

# Life circle of laptops



# The first laptop

- As 8-bit CPU machines became widely accepted, the number of portables increased rapidly. The first "laptop-sized notebook computer" was the [Epson HX-20](#), invented (patented) by [Suwa Seikosha](#)'s Yukio Yokozawa in July 1980, introduced at the [comdex](#) computer show in [Las Vegas](#) by Japanese company [Seiko Epson](#) in 1981, and released in July 1982. It had an [LCD](#) screen, a rechargeable battery, and a calculator-size printer, in a 1.6 kg (3.5 lb) chassis, the size of an [A4 notebook](#). It was described as a "laptop" and "notebook" computer in its patent.

# Histor y

From 1983 onward, several new input techniques were developed and included in laptops, including the [touch pad](#) ([Gavilan SC](#), 1983), the [pointing stick](#) (IBM [ThinkPad 700](#), 1992), and [handwriting recognition](#) (Linus Write-Top, 1987). Some CPUs, such as the 1990 Intel [i386SL](#), were designed to use minimum power to increase battery life of portable computers and were supported by dynamic [power management](#) features such as Intel [SpeedStep](#) and AMD [PowerNow!](#) in some designs.

Displays reached 640x480 ([VGA](#)) resolution by 1988 (Compaq SLT/286), and color screens started becoming a common upgrade in 1991, with increases in resolution and screen size occurring frequently until the introduction of 17" screen laptops in 2003. Hard drives started to be used in portables, encouraged by the introduction of 3.5" drives in the late 1980s, and became common in laptops starting with the introduction of 2.5" and smaller drives around 1990; capacities have typically lagged behind physically larger desktop drives.

Common resolutions of laptop [webcams](#) are 720p (HD), and in lower-end laptops 480p. The earliest known laptops with [1080p](#) (Full HD) webcams like the Samsung 700G7C were released in the early 2010s.

[Optical disc drives](#) became common in full-size laptops around 1997; this initially consisted of CD-ROM drives, which were supplanted by CD-R, DVD, and [Blu-ray](#) drives with writing capability over time. Starting around 2011, the trend shifted against internal optical drives, and as of 2021, they have largely disappeared; they are still readily available as external [peripherals](#).

# Etymology

While the terms *laptop* and *notebook* are used interchangeably today, there is some question as to the original etymology and specificity of either term—the term *laptop* appears to have been coined in the early 1980s to describe a mobile computer which could be used on one's lap, and to distinguish these devices from earlier and much heavier, [portable computers](#) (informally called "luggables"). The term "notebook" appears to have gained currency somewhat later as manufacturers started producing even smaller portable devices, further reducing their weight and size and incorporating a display roughly the size of [A4](#) paper; these were marketed as *notebooks* to distinguish them from bulkier mainstream or [desktop replacement](#) laptops.

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## EVOLUTION OF THE LAPTOP



**1981**

**OSBORNE 1**

The first portable computer (though large and heavy with a tiny 5in screen) became a hit with business people, who could take a computer with them for the first time



**1982**

**GRID COMPASS**

Designed by the British engineer Bill Moggridge, it was the first portable computer to feature a screen that folded down on to a keyboard



**1989**

**APPLE MACINTOSH PORTABLE**

The first portable computer from Apple. Also the first to send an e-mail from space, when it was taken aboard a Space Shuttle mission



**1996**

**TOSHIBA LIBRETTO 20**

A cute 6in display with Windows 95, it was among the first of many Windows-powered laptops



**2004**

**SONY VAIO X505**

The first in a line of desirable (but expensive) thin laptops



**2007**

**ASUS EEE PC 701**

One of the first "netbooks": small laptops with basic specifications, but cheaper than £250



**2010**

**APPLE IPAD**

A laptop-killer, Apple's tablet has changed what we expect of computing devices, bringing apps and touch screens into the mix

