

u3a Computing Group

Alan Hopwood, 6 October 2022

Computing Foundations

What is the difference between an app and a website?

Language clarification - “App”

App vs Website

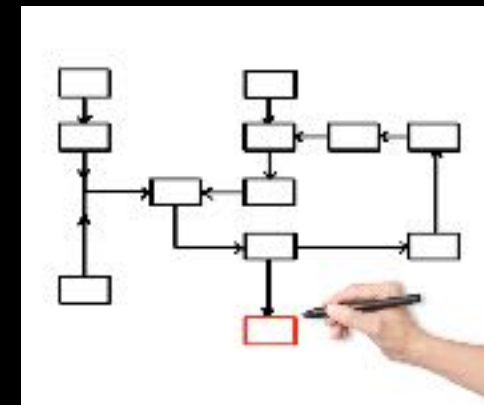
- In common usage (but not always):
 - Apps are associated with smart phones and tablets
 - Applications are associated with Laptops and Desktops
- Really:
 - App = application = program = programme
 - They are all the same really

Some Background

App vs Website

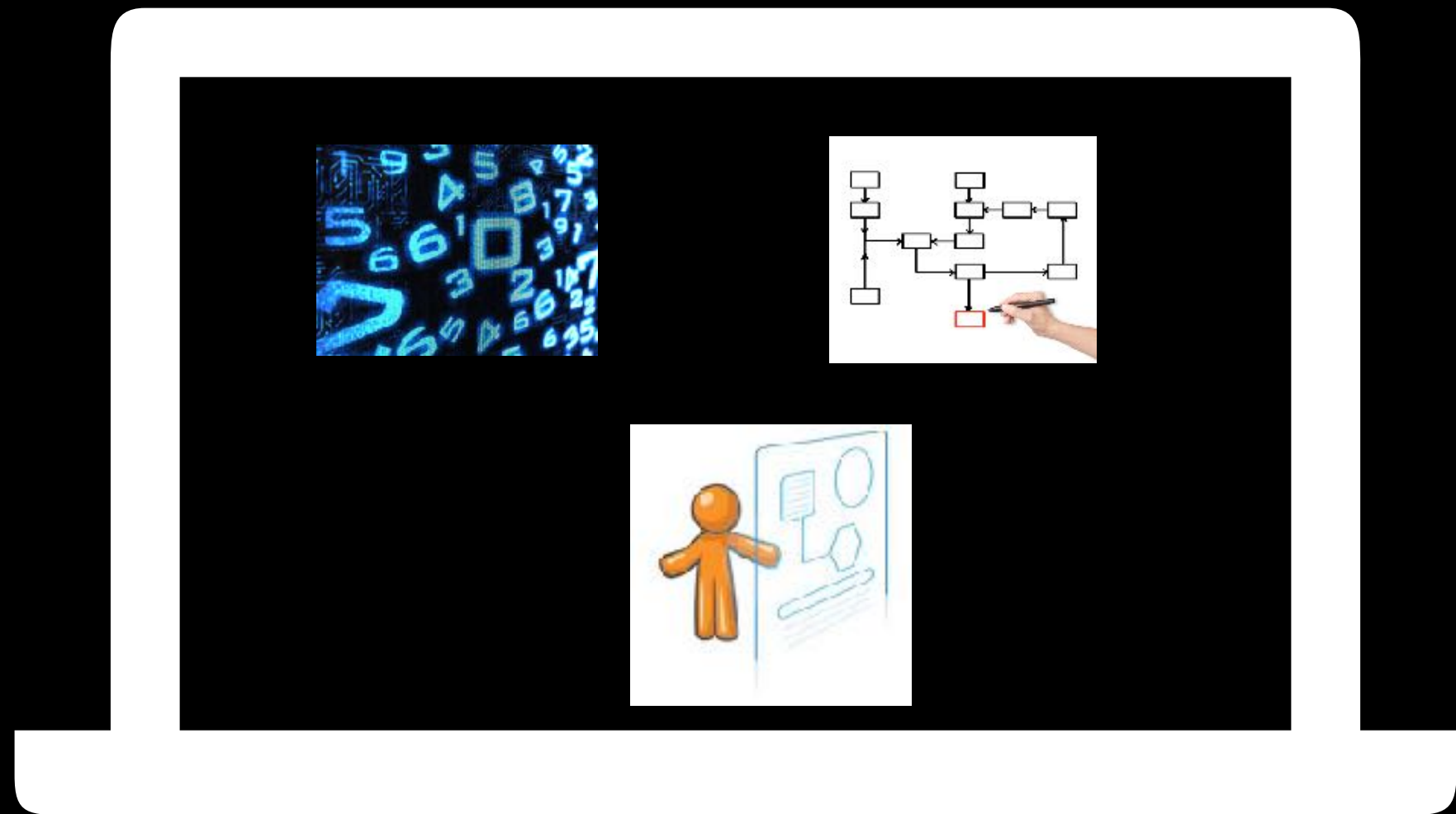
All computer systems can be split into components:

