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Chapter 1 : From_Airline_Reservations_to_Sonic_the_Hedgehog_A_History_of_the_Software_Indust - cal

From Airline Reservations to Sonic the Hedgehog: A History of the Software Industry - by the time of its publication and writing of this comment - is the only book that is solely on history of software industry.

From Airline Reservations to Sonic the Hedgehog: Should the cold war become hot, America was wired and ready. And so, under the threat of nuclear conflagration, the US military basically invented the software industry. As Martin Campbell-Kelly points out, only a superpower that was prepared to spend billions of dollars could have accelerated research in real-time computing systems to such an extent, while also creating a cadre of highly trained programmers who subsequently began to work as independent contractors in the civilian sector. Developed by IBM in consultation with American Airlines, it went live in , automating the processing of airline reservations. Until then - because of the economic requirement to minimise empty seats while avoiding over-booking - reservations were a time-consuming manual process involving at least 12 steps: He points out that the stuff we consciously encounter as "software" in our day-to-day lives - web browsers, word processors and so on - is only the consumerised tip of a very large iceberg. Whenever you drive a modern car, book a flight, use a cashpoint, or pay for something by credit card, you are using software. The 70s saw the increasing popularity of computer-aided design systems, database programs, and the introduction of the word processor. Indeed, the most accurate description of Bill Gates available here is from another author, who called him not a technical genius but simply "the foremost applied economist of the past half-century". From this long perspective, we can see that as computer software gained visibility, it also underwent a poetic transformation. Then came a more moderate, technically descriptive naming convention: SyncSort sorted files; Autoflow created two-dimensional flowcharts. Autoflow was certainly ahead of its time in marketing terms: The metaphoric switch, after which computer software sought to invoke more imagistic or mythical associations, arguably began with Oracle, the database company founded in by Larry Ellison, perhaps the only high-profile software entrepreneur who can compete in fame with Gates, and one of whose biographies is entitled *The Difference Between God and Larry Ellison*. Modern commercial programs seek to flatter their users with ever more heroic connotations. The marketing mavens at Microsoft, meanwhile, have a particular genius for this paradigm: Internet Explorer is a digital pith helmet for courageous clickers of links; PowerPoint recasts middle managers as generals addressing their troops; and Excel posits the creation of a pie-chart as the highest form of intellectual activity. The 21st-century software industry, as Campbell-Kelly points out, is now so enormous and diverse that it hardly makes sense to think of it as one industry. And while corporate wage-slaves have their data-processing drudgery reimagined for them as military or colonial victory, the software, no doubt heavily acronymised, that runs the avionics of stealth aircraft or the navigation systems of "smart" munitions continues to change the face of the physical world in the most emphatic way possible.

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Chapter 2 : Top shelves for From Airline Reservations to Sonic the Hedgehog

From Airline Reservations to Sonic the Hedgehog is a history of the software industry in the United States, down to It avoids technical details " there's little about software engineering and programming languages, for example, or developments in computer science " to focus on the economic and business accompaniments of technological change.

From Airline Reservations to Sonic the Hedgehog: And Campbell-Kelly is an academic historian, providing full references and a discussion of sources and avoiding hype or dramatisation. But From Airline Reservations is never heavy going: An introduction discusses industry statistics, other sources, and the restriction to the United States. The basic structure is then chronological and sectoral, with a three sector division into software contracting, corporate software products, and mass-market software products. Two chapters cover software contracting. The System Development Corporation, set up to produce software for the national defense network SAGE required thousands of programmers and became a kind of "programming university", while the SABRE airline reservations system was the most important civilian project. As well as large systems integrators there were small software contractors, some of which were to grow rapidly. The s saw consolidation, with an increasing need for marketing and project management skills as well as casualties from a computer "utility" fad early Application Service Providers and the computer stocks crash of New firms continually appeared, however, with high turnover. Coverage of software contracting stops there, with a closing comment that: There are three chapters on the software products industry. The first covers its origins between and , with extended case studies of two leading products: Next comes a survey of software products through the s. These were classified by supplier computer manufacturers and independent vendors, with some turnkey vendors, software brokers, and time-sharing services and by category. Campbell-Kelly suggests that the increasingly fine classification of software was itself significant. This is illustrated with case studies of IBM a manufacturer and three big independent vendors: One reason for the success of the latter, a German company, was that European companies lagged those in the United States and had not yet invested in company-specific software. Then come three chapters on the personal computer software industry. The first covers the pioneer period from to , beginning with the origins of the microcomputer and the "first mover" advantage in operating systems held by Digital Research and then Microsoft. Also covered are programming languages and VisiCalc and other productivity software packages. In production and distribution "there was almost no point of contact between the booming microcomputer software industry and [that] for corporate mainframes and minicomputers". The second chapter continues the story down to Much of this involves Microsoft, of course, but the chapter title is "Not Only Microsoft" and Campbell-Kelly argues that it has received disproportionate attention. Success in the PC software industry came not just from luck, but from exploitation, deliberate or not, of the economics of increasing returns. A third chapter looks at home and recreational software, in particular at games and game consoles , CD-ROM encyclopedias, and personal finance software Quicken versus Microsoft Money. Here Campbell-Kelly sees "a historical trend for software to become subordinate to the intellectual content or the complementary services offered". Campbell-Kelly himself is British and there are occasional references to British and European companies, but the focus is on the United States. A final chapter looks at reasons for the success of the US software industry: On "political" issues, Campbell-Kelly takes a more positive view of Microsoft than some: He also ignores free software completely, which is perhaps reasonable given the end-point in , though the GNU Project and its antecedents would have made an interesting topic " and hindsight suggests that the idea of free software was more significant than any specific product. From Airline Reservations to Sonic the Hedgehog should command a wide audience: May - buy from Amazon.

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Chapter 3 : From Airline Reservations to Sonic the Hedgehog (Martin Campbell-Kelly)

A business history of the software industry from the days of custom programming to the age of mass-market software and video games.

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Chapter 4 : From Airline Reservations to Sonic the Hedgehog: A History of the Software Industry

A business history of the software industry from the days of custom programming to the age of mass-market software and video games. From its first glimmerings in the s, the software industry has evolved to become the fourth largest industrial sector of the US economy.

Chapter 5 : From airline reservations to Sonic the Hedgehog: a history of the software industry - Wikidata

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