

This section is under construction. I have lots of stuff to put here and it's taking some time to sort through it and get it all formatted properly.

This is perhaps my biggest hobby. It's definitely my highest-mass hobby. ;)

My pride and joy, a functioning DEC PDP-11/70 minicomputer, circa 1975.

Contents

- [1 Why?](#)
- [2 History](#)
- [3 My Systems](#)
 - ◆ [3.1 Systems](#)
 - ◆ [3.2 Peripherals](#)

Why?

Most people understand the guy with the Model T Ford in his garage, restored to perfection. He knows every detail of its construction, the names of the people who designed it, he can tell you where it was made, everything about its history. He cleans every inch of it lovingly with the very best toothbrushes. He takes it out for a drive on warm weekend afternoons, and people point to it on the street and say "ooh, ahh!" We've all seen this. This is the same sort of thing, except the subject is computers, not cars. Cars have revolutionized transportation, while computers have revolutionized *everything*. Their history is worth preserving. This has become quite a big hobby in recent years.

It's important to note that we're not talking about last year's Pentiums, or laptops running Windows 98...we're talking about 40-year-old, multi-ton machines with magnetic core memory, spinning tapes, and big panels of blinking lights, like you've seen in old sci-fi movies.

My IBM System/36 model 5360, a business computer from the early 1980s.

History

A very important part of any field is its history. Nearly a hundred years ago, philosopher George Santayana wrote "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." This really does happen. Being familiar with early efforts in this field, I've seen quite a few new products introduced which repeat old mistakes. Also entertaining is when a company claims to have "invented" something that has existed for years. Several times in recent years I've seen press releases hit the streets announcing some "new discovery", and I stroll into my library,

Classic_Computing

pick up a book on software design from the mid-1950s, and find references to it there. One is forced to wonder whether or not any of these guys ever actually read any books, and how much time they could have saved by studying a little history.

Some 1970s-era personal computers: a Heathkit H8, IMSAI 8080, and SwTPC 6800 computers, and an LSI ADM-5 terminal

While digital computers are relatively young in the grand scheme of things, their history is fascinating and full of good stories. Throughout the 1930s to 1950s, quite literally the *smartest people on the planet* were developing the world's first digital computers. Their work...the algorithms, methodologies, ideas, and designs...are the underpinnings of nearly every piece of technology in use by our society today. Cell phones, MP3 players, GPS, the Internet, the ignition controller in your car, your pocket calculator...*none* of them would exist today without the work of those early pioneers so many decades ago.

My Systems

Here you will find information regarding my own efforts to preserve the history of the science that has transformed the world. I have a sizable collection of this type of equipment. Some of it is in storage, but the majority of it is in my house. Eventually I'd like to open a public museum to display my collection, but for now a virtual museum will have to suffice. Some of these machines are important to me due to exposure during my younger years, while others were just ones that I had fantasized about owning or using years ago. Still others are ones that have caught my eye for one reason or another, usually due to some particularly clever aspect of their internal architecture and/or design. Other machines in my collection are ones that I owned and used when they were modern, and just ended up keeping.

Here are some pages dedicated to specific systems in my collection. I will be adding more here as time permits. I have over a hundred computers here, so this is just a tiny sample! I'll add individual pages for my more important systems as time permits.

Systems

- [DEC PDP-11/70](#)
- [DEC PDP-11/34a](#)
- [IBM System/36](#)

Peripherals

- [Friden Flexowriter](#)