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# Touchpad

Videos show Africa through the eyes of children

A **touchpad** is an input device commonly used in [laptop computers](#). They are used to move the [cursor](#), using motions of the user's finger. They substitute for a [computer mouse](#). Touchpads vary in size but are rarely made larger than 50 cm<sup>2</sup> (about 8 in<sup>2</sup>)

Touchpads commonly operate by sensing the [capacitance](#) of a finger. Capacitive sensors are laid out along the horizontal and vertical axis of the touchpad. The location of the finger is determined from the pattern of capacitance from these sensors.

Touchpads are relative motion devices. That is, there is no [isomorphism](#) from the screen to the touchpad. Instead, relative motion of the user's fingers causes relative motion of the cursor. The two buttons below or above the pad serves as mouse standard buttons. You can also click by tapping your finger on the touchpad, and drag with a tap following by a continuous pointing motion (a *click-and-a-half*).

Some touch pads also have "hotspots": locations on the touchpad that indicate user intentions other than pointing. For example, on certain touchpads, moving your finger along the right edge of the touch pad will control the [scrollbar](#) and scroll the [window](#) that has the [focus](#).

Major manufacturers of touchpads include Synaptics, Alps Electric Corporation, and [Cirque Corporation](#).

See also: [pointing device](#), [pointing stick](#).

## External link

- <http://www.synaptics.com>

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