Heather Clark
"It never really said anything to me that you could have a computer in your house"

Quotations

Booting Up: First Interactions
"I saw *Ferris Beuller's Day Off* and I knew Ferris had a computer, and I saw *WarGames* and I knew that Mathew Broderick's character again had a computer. But it never really got to me or it never really said anything to me that you could have a computer at your house." – Heather Clark

Learning Machines: Computers in School
"There was a, I don't even know what the program was called, but there was this little turtle and it was called a turtle. It was a little carrot shaped, V shaped sideways thing, and you use the keys on the keyboard to move the turtle around and create shapes and designs and things. And that is all I remember about it." – Heather Clark

Home Network: Accessibility of Home Computers
"At our house you were lucky if you had food or the electricity was on. The last thing you are thinking is, 'Hey, let's get a computer in here!' Can I have this Easy Bake Oven that costs ten dollars and not this computer that costs thousands of dollars, and I still didn't get the Easy Back Oven." – Heather Clark

"You've got mail!": Dawn of the Internet
Before we had a computer, we had WebTV, which was accessing the internet through the TV because we couldn't afford a computer at first. We did all of our emails through the TV and that program…"
"It was a console connector that you would put on your TV that when you wanted to get to the internet you would dial through, this was before DSL, before cable modems, but regular old dial up that sounds very Australian when it comes on. You would do that and then on your TV screen you would have a way to click to and send your emails." - Heather Clark

Defragmenting: Effect of Computers on Home Life
Pros were that there was more information. You could go onto the internet and find out things you didn't know about…" "I think there is a lot on the internet that can reduce racial tension and misunderstandings because the less ignorant you are the more you may understand other people and their points of view…" "But there is a lot of false information that is put up there…" "But the main thing is the increase in information. I think that is good thing even if it is bad information it is better to be informed both ways than to not be informed at all." – Heather Clark

Historic Background

Booting Up: First Interactions

WarGames (1983) and *Ferris Beuller's Day Off* (1986) were both feature films starring the actor Mathew Broderick as their main protagonists. Both characters in the films use computers in their home in conjunction with in house modems to access other computers through a crude form of the internet. In the film *WarGames* David, the main protagonist of the film, utilizes his computer to hack into a government supercomputer accidentally while attempting to hack into a video game companies system. Additionally, he uses his computer to change his grades by accessing his high school computer servers, which mirrors *Ferris Beuller's Day Off*, in which Ferris, the titular character, uses his computer to access his high school's attendance records to remove his absences from their records. Ferris goes on to break the fourth wall and talk directly to the audience stating his dismay at the fact his parents had purchased him a computer rather than a car. Both items out of the question for Heather Clark's family, thereby, showcasing the divide between these characters of film and herself; which led to her associating such ideas to be merely in the realm of film.

Learning Machines: Computers in School

The Logo programming language was a creation of Seymour Papert in the 1960s, who utilized it to demonstrate how a robotic "turtle" could move across a flat plane after having commands being relayed to it through a computer. This "turtle" evolved from a physical robotic object to being purely existent in the realm of computer graphics in the late 70s. This computer program, which was designed to create shapes and logos, hence the name of the programming language, would gain traction with teachers across the United States during the 1980s, and be integrated into several schools' curriculum to introduce computer technology to students. This program is what Heather Clark would go on to utilize in her middle school education and be her first interaction with computer technology.

Home Network: Accessibility of Home Computers

IBM released their first home computer product under the name of the "IBM Personal Computer" in 1981. This was a landmark moment in history as it brought computers out of the realms of only the richest businesses to being feasibly accessible to an average consumer. This is demonstrated through the price drop from $9,000,000 for an IBM computer to just $1600. IBM, therefore, set the standard for what home computing looked and functioned like. However, during the 1980s, with adjustments for inflation, a $1600 computer would cost $4910, which is the equivalent of a down payment on a new car. Therefore, for impoverished families like that of Heather Clark such spending was out of the question when meeting the living standards for food and shelter needed to be met first.

"You've got mail!": Dawn of the Internet

WebTV as a business was founded by Steve Perlman in 1996 to provide consumers with an approachable and familiar interface to access the internet through their home TV. This was to function using a wired keyboard plugged into a cable box like peripheral plugged into the audio-visual ports on a user's TV, which would allow users to navigate the web from their living room and access important features like email. Though the failure of WebTV was that it primarily was utilized as an email machine as when visiting websites not optimized for WebTV viewing sites would not function as intended for be able to be viewed properly at all. Thus, as Heather describes in her quote using WebTV was a cheaper alternative to purchasing a thousand-dollar computer and associated modem and internet access for individuals that still needed access to key features of the internet like email.

Defragmenting: Effect of Computers on Home Life

As a high school teacher, Heather Clark's belief in the positive impact of computers and the ability to access information at an unprecedented scale to her own childhood is defined by her career and personal experience. As someone who was impoverished and had very little access to information outside of what was provided through her school and local libraries, her belief is that in the modern era there is a responsibility to be informed. She also recognizes that some of the information from different sources is not factual or in some cases deliberately false, but still believes that such information is important nonetheless due to the wealth of actual information that can be accessed just as easily.

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