

Evolution Of the **p c**

Fifty years ago this month, a computer pioneer said, "There is no reason to suppose the average boy or girl cannot be master of a personal computer." Soon after, PCs arrived—and now we grownup boys and girls cannot imagine our lives without them.
By Betsy Towner

1962 The LINC (Laboratory Instrument Computer) begins processing data in an MIT lab to assist with biomedical research. The minicomputer paves the way for PCs.

1965 The PDP-8, made by Digital Equipment Corp., debuts and becomes the first minicomputer success. Price: \$18,000.

1969 The Department of Defense establishes the first computer network, called the ARPAnet—later named the Internet.

1971 ARPAnet transmits the first email.

1972 Atari releases Pong, kick-starting the video game industry.

1975 Popular Electronics puts the Altair 8800 computer kit on its January cover, and its maker, MITS, is flooded with orders. Memory: 256 bytes.

1976 Steve Wozniak creates the Apple I. Its sales allow Wozniak and Steve Jobs to start Apple Computers.

1977 The Commodore PET, Apple II and Tandy Radio Shack's TRS-80 all debut.

1981 IBM calls its minicomputer the PC, turning the description into a brand. Sales soar.

1982 GRID Systems releases Compass, the first laptop. Price: \$8,150. • Time names the computer "Machine of the Year" in a story written on a typewriter.

1983 Compaq Computer Corp. makes the first PC clone, 100% compatible with IBM's PC. First-year sales: \$111 million.

1984 Apple's Macintosh debuts during a \$1.5 million Super Bowl commercial. The Mac is the first successful computer to feature a mouse and user-friendly graphics.

1990 The World Wide Web is invented. • The first successful version of Microsoft's Windows 3.0 launches.

1995 Amazon and eBay both debut, revolutionizing the way we shop.

1998 Google and PayPal debut, transforming information searches and financial transactions. • Apple's successful iMac becomes the first in its line of iProducts.

2007 Apple's iPhone goes on sale, boasting up to 8 gigabytes of memory in a pocket-size phone.

2008 Apple launches the iPad, selling more than 300,000 on the tablet's debut day.

2012 iPhone 5 debuts.



PDP-8



ATARI



APPLE I



PET



COMPASS



SOURCES: COMPUTER HISTORY MUSEUM, MESSING.COM, NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, OLD-COMPUTERS.NET, SMITHSONIAN.COM, NEW YORK TIMES