

June 27th

Henry Ross Perot

Born: June 27, 1930;

Texarkana, Texas
Died: July 9, 2019

Perot became a salesman for IBM [Sept 3] in 1957, and filled his year's sales quota in just two weeks. To celebrate his birthday in 1962, he left IBM to found Electronic Data Systems (EDS [Feb 18]), one of the first companies to specialize in data processing service management. EDS's first major customer was Frito-Lay based in Plano, Texas, where Perot later based EDS's impressive headquarters.

When Steve Jobs [Feb 24] lost the power struggle at Apple and created NeXT [Oct 12], Perot was an angel investor, contributing over \$20 million. Perot later said that he didn't want to miss out as he had when he declined to invest in Bill Gates' [Oct 28] fledging Microsoft.

On Oct. 28, 2011, the Museum of Nature & Science in Dallas announced that it was naming a newly discovered species of the dinosaur *Pachyrhinosaurus* after the Perot family.

Automated Bakery

June 27, 1962

Construction of a new Sara Lee plant in Deerfield began on this day. When the factory started production in 1964, it was the first to use a computer, a GE-600, for quality control, including the monitoring of equipment speeds, oven temperatures, and determining what products needed to be produced to fill orders.

At the opening ceremony, Charles W. Lubin, president of Sara Lee, proudly announced, "If a correction is needed, the computer spots it in microseconds, prints it out on a typewriter, and sounds an alarm

so that our bakers can make the necessary correction immediately."

In the May 12th, 1965 issue, of *Factory Magazine*, the facility was named one of the ten top new plants in the US.

It was estimated that the factory was able to turn out 7 million cheesecakes, brownies, danish, croissants, cinnamon rolls, and muffins per week.

First ATM

June 27, 1967

The first Automated Teller Machine (ATM) was unveiled by Barclays Bank at its Enfield Town branch in London.

The De La Rue Automatic Cash System (DACS) was developed by a team led by John Shepherd-Barron, who later said "I hit upon the idea of a chocolate bar dispenser, but replacing chocolate with cash."

The DACS utilized a specially marked cheque irradiated with a compound of carbon-14. Shephed-Barron disparaged any radiation hazard, noting that "you would have to eat 136,000 such cheques for it to have any effect on you"

The more familiar card with a magnetic strip was first employed on Sept. 2, 1969, when Chemical Bank installed the first ATM in the US in Rockville Centre, New York.

Some believe that the ATM was invented by the American Luther George Simjian, who filed a patent on June 30, 1960. His Bankograph came into service at City Bank in NYC in 1961, but was removed after six months due to lack of interest. However, the Bankograph was technically an automated envelope deposit machine (accepting coins, cash and cheques), and didn't have cash dispensing features.

Atari

June 27, 1972

In 1969, Nolan Bushnell [Feb 5] and Ted Dabney [May 2] formed Syzygy (named after the astronomy term for an alignment of celestial bodies), to produce their arcade game, "Computer Space" [Oct 15]. Amazingly, when they attempted to incorporate Syzygy in 1972, they discovered that the name was already taken (by a candle company owned by a hippie commune, according to Bushnell).

The pair decided to instead incorporate their company under the name Atari, a reference to a checkmate-like position in the game Go, which Bushnell called his "favorite game of all time".

A few months later, they released Pong [Nov 29], which sparked the beginning of the video game industry, with Atari becoming the leader in both arcade and home gaming.

Some other classic Atari games of the time: Gotcha, nicknamed "The Boob Game" (1973) [July 20], Gran Trak 10 (1974) [May 00], Tank (1974) [Nov 5], Hi-Way (1975) [Oct 20], Breakout (1976) [May 13], Asteroids and Lunar Lander [June 17].

When Bushnell needed more investment, he persuaded Warner Communications to buy the company in August 1977. This later proved to be a mistake since Warner's man, Ray Kassar, and Bushnell didn't work well together, and he was forced out in Nov 1978.

However, Atari released a series of important home game machines during this time. First, the Video Computer System (VCS or Atari 2600) on [Oct 14] 1977. The Atari 400 and 800 from 1979 were considered the best 8-bit 6502 [Sept 16] machines for games and color graphics.

Atari was the fastest growing company in the US, until the video game crash of 1983 [July 1]. By 1984, the company had

been split into pieces., with the consumer division was sold to Jack Tramiel [July 1] and renamed Atari Corporation.

Matters improved with the release of the 16-bit Atari ST [Jan 10], a popular successor to the Atari 8-bit family, which also allowed Atari to move into the small business market in the mid-1980's. This was followed by a handheld game console, the Atari Lynx [Sept 1] and, in 1993, the disappointing 64-bit Atari Jaguar [Nov 23]; it was the last Atari home console.

During these twilight years, Tramiel and his family wanted to ditch the company, and the result was a rapid succession of changes in Atari ownership.

