Explore the Past on Video

The largest single assortment of videos on the history of computing will be available to the public in "PEOPLE AND COMPUTERS: Milestones of a Revolution." State of the art interactive video technology and an extensive list of film and video developed by interactive video specialist Brad Larson have made this possible.

This highly interactive, $1 million exhibition on the evolution and impact of the computer opened June 29, 1991. It features nine milestones with life-size re-creations of computing environments from the past.

The first eight milestones are enriched by over 70 clips from early, classic films and videos stored on three video discs. Several IBM PS/2s with M-motion boards allow visitors to interact with the discs, sampling representative videos of the people, technology, and culture from the 1930s through the 1980s.
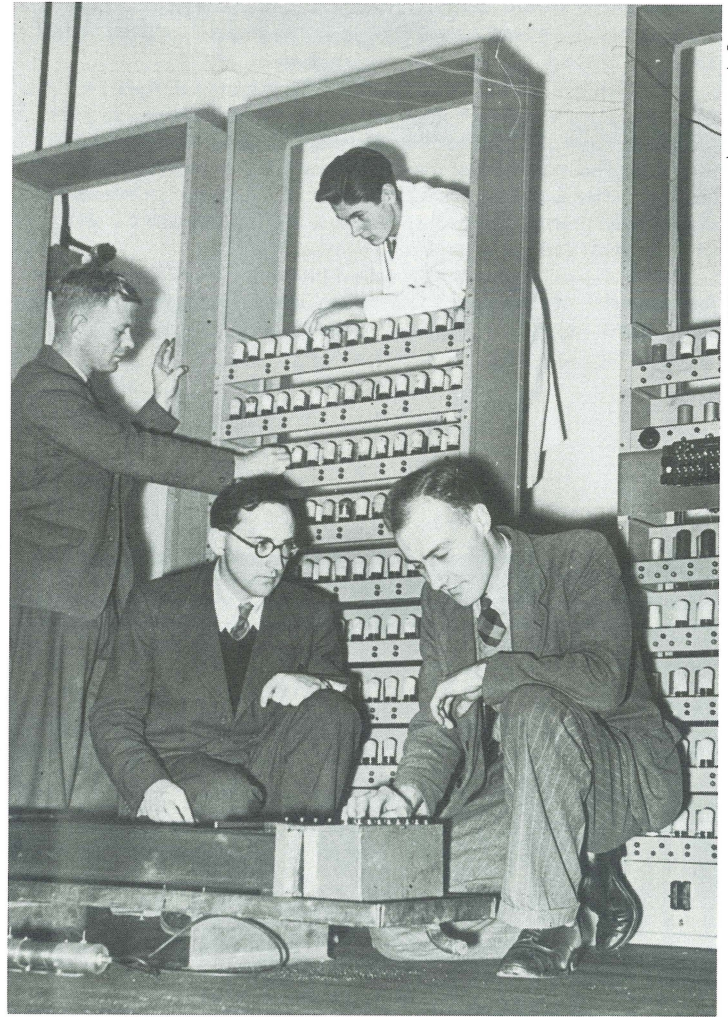
Eight stations let visitors select from three categories: "Popular Culture," "People," or "Technologies." "Popular Culture" brings back movies and video from each era. For the late 1930s, the choices include a segment from the movie, *Metropolis*, and a film of the 1939 World's Fair. For the 1970s, popular TV programs and movies are featured.

Selecting "People" allows visitors to meet and see both the "milestone makers" and people affected by the innovations. For the late 1940s, a period of invention, there is actual footage from computer pioneers Presper Eckert and John Mauchley, who conceived the ENIAC, Maurice Wilkes, creator of the EDSAC, and other inventors. For the late 1970s, visitors can view a clip of the linotype operators at the *New York Times*, as they shift to becoming computer operators.

Choosing "Technologies" provides a variety of views of computers at work. Video clips from the 1950s show people serving the machines that worked round the clock, while TV ads from the 1980s tout the personal computer.

During the last year, Brad Larson, whom The Computer Museum shares with The Children's Museum, has reviewed hundreds of different films and videos. He then edited the selections to provide the essence in a few minutes.

Throughout the project, Larson was assisted by the staff of the upcoming PBS TV series, *The Machine That Changed the World*, without whose efforts such a broad display would not have been possible.

Photograph: The Computer Museum Collection

Computer pioneer Maurice Wilkes (wearing glasses) and his team are seen with the EDSAC computer ca.1950.

Photograph: The Computer Museum Collection

Choosing "People" at the interactive videodisc lets visitors meet early programmer, Rear Admiral Grace Hopper, pictured here with Howard Aiken, inventor of the Harvard Mark I.