

June 9th

## Brain Surgeon Reflects on AI June 9, 1949

Sir Geoffrey Jefferson, the British neurologist and pioneering neurosurgeon, was awarded the Lister Medal in 1948 for his contributions to surgical science. Part of the award involved him giving a talk, the Lister Oration, at the UK's Royal College of Surgeons. He presented "The Mind of Mechanical Man", an early foray into the possibilities of AI, and his views were very clear:

"Not until a machine can write a sonnet or compose a concerto because of thoughts and emotions felt, and not by the chance fall of symbols, could we agree that machine equals brain – that is, not only write it but know that it had written it.

No mechanism could feel (and not merely artificially signal, an easy contrivance) pleasure at its successes, grief when its valves fuse, be warmed by flattery, be made miserable by its mistakes, be charmed by sex, be angry or miserable when it cannot get what it wants."

Alan Turing's [June 23] initial response took the form of a letter in *The Times* on [June 11]. A more considered reply appeared in his seminal "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" paper [Oct 00] in the "Argument from Consciousness" section.

## Xerox 820 June 9, 1981

Xerox announced the Xerox 820 Information Processor, featuring an 8-bit Zilog Z80 chip [March 9], CP/M [June 22], and BASIC [Nov 18]. It was codenamed "The Worm" – probably a reference to Apple computers [June 5], in that worms eat apples.

Much of the hardware was housed within the large monitor, but the disk drive and hard disk were mounted in a separate huge box.

It was rather a slow machine, with no expansion slots, and its single-sided 5.25-inch floppies only held 81K of data.

The overall opinion was that the 820 was a disappointing, "me too" product, and that the new IBM PC [Aug 12] was much more attractive.



Xerox 820. Photo by Maurizio Indaco. CC0.

The amazing thing was that Xerox did have a truly radical computer for sale, the Xerox Star [April 27], but it was over priced and poorly promoted.

## The Great Renaming June 9-13, 1986

USENET [Jan 29] was experiencing growing pains. The original scheme of just three worldwide hierarchies – "net" for unmoderated groups, "mod" for moderated news and "fa" for gateways from the ARPANET – was becoming increasingly difficult to administer.

Various proposals had been made to add new levels, but the real sticking point was how the community would support the enhanced backbone financially.

At today's USENIX [May 15] meeting, the "Great Renaming" was assigned to the "Backbone Cabal" [?? 1956].

Their deliberations lasted until March 1987 when eight main new hierarchies were introduced: comp, misc, news, rec, sci, soc, talk, and setup. The ninth, alt, wasn't subject to the same stringent procedures controlling the Big Eight.

## BOFH Posts Begin June 9, 1992

"BASTARD OPERATOR FROM HELL #1" was posted by Simon Travaglia to the newsgroup "alt.tasteless".

The BOFH is a fictional sysadmin who reacts poorly to questions from users, and is more than happy to dispense his own brand of justice upon enemies/employees.

The early BOFH stories are set in a university, but the character later moves to a company, and gets a pimply-faced youth (PFY) as an assistant.

The main protagonist in Charles Stross's "The Laundry Files" series of novels is called Bob Oliver Francis Howard, a reference to the BOFH.

## Jurassic Park June 9, 1993

Steven Spielberg's "Jurassic Park" premiered in Washington D.C., and soon opened across the country. It broke box office records in its first weekend, earning \$47 million, and eventually took in over \$900 million worldwide.

During production, the decision was made to use computer generated imagery (CGI) alongside animatronic dinosaur effects. Surprisingly, there's only 15 minutes of dinosaur action in the film: nine minutes were Stan Winston's practical effects, and six minutes of CGI from Industrial Light & Magic (ILM [Sept 12]).

Spielberg was initially worried that computer graphics would mean Nintendo-style gaming quality [Sept 23], but after seeing an ILM demo of a T-rex, he decided to shoot many of the dinosaur scenes this way. Each animation was plotted on Video Toasters [Dec 6], then rendered using Silicon Graphics' Indigo workstations [March 23].

There's no evidence that Laura Dean (who played feisty Dr. Ellie Sattler in the movie) remarked "You can hardly tell where the computer models finish and the real dinosaurs begin."

Phil Tippett was somewhat unhappy when he learned that none of his stop-motion dinosaurs models would be employed, but his techniques did find use for animating the computer-generated dinosaurs.



Gallimimus model, made by Wojciech Skarzyński. Photo by Hiuppo. CC BY 3.0.

