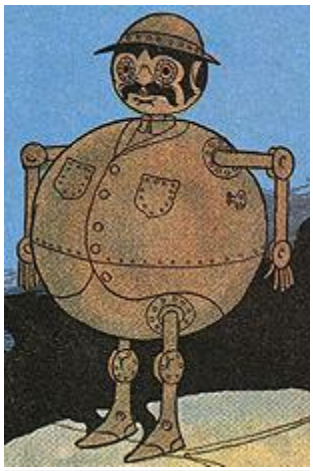
July 30th

Tik-Tok

July 30, 1907

Tik-Tok first appeared in "Ozma of Oz" by L. Frank Baum, becoming one of the first robots to appear in modern literature. and probably the best remembered, although the term “robot” wasn't invented until the 1920s, in the play R.U.R [Jan 25]. The very first robot in modern literature is usually deemed to be Edward S. Ellis’ Steam Man [March 24].



Tik-tok as he appears in "Ozma of Oz". Illustrated by John R. Neill.

Tik-Tok (sometimes spelled as Tiktok) is a round-bodied mechanical man made of copper that runs on clockwork springs which periodically need to be wound. He has separate winding mechanisms for thought, action, and speech, thereby indicating a good degree of hardware abstraction. Unfortunately, Tik-Tok is unable to self-wind, but is "guaranteed to work perfectly for a thousand years."

In his stories, Baum repeatedly asserts that Tik-Tok is not alive and feels no emotions. He describes himself as a “slave” to Dorothy.

For more robot men, see [Feb 00], [Feb 24], [March 23], [April 16], [April 30], [July 17], [Sept 15], [Nov 11], [Nov 30], [Dec 22].

Sir Clive Marles Sinclair

Born: 30 July 1940;

Richmond, Surrey
Died: Sept 16., 2021

Sinclair founded Sinclair Radionics on July 25 1961, and went on to produce the first slim-line electronic pocket calculator in 1972 (the Sinclair Executive).

In [Feb 00] 1978, his company, Science of Cambridge, launched a microcomputer kit, the MK14. In May 1979 Jim Westwood started the ZX80 project at the company, which went on sale on [Jan 29] 1980. Sinclair Research (yet another new name) went on to release the ZX81 [March 5], the ZX Spectrum [April 23], and the Sinclair QL [Jan 12].

UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher presented a ZX Spectrum to the Prime Minister of Japan, as a gift and as an example of Britain’s technological prowess. Sinclair's knighthood was duly recommended by Thatcher.

In 2010 he stated that he did not use computers himself, and preferred using the telephone rather than email. Sinclair was a respected poker player, and won the season final of the TV show *Celebrity Poker Club* in 2003.

Richard Shoup

Born: July 30, 1943;

Gibsonia, Pennsylvania
Died: July 18, 2015

Shoup was a pioneer in computer graphics and animation. At Xerox PARC [July 1], he and Alvy Ray Smith [Sept 8] wrote SuperPaint, one of the first image editing programs, which produced its first pictures in April 1973. SuperPaint was also one of the first applications to sport a graphical user interface, and utilize a graphics tablet. It also had the ability to capture images from standard video input.

The program ran on a Data General Nova 800 minicomputer [April 15], modified to support a hand-wired framebuffer made up of 16 memory cards. This meant that 8-bit images with a resolution of 640 x 480 could be manipulated.

Shoup later received both an Emmy and an Academy Award for this work.

He was also an avid musician in his spare time, playing jazz trombone in various bands around the Bay Area.

Van Lynn Jacobson

Born: July 30th, 1950;

California

Jacobson was one of the primary developers of the TCP/IP protocol stack [Sept 9], especially related to its performance and scaling capabilities. In particular, his work with Mike Karels on redesigning TCP/IP’s flow control algorithms to better handle congestion is said to have saved the Internet from collapse in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Jacobson also developed the TCP/IP Header Compression protocol, and was the co-author of several popular network diagnostic tools, including traceroute, tcpdump, and pathchar.

He also led the development of the Internet Multicast Backbone (MBone [June 24]), and the creation of its audio and video conferencing tools (e.g. vic, vat, wb). MBone laid the groundwork for current Internet VoIP and multimedia applications [Aug 29].

Jacobson studied modern poetry, physics, and mathematics as an undergraduate.

Samuel J. Palmisano

Born: July 30, 1951;

Baltimore, Maryland

Palmisano joined IBM in 1973 as a salesman, rose through the ranks, to become CEO in March 2002 and chairman from 2003 to 2012, succeeding Louis Gerstner, Jr. [March 1].

Palmisano managed the sale of IBM's PC group to Lenovo [Dec 8], a controversial move at the time, since it meant that IBM handed the title of the world's largest IT firm (by revenue) to Hewlett-Packard [Sept 3].

In 2008, he launched IBM's Smarter Planet initiative, which formed part of the company's move towards cloud computing [March 30].

Palmisano once played backup saxophone for "The Temptations", and turned down an opportunity to try out with the Oakland Raiders.

First Computer Auction Flops

July 30, 1970

The prestigious Parke-Bernet Galleries on East 84th Street in NYC held the first computer auction. The 93 lots of assorted computer detritus brought in less than $300,000, some of which included "house buying" to keep the items from going at prices well below their market value.

An IBM 7070 [Nov 30] (a million dollar machine originally) sold for $2,250; a UNIVAC Solid State 80 [March 10] (a $300,000 device) sold for $485.

The offerings included a 80 pound, 51-inch-long control panel from a UNIVAC I, the first commercial computer [March 31]. It belonged to William A. Ferguson, who said his wife had told him to "get it out of the laundry room." It was sold for $110.

First UNIX News

July 30, 1975

The first issue of "UNIX News" was published by Mel Ferentz of Brooklyn College. Around 40 copies were sent out, mostly to US and Canada institutions, but also to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Herriot-Watt University (in Edinburgh) and the Universite Catholique de Louvain (Belgium). The North American part of the circulation list included a a public high school and a private girls' school.

By September 1976, the number of subscribers had grown to a whopping 138: 13 in Canada, ten in Great Britain, four in Australia, three each in Israel and the Netherlands, and one in Austria, Belgium, Germany, and Venezuela.

In July 1977, "UNIX News" became ";login:" after AT&T informed Ferentz that he couldn't use the word UNIX [Oct 15] as it was trademarked. A similar name change was forced upon the UNIX Users Group [May 15], which became USENIX [June 6].
