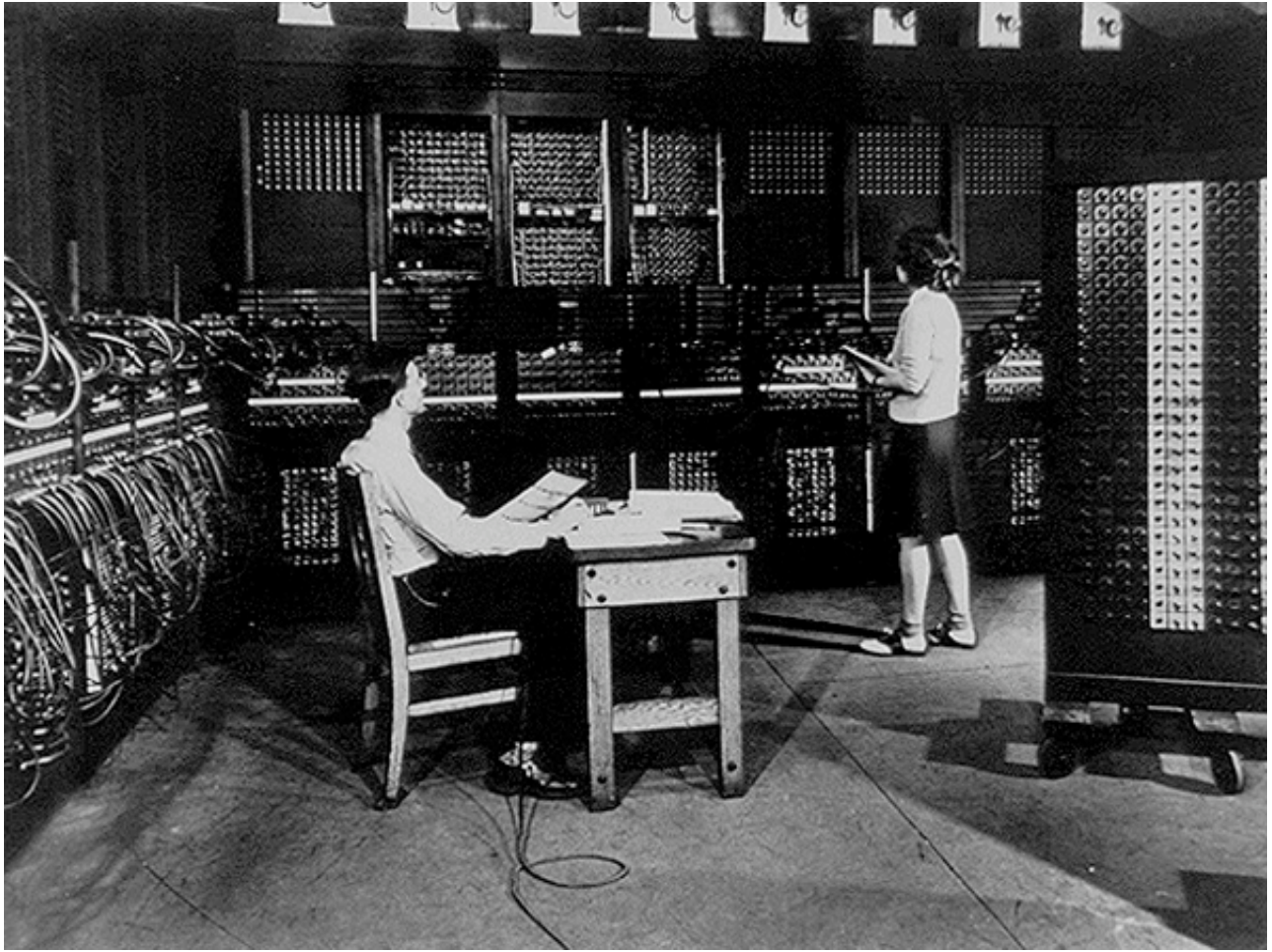


9 Tech Inventions That Started it All - How Far We've Come

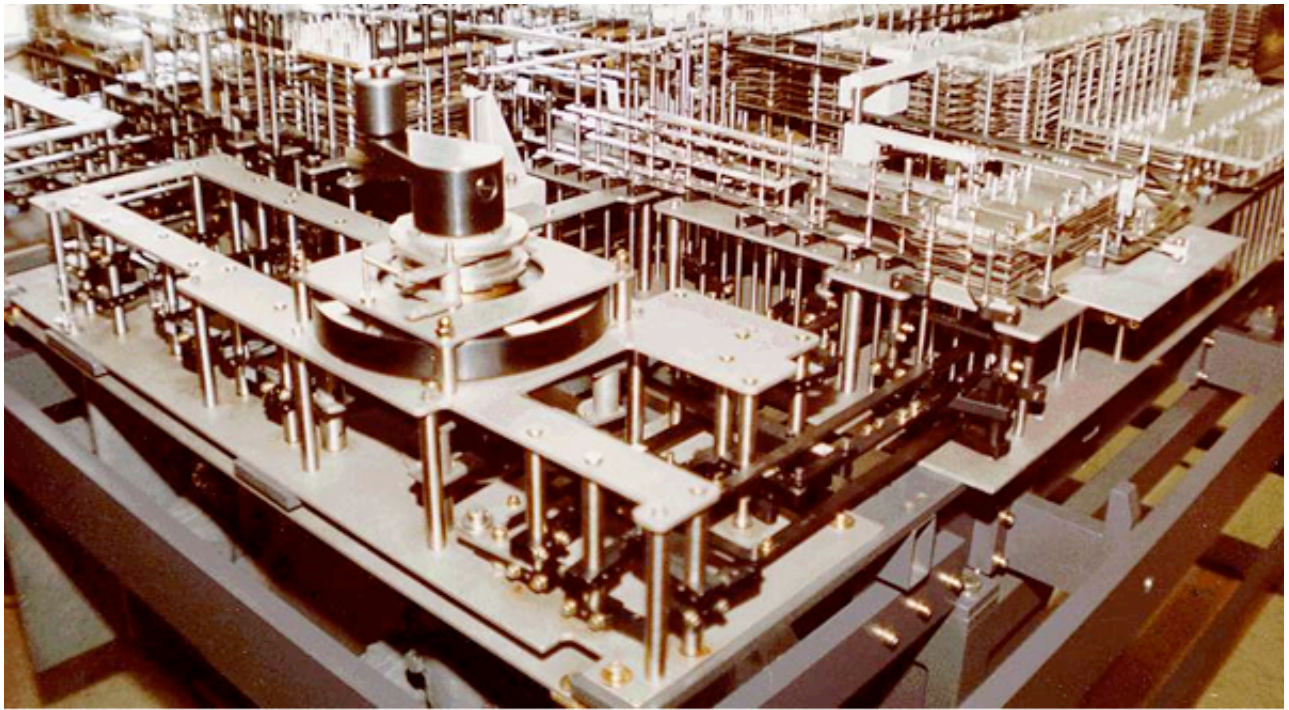


In this day and age, it's often all too easy to complain about the problems plaguing social networking sites, overpriced computers, and the lack of viable applications available amongst various smartphones. It's important, however, to remember where we came from and acknowledge how far technology has come.

Before you throw your keyboard at the wall after your next [Firefox](#) crash, take a deep breath and try to imagine a time before browsers even existed... a time before *websites* existed. Allow us to take you on a stroll down memory lane and put it all in perspective.

