

July 13th

Douglass Read Cutting

Born: 13 July, 1963 (??); California

Cutting implemented Lucene, a library for full text indexing and searching, which later became a part of Nutch, an open source web crawler which he developed with Mike Cafarella.

In December 2004, Cutting and Sanjay Ghemawat published the MapReduce algorithm [July 23], which allows very large scale computations to be parallelized across clusters of servers.

In 2006, Cutting released Hadoop, a software framework for distributed storage and processing of big data using the MapReduce model. It also borrowed ideas and code from the Lucene and Nutch projects.

The name Lucene is Cutting's wife's middle name and her maternal grandmother's first name. Hadoop is named after Cutting's son's toy elephant, which also appears in the project's logo.

The Last Starfighter

July 13, 1984

Universal Studios released the sci-fi film "The Last Starfighter", directed by Nick Castle and starring Lance Guest and Robert Preston. The story tells how a teenage video game whiz uses his gaming skills to help save a planet under attack by real aliens.

Along with Disney's TRON [July 9], the movie is notable for being one of the first to make extensive use of CGI effects. Digital Productions (founded by John Whitney Jr. [April 8] and Gary Demos) created 27 minutes of effects using a Cray X-MP [Dec

4]. Each frame contained an average of a quarter of a million polygons because unlike Star Wars [May 4], which used physical models for the spaceships, Starfighter's ships were completely CGI.

Atari was also set to release several tie-in games, but they never got past the prototype phase. One reason for dropping them may have been that game machines of the time couldn't produce the real-time 3D graphics shown in the movie. Rumor also has it, that Atari did complete a prototype "The Last Starfighter" arcade machine, but it has since been lost.

Metal Gear

July 13, 1987

"Metal Gear" was the first military stealth game released by Konami for the MSX2 computer [June 16]. It was designed by Hideo Kojima, who also produced many of the sequels.

The game has special forces operative Solid Snake carry out a solo infiltration mission in the fortified state of Outer Heaven. His job is to destroy Metal Gear, a bipedal walking tank capable of launching nuclear missiles.

The game was originally intended to be a conventional military first-person shooter, but the MSX2's hardware limited the number of on-screen bullets and enemies. Kojima changed the gameplay focus from shooting to avoiding capture. This novel stealth concept received a lot of criticism – one comment from Kojima's boss was, "Hiding from your enemies? That's not a game!".

Code Red

July 13, 2001

The "Code Red" worm first surfaced on this day, discovered by two eEye Digital Security employees, Marc Maiffret and Ryan Perme. The worm was named Code Red because the

pair were drinking Code Red Mountain Dew at the time (also known in Canada as Code Rouge).

The worm targeted computers using the Microsoft IIS Web server, exploiting a buffer overflow problem. It launched a denial of service attack on several IP addresses, including the White House, and included a backdoor for remote access.

It left the message "Hacked By Chinese!" on affected Web pages, but there's some evidence that the worm originated in Makati City, in the Philippines, also home to the "ILOVEYOU" worm [May 5].

For more virus nasties, see [Jan 26; March 26; April 30; July 15; July 17; Sept 5; Oct 26; Nov 21].

Wardriving

July 13-15, 2001

Peter M. Shipley presented a talk on wardriving (a term that he coined) at DEF CON 9 [June 9]. Wardriving involves searching for accessible WiFi networks using a portable computer or smartphone, while driving around a neighborhood.

Shipley wrote several Perl [Dec 18] scripts to interface with a GPS receiver which plotted WiFi access points on a map, eliminating the time-consuming process of the user having to write down the locations.

Shipley discovered that only 15% of the WiFi networks in the San Francisco areas that he surveyed were protected by encryption.

The phase "wardriving" derives from "wardialing" [Oct 9], as popularized by the film WarGames [June 3]. Wardialing involves dialing a long sequence of phone number in search of modem lines. Other variants include: warbiking, warjogging, and warrailing.