

Babbage's calculating machine was the first successful attempt to replicate a mental process using a non-human object. Babbage essentially created a primitive version of a computer. It was able to compute mathematical calculations faster than a human. His machine consisted of many gears and levers, which could be maneuvered by a crank. Thus, with the exertion of outside force, this machine could operate "in the same way" as a human mind. There may have been some people who felt that the machine was a clear sign that the human mind, like the machine, is nothing more than a collection of levers and gears that when stimulated by outside forces, performs the actions that we experience as normal everyday behavior. This kind of a view would have been in line with the spirit of the time which was the spirit of mechanism. In this view there would be no real difference between a human and a machine. Babbage's invention may be seen by some as the first form of artificial intelligence. Ada Lovelace, an avid supporter of Babbage, and mathematical genius, pointed out however, that the machine could not create any new ideas of its own. It could only do what it was programmed to do. Lovelace also explained how the machine worked and possible ways that it could be used. The US department of defense named their computer system after her in 1980.