

When I was a Lad

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To the tune of *When I was a Boy* by Frank Hayes

Stone knives and bearskins: the real story

<p>When I was a lad our computer Had vacuum tubes and a drum And we wound paper tape for our input Between our forefinger and thumb. Back when smalltalk was sports and the weather And an object was what you could see And we watched Captain Video in black and white Before there was color TV.</p> <p>And we walked seven miles to the school-house – It really was uphill both ways – Through weather in summer and winter, Back in the good old days. Back before fortran 77 When the PC was only a fad <i>Nobody'll ever need more than 640K</i> And we entered our programs on punched cards When I was a lad.</p> <p>When I was a lad all our networks Ran on modems and UUCP When the ARPANET had only sixteen nodes And it didn't support FTP. Now you kids who think your T1 line</p>	<p>Is fast, better watch what you say And consider the speed of a truck full of tapes As it barrels along the highway.</p> <p>And we walked... Back when fortran was not even fortran IV And Unix was only a fad <i>For serious computing you need VMS</i> And we entered our programs on paper tape When I was a lad.</p> <p>When I was a lad our IS shop Used mechanical sorters and such And we numbered our decks with a drum-card To protect them, though not very much Back when space travel was science fiction And a mainframe weighed fifty-five tons And we programmed in ones and in zeros *with a hand-punch!*</p> <p>And filled up the chad-box with ones.</p> <p>And we walked... Back when fortran was not even fortran II And the mainframe—Ha! Only a fad <i>we'll only ever sell six of 'em</i> And we entered our programs on plug-boards When I was a lad.</p>
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OK, the chronology is screwed up, it was only three miles, and I never actually programmed a plugboard (but our IS shop did). Everything else is true. Note that “vacuum” in the second line has three syllables.

“Only six computers will ever be sold in the commercial market” has been attributed to Howard Aiken of IBM. (reference²)

Also note that I'm about 10 years older than Frank Hayes, so I don't *have* to exaggerate.

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²<<http://www.wired.com/news/technology/0,1282,44489,00.html>>
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