

## March 12th

### First Computer Cartoon

March 12, 1946

The first cartoon gag based on a real computer, the ENIAC, was drawn by Franklin Osborne Alexander and published in the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, just a month after the machine's unveiling [Feb 15]. It can be viewed at <http://potrzebie.blogspot.com/2011/07/first-computer-cartoon-1946.html>.

Alexander was a political cartoonist and, like most political jokes, the humor hasn't aged well, unless you happen to be an expert on post-war US economics. The quip refers to the design of a new wage-price policy that would keep inflation down without causing massive strikes.

The three characters are US Treasury secretary John W. Snyder, Chester Bowles the former head of the Office of Price Administration (OPA), and Paul A. Porter the newly elected OPA head. Beneath a sign that reads "ENIAC: The Wizard Computing Machine", Bowles is considering a control panel, and the caption reads "Completed Just in Time." I suppose this means that ENIAC, being of superior intellect, has solved the problem that the three duffers found too difficult.

For more computing cartoons, see [April 16], [July 5], [Aug 23], [Sept 9], [Sept 24], [Oct 17].

### First CeBIT

March 12-16, 1986

The first "Centrum für Büroautomation, Informationstechnologie, und Telekommunikation" (CeBIT) exhibition was held in Hanover Germany, and attracted over 2,000 businesses and 334,400

visitors. This made it the world's largest computer trade fair, easily beating its American equivalent, COMDEX [Dec 3]. Unfortunately, declining numbers in later years meant that the event was placed on indefinite hiatus in 2018.



The Heyday of CeBIT (2000). Photo by maebmij. CC BY-SA 3.0.

The show had previously been part of the Hanover Fair, but was split off due to its popularity. The fair had begun in 1947, and by the late 1950's "office equipment industry" was the third largest exhibitor group.

An interesting part of CeBIT that made it more than just a trade show was the CeBIT Global Conference. It invited industry figures and researchers to pontificate on trends and innovations. Over the years, the speakers had included Steve Wozniak [Aug 11] and Arnold Schwarzenegger [Oct 26].

### First Web Proposal

March 12, 1989

Tim Berners-Lee [June 8] submitted "Information Management: A Proposal" to the CERN management, in which he requested support for the development of a hypertext document system for researchers in the organization. He had already proposed something similar, the ENQUIRE hypertext system [June 23], when he last worked for CERN at the start of the 1980's. The current incarnation was called the 'Mesh'.

The proposal intrigued Berners-Lee's boss Mike Sendall, who wrote on the paperwork: 'Vague, but exciting'. Nevertheless, it failed to receive funding, which led Berners-Lee to ask for help from Robert Cailliau [Jan 26] to write a more detailed revision. They submitted this version on [Nov 12], 1990, which is often described as the birthday of the World Wide Web.

### CIA Search

March 12, 2006

An article in *The Chicago Tribune* claimed to have compiled a list of 2,653 CIA employees by searching only commercial databases accessible via the Internet. The details included the names of operatives, internal agency telephone numbers, and the locations of twenty-four clandestine CIA facilities.

A spokeswoman for the agency later admitted that the newspaper's claims would force the CIA to change its methods of protecting information, but wouldn't concede that the *Tribune's* claims were true.

Off the record, a retired CIA operative called the article "goofy at best"