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Technology, Internet

The History of Computers

A computer is a machine built to do routine calculations with speed,

reliability, and ease, greatly simplifying processes that without them would

be

a much longer, more drawn out process.

Since their introduction in the 1940's. Computers have become an

important part of the world. Besides the systems found in offices, and

homes,

microcomputers are now used in everyday locations such as automobiles,

aircrafts,

telephones, and kitchen appliances.

Computers are used for education as well, as stated by Rourke Guides in

his book, Computers: Computers are used in schools for scoring examination

papers, and grades are sometimes recorded and kept on computers (Guides

7).

" The original idea of a computer came from Blaise Pascal, who invented

the first digital calculating machine in 1642. It performed only additions of

numbers entered by dials and was intended to help Pascal's father, who was

a tax

collector" (Buchsbaum 13).

However, in 1671, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz invented a computer that

could not only add but, multiply. Multiplication was quite a step to be taken

by a computer because until then, the only thing a computer could do was

add.

The computer multiplied by successive adding and shifting (Guides 45).

Perhaps the first actual computer was made by Charles Babbage. He

explains himself rather well with the following quote:

" One evening I was sitting in the rooms of the Analytical Society at

Cambridge with a table full of logarithms lying open before me. Another
member

coming into the room, and seeing me half asleep called out, " Well Babbage,
what

are you dreaming about?', to which I replied, " I am thinking that all these

tables might be calculated by machinery'"(Evans 41).

" The first general purpose computer was invented in 1871 by Charles

Babbage, just before he died"(Evans 41). It was still a prototype of course,

but it was a beginning.

Around this time, there was little or no interest in the development of

computers. People feared, due to the lack of their knowledge, that computers

would take over everything and run their lives (Buchsbaum 9).

If only these 18th century Americans, who were ignorant to the necessity

of computers, would have known the many benefits they were missing out on, they

would have more readily funded individuals such as Charles Babbage.

As Glossbrenner states in The Complete Handbook of Personal Computers,

Computers are great information resources: Computers are great

conversationalists. Its' keyboard is its' mouth, the processor its' brain, and

the monitor, its' eyes, and just like a person it can communicate with you

(Glossbrenner 18). People did not comprehend this early on, and didn't take

computers as seriously as they should have.

In conclusion, throughout the years, people should have been more

interested and involved in computers. Today, nearly everything is centered

around them with their high speed capabilities getting even better with every

day. They will continue to grow and become more advanced forever.