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A SMALL TRIBUTE TO COMPUTER LEGENDS WHO MADE AN IMPACT ON THE COMPUTER INDUSTRY AND PASSED AWAY IN THE YEAR 2011

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AMRITSAR

ABSTRACT

The death of Steve Jobs at the age of 56 on October 5, 2011 activated an unprecedented level of mourning and tributes across the IT industry. And while Jobs was the most high profile technology innovator to die that year, he was far from the only significant loss for the Tech industry. We have lost many other notable people who had immense influence on our industry. This article is dedicated to those who left an empty space in the Computer World in year 2011. Their impact on the industry and our lives will carry on.

KEYWORDS

Daniel D. McCracken, Dennis Ritchie, Harry Olsen, Jean Bartik, Kenneth, Michael Stern Hart, Paul Baran, Steve Jobs.

INTRODUCTION



Several IT professionals who contributed so much to our society passed away in year 2011. They touched our lives in so many ways. Their contributions are immense and unforgettable. This article is just a tribute to all of them for providing us with technological innovations.

KENNETH HARRY OLSEN

Kenneth Harry Olsen (February 20, 1926 - February 6, 2011) the **co-founder of DEC and minicomputers pioneer**

Kenneth Harry Olsen, the co-founder of DEC, a pioneer in developing minicomputer, died on February 6, 2011.

Kenneth Harry Olsen, born on February 20, 1926 in Bridgeport, Connecticut, was an American engineer who co-founded Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) in 1957 with colleague Harlan Anderson. Olsen began his career working in summers in a machine shop. Fixing radios in his basement gave him the reputation of a neighborhood inventor.

Olsen earned BS (1950) and an MS (1952) degrees in electrical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. During his studies at MIT, the Office of Naval Research of the United States Department of the Navy recruited Olsen to help build a computerized flight simulator. Also while at MIT he directed the building of the first transistorized research computer. Olsen was an engineer who had been working at MIT Lincoln Laboratory on the TX-2 project.

Ken Olsen was known throughout his career for his paternalistic management style and his fostering of engineering innovation. Ken Olsen's valuing of innovation and technical excellence spawned and popularized techniques, such as engineering matrix management, that are broadly employed today throughout many industries. In 1986, Fortune Magazine named Olsen "America's most successful entrepreneur", and the same year he received the IEEE Engineering Leadership Recognition Award.

Olsen retired from DEC in 1992. He subsequently became the chairman of Advanced Modular Solutions. Olsen was also a major contributor to 'The Family', a religious and political organization.

Olsen was a trustee of Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. There, the Ken Olsen Science Center was named after him in 2006, and dedicated on 27 September 2008. Its lobby features a Digital Loggia of Technology, documenting Digital's technology and history, and an interactive kiosk to which former employees have submitted their stories.

Olsen died on February 6, 2011. Ken Olsen launched DEC during the mainframe era of computing. Computing was mainframe-centric before Ken Olsen started the ball rolling with commercially-successful minicomputers; first the PDP-8, later the PDP-11 and PDP-15. Minicomputers made it possible to distribute computing power throughout an organization instead of having only a centralized data center. Ken Olsen was in the unique class of creative people who brought about major innovation in computing with minicomputers.

JEAN BARTIK

Jean Bartik (December 27, 1924 - March 23, 2011) the **first woman programmer of ENIAC**

Jean Bartik, the first woman programmer of ENIAC, died on March 23, 2011.

Jean Bartik was a women pioneer and a computer programmer - the first woman to program the ENIAC, the first large-scale, fully electronic, and general-purpose computer developed in the United States. Bartik also worked on the BINAC and UNIVAC computers, which were successors to the ENIAC. She was one of the original programmers for the ENIAC computer.

She was born on December 27, 1924 in Northwest Missouri in Gentry County. She attended Northwest Missouri State Teachers College, majoring in mathematics. In addition to a BS in mathematics from Northwest Missouri State Teachers College, Bartik held an MS in English from the University of Pennsylvania and an honorary Dr. of Science from Northwest Missouri State University.

In 1945, she was hired by the University of Pennsylvania to work for Army Ordnance at Aberdeen Proving Ground. When the ENIAC computer was developed for the purpose of calculating ballistics trajectories, she was selected to be one of its first programmers. Bartik later became part of a group charged with converting the ENIAC into a stored program computer; in the original implementation, ENIAC was programmed by setting dials and changing cable connections. She went on to work on the BINAC and UNIVAC I computers. In 1997 she was inducted into the Women in Technology International Hall of Fame, along with the other original ENIAC programmers. In 2008 she was one of three Fellow Award honorees of the Computer History Museum, along with Bob Metcalfe and Linus Torvalds.

