

# Prologue.

Question 1: What was the world before the Computers and THE NET?

There are not so many anymore who are able to remember that time. He can.

It was for a long time not realized what this 'thing' later called IT (Information Technology) did to the world. A completely new dimension 'hit' humanity.

Question 2: Could the impact of IT in the development of humans, the whole society, and almost everything, not be compared with the invention of gunpowder? Or even with the atomic bomb?

End of 'psychological' somersaults. Back to reality. Back to the text of: "The Other Computer History".

What is coming now may not be of interest to many. Unless she or he is really an overwhelmed 'computer freak'. In 1955, there was no evidence of something like this. And also the ugly German word, 'Informationstechnologie' was most likely not in the 'Duden'. 'Duden' was and still is the most important wordbook in German.

It was much easier, even for a born Swiss, to write the technical parts of what now is to be read in English. After all, English is the language of computer people. Not just for them. Children all over the world are eager to learn it already in kindergarten.

He is very, very familiar with the computer and everything related to it. Therefore: The 'DU' in the title of the German version of this book. They have been working together for 45 years. Sometimes friends, sometimes enemies. Deadly sad mood and joy followed in high frequent order. A kind of hate-love. It was definitely a very close relationship.

He was there. From the beginning. He was there until 2004 when he 'switched off'. Or better: He wanted to do this. With only half a success. As was so often the case in his computer-oriented life. Today he is no longer so interested in the details of the almost crazy development of IT. And he's afraid of all its abuse.

He has become a normal 'user'. But that too is becoming a burden. The daily battles with Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Word are getting harder every day.

But he's not (yet) completely out of service and away from that 'stuff'. In an intensive conversation with his son on his already somewhat advanced birthday, he recognized his defeats and victories with the machines which so often gave him big problems. But they also brought a lot of joy during his long professional career.

But writing it down is a very different 'story'.

It seems to have made a big impression on his son what he heard from his father. Of course: He is also a computer scientist. With a diploma and more. Not like his father. At his time, there were no signs of a possibility to study computer science. The term, as said, did not even exist. He has no official certificates. The only official document is the paper, which certifies that he has passed the exam in this hated profession as a precision mechanic.

He received the certificate that he had completed his apprenticeship only after the second agonizing examination. And only because he made a sacred promise to the examiners that he would never work in this profession. Which he obviously would never have done.

In the 'Stone Age' of computers and data transmission, the universities did not see their future. The glamorous potential of the new techniques has long been ignored.

He saw it very early. But it was only by the conversation with his son that he realized what a great deal of knowledge he now has.

But does it bring something to write them down?

The question of all the questions: Does it bring money?

Is this not the only final criteria for almost every decision in life?

This book will certainly not bring lots of cash!

He replied to his son: "No pig will care about my stories". The millions of young people who gesticulate today on laptops, smartphones, and whatever will come are only interested in the photo of the lover, dirty pictures, the games, the news about the next upcoming actions, and demonstrations,

"I am on Facebook, that's why I am". (Quote Rodolfo Bodmer).

So, it's a pretty hopeless project to write a book with forgotten facts about technical details and their problems. Or tell the world about the amazing moments he had together with a genius like Seymour Cray. Or the imagination you need to fix Supercomputers.

In addition, it will be extremely stressful to concentrate for two or more hours a day for weeks and months. Not to mention the dozen hours spent searching on the internet for forgotten abbreviations, correcting names, verifying facts, and so on. And to fight the attempt to follow the guaranteed arising 'brain associations'. Force yourself to

come back to the topic as soon as possible: To the Other computer history.

Yes, and let no mistakes creep in. A potential reader would not like this and the writer will receive malicious criticism. He prefers to leave mistakes to the computer. Better: To those who create the programs. The benefits of a computer are only as good as the programmer who wrote the software. A computer is a tool. Nothing else. Like a lathe. Only: To work with a lathe and to use it correctly has still to be done manually.

Today, the computer is the boss. Nothing works without it. But also a lot goes wrong with it.

Quote: "The computer creates us today the problems which we earlier did not have".

Much about this unpleasant reality can be read from now on.

The beginning of the 'essay' was quite difficult. Will it ever be finished? Qui vivra verra!

Quote: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak". (Matthew 26, 41 in the Bible).

Oh, excuse me for slandering the Homo sapiens. But like most things in life, the accused machine also has very excellent and useful skills. For example: It can perform calculations very quickly. Learning arithmetic in elementary school will soon have become redundant. No more hated and strenuous learning of multiplication tables. The students need no longer construct grammatically correct sentences. They now have time to chat, send text messages and tell each other

the usual nonsense. Or to play computer games. A very productive activity.

But without the word processor with all its 'features', problems, and errors, this text could never be written. Today, almost nothing is put on paper by human fingers.

In Switzerland, there is an important exception:

The last will !!!