

Train while you strain



Pretty Fly For A Wi-Fi (a brief history of wireless technology)

In 1880, Alexander Graham Bell and Charles Sumner conducted the first ever wireless conversation remotely using projected light beams. In 2014 the number of active wireless devices on planet Earth officially overtook the number of human beings currently alive. In 2 years time there will be 22.2 billion connected wireless devices worldwide, which will be approximately triple the population of the planet. But how have we got to this?!

Well without the invention of radio technology back in the 1800s, there would be no wireless technology in existence today. In essence, wireless technology and radio technology are one and the same. A few years after Alex and Charlie had their chat using light beams, a German chap called Heinrich Rudolf Herz produced the first ever radio wave and by 1894 radio had become a form of communication. In 1896 an Italian inventor called Marchese Marconi had managed to send a telegram with the words "Are you ready?" over a distance of 1.5 miles completely wire free, or indeed, wirelessly.

Following the dawn of the century he had managed to expand the radius of radio waves to 31 miles over the English Channel. By 1901 he was sending radio communicated telegrams across the Atlantic Ocean, paving the way for radio, television and radar, earning Marconi the moniker "The Father Of Radio".

The first occurrence of data being transmitted wirelessly using radio technology was during World War II and many experts argue that it was one of the main deciding factors that actually helped win the war, with radar being a huge advantage to the Americans. It was around this era that a lot of speculation began about whether radio signals could be expanded into something much bigger.

In 1971, a group of researchers at the University of Hawaii created the first wireless computer network as we understand them today, called ALOHAnet. This wireless network comprised of only 7 computers that were able to communicate with each other and share data wirelessly. It wasn't much but it was a massive innovation in the world of wireless technology. In 1972 the ALOHAnet wireless network was able to connect to with Arpanet, the building block of the entire Internet situated on mainland America.

In the 1980s, frequencies for mobile networks became commercially available and by 1985 suitable frequencies for what is now known as Wi-Fi were allocated and put into use. It was still a very primitive and uncommon technology and was used only in the business sector. AT&T came up with WaveLAN and in 1991 launched a range of products that were intended for use by cashier systems.

1997 was the year that Wi-Fi was officially launched but it wasn't until 1999 when the major commercial breakthrough of this technology occurred. Apple launched the iBook in June of that year, which was the first consumer product that offered Wi-Fi (branded AirPort) network connectivity, with Apple's President of Marketing jumping from a significant height while demonstrating the device's wireless networking functionality.