PAUL BARAN

Paul Baran (April 29, 1926 - March 26, 2011) **Father of Packet Switching Technology and Internet pioneer**

Paul Baran, passed away on March 26, 2011, leaving behind his remarkable inventions, the fruits of which we all currently enjoy.

Paul Baran was a Polish American engineer who was a pioneer in the development of computer networks. He invented packet switching techniques, and went on to start several companies and develop other technologies that are an essential part of the Internet and other modern digital communication. Paul Baran was born in Grodno, Poland (which is now in Belarus) on April 29, 1926. He graduated from Drexel University in 1949 (then called Drexel Institute of Technology), with a degree in electrical engineering. He then joined the Eckert-Mauchly Computer Company, where he did technical work on UNIVAC models, the first brand of commercial computers in the USA. He obtained his Masters degree in engineering from UCLA in 1959, with advisor Gerald Estrin while taking night classes. After joining the RAND Corporation that same year, Baran took on the task of designing a "survivable" communications system that could maintain

communication between end points in the face of damage from nuclear weapons. While conducting research at the historic RAND organization, he invented the field of *packet switching* networks, a concept embedded in the design of the *ARPANET* and the standard *TCP/IP* protocol used on the *Internet* today. Baran later left RAND to become an entrepreneur and private investor in the early 1970's, and founded Metricom, co-founded Com21.com, and co-founded the Institute for the Future. Baran extended his work in packet switching to wireless-spectrum theory, developing what he called "kindergarten rules" for the use of wireless spectrum. In addition to his innovation in networking products, he is also credited with inventing the first metal detector, a doorway gun detector.

DANIEL D. MCCrackEN

Daniel D. McCracken (July 23, 1930 - July 30, 2011) **the first best-selling author of computer books**

Daniel D. McCracken, the first best-selling author of computer books, died on July 30 in New York.

Daniel D. McCracken was a computer scientist in the United States. He was a Professor of Computer Sciences at the City College of New York, and the author of over two dozen textbooks on computer programming. His "*A Guide to Fortran Programming*" (Wiley, 1961) and its successors were the standard textbooks on that language for over two decades. His books have been translated into fourteen languages.

McCracken was born on July 23, 1930 in Hughesville, Judith Basin County, Montana, a mining town, and graduated in 1951 from Central Washington University with degrees in mathematics and chemistry. He worked seven years with the General Electric Company in computer applications and programmer training. After that, he worked at the New York University Atomic Energy Commission Computer Center, and was a graduate student at the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences. In 1959 he became a consultant and continued writing on computer subjects. In 1970 he earned a Master of Divinity degree from the Union Theological Seminary in New York. From 1976-78, he was vice president of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), from 1978-80 he was president of the the ACM, and in 1994 he was inducted as a Fellow of ACM.

McCracken died a week after his 81st birthday on July 30, 2011

MICHAEL STERN HART

Michael Stern Hart (March 8, 1947 - September 6, 2011) **Father of e-books**

Michael S. Hart, known as the "father of e-books" died on September 6, 2011.

Michael Stern Hart was an American author, best known as the inventor of the electronic book (or ebook) and the founder of Project Gutenberg, a project to make ebooks freely available via the Internet. Most of the early postings were typed in by Hart himself.

Michael Stern Hart was born in Tacoma, Washington on March 8, 1947. Hart attended the University of Illinois, graduating in just two years. He then attended but did not complete graduate school. Michael Hart was a street musician in San Francisco. He made no money at it, but then he never bought into the money system much—garage-sale T-shirts, canned beans for supper, were his sort of thing. He gave the music away for nothing because he believed it should be as freely available as the air you breathed, or as the wild blackberries and raspberries he used to gorge on, growing up, in the woods near Tacoma in Washington State. All good things should be abundant, and they should be free. He came to apply that principle to books, too. Everyone should have access to the great works of the world, whether heavy. The joy of e-books, which he invented, was that anyone could read those books anywhere, free, on any device, and every text could be replicated millions of times over.

In 1971, Michael Hart was given some operator time on a Xerox mainframe in the University of Illinois, and felt obligated to produce something worthwhile. Struck by an idea, he typed in, letter by letter, the text of the U.S Declaration of Independence, from a copy he had been given on the fourth of July. He then attempted to send it to everyone connected to the mainframe, and narrowly escaped bringing the network (such as it was) down around their heads. It was an inauspicious start for Project Gutenberg, one of the most forward-thinking projects in the history of technology. The basic principles of the web as we know it are embodied in Project Gutenberg. The idea of digitizing and making freely available the world's information found its first real grip there. YouTube, iTunes, and Google Books of course are merely scaled-up versions of that first impetus, to take the written page and translate it to ones and zeros. Hart also predicted the enhancement of automatic translation, which would provide all of the world's literature in over a hundred languages. While this goal has not yet been reached, by the time of his death Project Gutenberg hosted eBooks in 60 different languages, and was frequently highlighted as one of the best Internet-based resources. Michael S. Hart left a major mark on the world. The invention of eBooks was not simply a technological innovation or precursor to the modern information environment. A more correct understanding is that eBooks are an efficient and effective way of unlimited free distribution of literature.

