Sept. 12th

Haskell Brooks Curry

Born: Sept. 12, 1900;

Millis, Mass.
Died: Sept. 1, 1982

Curry's work on combinatory logic became the foundation for one kind of functional programming language. The other main approach is Alonzo Church's [June 14] lambda calculus, which has predominated in recent decades.

Curry is also known for the Curry–Howard correspondence, which draws a link between logical proofs and computation.

Haskell B. Curry. Photo by Gleb.svechnikov. CC BY-SA 4.0.

Additionally, his last name is used to identify a technique for translating a function that takes multiple arguments into a sequence of function evaluations, each with a single argument (i.e. currying).

After WWII, Curry worked at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, and became a member of the Computations committee, which decided how the ENIAC [Feb 15] would be used after it was moved to the Ballistics Research Lab [July 29].

Three programming languages are named after him: Haskell, Brooks, and Curry.

Casey G. Cowell

Born: Sept. 12, 1952;

Detroit Michigan

In 1976 Cowell co-founded US Robotics (USR) with Steve Muka and Paul Collard to produce modems. They named the company in homage to Isaac Asimov [Jan 2] and his "US Robot and Mechanical Men" which was "the biggest company in the universe". The founders had little experience of business or modems, and Cowell later said, "We learned how to make the modems from reading Don Lancaster's "TV Typewriter Cookbook." [Sept 00].

Early products included the USR310, USR330, and the Phone Link 300 – all of them acoustic couplers that transmitted analog signals over phone lines at just 300 baud. However, the company's big break came in the early 1980s when Apple asked them to make modems for them.

USR eventually became the leading seller of dial-up modems, which were the most popular way of accessing the Web at the end of the 1990s. It helped that in Feb. 1997, USRs was the first to ship a 56 Kbps modem.

On [June 12] 1997, the company was purchased by 3Com Corp. for $6 billion.

Don Landers Daglow

Born: Sept. 12, 1952;

San Francisco, California

Daglow began programming games during the 1970s while studying playwriting at Pomona College in California. His work reached a wide audience by being distributed through DECUS [March 00].

Daglow wrote the first interactive baseball game ("Baseball") in 1971, which is now included in the Baseball Hall of Fame. His "Intellivision World Series Baseball" (1983) was also the first game to use multiple camera angles to display the action.

His other games of the 1970s included "Star Trek" (1972) [Sept 8] and "Dungeon" (1975), perhaps the first mainframe computer role-playing game. Another contender for first is the similarly named "The Dungeon" [Dec 22] for the PLATO system [Aug 22].

While at Intellivision, Daglow was responsible for Utopia (1981), which was probably the first city building and god game, and helped inspire SimCity [Feb 2] and Civilization [Feb 24].

His work with Cathryn Mataga on AOL's [Oct 2] "Neverwinter Nights", (1991 -1997) won an Emmy Award for Technology and Engineering in 2008. It was the first graphical Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG).

Daglow won the prestigious "New Voices" playwriting competition in 1975, and has also found time to publish stories in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*.

First IC Demo

Sept. 12, 1958

Jack Kilby [Nov 8] demonstrated the first integrated circuit (IC) to executives at Texas Instruments (TI). The prototype was composed of germanium mesa transistors, resistors, and capacitors linked by wires mounted on a germanium board measuring 1/16 by 7/16 inches. Kilby later wrote, "Since all of the components could be made of a single material, they could also be made in situ interconnected to form a complete circuit."

Kilby designed the IC while the TI plant was closed for a two-week holiday in July. As a new employee (he had joined in May), he hadn't yet earned enough vacation time to take a break himself. He came up with the preliminary idea on July 24.

When his boss, Willis Adcock, returned from leave, Kilby

showed him the sketches. Adcock was skeptical, and requested proof that such a device would work. Kilby built a test-rig on Aug. 28 with all the semiconductor elements, but it wasn't yet integrated. Kilby applied for a patent for his work on [Feb 6], 1959.

Meanwhile, back on [Jan 23], Robert Noyce [Dec 12] had documented his design for an IC using essentially the same approach, but in silicon. Noyce got around to filing for a patent in April 1960 (a year after Kilby), and was granted it the next year. However, Kilby wasn't awarded his patent until 1964.

A precursor to Kilby's work was Geoffrey Dummer's concept of a miniaturized IC, which he first presented publicly on [May 5] 1952.

