Oct. 28th

Marcian Edward Hoff, Jr.

Born: Oct. 28, 1937,

Rochester, New York

Hoff was one of the co-inventors of the Intel 4004 [Nov 15], together with Stanley Mazor [Oct 22], Masatoshi Shima [Aug 22], and Federico Faggin [Dec 1].

He joined Intel in 1967 as employee number 12, and was largely responsible inside the company for promoting the idea of building a "universal processor" rather than a variety of custom designed circuits: an insight that started the microprocessor revolution.

Ted Hoff (2009). Photo by Dicklyon. CC BY-SA 4.0.

His work arguably also saved his own life after he was fitted with a pacemaker in 1991 which uses a microcontroller. (Probably a member of the Texas Instruments MSP430F16x family.)

He credited his interest in electronics to a subscription to *Popular Science* magazine that he received from his uncle when he was 12.

A May 2009 Intel ad called Hoff a "rock star" of the company. The accompanying illustration contrasts a grunge rock 'n roll band with two bespectacled computer engineers in lab coats, neither of whom are Hoff.

William Henry Gates III

(KBE [March 2])

Born: Oct. 28, 1955;

Seattle, Washington

Gates and Paul Allen [Jan 21] founded Traf-O-Data [Jan 1] and the somewhat better known Micro-soft [April 4], but his journey at the speed of thought down the road ahead at Microsoft came to a halt on [June 27] 2008. Since then Gates has pursued worthy philanthropic endeavors, through the Bill & Melinda Gates [Jan 1] Foundation.

Gates first program was a version of tic-tac-toe [Aug 25], written on a DEC PDP-10 accessed from his Lakeside high school. He started getting paid for programming on [Nov 18] 1970.

So far, he has appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine 11 times:

- April 16, 1984: smirking with a floppy stabbed into the index finger of his left hand, which must have hurt;
- June 5, 1995: holding a lightning bolt, or perhaps a banana; this time with his right hand;
- Sept. 16, 1996: glowing eagerly from the center of a green web;
- Jan. 13, 1997: looking sexy, or pensive (you choose);
- Nov. 9, 1998: somewhat pixilated and chubby;
- March 22, 1999: with good teeth;
- Nov. 15, 1999: as a worried cartoon balloon;
- July 24, 2000: only a small picture at the top left that's easy to miss;
- May 23, 2005: hiding behind an xBox [Nov 15], and looking somewhat Borg-like;
- Dec. 26, 2005: as a person of the year; inadequately photoshopped [Feb 19] with Bono and Melinda Gates. And why is Bono between the happy couple?
- Aug 11, 2008: washed-out (color-wise) and thoughtful.

This long roster beats Steve Jobs' appearances, which only total eight [Jan 3].

In 2006 Gates and Melinda were awarded the Order of the Aztec Eagle for their philanthropic work, which he can place next to his Silver Buffalo Award from the Boy Scouts of America in his display cabinet [Nov 11]. He also has a fly named after him, in recognition of his contribution to dipterology [May 15].

Over the years, he has owned a Porsche 930 Turbo, a Porsche 959, a Mercedes, a Jaguar XJ6, a Carrera Cabriolet 964, and a Ferrari 348. In the early years of Microsoft, he bought a 1979 Porsche 911 to race around the desert (see [Dec 13]).

Gates was the World's Richest Man for a long time, although as of 2020 he's actually only third richest. Jeff Bezos [Jan 12] holds top spot with an almost obscene amount. However, by some measures, Gates, Bezos, and others are just beginners. When John D. Rockefeller died in 1937, his estate equaled 1.5% of America's GDP. That's around three times more than these modern day whippersnappers.

Three quotes of many by the computer auteur:

"Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one."

"If GM had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving $25 cars that got 1000 mpg."

"Measuring programming progress by lines of code is like measuring aircraft building progress by weight."

Alfonso John Romero

Born: Oct. 28, 1967;

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Romero was the co-founder of id Software [Feb 1] and designer of many of its early games, including Wolfenstein 3D [May 5], Dangerous Dave, Hexen, Doom [Feb 10], and Quake [June 22]. His development tools, and the programming techniques created by id Software's lead programmer, John D. Carmack [Aug 20], helped produce many great first person shooter (FPS) games of the 1990's. He is also credited with coining the FPS term "deathmatch" (not to be confused with a "death march" [Oct 2]).

In level 30 of Doom II, "Icon of Sin", a giant demon's head appears, and a suitably demonic message is heard. This is actually Romero saying "To win the game, you must kill me, John Romero!", but played in reverse.

SCI Announced

Oct. 28, 1983

DARPA announced its Strategic Computing Initiative (SCI), a ten-year plan to develop machine-intelligence technologies, varying from chip designs to AI software. The Department of Defense subsequently spent $1 billion on the scheme.

The inspiration was Japan's Fifth Generation Project [April 14], and the scary 1983 book "The Fifth Generation" by Edward A. Feigenbaum [Jan 20] and Pamela McCorduck, a must-read on Capitol Hill at the time. The same forces motivated a similar AI project in the UK called Alvey [Aug 30].

Under the direction of the Information Processing Technology Office (IPTO [Oct 1]), nearly 100 SCI-related projects were running at 60 institutions by 1985. However, it was becoming clear that the venture wouldn't succeed in creating machine intelligence at the levels that had been hoped (hyped) for.

