

## **Put Your Name Here**

The Personal Computer is now over 15 years old and it has become an omnipresent part of modern life. Time Magazine predicted almost twenty years ago that computers would be commonplace in the home by 1987 and they proved to be wrong - it happened almost two years earlier!<sup>1</sup>

The predecessor of the PC was the Apple II, a small microcomputer that became an important part of high school and elementary school classrooms in many places. But this was not the first microcomputer; that was the MITS Altair, which appeared on the cover of Popular Electronics in 1977. (Actually it was a cardboard facsimile; the real computer was lost in the mail!)<sup>2</sup>

When IBM decided to start marketing a small computer, they decided that the term "microcomputer" was too technical a term and would scare off potential customers. So they chose the more user-friendly term "Personal Computer" and used a Charlie Chaplin lookalike dressed as Chaplin's famous character the Little Tramp to advertise

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<sup>1</sup>***Time Magazine Special Issue***, July 1977.

<sup>2</sup>Trotsky, Leon, ***History of Personal Computing***, My Press, 1992, p. 45.

the PC. These days the term Personal Computer describes any computer using an Intel microprocessor and running MS-DOS or Microsoft Windows.

Intel has become an extremely rich company as a result of the PC.<sup>3</sup> Intel introduced the following processors in these years:

8086	1980
80286	1983
80386	1986
80486	1989
Pentium	1993
Pentium II	1996
Pentium III	1999
Pentium 4	2002

Microsoft's own fortunes have exceeded those of Intel; Microsoft owns over 90% of the operating system market while Intel owns 75% of the processor market. Only IBM has failed to profit from their own creation; they own 19% of the PC market, although they have rebounded as a company in recent years.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Akers, John, *How IBM Lost the PC War*, Black and Blue Press, 1995, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *The Wall Street Press*, January 14, 1998, p. 1.