François-Henri Raymond

Born: Sept. 22, 1914;

Paris, France
Died: Nov. 25, 2000

Raymond played a decisive role in the development of French computing in the 1950's and 1960's against a cultural background which still spurned engineering (leave it to the "Grandes Ecoles"), and where most academics, particularly in mathematics, considered "computer science" an oxymoron.

Raymond had been inspired by a study trip to the US in spring 1947. He met Howard Aiken [March 8], visited MIT, RCA and other research groups, and picked up a copy of the "Preliminary Discussion of the Logical Design of an Electronic Computing Instrument" [June 28] for $1.

Back in France, he founded the Society for Electronics and Automation (SEA; Société d'Electronique appliquée à l''Automatisme) in 1948, which went on to build the first analog electronic computers in France.

Between 1951 and 1956, SEA developed the CUBA (Universal Binary Calculator of Armament; Calculateur Universel Binaire de l'Armement), the first digital French machine, and one of the first to use core memory [May 11].

SEA's CAB 500, a small scientific computer, was released in Feb. 1961, and within eight months there were sixty in use around the country. One aspect of its success was its support for a simple high-level programming language called PAF (Automatic Programming of Formulas).

In 1966, Raymond met with General De Gaulle, to discuss the future of the French computer industry. At the end of the year, the "Plan Calcul" was launched:

three companies, including SEA, were merged to form the Compagnie Internationale pour l'Informatique (CII), and a research institute, the Institut de Recherche en Informatique et Automatique (IRIA) was created [Sept 9].

John Leroy Hennessy

Born: Sept. 22, 1952;

Huntington, New York

Hennessy co-developed the RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer [May 30]) processor design along with David Patterson [Nov 16] in the early 1980s, and led Stanford's MIPS project (1981-1984) on RISC design, which was later commercialized as the MIPS architecture [Jan 00]. As of 2018, 99% of all new chips used a RISC architecture.

Hennessy and Patterson also wrote two of the standard textbooks on hardware: "Computer Architecture: A Quantitative Approach" and "Computer Organization and Design: the Hardware/Software Interface."

John L. Hennessy (2007; so before his scarf award). Photo by Eric Chan. CC BY 2.0.

Hennessy's first successful hardware design was a a tic-tac-toe machine [Aug 25] developed with a friend as a high school science project, and built from relays.

In 2010, Hennessy was presented with a khata, a traditional ceremonial scarf in

Tibetan Buddhism, symbolizing purity and compassion. He received it from the 14th Dalai Lama, who was visiting Stanford while Hennessy was the president of that institution.

Letter to Science
Sept. 22, 1967

In a letter to the editor of *Science* Herbert Simon [June 15], Alan Perlis [April 1], and Allen Newell [March 19] offered an early defense of the legitimacy of studying computer science. The following year Simon delivered a series of lectures that further developed their arguments, which were later published as the book, "The Sciences of the Artificial".

An interesting point raised by the letter was that computer science was more than just the study of algorithms, and should also involve hardware. This matter was largely ignored when the ACM published "Curriculum '68" [March 00]. which laid down recommendations for academic programmes in computing.

Microsoft Licenses 86-DOS (QDOS)
Sept. 22, 1980

Prev: [Aug 28] Next: [Nov 6]

Microsoft's Paul Allen [Jan 21] contacted Rod Black of Seattle Computer Products (SCP) to explore the possibility of licensing their 86-DOS (previously called QDOS, the Quick and Dirty Operating System). The software had been developed by Tim Paterson [June 1], and offered a command structure and API that imitated Digital Research's CP/M [May 19], which made it easy to port programs between the two OSes.

The next day, Black signed a non-exclusive arrangement with Microsoft for $10,000 which gave Microsoft the right to

distribute 86-DOS to any number of end-users, and (more importantly) to sublicense it to manufacturers for an additional $10,000. Microsoft's plan, unknown to Black, was to license the OS to IBM for its forthcoming PC [Aug 12].

NEC vs. Intel Ruling
Sept. 22, 1986

This dispute concerned NEC's alleged infringement of Intel's 8086 [June 8] and 8088 [July 1] microprocessor copyrights. While NEC had been legally manufacturing these chips for Intel, it had also used the designs to create its own Intel-compatible microprocessors, the NEC V20 and V30.

Judge William P. Gray ruled that microcode can be copyrighted, but that Intel had given up its copyright on the x86 instruction set when it had started selling the processors without a copyright notice. Gray also ruled that competitors could create similar instruction sets without violating Intel's copyright.

High eBay Auction
Sept. 22, 1999

The bidding in an eBay [Sept 3] auction for 500 pounds of marijuana reached $10 million before the site closed it down.

This was just one of many quirky eBay auctions that occurred during the site's early years. For example:

- "The meaning of life" sold for $3.26 in 2000. The seller wrote, "I have discovered the reason for our existence and will be happy to share this information with the highest bidder." Eight people placed bids.

- Several towns after been auctioned; the first on [Dec 27], 2002.

- In 2004, a partially eaten, 10-year-old grilled cheese sandwich said to bear the image of the Virgin Mary sold for $28,000.

- A suit of armor built for a guinea pig fetched $1,150 in 2013. The creator promised that the tiny hand-made suit (with matching helmet) would "keep a guinea pig protected and secure in all situations."

One Web Day
Sept. 22, 2006

"One Web Day" (OWD), an annual event celebrating the glorious Internet, was created by Susan P. Crawford, an ICANN [Sept 18] board member at the time. It aims to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining open-networking principles, and expanding access to the Internet.

Its first "anchor celebration" was held in Battery Park in NYC, with addresses by technology advocates Craig Newmark, Drew Schutte, and Scott Heiferman.

Themes from the last few years include: "Recognizing Core Internet Values", "Connecting the Next Billion" (a theme so good, it's been used twice), and "Open The Pipes".

Airbnb Begins
Sept. 22, 2007

Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia couldn't afford the rent on their loft apartment in San Francisco, so on this day, Gebbia sent an e-mail to Chesky suggesting that they start offering bed (a sleeping mat) and breakfast to help pay the bills. They set up a website to advertise their pad (for $80/night), and had three people contact them; their first guest was Amol Surve.

In Feb. 2008, Nathan Blecharczyk joined the team as Chief Technology Officer, and the site Airbedandbreakfast.com launched on Aug. 11, 2008.

To help fund the startup, the founders created special edition breakfast cereals, with the presidential candidates, Barack Obama and John McCain as the inspiration for "Obama O's" and "Cap'n McCains". In two months, 800 boxes were sold at $40 each.

In March 2009, the company's name was changed to Airbnb.com, and the site's content was expanded from air beds and shared spaces to a variety of properties.

By Oct. 2019, two million people were staying with Airbnb each night, but the site has increasingly being critized for pushing up rent prices due to short-term lettings.