

July 22nd

Mariner Bugs Out July 22, 1962

The rocket carrying the Mariner 1 probe almost immediately diverted from its flight path, and Mission Control was forced to destroy it just 294 seconds after liftoff. The subsequent investigation revealed that the problem was due to a programmer incorrectly transcribing a handwritten formula into code, missing out a superscript bar. It signified a smoothing function applied to the time derivative of a radius. Without the function, even small variations in speed would trigger the rocket boosters to fire.

In his 1968 book "The Promise of Space", Arthur C. Clarke [Dec 16] described the mission as "wrecked by the most expensive hyphen in history." The cost was estimated at around \$18.5 million.

On a happier note, Mariner 2 reached Venus on December 14, and successfully collected data on Venus' atmosphere, magnetic field, and mass.

Alan Cox Born: July 22, 1968; Solihull, England

Cox was a key figure in the early development of Linux, and was at one time regarded as the "second in command" after Linus Torvalds [Dec 28]. He fixed many of the kernel's bugs, rewrote much of the networking subsystem and was one of the main developers and maintainers of the version 2.2.

He now runs a model train company producing N gauge kits.

The Atlanta Three July 22, 1989

Three members of the "Legion of Doom" hacker group were arrested when the US Secret Service raided their homes in Atlanta. The quickly-named "Atlanta Three" were charged with tapping into Bell South's telephone networks in September 1988, and although, Franklin Darden (aka "The Leftist"), Adam Grant ("The Urvile" or "Necron 99"), and Robert Riggs ("The Prophet") fully cooperated, they were still sentenced to time in prison.

The Secret Service kept busy, later raiding "Steve Jackson Games" [March 1] and carrying out "Operation Sundevil" [May 7], neither of which proved successful.

This "Legion of Doom" should not to be confused with the group of 13 supervillains that appeared in "Challenge of the Super Friends", an animated 1978 cartoon series from Hanna-Barbera.

Lynx Released into Wild 22 July 1992

Lynx was developed by Lou Montulli [Sept 8], Michael Grobe, and Charles Rezac originally as a hypertext browser for Gopher space [Feb 7]. But in March 1993, Montulli added an Internet interface and so version 2.0 became one of the first web browsers.

Lynx is also probably the oldest browser still in use, because of what seemed like a limitation back then – its lack of support for graphics. However, this makes it very suitable for low-powered embedded systems, and avoids many of the privacy concerns inherent with graphical browsers.

In 1995, Lynx was released under a GNU General Public License, and is now maintained

by a group of volunteers led by Thomas Dickey.



The Eurasian lynx. Photo by Bernard Landgraf. CC BY-SA 3.0.

Cheerios and Bibles July 22, 2000

Cereal manufacturer General Mills apologized for including CD-ROMs containing the New International version of the Bible in about 12 million cereal boxes of Cheerios, Chex, and other healthy breakfast products. "While inclusion of the Bible may be seen as added value by some, it is the company's policy not to advance any particular set of religious beliefs," said the company.

The discs were part of a \$10 million software-and-cereal promotion. According to General Mills, it didn't know the Bible had been put on the CDs. However, Greg Swann, founder of Rhinosoft Interactive of Wisconsin, the company that helped create the CDs, called General Mills' claims that it was unaware of the software Bibles "a flat-out lie."

Michigan-based Zondervan Publishing had licensed the software version of its Bible for free, and called the cereal promotion “the largest distribution of Bibles to date.”

The Secret History of Hacking

July 22, 2001

“The Secret History of Hacking” is an entertaining 50-minute documentary made by Ralph Lee focussing on phreaking and hacking from the 1970s to the 1990s, which was released on this day.

John Draper [March 11], Steve Wozniak [Aug 11], and Kevin Mitnick [Dec 25] are prominently featured, along with archival footage of Joe Engressia [May 25], Ron Rosenbaum [Oct 00], Steven Levy [Jan 26], Lee Felsenstein [April 27], Jim Warren [July 20], John Markoff [Oct 24], and others

The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs

July 22, 2017

“The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs” (RSJ), an opera by Pulitzer Prize-winning librettist Mark Campbell and composer Mason Bates (aka D.J. Masonic), premiered at the Santa Fe Opera.

Campbell remarked that Jobs’ story [Feb 24] was just as torrid as anything in *Carmen* or *La Traviata* – dealing in unchecked ambition, fickle love, rivalry, betrayal, death, redemption, and computers.

However, Jobs family and friends weren’t involved in the making of “RSJ”, Apple was never mentioned, products were left unnamed, and the libretto included a disclaimer that it did not purport to depict actual events.
