

# [The kicking himself) and so they turned](https://assignbuster.com/the-kicking-himself-and-so-they-turned/)

The Evolution of the PC and MicrosoftKasey Anderson2/21/97Computer Tech.

ESSAYXerox, Apple, IBM, and Compaq all played major roles in the developmentof the Personal Computer, or PC, and the success of Microsoft. Though it mayseem so, the computer industry did not just pop-up overnight. It took manyyears of dedication, hard-work, and most importantly, thievery to turn thepersonal computer from a machine the size of a Buick, used only by zit-faced nerds, to the very machine I am typing this report on. Xerox started everything off by creating the first personal computer, the ALTO, in 1973. However, Xerox did not release the computer because they didnot think that was the direction the industry was going. This was the first ofmany mistakes Xerox would make in the next two decades.

So, in 1975, Ed Robertsbuilt the Altair 80800, which is largely regarded as the first PC. However, theAltair really served no real purpose. This left computer-lovers still yearningfor the perfect PC…actually, it didnt have to be perfect, most nerds justwanted their computer to do SOMETHING. The burning need for a PC was met in 1977, when Apple, a company formedby Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, released its Apple II.

Now the nerds weresatisfied, but that wasnt enough. In order to catapult the PC in to a big-timeproduct, Apple needed to make it marketable to the average Joe. This was madepossible by Visical, the home spread sheet. The Apple II was now a true-blueproduct. In order to compete with Apples success, IBM needed something to setits product apart from the others. So they developed a process called openarchitecture.

Open architecture meant buying all the components separately, piecing them together, and then slapping the IBM name on it. It was quiteeffective. Now all IBM needed was software. Enter Bill Gates. Gates, along with buddy Paul Allen, had started a software companycalled Microsoft. Gates was one of two major contenders for IBM.

The other wasa man named Gary Kildall. IBM came to Kildall first, but he turned them away(He has yet to stop kicking himself) and so they turned to Big Bad Bill Gatesand Microsoft. Microsoft would continue supplying IBM with software until IBM insistedMicrosoft develop Q/DOS, which was compatible only with IBM equipment. Microsoft was also engineering Windows, their own separate software, but IBMwanted Q/DOS.

By this time, PC clones were popping up all over. The most effectiveclone was the Compaq. Compaq introduced the first BIOS (Basic Input-OutputSystem) chip. The spearheaded a clone market that not only used DOS, but laterWindows as well, beginning the incredible success of Microsoft. With all of these clones, Apple was in dire need of something new andspectacular.

So when Steve Jobs got invited to Xerox to check out some newsystems (big mistake), he began drooling profusely. There he saw the GUI(graphical user interface), and immediately fell in love. SO, naturally, Xeroxinvited him back a second time (BBBBIIIIGGGG mistake) and he was allowed tobring his team of engineers.

Apple did the obvious and stole the GUI from Xerox. After his own computer, the LISA, flopped, Jobs latched on to the project ofone of his engineers. In 1984, the Apple Macintosh was born. Jobs, not wantingto burden his employees with accolades, accepted all of the credit. Even with the coveted GUI, Apple still needed a good application. Andwho do you call when you need software? Big Bad Bill Gates. Microsoft designeddesktop publishing for Apple.

However, at the same time, Gates was peekingover Jobss shoulder to get some hints to help along with the Windowsproduction. About the same time, IBM had Microsoft design OS/2 for them so theycould close the market for clones by closing their architecture. This was thelast straw for Microsoft. They designed OS/2 and then split with IBM toconcentrate fully on Windows. The first few versions of Windows were onlymediocre, but Windows 3. 0 was the answer to what everyone wanted.

However, itdid not have its own operating system, something that Windows 95 does. 3. 0sold 30 million copies in its first year, propelling Microsoft to success. So, neither the PC industry nor Microsoft was built overnight. Eachowes a lot to several different people and companies. Isnt it amazing that somuch has developed in just twenty-three years? Heres something even moreamazing.

Remember the ALTO? Guess what it had… a GUI, a mouse, a networkingsystem, everything. So maybe we havent come all that far.