

Tech nostalgia: The top 15 innovations of the 1990s

By Conner Forrest



World Wide Web

Although originally proposed in 1989, the web was first launched and used in the early 1990s. Tim Berners-Lee (pictured), with help from Robert Cailliau, was able to connect hypertext with the internet and create the foundation for what we know as the web today. Web browsers such as Mosaic and Netscape Navigator helped popularise the web in the 1990s.

Image: World Wide Web Consortium



Hubble Space Telescope

One of the largest telescopes in the world, the Hubble Space Telescope, was launched into orbit in 1990. The Hubble was designed to be maintained and serviced by astronauts and is still operating today.

Image: NASA



E-commerce

While the concept of e-commerce existed loosely for a few years, it wasn't until the 1990s that modern e-commerce was born. In 1995, both Amazon and eBay launched, and in 1999 Alibaba made its debut. These sites redefined the shopping experience.

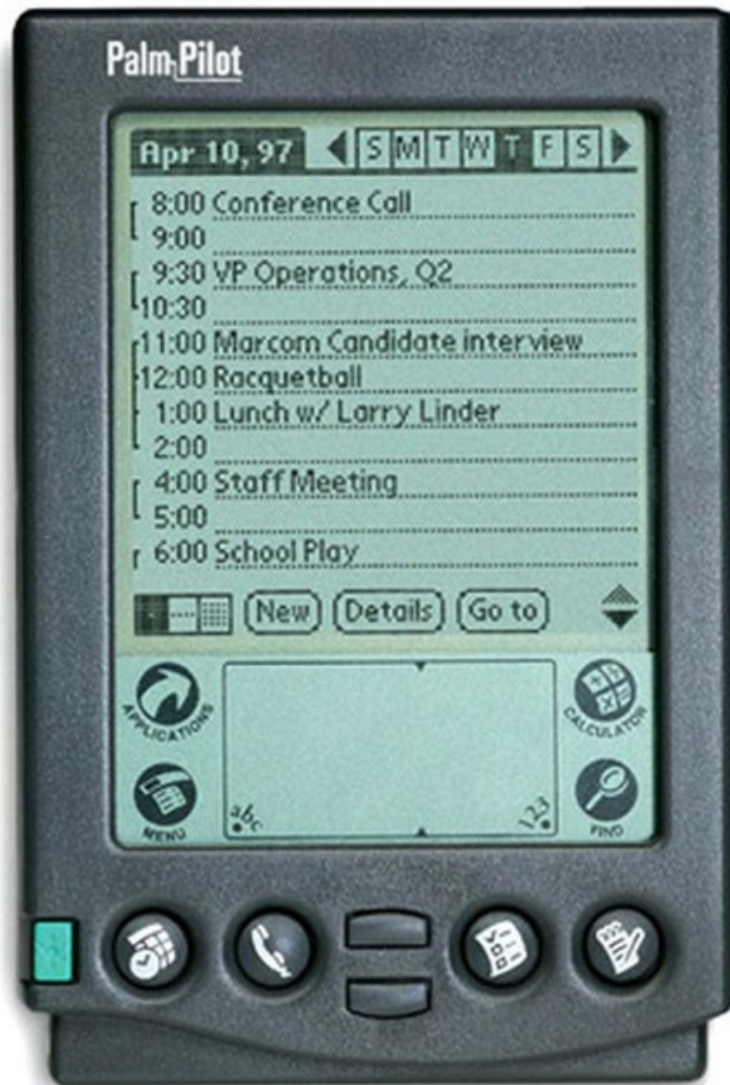
Image: James Martin/CNET



Linux

Perhaps the most well-known open-source software, Linux was initially released by Linus Torvalds in 1991. Linux is still in development today.

Image: Linux



PDA's

You could argue that without the PDA, we wouldn't have modern smartphones. The term was first used by former Apple CEO John Sculley to describe the Apple Newton in 1992. Companies such as Palm Pilot helped to further popularise the technology.

