James Thomas "Jimmy" Fallon
Born: Sept. 19, 1974;

New York City

Fallon was a cast member of "Saturday Night Live" (between 1998 and 2004) and has been the host of "The Tonight Show" since 2014.

More importantly, he began varsity life as a computer science major at New York's College of Saint Rose, but "I got out once it got really hard. I made it up to C++. Then I couldn't do the math – it got really confusing. I switched to a communications major."

He dropped out of college in 1995 just before graduating to pursue stand-up comedy full-time in Los Angeles.

FCC Interference
Sept. 19, 1979

The US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted requirements for controlling interference from computers, and other digital devices. At the time, the clock frequencies of newer computers were edging up toward the TV and FM broadcast bands, while some older machines operated at frequencies inside the AM band.

Problems occurred at several police departments in Western states who reported that their radios were receiving tranmissions sent from arcade games. Also, communication issues at an East coast airport was traced back to a computerized cash register at a drug store a mile away. A well-known offender was the RadioShack TRS-80 [Aug 3], which generated significant amounts of TV interference.

Earlier that year, the FCC had warned home computer makers (e.g. Apple, Atari, Commodore, and RadioShack) of what was coming, and told them to start submitting their models for radio interference testing.

Emoticons Post
Sept. 19, 1982

Many eminent historians identify Scott E. Fahlman as the inventor of the emoticon due to a message he posted to the CMU's computer science bulletin board:

"I propose that the following character sequence for joke markers: : -) Read it sideways. Actually, it is probably more economical to mark things that are NOT jokes, given current trends. For this, use : - ("

However, back on April 12, 1979, Kevin MacKenzie's email to the MSGGROUP list [June 7] suggested adding emotion to emails via punctuation such as -) to indicate that the sentence was tongue-in-cheek.

Before that, in May 1967, *Reader's Digest* published a similar mark, and a 1969 *New York Times* interview quoted Vladimir Nabokov as saying, "I often think there should exist a special typographical sign for a smile — some sort of concave mark, a supine round bracket."

Vladimir Nabokov, Montreux, October 1969. Author: Giuseppe Pino (Mondadori Publishers).

The use of emoticons can be traced back to 1635, when a Slovak notary draw one in his town's municipal financial records to indicate his satisfaction with the figures.

In 2000, Despair Inc. obtained a US trademark for the frowny-face emoticon :-(when used on greeting cards, posters, and art prints. In 2001, the company issued a satirical press release, announcing that it would be suing any Internet users who dared to use its emoticon without permission. The joke backfired badly, and the company was deluged with hate e-mails 😫.

Mac IIx Released
Sept. 19, 1988

The Macintosh IIx built on the success of the Mac II [Jan 24], by employing a 68030 CPU and 68882 FPU (the first Mac with either). Other new features included a DOS-compatible 1.44 MB SuperDrive and virtual memory. The SuperDrive became one of the line's key selling points, as it increased the system's ability to inter-operate with PCs.

Steve Jobs [Feb 24] (currently ousted from Apple) had tried to dampen the excitement by announcing details of his rival NeXT Computer the week before at a price designed to undercut the Mac IIx, but it was another month before it was actually released [Oct 12].

The IIx proved so popular that Apple continued supporting it until 1998, a year after Jobs' return to the fold [Sept 16].

32,768 Days
Sept. 19, 1989

About 100 hospitals using software from Shared Medical Systems saw their computers go into infinite loops.

It turns out that today was exactly 32,768 days (i.e. 2^{15} days) after Jan. 1, 1900. Unfortunately, the hospital systems were using signed 16-bit binary values, which meant

that today's date was too large, and was recast as a negative number.

A similar fault caused the Michigan Terminal System (MTS) to crash, but on Nov. 16, 1989 because its signed 16-bit values were counted from March 1, 1900. The MTS was one of the first time-sharing OSes; it was developed in 1967 at the University of Michigan for use on the IBM System/360 [April 7]. Amazingly, it was still being employed at several universities at the end of the 1990s.

For software using the UNIX Epoch date ([Jan 1] 1970), the unsigned 16-bit day maximum will occur on June 6, 2079.

Unabomber Manifesto
Sept. 19, 1995

Between 1978 and 1995, the US domestic terrorist known as the Unabomber killed three people, and injured 23 more, in a bombing campaign targeting individuals involved with modern technology.

The FBI used the title "UNABOM" (UNiversity & Airline BOMber) to refer to the case, which resulted in the media calling him the Unabomber.

On this day, his 35,000-word anti-technology manifesto, "Industrial Society and Its Future", was published in the the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, after he threatened more attacks.

It argued that his bombings were an extreme but necessary measure required to attract attention to the erosion of human freedoms by modern technologies. Paul Kingsnorth, a former deputy-editor of *The Ecologist*, noted that the manifesto's arguments were "worryingly convincing."

The publication turned out to be useful – the bomber's sister-in-law and his brother recognized the writing style and beliefs, and tipped off the FBI.

Apple Maps
Sept. 19, 2012

Apple released its iOS mapping service [Jan 9], replacing Google Maps [Feb 8] in the process.

It soon became apparent that many train stations, bridges, and tourist attractions were missing or mislabeled. The Washington Monument had moved across the street. The London train station at Paddington and Tokyo's main station were missing, and the Helsinki Central railway station was transformed into a park. In the app's 3D view, Auckland's main station was floating in the ocean.

David Pogue of the *New York Times* called it the "least usable piece of software Apple has ever unleashed."

San Jose, California,
3D View. 1875.

Apple CEO Tim Cook [Nov 1] apologized on Sept. 28 and two key map employees departed the company. It's not true that they made a wrong turn as they left Cupertino and drove off the end of the Santa Cruz Wharf.

For more maps, see [Feb 4], [Feb 8], [March 6], [July 14], [Aug 9], [Dec 24].

Software Freedom
Sept. 19, 2020

Software Freedom Day (SFD) is an annual worldwide celebration of free software organized by the Digital Freedom Foundation (DFF),

which usually occurs on the third Saturday of this month. The group also organizes "Hardware Freedom Day" in April of each year.

SFD was first observed on Aug. 28, 2004 when about 12 groups participated. In 2017, events were held at over 100 locations.

The primary sponsor is Canonical, the company behind Ubuntu [Oct 20]. The DFF president is Frederic Muller, a founding member and former president of the Beijing GNU/Linux User Group, and co-organizer of many international Open Source events in China and Asia