TMRC Founded
Sept. 6 ??, 1946

The Tech Model Railroad Club (TMRC) was an MIT student group specializing in the automated operation of model trains, which eventually became a major source of hacker culture. Noted TMRC members included: John McCarthy [Sept 4], Peter Samson [Aug 16], L Peter Deutsch [Aug 7], Alan Kotok [Nov 9], Richard Greenblatt [Dec 25], and Steve 'Slug' Russell [May 17]. Jack Dennis and Samson compiled the June 1959 "Dictionary of the TMRC Language", which later became "The Jargon File" [Oct 2] and "The Hacker's Dictionary" [Dec 4].

The club's first meeting was organized by John Fitzallen Moore and Walter Marvin in Nov. 1946. In 1948, the group obtained space in Room 20E-214, on the third floor of the famous MIT Building 20 [March 27], better known as "the Plywood Palace."

The club's "Signals and Power Subcommittee" focussed on designing train control circuitry, and by 1962 had created a very complex electromechanical layout, involving about 1200 relays. Looking for better ways to control such an enormous system led to the group tinkering with an IBM 704 [May 7], but things became more serious after Jack Dennis (who by then had joined the Electrical Engineering faculty) gave them access to a TX-0 [Nov 20]. In 1961, DEC donated a prototype PDP-1 [Nov 00] to MIT, which also became available to TMRC members Eventually, many of those people joined MIT's AI Lab [Sept 00].

Cara Carleton Fiorina (née Sneed)
Born: Sept. 6, 1954;
Austin, Texas

Fiorina is known primarily for her tenure as CEO of Hewlett-Packard (HP [Jan 1]) from 1999 to 2005, making her the first woman to head a Fortune 500 company. She faced considerable opposition from HP employees during her term, principally due to her role in the demise of "The HP Way" work culture. Bill Hewett [May 20] had explained it like so: "The janitor gets exactly the same percentage increase due to profit sharing that I do, or anyone else in the company."

Carly Fiorina (2004). Photo by Antônio Milena/AB. CC BY 3.0.

She also oversaw what was then the largest technology sector merger in history, when HP acquired Compaq [Sept 3] in 2002. Unfortunately, the merger proved to be troublesome, and Fiorina was replaced in 2005 by Mark Hurd, after the company had lost half of its value.

She unsuccessfully ran for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016, becoming the first declared female candidate.

Rocky's Boots Released
Sept. 6 ??, 1982

"Rocky's Boots" was a logic puzzle game developed by Warren Robinett and Leslie Grimm, for the Apple II [June 5], the Commodore 64 [Jan 7], and others. It was one of the first educational PC software products to use an interactive graphical simulation.

The objective was to wire up a mechanical boot to kick objects off a conveyor belt. The player did this by connecting a series of logic gates together to modify the boot's behavior. The components included AND, OR, and NOT gates, and even flip-flops.

REKURSIV Lectures
Sept. 6-9, 1988

David M. Harland gave two lectures at the University of Newcastle, UK on his REKURSIV architecture which implemented object-oriented concepts directly in hardware. Operations were applied to objects rather than bits, bytes, or words, virtual memory became a persistent object store and the instruction set supported recursion (hence the name).

A small number of prototype boards were produced for Sun workstations [July 00], and donated to UK universities.

In later years, Harland became a space historian, and the author of numerous books on the topic.

The Panix Attack
Sept. 6, 1996

The Panix Attack may have been the first ever Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) incident. It was aimed at the Public Access Networks Corporation (Panix), a popular Manhattan-based ISP, and it took sysAdmins nearly 36 hours to bring under control.

The event prompted Linux [March 14] to introduced the concept of SYN cookie protection to alleviate future attacks of a similar nature. Of course, later DDOS attacks just switched to other approaches [Jan 21; April 10; Aug 17].

Another contender for the first DDoS outbreak is the Morris worm of [Nov 2]1988.

The USS Hopper
Sept. 6, 1997

The USS Hopper (DDG-70) is a US Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer, named after the computer scientist (and Rear Admiral) Grace Hopper [Dec 9]. This vessel was only the second warship to be named after a woman from the Navy's ranks.

Construction began on Feb. 23 1995, and the Hopper was launched and christened on Jan. 6 1996. She was commissioned into service in San Francisco on this day.

The ship's motto "AUDE ET EFFICE" can be translated as "DARE AND DO", a phrase Hopper often employed. She also remarked that: "A ship in port is safe, but that's not what ships are built for. I want all the youngsters to sail out to sea and be good ships."

eDonkey Released
Sept. 6, 2000

eDonkey2000 (aka "ed2k") was a peer-to-peer file sharing application developed by Jed McCaleb and Sam Yagan. It introduced a notable improvement to filesharing – the ability to download files piecemeal from multiple peers rather than just from a single source.

On Sept. 28, 2005, the eDonkey client was forcibly discontinued following a cease-and-desist letter from the RIAA [Feb 4; Sept 8]. Nevertheless, the eDonkey network lived on, accessible via other applications, such as eMule developed by Hendrik Breitkreuz. However by the late 2000's, BitTorrent [July 2] had overtaken eDonkey as the most widely used file sharing protocol.

Microsoft Break up Cancelled
Sept. 6, 2001

Prev: [April 3]

The US Department of Justice announced that it would no longer pursue the breakup of Microsoft, or the claim that Microsoft illegally integrated its IE browser [Sept 30] with MS Windows.

Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson's demand that Microsoft be divided up [April 3] was overturned by a federal appeals court, in part because the panel believed that public comments made by Jackson during and after the trial showed a bias against Microsoft. For instance, he had compared Microsoft's executives to "drug traffickers" and "gangland killers." He also said that Bill Gates had "a Napoleonic concept of himself."

"Napoleon Crossing the Alps," by Jacques-Louis David (1805).

The change may also have reflected the recent update in administrations; President George W. Bush had taken office on Jan 20, 2001. Also, Bill Gates had stepped down as CEO on [Jan 13] 2000.

Although this was the end of the US antitrust case for Microsoft, the Europeans were waiting in the wings [March 24].

Facebook's News
Sept. 6, 2006

Facebook's [Feb 4] News Feed began life as an alternative home page where users could view a constantly updating list of their friends' Facebook activities.

The four developers – Chris Cox, Andrew "Boz" Bosworth, Ruchi Sanghvi, and Kang-Xiang – had thought the new feature might be reasonably popular. But this morning they woke up to inboxes full of outraged messages from hundreds of thousands of people. It was the most "inglorious launch moment in history," remarked Chris Cox later.

The main complaint was that the feed was too intrusive and violated privacy. Some users called for a boycott of the company, and CEO Mark Zuckerberg [May 14] was forced to write a blog post which adviced "Calm down. Breathe. We hear you".

Currently, nearly three billion people use Facebook every month, which makes News Feed the most viewed source of news. Unfortunately, it's also become a significant contributor to the spread of misinformation (i.e. "fake news"). Since 2015, the company has been announcing a steady stream of updates to try to combat the problem.

Jobs' Letter
Sept. 6, 2007

In a public letter, Steve Jobs [Feb 24] apologized to the first wave of iPhone [June 29] buyers who had waited in long lines to pay a handsome $599 for a device that Apple and AT&T had just reduced to $399 after just two months on sale. Jobs promised

every customer who had
purchased an iPhone at the
higher price, a $100 credit
redeemable at Apple's website
or stores.