

May 15th

Robert Anthony Kowalski

Born: May 15, 1941;
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Kowalski is known for his contributions to the development of Logic Programming (LP), starting with the procedural interpretation of Horn clause logic.

With Marek Sergot, he developed both the event calculus and the application of LP to legal reasoning. He also collaborated with Fariba Sadri on a software agent model in which beliefs are represented by logic programs and goals are integrity constraints.

Kowalski was one of the early proponents of abductive LP. His interest in abduction was encouraged at school by his Latin teacher, Father Walsh, who trained him and three others to compete in Latin sight-translation contests.

Early in his academic career, he signed up for an expedition to find gold in Honduras, but abandoned the journey somewhere in Ohio. His latest book has a chapter on the Meaning of Life, and he's also responsible for identifying three previously unknown Mesolithic sites in the UK's South Downs.

Brian Peter George St John le Baptiste de la Salle Eno

Born: May 15, 1948;
Woodbridge, Suffolk

Eno is known for his pioneering work in rock, ambient, pop, and electronic music. A self-described "non-musician", Eno has always advocated "theory over practice".

In 1994, Microsoft designers Mark Malamud and Erik

Gavriluk approached Eno to compose music for Windows 95 [Aug 24]. The result was the six-second start-up clip, called "The Microsoft Sound".

Eno wrote of the experience: "The thing from the agency said, "We want a piece of music that is inspiring, universal, blah-blah, da-da-da, optimistic, futuristic, sentimental, emotional," this whole list of adjectives, and then at the bottom it said "and it must be 3¹/₄ seconds long."

Eno also admitted, "I wrote it on a Mac. I've never used a PC in my life; I don't like them."



Brian Eno (2012). Photo by Joerundfp. CC BY 2.0.

The music for the life simulation game, Spore [Sept 7], was designed by Eno. He worked with Peter Chilvers, Kent Jolly and Aaron McLeran to implement "The Shuffler" which procedurally generates fragments of the soundtrack from a number of samples. The music changes based on a gamer's style of play, so no two gaming sessions sound exactly the same.

Subsequently, Eno and Chilvers created generative music applications for the iPhone [Jan 9], iPod Touch [Oct 23], and iPad [April 3].

First UNIX Users Meeting May 15, 1974

The first meeting of the UNIX [Oct 15] Users Group was organized by Lou Katz at

Columbia University. Ken Thompson [Feb 4] spoke at the event, and the audience exchanged bug reports, tips, and tricks concerning UNIX and DEC [Aug 23] hardware.

Although only a few dozen people attended this first gathering, the group would grow into USENIX, the Advanced Computing Systems Association. It currently sponsors several conferences and workshops.

In June 1977, a lawyer from AT&T informed the group that they couldn't use the word UNIX as it was a trademark of Western Electric (the manufacturing arm of AT&T until 1995). Margaret Law's suggestion, USENIX, was adopted on May 24, 1978.

Almost since its beginning, USENIX has published a respected technical journal, *login*: [July 30], and also found time to create a deck of playing cards to honor UNIX contributors [June 6].

Other notable user groups, in chronological order of their foundation, include SHARE [Aug 22], DECUS [March 00], the Amateur Computer Society (ACS [May 5]), the Amateur Computer Club (ACC [Dec 13]), the Homebrew Computer Club [March 5], ACGN [June 13], A.P.P.L.E. [Feb 21], and the Chaos Computer Club (CCC) [Sept 12].

Computerland in China

May 15, 1984

William Millard, of Computerland [Sept 21], and officials of the Chinese government signed a letter of intent in Beijing to create a network of microcomputers in China.

Of more lasting importance was ComputerLand's hiring of Sidney Rittenberg as their special advisor on China. This role was the beginning of his metamorphosis into a high-flying go-between for Western companies hoping to enter the

Chinese market. At various times, his consultancy represented Intel, Microsoft, and many others.

Rittenberg had arrived in China as an Army private in 1945, and after the war joined Mao's revolutionaries in the mountains. His time with them included late-night card games with Mao, Zhou Enlai, and other future leaders, long before the Communists took power. He was even mentioned in Chairman Mao's writings, under his Chinese name, Li Dunbai.

He later served as a mid-level party functionary – except for two periods of imprisonment for spying (for six years and later ten years). In both cases, he was eventually exonerated and released.

During his second period in jail, he penned a new Confucian saying: "Man who climbs out on limb should listen carefully for sound of saw."

Gates and Allen's Flower Flies

May 15, 1997

Hoverflies (flower flies) are often seen around flowers, as they feed mainly on nectar and pollen.

Bill Gates' [Oct 28] flower fly (*Eristalis gatesi*) is found only in Costa Rica's high Talamanca montane cloud forests. Paul Allen's [Jan 21] flower fly (*Eristalis alleni*) is based in similar habitats.

The black and yellow abdominal color pattern of *E. gatesi* is unique among flower flies. However, *E. alleni* is somewhat similar in appearance to the males of *E. circe* and *E. persa*, but can be distinguished by its leg color.

The names were assigned by Christian F. Thompson in his paper "Revision of the *Eristalis* flower flies (Diptera: Syrphidae) of the Americas South of the United States" which appeared in the Proceedings of the

Entomological Society of Washington.



Eristalis gatesi. PD-USGov-USDA.

Thompson explained his naming choice like so: "I have named them after the brilliant pair of Paul Allen and Bill Gates, who have done more to bring power to the people through computer software. That in turn has allowed for the blossoming of all of our talents, not the least the ability of systematists to more effectively and efficiently describe our disappearing biota."

The paper is online at https://repository.si.edu/bitstream/handle/10088/17085/ent_FCT_74.pdf, and includes beautiful colored drawings of the flies.

HTC Founded

May 15, 1997

Cher Wang, H.T. Cho, and Peter Chou founded HTC in Taiwan, originally to make Windows Mobile smartphones [Jan 4]. HTC later became a co-founding member of the Open Handset Alliance, a group of manufacturers and mobile network operators dedicated to Android [Nov 5].

The HTC Dream [Sept 23], marketed by T-Mobile in many countries as the T-Mobile G1, was the first phone to run Android. HTC also worked with Google to build the Nexus One [Jan 5].

On [April 5] 2016, HTC released the Vive, a virtual reality head-mounted display, in collaboration with Valve Corporation.

On Sept. 21, 2017, Google announced that it was acquiring roughly half of the 4,000 staff who worked in HTC's design and research groups, including the team involved with Google's Pixel smartphone.
