

Oct. 16th

## Edward J. McCluskey

**Born:** Oct. 16, 1929;  
New York City  
**Died:** Feb. 13, 2016

William Quine and McCluskey's eponymous algorithm for the minimization of Boolean functions has become a crucial component of chip design automation methods. He also developed the theory of transients (i.e. hazards) in logic networks, and operating modes for sequential circuits. Later work focused on fault-tolerant computing.

Unusual hats were a McCluskey 'trademark', with headgear ranging from Mickey Mouse ears to a Sherlock Holmes' deerstalker.

## Michael John Muuss

**Born:** Oct. 16, 1958;  
Iowa City, Iowa  
**Died:** Nov. 20, 2000

Muuss was the author of the ubiquitous PING, a useful network tool for testing the reachability of a host on the Internet. The name was borrowed from sonar terminology, although it's sometimes said to stand for "Packet InterNet Groper". He wrote it in one evening in 1983.

His other contributions included BRL-CAD for 3D modeling, and the tcp and Bind networking tools. He also developed the concept of a default route or gateway.

Muuss was known for tracking down computer security crackers, and makes a guest appearance in Clifford Stoll's [June 4] "The Cuckoo's Egg".

Muuss collected stories about people's use of ping. He believed the following to be the best one:

a network administrator wanted to find the source of an intermittent Ethernet failure in his building. He did this by linking ping to a vocoder (voice encoder), in essence writing:

```
ping goodhost |  
sed -e 's/./*/ping/' |  
vocoder
```



Mike Muuss (1999). Photo by Lee Butler. CC0.

He wired the vocoder's output to a loudspeaker so the computer would say "ping" once per second. He then wandered through the building wiggling Ethernet connectors until the sound stopped.

Of course, the "Ping of Death" must be mentioned – a system attack involving malformed pings. A correctly-formed ping packet is typically 84 bytes in size, but any IPv4 packet may be as large as 65,535 bytes, which on some systems can cause a buffer overflow when a malformed ping packet is reassembled. Despite ping's advanced age, "ping of death" problems still occur. For example, in 2013, an IPv6 [Dec 00] version was discovered in MS Windows.

## CDC 1604

Oct. 16, 1959

Control Data Corporation (CDC) [July 8] released their first computer, the CDC 1604, the world's fastest at the time, and about half the price of comparable systems. The main body weighed one ton, and its console another half-ton. It

boasted 32 KB of core memory and a cycle time of 6.4 microseconds. It was designed by Seymour Cray [Sept 28].

The first was delivered to the US Navy in 1960, and by 1964, over fifty had been sold.

CDC president William Norris named the machine by adding the firm's address, 501 Park Avenue, to the number of the last machine he had worked on, the UNIVAC 1103 [Oct 00].

## WANK Worm

Oct. 16, 1989

WANK (Worms Against Nuclear Killers) attacked DEC VMS [Oct 25] computers by exploiting DECnet protocols rather than the more fashionable TCP/IP [Sept 9], and was tightly coded in the Digital [Aug 23] Command Language for that explicit purpose.

It was the first major worm to push a political message, including the bromide "You talk of times of peace for all, and then prepare for war." Indeed, it contained over sixty messages of this ilk (which were selected at random), including "Vote anarchist" and "The FBI is watching YOU". It was also programmed to trick users into believing that it was deleting files by displaying a deletion dialogue that could not be aborted, though no data was actually erased.

It was believed to have been the first virus created by Australian hackers, due to references to the awesome rock band, "Midnight Oil." Other indications suggested the virus was from Melbourne, although Oil's lead singer (The Honourable) Peter Garrett was born in Wahroonga, Sydney.

## Spyware

Oct. 16, 1995

The first use of the term 'spyware' probably occurred in the USENET post made by Roland Vossen on this day, as

part of a message poking fun at the source code for Windows 95 [Aug 24].

The spyware label was originally applied to code explicitly aimed at espionage, but the term has evolved to encompass any software that gathers information about a person or organization without their knowledge.

In early 2000, the founder of Zone Labs, Gregor Freund, used the phrase in a press release for his company's "ZoneAlarm Personal Firewall". Later that year the software hit the headlines when ZoneAlarm alerted a parent that the seemingly mild-mannered educational software "Reader Rabbit" from Mattel was secretly sending data back to the company.

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## Clojure

Oct. 16, 2007

Clojure, a dialect of Lisp [April 15] designed for concurrency, was released by Rich Hickey after several years of development. Clojure runs on both the Java [May 23] Virtual Machine and Microsoft's .NET Common Language Runtime [Feb 13].

The current development process is community-driven, but overseen by Rich Hickey as benevolent dictator for life (BDFL [April 18]).

A quote from Hickey: 'I discovered Lisp after ten years of C++ [Oct 14] and said to myself, "What have I been doing with my life?"'

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## Eee PC

Oct. 16, 2007

The Asus Eee PC 701 netbook was released on this day. The line was notable for its combination of a small form factor, Linux [Sept 17], a solid-state drive (SSD), and relatively low cost, although later models

added the options of MS Windows and a hard disk drive.



ASUS Eee PC. Photo by Red. CC BY 3.0.

According to Asus, the name Eee stood for the three "E"s in "Easy to learn, Easy to work, Easy to play".

Many PC manufacturers jumped on the bandwagon, creating a plethora of devices. In 2008, Asus put out at least 20 different models alone. In that year, netbooks accounted for about 40% of all laptop sales.

But the netbook's success was short-lived, overtaken by tablets. When Steve Jobs [Feb 24] introduced the iPad on [April 3] 2010, he pointed out, "the problem is netbooks aren't better at anything."

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## Live Free or Die Hard

Oct. 16, 2007

Mike Dunn, president of 20th Century Fox announced that the DVD release of the film "Live Free or Die Hard" would be the first to include a complete electronic copy of the movie playable on computers. However, it also came with Digital rights management (DRM [Oct 3]). A user had to install Fox's "Digital Copy Manager" on the target computer, and type in a keycode included in the DVD box to unlock the movie file.

The movie pits John McClane (Bruce Willis) against cyber terrorists who have hacked into government and commercial computers across the US to start a "fire sale" of financial assets.

All the IP addresses shown are legal ones. However, most start with either 10, 172.16 or 192.168 which are used only for local network traffic.

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