STEVE PAUL JOBS

Steve Paul Jobs (24 February 1955 - October 5, 2011) **the visionary co-founder of Apple**

He was an American businessman and inventor widely recognized as a charismatic pioneer of the personal computer revolution. He was co-founder, chairman, and chief executive officer of Apple Inc. Jobs was co-founder of Pixar Animation Studios. Jobs' first job was with Hewlett-Packard, as a summer employee.

In 1976, at the age of 21 years old, Steve Jobs founded Apple with his summer job's co-worker at HP, Steve Wozniak, making them the first and second Apple employee. The legend of Jobs' innovation had just started.

Jobs introduced the Macintosh to the world in 1983, and it became the first commercially successful small computer with a GUI (Graphical User Interface). In 2007 Jobs entered the mobile market with his new and revolutionary iDevice, named iPhone, which changed the way people using the mobile phone, thus forcing mobile giants like Nokia to innovate at its best. Following the tremendous success of iPhone, Jobs took on the next risky step to introduce his last revolutionary product to the world – iPad in 2010. Once again Steve Jobs shocked the world by the device which can't even be categorized into either computer or smart phone category, but its surprising success once again proved the visionary power of the Jobs.

He was one of the key people bringing the true innovation to the world. He showed us how making the difference can change the world; He changed the way we interact with gadgets and computers. And when he left, he left behind a great deal of legacy he created and improved. He just changed the world.

It is undeniable that Steve Jobs brought us innovation and iconic products like the world had never seen, as well as a cult following of consumers and end users that mythicized him.

DENNIS MACALISTAIR RITCHIE

Dennis MacAlistair Ritchie (September 9, 1941 - October 12, 2011) **Father of C programming**

Dennis Ritchie, father of C programming, died on October 12, 2011

Dennis Ritchie was an American computer scientist who "helped shape the digital era." He created the C programming language and, with long-time colleague Ken Thompson, created the UNIX operating system. He was also co-author of the book "*The C Programming Language*", published in 1978, acted as both a concise definition of C and a peerless introduction to the style and techniques of programming in that language. It remains a source of inspiration and practical help to programmers to this day.

Modern computing as we know it would not have existed without Dennis Ritchie, father of the C programming language and Co-creator of the UNIX operating system. The C programming language, a shorthand of words, numbers and punctuation, is still widely used today, and successors like C++ and Java build on the ideas, rules and grammar that Mr. Ritchie designed. The UNIX operating system has similarly had a rich and enduring impact. Its free, open-source variant, Linux, powers many of the world's data centers, like those at Google and Amazon, and its technology serves as the foundation of operating systems, like Apple's iOS, in consumer computing devices.

Dennis MacAlistair Ritchie was born on Sept. 9, 1941, in Bronxville, N.Y. Ritchie graduated from Harvard University with degrees in physics and applied mathematics. In 1967, he began working at the Bell Labs Computing Sciences Research Center, and in 1968, he received a PhD from Harvard.

Ritchie received the Turing Award from the ACM in 1983, the Hamming Medal from the IEEE in 1990 and the National Medal of Technology from President Clinton in 1999. Ritchie was the head of Lucent Technologies System Software Research Department when he retired in 2007.

His death came a week after the death of Steve Jobs, although Ritchie's death did not receive as much media coverage. Computer historian Paul E. Ceruzzi said after his death: "Ritchie was under the radar. His name was not a household name at all, but... if you had a microscope and could look in a computer; you'd see his work everywhere inside."

"Steve Jobs was the king of the visible, and Ritchie was the king of what is largely invisible," said Martin Rinard, professor of electrical engineering and computer science at MIT and a member of the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory.

"Jobs' genius is that he built products that people really like to use because he had taste and built things that people really find compelling. Ritchie built things that technologists were able to use to build core infrastructure that people don't necessarily see much anymore, but they use every day."

CONCLUSION

We have lost the great professionals but their remarkable contributions to the technology shall always be remembered by us. They changed the way we use technology now and made our lives easier through their great work. I would like to say a big Thank you to all of them for their tremendous contributions to the world. May their souls rest in peace!

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