

News from Nan

COMPUTER HISTORY

MY HIGH-TECH ADVENTURE: CHAPTER 02, EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH COMPUTERS

AUGUST 10, 2018 | DICK | LEAVE A COMMENT

Dick wrote this post, which was part of a book, My high-tech adventure, to record his memories of working in the computer industry, starting in about 1960. It was first published in 2012.

My tic-tac-toe machine

When I was about 10 (1952), I tried to build my own computer that would play tic-tac-toe. This “computer” was made out of plywood, switches, wires, light bulbs and dry cells, and it never really worked. I spent the money my parents gave me for a birthday present buying the parts at the hardware store. I put in many hours working on it in the basement of our house. That was probably the first time I had anything to do with computers.

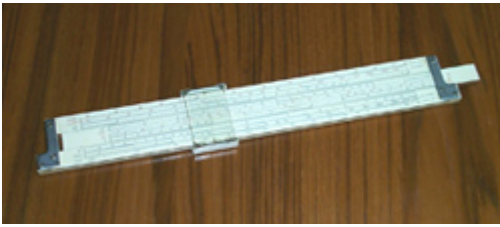
At that same time I also learned how to use the abacus and slide rule. My friends, Philip Mitchell and Lane Carroll, and I used to play games calculating numbers like 9 to the 9th to the 9th power just to amaze ourselves.

Early interest in personal computers

When I was in junior high school, I first began to hear about digital computers. If you consult a history of computing, you will find that the time I was in junior high (1955-1956) was just when computers began to be used in business and the government in a big way.

One day in 1959 my mother heard my friends and me talking about something related to computers, and she actually phoned the local IBM branch office to ask if they had any inexpensive computers that she could buy for me. At the time the cheapest thing probably cost several million dollars! So my mother had the idea of the personal computer long before the industry did.

The following figure shows the “computer” I used in school.



Slide rule

◀ 2018 ◀ ABACUS ◀ MYHITECH ◀ SLIDE RULE ◀ TIC-TAC-TOE

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)