

at15007 differences between atmega328 p and atmega328pb

Published: September 19, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Introduction

When engineers and hobbyists dive into the world of AVR microcontrollers, the ATmega328P often emerges as the go-to choice for its balance of performance, size, and community support. Yet, for those seeking a bit more flexibility without leaving the familiar ATmega family, the ATmega328PB offers a compelling upgrade. In this comprehensive guide, we explore the **at15007 differences between ATmega328P and ATmega328PB**, breaking down the technical nuances, practical implications, and real world scenarios where each device shines. Whether you're a seasoned developer or a beginner embarking on an Arduino based project, understanding these distinctions will empower you to make informed design decisions that align with your project's requirements.

Understanding ATmega328P and ATmega328PB

Basic Overview

The ATmega328P is a low power, 8 bit AVR microcontroller featuring 32 kB of flash memory, 2 kB of SRAM, and 1 kB of EEPROM. It's the heart of the Arduino Uno, providing a familiar platform for countless educational and prototyping projects. The ATmega328PB, meanwhile, builds upon the same core architecture but introduces several enhancements, such as additional peripherals, more I/O pins, and a second timer/counter unit. Both devices operate at 5 V logic levels and support a wide range of clock frequencies up to 20 MHz.

Key Differences

At first glance, the ATmega328PB may appear to be a mere incremental upgrade. However, a deeper dive reveals several critical differences that can influence your design:

- Pin count: ATmega328PB offers 48 pins versus the 28 pin ATmega328P.
- Additional timers: Two 16 bit timers in PB versus a single 16 bit timer in P.
- Enhanced analog features: Extra ADC channels, comparators, and DACs in PB.
- Power management: More advanced sleep modes in PB.
- Bootloader flexibility: PB supports a larger bootloader size.

Pin Count and Functionality

Pin Layout

The ATmega328P comes in a 28 pin DIP or 32 pin QFN package, offering a compact footprint ideal for breadboard and small PCB designs. In contrast, the ATmega328PB expands to a 48 pin DIP or 64 pin QFN package, providing additional I/O lines and peripheral interfaces. This extra pin count allows designers to integrate more sensors, actuators, or communication modules without resorting to external expanders.

Additional Features in PB

Beyond the sheer number of pins, the ATmega328PB introduces:

- Two 16 bit Timer/Counter Units (Timer0 and Timer1): The PB's second timer (Timer2) offers more flexibility for

PWM, input capture, and frequency measurement.

- Multiple USARTs: While the P has a single USART, the PB supports two, enabling simultaneous serial communication with different devices.
- Enhanced Analog-to-Digital Conversion: The PB provides up to 12 ADC channels compared to 8 in the P.
- On-Chip DAC: The PB includes a 10-bit DAC, absent in the P.

Memory and Storage

Flash, SRAM, EEPROM

Both microcontrollers share the same core architecture, but the ATmega328PB offers a slight increase in EEPROM (2 kB vs. 1 kB) and a marginally larger SRAM footprint (2 kB remains the same, but the PB's internal architecture allows more efficient usage). Flash memory remains identical at 32 kB, ensuring that existing firmware can be ported with minimal adjustments.

Differences

While the raw memory sizes are similar, the PB's additional peripherals necessitate a larger bootloader space. Consequently, the default bootloader for the PB is larger, which can reduce the user program space if not managed carefully. However, developers can customize the bootloader to fit their specific needs, mitigating this drawback.

Peripherals and Communication Interfaces

SPI, I2C, UART

Both devices support SPI, I2C, and UART interfaces. The ATmega328PB enhances UART support by offering two USART modules, which can be configured independently. This feature is particularly beneficial for applications requiring simultaneous data streams, such as a sensor network combined with a Bluetooth module.

Enhanced Features in PB

- Second USART: Enables dual serial communication, useful for debugging and data logging concurrently.
- Dual SPI Master: The PB can act as a master for two SPI devices simultaneously, reducing the need for additional microcontrollers.
- Advanced I2C: The PB supports I2C slave mode with more flexible addressing options.

Analog Features

ADC Channels

The ATmega328P offers eight 10-bit ADC channels. The ATmega328PB expands this to 12 channels, providing more input options for complex sensor arrays. This increase is invaluable for projects that require monitoring multiple analog signals, such as environmental monitoring stations or industrial control systems.

DAC, Comparators

While the P lacks a digital-to-analog converter, the PB includes a 10-bit DAC, enabling precise voltage generation for applications like motor control or signal synthesis. Additionally, the PB offers two comparators with interrupt capability, facilitating low-power event detection without continuous polling.

Power Management

Power Modes

Both microcontrollers support standard AVR sleep modes—Idle, ADC Noise Reduction, Power Down, Power Save,

and Standby. The ATmega328PB, however, introduces an additional “Standby” mode that further reduces power consumption by disabling more internal clocks.

Differences

In low power designs, the PB’s enhanced sleep modes can translate to significant energy savings, especially when paired with external sensors that wake the MCU via interrupts. This feature makes the PB an attractive choice for battery powered IoT devices.

Clock and Timing

Clock Sources

Both devices support internal RC oscillators (8 MHz, 32 kHz) and external crystal oscillators (up to 20 MHz). They also provide a 32 /kHz watchdog timer for low power operation.

Frequency Differences

The ATmega328PB can run at a higher maximum frequency of 20 MHz, slightly surpassing the P’s 20 MHz limit. This small difference can be crucial for time critical applications, such as high speed PWM generation or precise timer interrupts.

Bootloader and Programming

Bootloader Compatibility

Because the ATmega328PB’s bootloader is larger, developers often need to tailor it to their firmware size constraints. The P’s bootloader is smaller, leaving more room for user code. However, the PB’s bootloader can be configured to use the same Arduino bootloader image if the user code fits within the available space.

Flashing Process

Programming the PB is similar to the P, using the AVR ISP protocol. The main difference lies in the selection of the correct fuses to enable the second timer and USART. Careful configuration of the fuses ensures that the PB operates in the desired mode without inadvertently disabling essential features.

Application Scenarios

When to Choose ATmega328P

- Budget Constrained Projects: The P is cheaper and widely available.
- Simple Sensor Arrays: Projects requiring fewer than eight analog inputs.
- Space Limited Designs: The 28 pin DIP or 32 pin QFN fits tight footprints.
- Community Support: Extensive libraries and community tutorials tailored to the P.

When to Choose ATmega328PB

- Complex I/O Requirements: Projects needing more than eight analog inputs or multiple serial interfaces.
- Low Power IoT Devices: The PB’s advanced sleep modes reduce battery consumption.
- High Speed PWM or Timer Applications: The second timer provides additional resolution.
- Future Proofing: The PB’s extra peripherals allow for feature expansions without changing the microcontroller.

Summary of Differences

Below is a concise comparison table summarizing the key distinctions:

Feature	ATmega328P	ATmega328PB
Pin Count	28 pin DIP / 32 pin QFN	48 pin DIP / 64 pin QFN
Flash Memory	32 /kB	32 /kB
SRAM	2 /kB	2 /kB
EEPROM	1 /kB	2 /kB
ADC Channels	8	12
DAC	None	10 bit DAC
USART Modules	1	2
Timer/Counter Units	1 16 bit, 3 8 bit	2 16 bit, 3 8 bit
Sleep Modes	Standard AVR modes	Standard + Standby
Maximum Clock Frequency	20 /MHz	20 /MHz (slightly higher performance)

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