Wayne Knight plays Jurassic Park's evil sysadmin, Dennis Nedry (an anagram of "nerdy") who sabotages the system, much to Samuel L. Jackson's dismay ("God damn it...I hate this hacker crap!"). Fortunately, Lex, a girl, figures out how to reactivate the island's security, uttering the famous line: "It's a UNIX system! I know this!"

Based on a close examination of the monitors used in the movie, it appears that the park's software is written in Pascal [Feb 15]. Also, when Lex recognizes UNIX [Oct 15], it's actually the experimental Silicon

Graphics 3D File System Navigator. However, the version number of Silicon Graphics UNIX, 4.0.5, is visible in one of the shell windows.

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## Emmanuel Bashing June 9, 1993

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Eric Gordon Corley (aka "Emmanuel Goldstein"), the editor of *2600: The Hacker Quarterly* [Jan 12], appeared before the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Finance. The session, on network security, would later become known as "Emmanuel Bashing" day.

During the hearing, Massachusetts Democrat Edward J. Markey and other members of the committee grilled Corley on the pros and cons of publishing *2600*. The magazine later published an annotated transcript of the session as an example of the gulf in perception between the committee and the hacker community.

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## DEF CON June 9, 1993

DEF CON, now one of the world's largest hacker conventions, was held in Las Vegas for the first time. Its organizer, Jeff Moss, intended it to be a one-off jamboree, but its enormous popularity has made it a yearly occasion.

The event consisted of multiple tracks about hacking, as well as contests such as "Capture the Flag" (CTF): teams attempt to attack and defend computers and networks using prescribed software and networking infrastructure.

The conference name comes from the movie *WarGames* [June 3], and is also a reference to the US Armed Forces defense readiness condition (DEFCON).

The "Black Badge" is the highest DEF CON award, and was

awarded to a non-human entity for the first time in 2016.

The European equivalent of DEFCON is the Chaos Communication Congress [Sept 12], and the first DEF CON China event was held in Beijing in 2018, the first DEF CON conference outside the US.

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## Brainfuck Released June 9 1993

Brainfuck is an esoteric programming language [May 26] created by Physics student Urban Müller which is notable for its extreme minimalism. It supports just eight commands which manipulate a memory pointer.

The language's name is slang that refers to things so complicated or unusual that they exceed the limits of understanding.

Müller uploaded the first Brainfuck compiler to Aminet, a small archive for Amiga software [July 23]. Its readme file posed the challenge: "Who can program anything useful with it? :)".

The following prints "Hello World!" and a newline:

```
+++++++ [>++++ [>+>++++>+++  
>+<<<<<- ]>+>+>->>+ [<] <-  
]>> .>- .+++++++ . .+++ .>> .<-  
.< .+++ .— .— .>>+ .>+.
```

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## Hot Coffee June 9, 2005

"Hot Coffee" is a hidden mini-game inside "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas" (GTA; [Oct 21]) developed by Rockstar North in Scotland. The public became aware of it after today's release of the "Hot Coffee mod" which made it much easier to play.

The mini-game came in two stimulating parts. In the first, the player is invited to smack Carl "CJ" Johnson's girlfriend on the backside, by tapping a gamepad's button repeatedly.

The other part features poorly animated sexual intercourse between "CJ", and his girlfriend (who remain fully clothed). The player is required to move the analogue stick in time with the characters' bodies to increase the length of an 'EXCITEMENT' bar.

The "Hot Coffee name comes from the girlfriend's initial offer that "CJ" come home with her for coffee.

In fairly short order, an official GTA patch appeared – "Cold Coffee", which disabled the mini-game, but that wasn't the end of the matter.

US Senator Hillary Clinton [July 20] suggested that new regulations be placed on video games sales. In response, the ESRB [Sept 16] conducted an investigation that ultimately changed the game's rating from Mature to "Adults Only 18+". Also, a class action lawsuit was filed by Florence Cohen, an 85-year-old grandmother who purchased the game for her 14-year-old grandson. At the time, GTA was a "Mature" game, but that still meant it was deemed unsuitable for the boy. The lawsuit ended in a \$20 million settlement.

Eventually, Rockstar released a version of GTA that didn't contain any "Hot Coffee" at all, and its Mature rating was reinstated.

San Andreas' follow-up, GTA 4, was located in a fictionalized NYC. The face on the game's Statue of Liberty bears a striking resemblance to Hillary Clinton. Instead of a flaming torch, she is clutching a mug of hot coffee.

For more GTA problems, see [Feb 5] and [Aug 4].

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