Lucasfilm

Sept. 12, 1977

Lucasfilm was founded by George Lucas in 1971 when he released his first feature film, "THX 1138," but was incorporated on this day.

George Lucas (1986). AP Wirephoto PD-US-1989.

Visual effects were handled by a group called Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), which was formed in May 1975 when Lucas began production of "Star Wars" [May 4]. A separate Computer Division inside ILM was created in July 1979, when Edwin Catmull [March 31], Alvy Ray Smith [Sept 8], and others accepted Lucas' job offers. In 1982, the videogame arm of the company, Lucasfilm Games (later LucasArts), was launched [Aug 10].

On [Feb 3]1986, the Graphics Group, around one-third of the Computer Division, was sold to Steve Jobs [Feb 14], and became Pixar.

A few ILM effects milestones:

- 1982: The Genesis sequence in "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan" [June 4]
- 1985: The first completely computer-generated character, in "Young Sherlock Holmes" [Dec 6]
- 1988: The first use of morphing in "Willow" [March 29]
- 1991: The T-1000 in "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" [July 3]
- 1993: The dinosaurs in "Jurassic Park" [June 9]
- 2006: The iMocap (Image Based Motion Capture Technology) system, which uses computer vision techniques to track performers on set.

In October 2012, Disney bought Lucasfilm, and so also acquired ILM.

Chaos Computer Club Formed

Sept. 12, 1981

The Chaos Computer Club (CCC) is Europe's largest association of hackers with nearly 8,000 registered members. It focuses on technical issues related to surveillance, privacy, freedom of information, and data security. The CCC describes itself as "a galactic community of life forms," with local chapters called "Erfa Circles" in various cities. It was founded in Berlin by Wau Holland (aka Herwart Holland-Moritz).

The CCC has hosted an annual "Chaos Communication Congress" since 1984, which is easily Europe's biggest hacker gathering [June 9], and a "Chaos Communication Camp", an outdoor alternative, held every four years since 2007.

In 2001, it celebrated its twentieth birthday by setting up an interactive light installation called Project Blinkenlights [Sept 11].

Other notable user groups, in chronological order of their foundation, include SHARE [Aug 22], DECUS [March 00], USENIX [May 15], the Amateur Computer Society (ACS [May 5]), the Amateur Computer Club (ACC [Dec 13]), the Homebrew Computer Club [March 5], ACGNJ [June 13], and A.P.P.L.E. [Feb 21].

Mark V. Shaney Unleashed

Sept. 12, 1984

Mark V. Shaney was a software-based USENET user, whose postings in the net.singles newsgroup were created by applying Markov chaining to text extracted from real posts. This explains its username – a play on the words "Markov chain".

The system was designed by Rob Pike [Nov 10], coded by Bruce Ellis, with Don P. Mitchell providing the Markov chain routines.

An example post: "I have taken it upon myself to conduct the annual net.singles underwear survey. Please MAIL me your responses and hopefully we can reach orgasm simultaneously as long as it seems to be of the situation."

Steam Released

Sept. 12, 2003

Valve Corp.'s Steam offers multiplayer gaming, video streaming, and social networking services., while the

Steamworks API lets developers integrate many of its functions into their own software. By 2019, Steam had over a billion registered accounts with 90 million monthly active users.

Valve was founded on Aug. 24 1996 by former Microsoft employees Gabe Newell [Nov 3] and Mike Harrington. Steam was developed because of the problems Valve had updating its online games, such as Counter-Strike. The installation of software patches might result in users being disconnected for days.

BlackBerry Pearl 8100 Released

Sept. 12, 2006

The Pearl 8100 was RIM's [March 7] first phone for the general public after it had come to dominate the business market. It was the first BlackBerry handset to include a camera and a media player application. It also replaced RIM's traditional thumbpad interface with a trackball; a feature that would become a staple of later devices.

A later model (the 8120) was the first to offer WiFi, and the Pearl Flip was the first of RIM's clamshell devices. As a result, the Pearl became one of the company's bestselling handsets.

Tinder Launched

Sept. 12, 2012

Tinder is a location-based social searching app, most commonly used for dating, and among the first of the "swiping" programs, where the user employs a swiping motion to choose between photos of people: swiping right for potentially good matches, and left to move to the next image.

By 2018 it was registering about 1.6 billion swipes per day, and had almost 6 million paying subscribers in the middle of 2020.

A *Marie Claire* reviewer wrote that "the game-style of Tinder means it's really easy to keep playing and forget about that hottie you were messaging yesterday."