1904 The Fleming valve, the first vacuum tube, is patented by Sir John A. Fleming.

1905 Albert Einstein publishes the theory of relativity.

1915 The first transcontinental call, between San Francisco and New York, is placed by researchers working at AT&T.

1920 Czech author Karel Capek coins the word “robot.”

1924 The Computing-Tabulating-Recording Company is renamed International Business Machines (IBM).

1934 Federal legislation is passed in the form of the Communications Act in an attempt to begin regulation of the telephone industry.

1939 The first digital computer prototype is created at Iowa State College by Clifford Berry and John Atanasoff. Hewlett-Packard is founded.

1941 Regular television broadcasting begins.

1947 Walter Brattain, John Bardeen, and William Shockley invent the first point-contact transistor at Bell Labs.

1948 Bell Labs unveils the transistor to the U.S. military and to the public at large.

1951 The UNIVAC 1, considered the first commercial computer, is sold to the U.S. Census Bureau by the Eckert and Mauchly Computer Co.

1956 Shockley, Bardeen, and Brattain win the Nobel Prize for their work on the transistor. IBM researchers unveil the first hard-disk drive.

1958 The U.S. Dept. of Defense creates the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA). The first integrated circuit or “silicon chip” is invented.

1965  Moore’s Law is espoused for the first time by Gordon Moore.
1968  Robert Noyce and Gordon Moore form the Intel Corp.
1969  ARPAnet is created.
1970  Glass fiber, precursor to the development of fiber optics, is created at Corning Glass.
1971  Intel creates the first microprocessor.
1972  The concept of electronic mail is introduced, as is the concept of open-architecture networking.
1975  Bill Gates and Paul Allen form a partnership, naming their new business Microsoft.
1976  Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak founded Apple Computer Co. Cray Research, Inc. unveils the Cray-1, a supercomputer with revolutionary speed capabilities.
1981  IBM introduces its personal computer.
1982  The TCP/IP protocol is developed.
1983  Microsoft Word is unveiled, as is the Windows operating system. Time magazine chooses the PC as its 1982 “Man of the Year.”
1984  Apple Computer Co. introduces the Macintosh.
1985  The National Science Foundation establishes NSFNET, an enhanced version of ARPAnet.
1986  Microsoft Corp. conducts its IPO.
1989  BITNET is born.
1990  Microsoft Corp. revenues exceed $1 billion. ARPAnet is decommissioned and shut down.
1991  The World Wide Web comes into existence as the National Science Foundation’s decree that prevents commercial use of the Internet dissolves.
1993  Graphics-based Web browser Mosaic is released. The U.S. Justice Dept. begins its antitrust investigation into Microsoft Corp.
1994  The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is established.
1995  Amazon.com goes online for the first time. The National Science Foundation’s financial support of the Internet is terminated.
2000  Technology stocks plummet in value as the dot-com shakeout takes hold. Internet startups are hit hard and many fold or merge.
2001  Time Warner and America Online (AOL) finalize their mega-merger.

1957  The USSR launches Sputnik.
1963  President John F. Kennedy is assassinated.
1969  U.S. astronauts become first men to walk on the moon.
1975  Saigon falls to North Vietnamese forces.
1978  In England, the world’s first test-tube baby is born.
1983  The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is discovered.
1985  A hole is discovered in the ozone layer above Antarctica.
1985  Nelson Mandela is elected president of South Africa.
1990  East and West Germany reunite and the Berlin Wall is dismantled.
1994  Nelson Mandela is elected president of South Africa.
2001  Terrorists attack NY’s World Trade Center and the Pentagon.