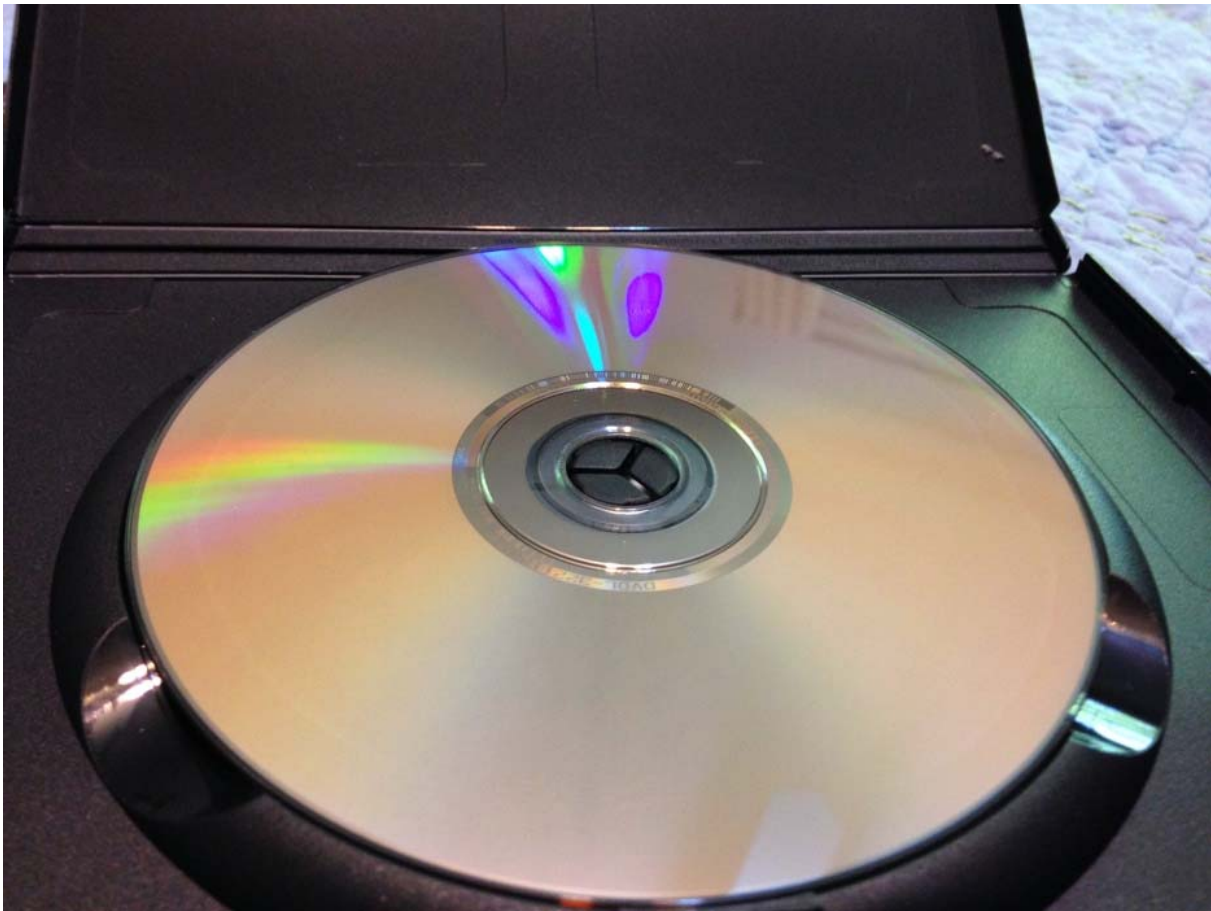
Image: CNET



Java

1995 saw the first appearance of the Java programming language. Originally developed by Sun Microsystems, it is now owned by Oracle since Sun was acquired in 2010.

Image: Oracle



DVDs

The digital video disc (DVD) appeared in the mid to late 1990s. The superior picture and sound of the DVD helped it quickly disrupt the existing VHS tape market.