1. Computers

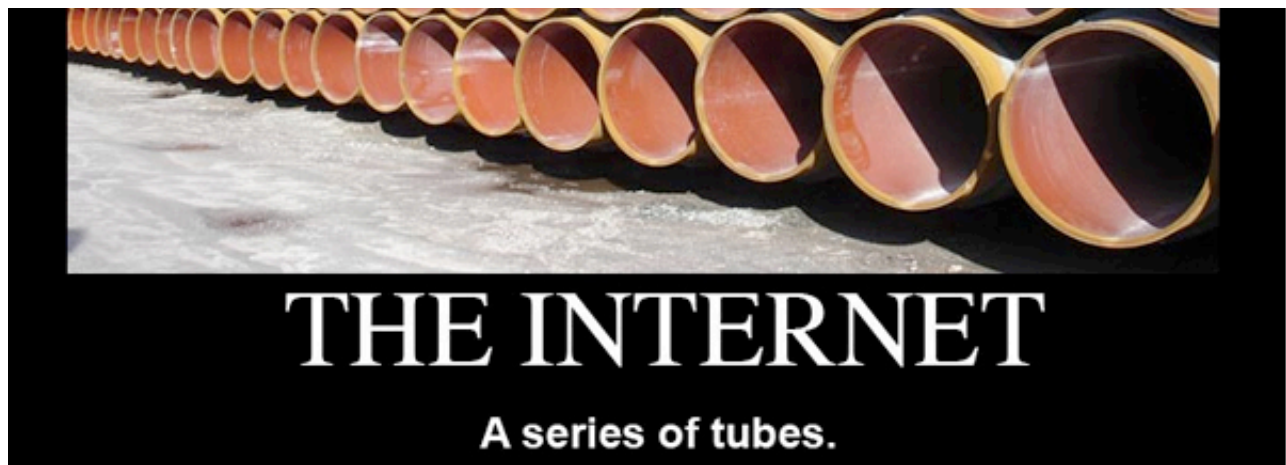




Given the variety of computers that have been invented throughout the years, there are multiple computers that can claim the title of “first” in their respective categories. The first programmable computer, however, was created between the years of 1936 and 1938 by Konrad Zuse in Germany. In typical nerd fashion, Zuse crafted the computer in his parents’ basement, naming it the Z1. The Z1 clocked in with a speed of 1 Hz, and was able to hold 64 words worth of memory. That’s right, the Z1 couldn’t even store this entire *paragraph*. Pretty crazy, right?

