The microprocessor is one of the unsung heroes of the modern era. Like the car designer whose vehicle gives the racing driver glory, the microprocessor makes quite incredible things possible all over the world. Each year we benefit from faster and more efficient performance which improves not just computing, but also numerous fields from retail and industry to agriculture and vehicle safety. This year, the humble microprocessor celebrates its 40th birthday. Since 1971, it has become the brain of literally millions of devices - without the microprocessor they would not have existed.

Let’s take a look at some of the devices the microprocessor has powered over the past 40 years:

**The Evolution of the Microprocessor**

- **1971**: Commodore PET
  - Widely acknowledged as the first all-in-one home computer

- **1974**: Busicom Calculator
  - The Unicom 141P* calculator was one of the very first devices to feature a microprocessor.
  - Computing as we know it started here…

- **1978**: Washing machine
  - The first microchip-controlled washing machines came onto the market, showing the diverse usages of the new technology

- **1980**: Osborne 1*
  - A 5" screen and weighing 10.7kg, it really was the ‘great’ grandfather of modern laptops

- **1981**: Arcade mania
  - Namco introduced Pac-Man* in the arcades of the US and sparked a huge craze

- **1985**: Nintendo NES*
  - The gaming industry was revitalised by consoles such as the Nintendo Entertainment System

- **1989**: Digital Signage
  - Digital signage is but one of a vast number of new uses for the microprocessor. Intelligent, internet-connected devices are increasingly found in everyday life – from industry and retail to agriculture and vehicles

- **1997**: BlackBerry*
  - The smartphone revolution kicked off when RIM introduce the BlackBerry 850

- **1999**: Windows
  - Desktop computers were introduced in the billions and the functional tasks became incredible

- **2001**: MacBook
  - The laptop of today is much more than a 1997 version of the Osborne 1

- **2002**: Windows Tablet PC
  - Almost a decade before the consumer obsession with tablets, businesses were using them for more functional tasks

- **2008**: iPhone
  - The iPod was released, and the future of MP3 as the music format of choice is set in stone

- **2010**: Apple iPad*
  - Tablets hit the consumer mainstream with the launch of the iPad

- **2011**: Ultrabook™
  - The evolution of the PC takes another big step as stylish Ultrabook devices push forward mobile, high performance computing

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*Other names and brands may be claimed as the property of others.

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