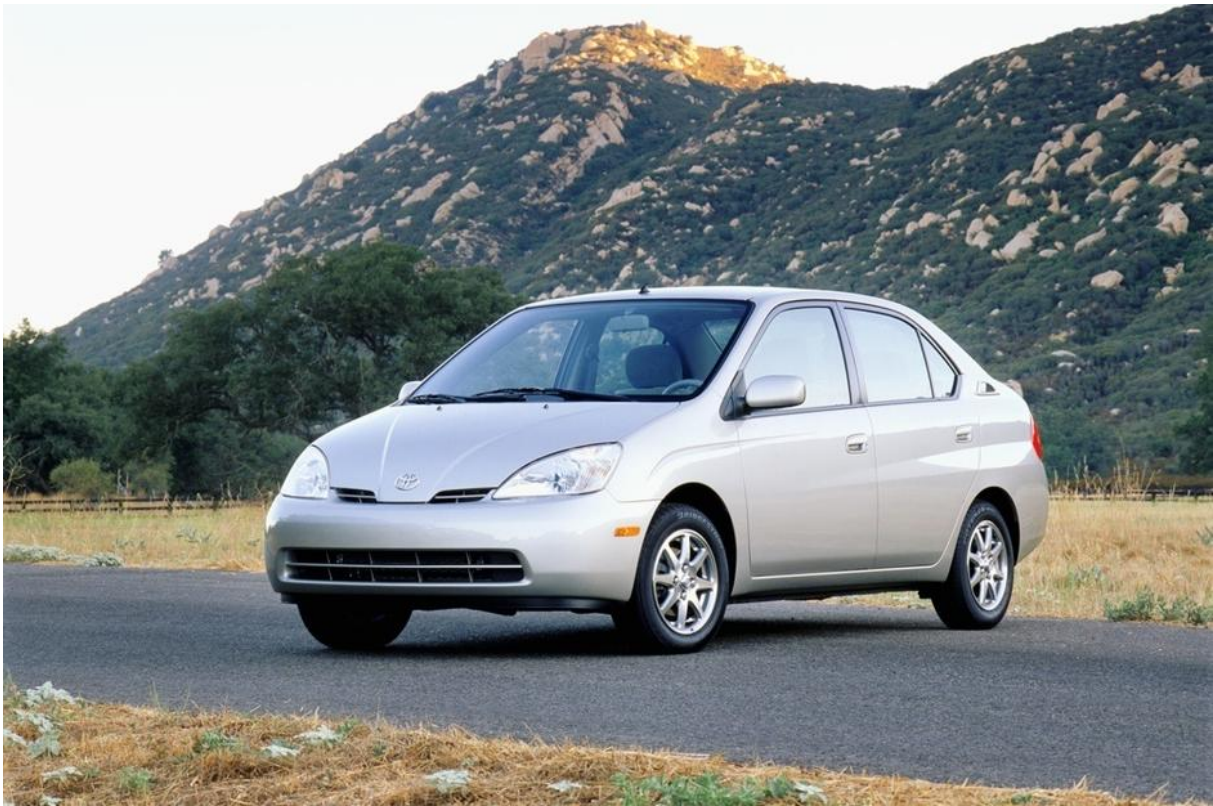
Image: Conner Forrest/TechRepublic



2G mobile phones

Second generation (2G) mobile phones came about in the 1990s after the first GSM network was launched in Finland. 2G service used digital transmission instead of analogue and led to the advent of SMS messaging. It also laid the foundation for 3G coverage and mobile data usage.

Image: Bill Detwiler/TechRepublic



Toyota Prius

In 1997, the Toyota Prius went on sale in Japan. The Prius was the first mass-produced hybrid automobile and it helped popularise hybrid technology and make it accessible to consumers.

Image: Toyota



NFC

Near field communication (NFC) allows mobile devices to communicate when in close proximity to one another. One of the first forms of NFC was patented in 1997 for use in Star Wars toys made by the company Hasbro that allowed the toys to "communicate" when close to one another. NFC is also used to power mobile wallets like Google Wallet and Apple Pay.

Image: CNET



USB flash drives

Although not commercially available until 2000, the creation and subsequent patents for the USB flash drive came about in 1999. Initially sold with a capacity of a few megabytes, current models can carry hundreds of gigabytes.

Image: Dong Ngo/CNET



Predator Drone

The General Atomics MQ-1 Predator has been in use by the US Air Force since 1995. It piqued much of the public interest and concern over drone and UAV technology.

Image: U.S. Air Force photo/1st Lt. Shannon Collins



DVR

Both TiVo and ReplayTV made their debut at the CES in 1999 and the digital video recorder (DVR) was born. The concept quickly gained popularity and is now integrated with the TV itself or available through cable providers.

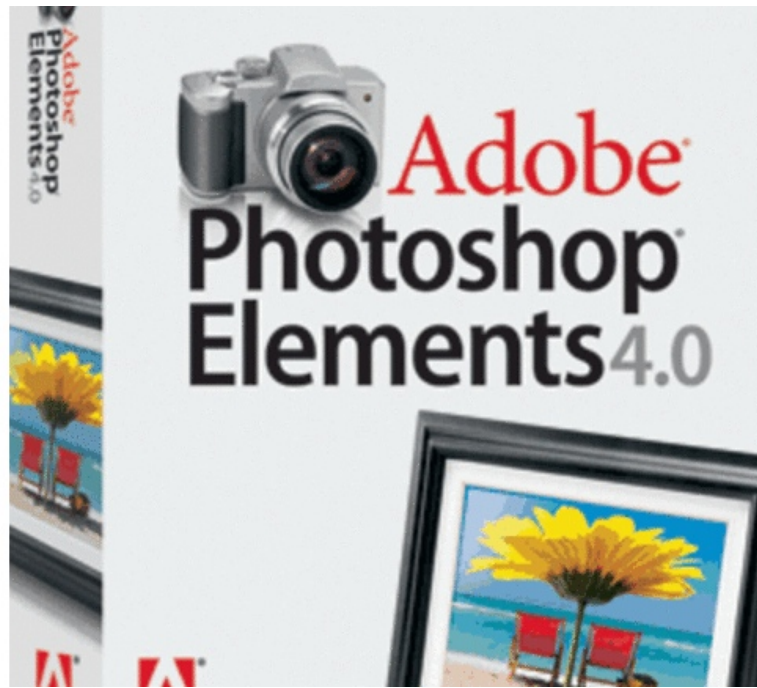
Image: CNET



Portable MP3 players

In the late 1990s, the first truly portable MP3 players were released. The Saehan Information Systems MPMan launched in 1997 and the Diamond Rio PMP300 (pictured) followed in 1998.

Image: Diamond



Photoshop

Adobe released the first version of Photoshop in 1990 and it has since become an industry standard for photo and graphics editing. Photoshop is now available as part of Adobe's Creative Suite.

Image: CNET



Conner Forrest is a Staff Writer for TechRepublic. He covers Google and start-ups and is passionate about the convergence of technology and culture.

Source: <http://www.techrepublic.com/pictures/tech-nostalgia-the-top-15-innovations-of-the-1990s/1/>

Slide show by Bodo Schwarz, ICE