Geffen's Digital Download

June 27, 1994

Years before Spotify [Feb 21], iTunes [April 28], or even Napster [Nov 22], Geffen Records released the first major label song as a digital download.

Aerosmith's "Head First", an unused cut from their "Get a Grip" sessions, was made available on CompuServe [Sept 24] as a WAV file. Ten thousand subscribers downloaded it in eight days by typing the command "GO AEROSMITH." The song was three minutes and 14 seconds long, but took around 90 minutes to download.



Steve Tyler of Aerosmith. Photo by S. Nadal. CC BY-SA 3.0.

Steven Tyler of Aerosmith remarked: "If our fans are out there driving down that information superhighway [Jan 3], then we want to be playing at the truck stop."

The digital download was the idea of three new Geffen employees: Jim Griffin, Robert von Goeben, and Luke Wood. Later Geffen became the first label on CompuServe's Music Vendors Forum. Fans could download 30-second clips of songs from its catalog.

Anarchy Online

June 27, 2001

Norwegian game company Funcom released "Anarchy Online" for MS Windows, the first major MMORPG to use a science fiction setting rather than the standard fantasy backdrop. It also introduced a number of features that became common in later MMORPGs including: dynamic quests (missions partly created by the user), free trial subscriptions, in-game advertising, and instancing (an area reserved for mission players only).

In addition to being distributed in a retail box, Anarchy Online was one of the first games available for download online.

AMD Complains

June 27, 2005

Advanced Micro Devices (AMD [May 1]) filed an antitrust complaint against Intel [Oct 20] alleging that it had employed monopolistic powers through the systematic use of secret rebates, special discounts, threats, and other means to lock AMD processors out of the chip market. For instance, if a company like Dell [May 3] offered a computer using an AMD chip then Intel would raise the price of every component sold to Dell.

AMD issued subpoenas to several manufacturers including

Dell, HP, IBM, Microsoft, Sony, and Toshiba.

In Nov. 2009, Intel settled the suit (along with several other disputes) for \$1.25 billion. A separate court case in the UK resulted in Intel being told to pay AMD €1.06 billion, the largest ever fine imposed in a British court.

Gates' Last Day

June 27, 2008

Prev: [June 15]

Bill Gates [Oct 28] spent his last day as an employee of Microsoft, before focussing solely on the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The transition had begun almost two years before.

The Microsoft home page uploaded a 'Bill Gates: Looking Back, Moving Ahead' video, which started with a fun (but quite official) history. The piece had originally been entitled 'Bill Gates: Looking Back, Moving Forward', which perhaps sounded too dangerous, at least for a lover of sports cars [Dec 13].

Earlier that year, Gates had kicked off his last CES [June 24] keynote with a humorous seven-minute film about what his last day at work might look like. It starred himself, Steve Ballmer [March 24], and a grab bag of celebrities and politicians. Another trip down memory lane involved a recreation of the famous Albuquerque picture [Dec 7].

Although today was billed as Bill's Farewell Tour, Gates remained the company's non-executive chairman until Feb 4 2014, when Satya Nadella [Jan 6] became CEO. Gates took on the role of a Technology Advisor to Nadella, which caused him to remark: "I'm thrilled that Satya has asked me to step up, substantially increasing the time that I spend at the company."

On March 13, 2020, Gates stepped down from the company's board to spend more time on philanthropic activities,

including global health, education and tackling climate change. In 2021, this expanded to include divorce proceedings.

Sky Diving in Glasses

June 27, 2012

At the Google I/O conference held at the Moscone center in San Francisco, Sergey Brin [Aug 21] began his talk by saying "This can go wrong in 500 different ways, so tell me: who wants to see a demo of Glass?" He meant Google Glass [April 15], an optical head-mounted display being developed in Google's Project Glass.

Skydivers in wingsuits, wearing Google glasses, jumped from a airship 4,000 feet above the city, landed on the Moscone center's roof and passed a package to stunt bikers who cycled across the roof to a man who abseiled down the side of the building. The parcel was handed to a person on the ground who cycled into the conference hall and delivered it to Brin.

The whole thing was shown in a live video feed from the skydivers' and bikers' glasses. The visuals were amazing although exactly what was in the package handed to Brin was never revealed. Perhaps a bill for organizing the event?

Google used 25 cameras to cover the action. The stuntmen wore 11 Glass prototypes and Brin also wore a pair. There were a further ten conventional cameras filming events from the zeppelin and from a helicopter, and three more inside the hall.

One big technology hurdle was how to receive live video signals from people falling through the air. They finally went with people pointing parabolic antennas at the skydivers from the roof.

The demo went perfectly, and was repeated the next day. However, after the excitement had cooled, some pettifoggers questioned whether the demo

actually showed off much of the technology behind Glass, except for its ability to stream (short) snatches of video.
