### Eric Steven Raymond (ESR)
#### Born: Dec. 4, 1957;

Boston, Massachusetts

Raymond is the author of the widely cited "The Cathedral and the Bazaar" ([May 27] 1997), an open source advocate [Feb 3], and a self-proclaimed neo-pagan.

In the 1990's, he edited and updated the Jargon File [Oct 2], as "The New Hacker's Dictionary".

He invented Linus's Law, named in honor of Linus Torvalds [Dec 28], which states that "given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow". But see [April 1]; [Nov 8].

A quote: "Computer science education cannot make anybody an expert programmer any more than studying brushes and pigment can make somebody an expert painter."

### Sherman Ordered a Pizza
#### Dec. 4, 1974

Donald Sherman, whose speech was severely limited by a neurological disorder called Moebius Syndrome, ordered a large pepperoni and mushroom. pizza over the phone.

He was calling from Michigan State University's AI lab, using one of the first text-to-speech systems (nicknamed "Alexander"). It had been designed by John Eulenberg and J. J. Jackson, employed a Votrax voice synthesizer (probably a VS6), and was running on a CDC 6500 [Sept 00].

The first call was to a Domino's Pizza, which hung up when the voice generation took too long. Thankfully, another pizzeria – Mr. Mike's – took the call, and

history was made: the first computer voice assisted commercial transaction.

The Votrax speech synthesis company was founded in 1971 , using a speech synthesizer design created by Richard T. Gagnon in his basement lab. However in the mid-1970's, Votrax collaborated with the US Naval Research Lab to develop a text-to-phoneme algorithm that ran on the company's VS5 and VS6 devices. This was followed in 1980 by Votrax's integrated circuit speech synthesizer, the SC-01.

### Cray X-MP
#### Dec. 4, 1985

The first Cray X-MP/48 became operational at the San Diego Supercomputer Center.

The original X-MP had been released back in 1982, promoted as the successor to the Cray-1, which it outwardly closely resembled. The main improvement was a shared-memory parallel vector processor, a first for Cray Research. The machine housed two CPUs, each theoretical able to reach 200 MFLOPS, nearly double the speed of its competitors. The X-MP/48, released in 1984, uped the ante to four CPUs, taking the speed to over 800 MFLOPS.
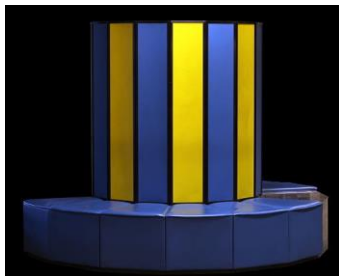


A Cray X-MP/48. Photo by Rama. CC BY-SA 2.0 fr.

Unsuprisingly, the X-MP was the world's fastest computer from 1983 to 1985, and became a popular choice for rendering computer graphics in movies such as "The Last Starfighter' [July 13].

Steve Chen was the X-MP's principal designer, and its success came at an opportune moment for Cray Research which had just spent over $100 million dollars developing Seymour Cray's [Sept 28] Cray 3. However, this also heightened the rivalry between Cray and Chen, which came to a head when the company decided to support Chen's Cray Y-MP. Cray left the business in 1989 to found Cray Computer Corporation.

### OS/2 Released
#### Dec. 4, 1987

In Aug. 1985, IBM and Microsoft signed a Joint Development Agreement, and OS/2 was one of the first results of the happy union.

The name stood for "Operating System/2" to reflect the idea that the OS was intended for IBM's PS/2 (Personal System/2) line. The system was developed under the leadership of IBM designer Ed Iacobucci

Unfortunately, OS/2 wasn't quite ready for the PS/2's big launch back on [April 2], and after it was released on this day, reviewers soon discovered it to be big, slow, and riddled with bugs. On the plus side, it did allow the use of a mouse with an IBM PC for the first time, and was also the first PC OS to provide multitasking based on hardware support. A major drawback was its support of only text mode (i.e. there was no GUI), although a graphical version belatedly arrived at the end of 1988.

Some industry observers pointed out that perhaps IBM shouldn't have asked Microsoft to build OS/2, because it was in direct competition with MS Windows 2.0 which coincidentally came out just five days later, on [Dec 9] 1987.

The collaboration between IBM and Microsoft began unravelling in 1990, between the releases of Windows 3.0 [May 22] and OS/2

1.3. OS/2 2.0 was announced on [Oct 21] 1991.

## AutoPC Released
### Dec. 4, 1998

Clarion's AutoPC was the first "car-puter" (car computer), a voice-controlled device that fitted into the radio slot of a car's dashboard. It let drivers control the radio (I wonder where that was located), a CD player, a phone, and an on-board GPS. It employed voice synthesis to read out e-mails, traffic reports, and entries stored in an address book. It was capable of swapping data with infrared-capable devices, such as the Palm Pilot [March 10].

The system ran Microsoft's "Windows Embedded Automotive OS", which was based on Windows CE [Nov 16]. It later evolved into the equally catchily-titled, "Windows CE for Automotive".

## Goner
### Dec. 4, 2001

The Pentagone (aka Goner) e-mail worm was transmitted inside messages sent to all the entries in Microsoft Outlook's address book. It also utilized ICQ [Nov 15] to spread itself.

The message attachment, "GONE.SCR," once opened, would terminate all anti-virus software running on the machine and delete their files. It would also create a registry key that would handily reactivate the virus every time the system was rebooted.

It caused an estimated $80 million of damages globally. In Aug. 2002, five Israeli school boys were charged with creating it.

## Expression Web
### Dec. 4, 2006

Microsoft released "Expression Web", an HTML editor and Web design program, as part of its "Expression Studio" suite. It was intended to replace Microsoft's previous HTML editor, FrontPage. "Expression Studio" was eventually discontinued, but "Expression Web" lives on as free software. It focuses on creating standards-based Web sites (unlike the earlier FrontPage) by providing support for HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and so on, but requires the .NET Framework [Feb 13] to operate.

FrontPage was released in 1997 as a salvo in the "browser war" [May 18] between Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE [Aug 16]) and Netscape's Navigator [March 25]. Rather deviously, FrontPage created Web pages with features that were only offered by IE.

## Unix Time Overflow #3
### Dec. 4, 292,277,026,596

(292 billion years from now, approximately)

At 15:30:08 UTC, the 64-bit version of UNIX time [Jan 1] will exceed the largest value it can hold.

This is probably not something that should concern us since all the affected systems will be offline, due to the Earth having been incinerated by the expanding red giant Sun some 284 billion years earlier.
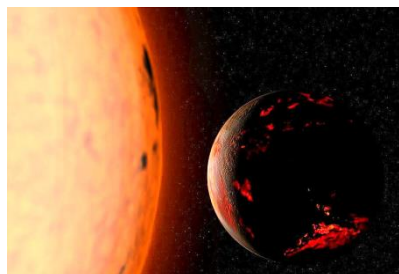


The Earth and Red Giant Sun in 5-7 billion years time. Artwork by Fsgregs. CC BY-SA 3.0.

Also see [Jan 19]; [Feb 7]. For links to all date/time related problems, see [Jan 1].