

INVENTION & INNOVATION

The History of Everyday Things

DEFINING TERMS:

*The definition of an **invention** is something such as a device or process that has been created or made up, or the process of creating or making up something or figuring out a way to do something.*

***Innovation** is the creation, development and implementation of a new product, process or service, with the aim of improving efficiency, effectiveness or competitive advantage.*

THE INVENTION OF THE TYPEWRITER

The first successful modern typewriter was invented in the 1860s by Christopher Latham Sholes and Carlos Gidden.

The machine featured a revolving wheel, inked ribbon and the keys for each letter of the alphabet making it very functional and reliable.

In 1873 Mr. Sholes decided to turn over the manufacturing of his machine to the Remington Company, who started mass producing the typewriter and turned it into a best-selling model. By the mid-1880s the Scientific American reported over 40,000 machines had been sold.

As sales continued to flourish, the typewriter had become regularly used around the world by government offices, businesses, banks and others. Around the same time, other manufacturers started to make their own versions of the machine. The invention of the typewriter led to long-lasting changes and significantly impacted the way people communicated.

Today, most people type their communications and documents on a computer or tablet that can be printed or stored electronically and accessed again later.





THE PHONOGRAPH AND VICTROLA

It's almost hard to reconstruct how different music was before the phonograph. Back in the mid-1800s, if you wanted to hear a song, you had only one option: live. You listened while someone played it, or else you played it yourself.

That changed in 1877 when Thomas Edison unveiled his phonograph. It wasn't the first such device to record and play back audio, but it was the first generally reliable one: scratchy and nearly inaudible by modern standards, but it worked. Edison envisioned a welter of uses, including for business, "to make Dolls speak sing cry" or to record "the last words of dying persons." But in 1878 he made a prediction: "The phonograph will undoubtedly be liberally devoted to music."

Ten years later, in 1887, Emile Berliner, founder of the Victor Talking Machine Company innovated on Edison's invention and created the mass-producible flat phonograph record which allowed for copies to be mass produced.

THE PURPOSE AND HISTORY OF RUG BEATERS

Cleaning carpets nowadays might not be an enjoyable task but with the aid of the vacuum cleaner it is a lot easier than it was 100 years ago.

By the middle of the 19th century carpets became cheaper due to new methods of mass production. This meant that more homes had them, and in greater quantity than before. As vacuum cleaners did not become affordable until the early 20th century, carpets either had to be swept or taken outside and beaten to remove dust and dirt. They would be hung over a washing line or railings and it is easy to imagine how difficult, strenuous and unpleasant this task was, especially with very large rugs.

These beaters are made of cane, though some were made of wire, wood or spring steel. The intricately woven head of the beater creates a strong, flat surface that will release dust without damaging the carpet. One beater and a thick piece of cane in the center of its handle to strengthen it, the other has a core of iron wire.



From the Washboard to the Washing Machine: Innovations that Improve Daily Life

Lets take a look at how far innovation in cleaning clothes has come and how much the process has changed over the years.

From the past...

The first washing machine wasn't really a machine, but a hand-powered washboard that was patented in 1797, by American Inventor, James King. The washboard was used by rubbing clothing up and down the board gradient using a bar of soap to clean clothing. James later discovered and patented the first hand-powered washing machine with a drum in 1851.

In 1858, Inventor Hamilton Smith patented the first rotary washing machine. The early rotary washing machine worked by a hand-cranking rotation of a perforated cylinder inside of a wooden barrel. The rotation of the cylinder forced water through the clothing to launder items.

In 1874, a man by the name of William Blackstone wanted to create a gift for his wife. Little did he know that his creation would be the first in-home washing machine. His innovation was still not electric, but it did remove dirt from clothing.

The rotary washing machine soon evolved over the years into an electric machine. The first electric washing machine patent was filed by Alva J. Fisher in 1908.

The first commercial electric washing machine was named Thor. It was the first drum style washing machine with a galvanized tub. Washing machines started to become more and more popular in homes after World War II.

Today's washers are all electric. People have the choice of either front loading or top loading washers. Washing machines have a few more bells and whistles than those back in the early 1900's—but it all started with a wooden washboard and a bucket of water and soap.

What will the next innovation in cleaning clothes be? Do you have any ideas on how to improve on the washing machine?