2. The Internet





THE INTERNET

A series of tubes.

The internet as we know it today was first created by Robert Kahn and Vinton Cerf in 1983. On January 1st, 1983, Kahn and Cerf launched the first TCP/IP network. Two years later, the first 56k network hit, and later became commercially available in 1988. Tim Berners-Lee, a British scientist working for CERN, invented the World Wide Web in 1989. The web came to fruition in 1991 when CERN made the World Wide Web project public. Before **Chrome**, **Firefox**, and even **Internet Explorer**, the web was accessible only using the ViolaWWW browser, which was eventually replaced by the Mosaic browser. Throughout the 90s, the internet experienced usage increases of over 100 percent each year as it became more commercially viable. As of December 31st, 2009, there are now 1.8 billion internet users worldwide — all of which are thankful for broadband.

3. Webpages and Websites





With the dawn of the World Wide Web came the existence of websites. The first webpage hit the web towards the end of 1990: <http://nxoc01.cern.ch/hypertext/WWW/TheProject.html>. While the page no longer exists, you can still [view an original copy](#) of it at [W3.org](#). After CERN announced that the web would be free for anyone to use in April of 1993, the number of websites across the web skyrocketed. The first webpages and websites make even the most laughable [designs from 1998](#) seem extremely advanced.

4. Personal Computers



The term “personal computer” was given to us by Ed Roberts in 1975 when he unveiled the Altair 8800. While Roberts coined the term, the Kenbak-1 was the first computer that fell under the category of personal computer. The Kenbak-1 first hit the market in 1971, and carried a \$750 price tag. Using a string of switches and lights, the

computer was capable of inputting and outputting data. Sure makes you thankful for your keyboard, eh?

5. Laptops



The Osborne 1, developed by Adam Osborne in 1981, secured its place in history as the first portable computer to be commercially available. While touted as the first portable computing device, the Osborne 1 wasn't exactly, well, *portable*. Weighing in at 23.5 pounds, the bulky computer makes even the most hardware intensive Alienware laptop seem as light as air. With a hefty price tag of \$1,795, the Osborne 1 wasn't exactly a hit. The Osborne Computer Company went bankrupt just two years later after introducing the Osborne 1's predecessor, the OCC-2.

6. Social Networking



Next time you feel the urge to bash Facebook and Twitter, take a second to recall a time when neither were even conceivable. While the web had existed for years, the first distinguishable social networking site wasn't created until 1997. That site was [SixDegrees.com](#). Using SixDegrees, internet users worldwide were able to create profiles. A year later, the site would begin to allow users to browse friend lists. While other communities had allowed users to create profiles at the time, SixDegrees was the first site that brought together various features to create a social networking site as we define it today. From SixDegrees, to [LiveJournal](#), to [MySpace](#), and now [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) — social networking has advanced to a point never previously imagined.

7. Computer Games





Created in 1962 by a MIT computer programming team led by Steve Russell, Spacewar went down in history as the first computer game. Spacewar was a multiplayer space-themed game which allowed players to battle to the death using spaceships armed with torpedoes. While it was a far cry from [Starcraft](#), Spacewar could be found on almost every computer in existence at the time. Next time your frustration peaks while playing your favorite game, head on over to [Zorg.org](#) to [play Spacewar](#), and you'll gain a new appreciation for just how far computer gaming has come.

8. Smartphones





Before there was an app for “that,” there *wasn’t* an app for that. Believe it or not, the first smartphone was created by **IBM** in 1992. The phone, name Simon, was first shown at **COMDEX** as a concept. In 1993, the phone hit the market, and was made publically available by **BellSouth**. A far cry from the apps we’ve all come to know and love today, Simon boasted *exciting* applications such as the calculator, calendar, world clock, and notepad. Interestingly, the phone *was* able to send e-mails and had a couple of games available. Another interesting point is the fact that Simon was operated by using a touch screen, which would not become common amongst cell phones until years later. **Androids** and **iPhones** are cool, but let’s give credit where credit is due — Simon is where it all started.

9. MP3 Players



Replacing the now rarely used portable CD player, the first MP3 player was created by the company Audio Highway. The player, named Listen Up, was announced in September of 2006 and hit stores in January of 1997. The MP3 player ended up winning the People’s Choice Award in 1998, and featured a storage capacity of 32MB — approximately six songs. 13 years later, I think it’s safe to say that we’re all

thankful for 160GB **iPods**.

What was the first computer that you owned? First smartphone? Laptop? Leave a comment and let us know.