

Lyrics ©2001 Stephen Savitzky. Some Rights Reserved<sup>1</sup>.  
To the tune of *When I was a Boy* by Frank Hayes

### Stone knives and bearskins: the real story

<p> <sup>A</sup> When I was a lad our computer  <sup>D</sup> Had vacuum tubes and a drum  <sup>D</sup> And we wound paper tape for our input  <sup>E7</sup> Between our forefinger and thumb.  <sup>D</sup> Back when smalltalk was sports and the  <sup>A</sup> weather  <sup>D</sup> And an object was what you could see  <sup>A</sup> And we watched Captain Video in black and  white  <sup>E7</sup> Before there was color TV.    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.    When I was a lad all our networks  Ran on modems and UUCP  When the ARPANET had only sixteen nodes </p>	<p> And it didn't support FTP.  Now you kids who think your T1 line  Is fast, better watch what you say  And consider the speed of a truck full of tapes  As it barrels along the highway.    And we walked...  Back when fortran was not even fortran IV  And Unix was only a fad <i>For serious com-  puting you need VMS</i>  And we entered our programs on paper  tape  When I was a lad.    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!*\br/&gt; And filled up the chad-box with ones.    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. (reference<sup>2</sup>)

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

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