- user Interface
 - Interpret mouse, keyboard or fingers
 - Adapt to screen size, colours
- program
 - the process logic
- data
 - numbers
 - text
 - images



Application (Stand alone)

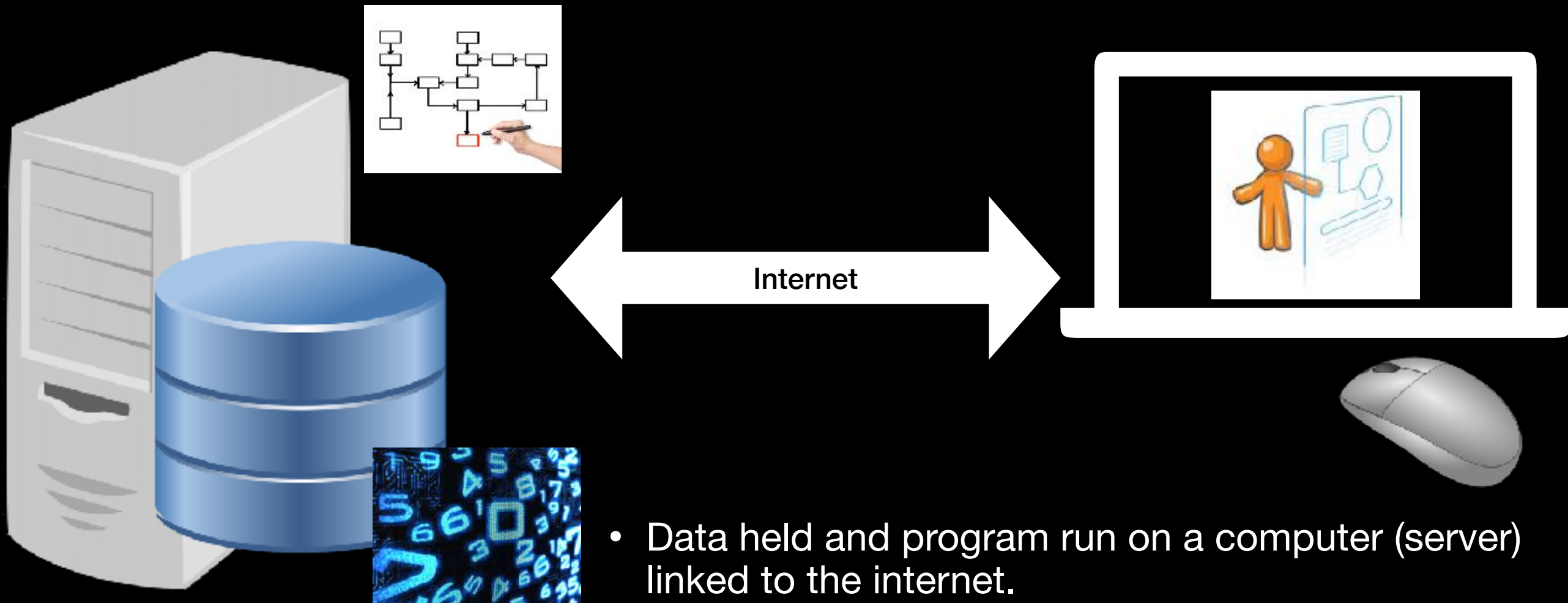
App vs Website



- data is stored; program run and user interface handled all within your “device” - laptop, smartphone or tablet

Website

App vs Website



- Data held and program run on a computer (server) linked to the internet.
- The (final) user interface handling is with your device.
- The website tells your device **WHAT** to display.
- Your device decides **HOW** to display it.

Web Browsers

App vs Website

- Compare display of the same website using an iPhone and an iPad.
- Website describes what it wants device to display using HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) code
- Your device uses a web browser (Chrome, Safari, Edge) to interpret the code sent by the website and translate into images and text of various styles.



And just to confuse things

App vs Website

- Web browsers (which are just a type of program) are now able to run some program functionality in your device.

But the “program” is always sent each time by the website.

- Applications / Apps can be split so that some of the program logic and/or data sits in your device and some sits in a server connected to the internet. Example being Banking Apps.

These Apps need an internet connection to work.

Thank You