When Jacob Schwartz became head of the IPTO in 1987, he cut funding to AI research drastically. In his words, DARPA should "surf", rather than "dog paddle", and he felt strongly that AI was not "the next wave".

The result was the collapse of AI research in the US, and an "AI Winter" [Jan 00] that lasted almost 15 years.

TI Leaves

Oct. 28, 1983

Battered by loses of $223 million during the first nine months of 1983, Texas Instruments (TI [Oct 1]) announced plans to exit the PC market and to discontinue support for its current TI-99/4a computer [June 21].

TI's Home Computer division was in the red largely due to the series of price reductions and rebates in order to bolster sales. They ended up costing TI $50 for every computer that they sold.

First Movie Website

Oct. 28 1994

"Star Trek Generations" was probably the first movie to have an official website, which went live on this day although the movie was only released on Nov. 18.

The story has Captain Jean-Luc Picard joining forces with Captain James T. Kirk, to stop a villain from destroying a planet. The actor Malcolm McDowell later said that he mainly agreed to play the bad guy so he could be remembered as the man who killed Kirk [March 22].

The website was personally approved by then-Paramount Motion Picture chairman Sherry Lansing, and constructed by a team at Paramount Media Kitchen in Palo Alto. The site offered press kit materials and the film's trailer, and its success prompted Paramount and other studios to create more sites.

However, there's a challenger for title of first movie website; some sources claim that "Stargate" was the first movie to have a website. It was set up by the movie's producer, Dean Devlin, and featured images, trailers and behind the scenes clips. There's no record on when the Stargate site came online, but the movie went on general release on Oct. 28th (i.e. today).

Screenshots of the defunct "Star Trek Generations" website can be viewed at `http://movies.trekcore.com/generations/originalsite/generationswebsite.pdf`. Remnants of the Stargate site can be found at the Internet archive: `http://web.archive.org/web/19970619002525/http://www.mgm.com/STARGATE/`.

The oldest movie website still online is for "Space Jam", which went live on Nov. 15 1996.

For more "Star Trek", see [Sept 8], [June 4], [Nov 26].

DMCA

Oct. 28, 1998

US President Bill Clinton signed the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DCMA). It brought US copyright law into compliance with World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) rules, and dealt with copyright issues related to the Internet by extending the Computer Software Copyright Act of [Dec 12] 1980.

In particular, the bill criminalized the reverse-engineering of any product with the intention of circumventing digital copyright protection (known as Digital Rights Management or DRM [Oct 3]).

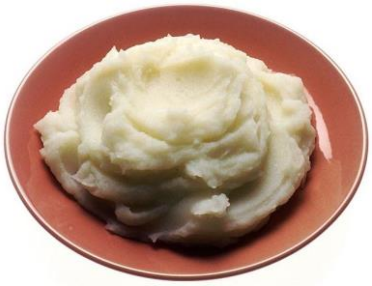
The law was criticized at the time for stifling innovation and competition, although it didn't hinder the subsequent rise of companies like Google and Facebook.

One generally agreed positive aspect of the DMCA were its safe harbor provisions that protect service providers from liability for copyright infringements by their users.

Facemash Completed

Oct. 28, 2003

Sophomore Mark Zuckerberg [May 14] finished coding "Facemash" at Harvard. The system placed photos of two people next to each other on a web page, and a user had to choose the 'hotter' individual. It bore many similarities to the earlier "Am I Hot or Not" website [Oct 9].



Not Facemash. Photo by Renee Comet.

To populate his site with suitable pictures, Zuckerberg hacked into protected areas of Harvard's network and copied private dormitory ID images (which were held in what the university called facebooks).

Facemash attracted 450 visitors and 22,000 photo views in its first four hours online. But by Sunday night (the 30th), an upsurge of righteous outrage from individuals and student groups led Zuckerberg to shut the site down. In an announcement which may sound eerily familiar to later Facebook users [July 24], Zuckerberg claimed surprise at such a response.

Zuckerberg faced expulsion and was charged by the administration with breach of security, violating copyright, and invading individual privacy. Ultimately, the charges were dropped.

In Jan. 2004, Zuckerberg began writing code for a new website, inspired by an editorial in the *Harvard Crimson* student newspaper. On [Feb 4], 2004, he launched "TheFacebook".

HTML 5

Oct. 28, 2014

The W3C (World Wide Web Consortium [Oct 1]) published its recommendations for HTML5, the successor to HTML 4.01 [Dec 18].

Work on HTML 5 had begun in 2004 (a mere ten years earlier) under the auspices of the Web Hypertext Application Technology Working Group (WHATWG [June 4]).

HTML 5 offered many improvements for multimedia, such as simplifying the embedding of streaming video and games, which were intended to reduce the need for browser plugins such as Flash [Jan 6] and Java [May 23].

HTML5 syntax was no longer based on SGML [May 00] despite the similarities of their markup notation. But it was designed to stay backward compatible with older versions of HTML.

Semantic markup got a boost, with tags that referred directly to navigation elements, headers, footers, and distinguished between primary and sidebar content. One aim was to reduce the overlap between HTML, CSS [Oct 10], and JavaScript [July 4].

The revisions since then have been: HTML 5.1 (Nov. 1, 2016) and HTML 5.2 (a W3C Recommendation as of Dec. 14, 2017).