Types of Secondary Storage

There are three main types of secondary storage for a computer.

1) **Solid State** storage devices, such as a USB flash drive.
   - Made from silicon microchips.
   - It can be written to and overwritten many times, like RAM.
   - However, unlike RAM, it is non-volatile, will not lose data when power is shut off.
   - It is fast to store and retrieve data to and from.

2) **Optical Storage** devices, such as CD, DVD and Blu-ray discs.
   - Uses a laser to scan the surface of a spinning disc made from metal and plastic. The disc surface is divided into tracks, with each track containing many flat areas and hollows. The flat areas are known as lands and the hollows as pits. The lands then have a value of 0 and the pits have a value of 1. This then allows a binary number to be stored.

3) **Magnetic Storage** devices, such as hard disk drives and old style floppy disks.
   - These use magnetic fields to magnetize tiny individual sections of a metal spinning disk. Each tiny section represents one bit. A magnetized section represents a binary ‘1’ and a demagnetized section represents a binary ‘0’. These sections are so tiny that disks can contain terabytes (TB) of data, or trillions of bytes.
   - Used to store large amounts of data.