commands to computer. The trackball is usually available in laptop computer. It is fixed on its keyboard. It is also available as separate input device.
3. Touch Pad/Track Pad

Touch Pad is a pressure-sensitive pointing device. It is also stationary device like trackball but it has no moving parts. It is a small, flat surface (or sensitive pad) over which a user slides fingertip to move the pointer on the screen.
A pointing stick is a pressure-sensitive pointing device. It looks like a pencil eraser. It exists between keys of keyboard. It is used to control the movement of a pointer on the screen. The pointer in the screen moves in the direction in which the pointing stick is pushed. Pointing stick input device is normally used with laptop computers.
5. Joystick

It consists of a **vertical handle or hand-held stick**. The stick is mounted on a base. The **hand-held stick is used to control the movement of pointer on the screen**. The button of the joystick is **pressed to activate certain event or action**. Joystick is basically used to **play video games**. It is also used in some **computer-aided design (CAD)** system.
6. Touch Screen

A touch screen is a special display screen. Input is given to the computer directly by touching the screen with user fingertip. Most touch screen computers use sensors in the computer's screen to detect the touch of a finger. Touch screen is often used in ATM. Touch screen systems are also used in restaurants, supermarkets, departmental stores etc.
The light pen is a hand-held pointing input device. It is a light-sensitive input device. The tip of pen contains a light-sensitive element. This device also contains a button.

Input is given to the computer directly by touching the screen with pen. When the pen is touched with the screen, it detects or senses a position on display screen. The user points the object to be selected on the display screen and then presses a button on the light pen.

Light Pen device is usually used by engineers and graphic designers.
Light Pen
Digitizer or Graphics Tablet

Digitizer is used for drawing new images or tracing old images. It enables a user to hand-draw images, animations, graphics, maps and engineering drawings. These tablets may also be used to capture data or handwritten signatures. It consists of a flat, rectangular board (or pad) and an input device stylus or puck. Each location on the rectangular board points to corresponding position on the computer screen. Stylus looks like a pen. It is used for drawing images on a specially designed graphics screen or digitizer. Puck looks like a mouse. Puck is also called cursor. For tracing, the puck is preferred because its crosshairs.
Pen and Puck