

Hill House: The computer center and the IBM Baby

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When I first joined AUC's computer center (1985) it was located on the 3rd floor of the Hill House building.. The center occupied the entire 3rd floor. As you left the elevator (which is not the one currently installed in Hill House, but a much older one that almost never worked and frequently locked its passengers between floors) the room to the right (HH 301) was occupied by Management (Mr. Kamal Hamdy, director, and Dr. Mona Kaddah associate director), the room in front of the elevator (HH302) was the computer lab, and finally the room to the left (HH 303) was where everybody else was. HH 303 was the center of computing at AUC. It had computing veterans (e.g., Samir Kary, Dalal, Wahib Basiliou, and others), data entry operators (like the wonderful late Mrs. Margo, Mrs. Ferial Farid, and many more), and the next generation of computing hopefuls (Taha Eisa, and yours truly). And most importantly, at the end of room HH 503 there was a special room with raised floor and freezing air conditioning that hosted our IBM mainframe; nick named by all of us: The Baby. Once inside the Baby's room you had to get some warm clothes on, especially if you were staying for a long while. Also, we had an array of hard drives each one the size of small fridge but will less than 1 M bytes of storage (if memory serves me); the entire capacity of our mainframe can now be placed on a single flash disk or mp3 player.

