

LibraryCrunch

Service for the Next Generation Library: A Library 2.0 Perspective by Michael Casey

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A Stroll Down Computer Memory Lane -- Realizing It's All About the Net

The folks over at [Engadget](#) celebrated the 25th anniversary of the IBM PC by remembering their first computers, which got me thinking about my early computers.

My first computer was a [Commodore VIC-20](#), precursor to the Commodore 64. I got my VIC-20 with 5kb of RAM in 1981 for \$299 plus tape drive. The VIC-20 (the VIC stood for video interface chip) beat the Apple II to the one million sales mark, although today it's largely forgotten. I'm told that the VIC-20 was also Linus Torvalds' first computer. My VIC-20 was great for playing and modifying early games. The graphics were crude by today's standards but it was easy to use and was a great platform on which to learn Basic programming.

My second computer (really my mom's, though she didn't use it too much) was an [Epson QX-10](#) CP/M machine which ran Valdocs and Peachcalc software. The QX-10 had a Z-80 processor and two (wow!) 5.25" floppy drives.

My first "real" PC was a [Compaq Portable](#) with an 8088 chip and, again, two 5.25" floppies. I bought it in 1986 and it ran [MS-DOS](#) with [WordPerfect](#), which got me through four years of college (along with MS Flight Simulator version 2). This was the first computer I networked with, using an early text-based Compuserve service to play with travel reservations and online shopping. I had the Compaq for five years, longer than any PC before or since.

Following the Compaq portable were a series of less exciting computers, including a Gateway 386SX, a Zeos 486, an off-brand Pentium, another Gateway (Pentium II), and a series of Dells leading up to my current Dell 8400. Along the way I also had a few laptops, culminating in my current [MacBook](#), which I love.

It's hard to believe it's only been 25 years since the introduction of the IBM PC. It's also hard to believe that until 1994, when I first started using [Mosaic](#) to browse the new web, all I ever used my computers for was word processing, some spreadsheet work, lots of gaming and email (via [Prodigy](#) until 1992 when I started using Internet-based email through my Penn State account). In retrospect, the computer was nothing without the net.

Posted by Michael on August 15, 2006 08:10 PM | [Permalink](#)

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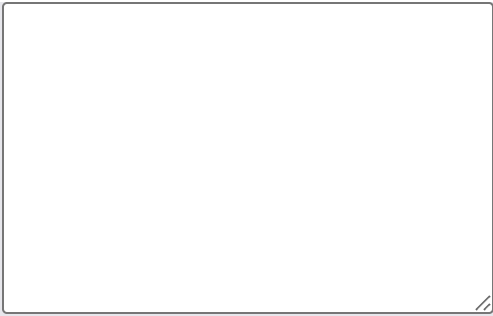
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