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Killer-App

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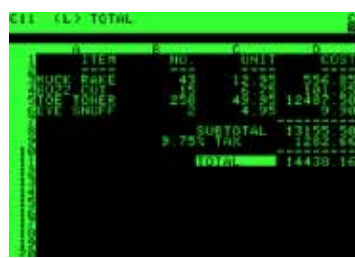
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Killer-App

Für manch neue Hardware muss erst eine Killer-App, eine für die breite Masse interessante Anwendung, gefunden werden, bevor sie sich durchsetzt. Im Fall des Personal Computers war es die Tabellenkalkulation.

The first personal computers were *embraced* by hobbyists but not the masses. To reach a broader *audience*, PCs had to do something; something people would be willing to spend thousands of dollars for. What the industry needed was its first killer-app.

That app was introduced to the world in 1979 at the National Computer Conference by Bob Frankston. Frankston was an MIT graduate who'd *hooked up* with Harvard MBA Dan Bricklin. Bricklin had developed a program to help *solve* a homework problem. He thought it had potential, and got in touch with Frankston to help him *refine* it.

The *reception* to Frankston's presentation wasn't as enthusiastic as the two men hoped. As Bricklin later *recalled*, there were "... twenty friends and family and two 'real' attendees." But the duo had built a better *mousetrap*, and the world was about to beat a path to their door. A highly regarded analyst at Morgan Stanley realized the software's potential. "... hardware developments have always *outpaced* software," he observed. "... for the business professional ... there is *precious little* software available that is practical, useful, universal, and reliable." But he believed Bricklin and Franklin's creation, known as VisiCalc, was about to change all that. "VisiCalc," the analyst *concluded*, "could some day become the software tail that *wags* (and sells) the personal computer dog."

VisiCalc was a *spreadsheet* – a class of software that would forever simplify the lives of *bookkeepers*. That alone was breakthrough enough. But what ultimately *grabbed* people's attention was the radically new interface. Instead of typing commands on a command line – the model for virtually all software at the time – users could position the cursor with the *arrow* keys and type at different locations on the screen. *Bear in mind* that the first Macintosh, with its breakthrough mouse and graphical user interface, was still fifteen years away.

VisiCalc quickly *caught on*, selling hundreds of thousands of copies. But a *host* of *competitors* soon entered the market. The big upset came with the introduction of Lotus Development Corporation's 1-2-3. VisiCalc's success had been tied to the Apple II. Steve Wozniac,

co-founder of Apple, once *stated* that two things were responsible for Apple's early success: Apple's floppy disk, and VisiCalc. The VisiCalc tail really did wag Apple's dog.

Unlike VisiCalc, 1-2-3 tied its *fortunes* to the soon to be dominant IBM PC. After a *mere* six years in existence, what was left of VisiCalc was *purchased* by Lotus. Lotus maintained a *stranglehold* on the spreadsheet market for over a decade. But it was slowly *displaced* by a spreadsheet that came bundled with Microsoft's Windows operating system. It's name? Excel. ■

Andy Boyd

	*see list ... declared
	fate
	just
adopted	
	bought
public	*see list
	replaced
	*see list ... met
work out	
improve	
reaction	
	remebered
visitors	
	*see list
overtaken	
	very little
figured	
swings	
	*see list
accountants	
got	
	*see list
Consider	
became popular	
lot ... rivals	

<i>arrow</i>	Pfeil
<i>attendee</i>	Teilnehmer, Besucher
<i>audience</i>	Publikum, Zielgruppe
<i>bear in mind, to (bore, borne)</i>	bedenken, berücksichtigen
<i>bookkeeper</i>	Buchhalter
<i>catch on, to (caught, caught)</i>	sich durchsetzen, Anklang finden
<i>co-founder</i>	Mitbegründer
<i>competitor</i>	Konkurrent, Wettbewerber
<i>conclude, to</i>	folgern, schließen
<i>displace, to</i>	verdrängen
<i>embrace, to</i>	annehmen
<i>fortune</i>	Glück, Schicksal
<i>grab, to</i>	greifen, packen
<i>graduate</i>	Absolvent
<i>hook up with so., to</i>	sich mit jmd. treffen
<i>host</i>	hier: Menge, Masse
<i>mere</i>	nur, bloß
<i>mousetrap</i>	Mäusefalle
<i>outpace, to</i>	überholen, hinter sich lassen
<i>precious little</i>	herzlich wenig
<i>purchase, to</i>	kaufen, erwerben
<i>recall, to</i>	sich erinnern
<i>reception</i>	Aufnahme, Zuspruch
<i>refine, to</i>	verfeinern, weiterentwickeln
<i>solve, to</i>	lösen
<i>spreadsheet</i>	Tabellenkalkulation
<i>state, to</i>	erklären, verlautbaren
<i>stranglehold</i>	Würgegriff
<i>wag, to</i>	wedeln, schwänzeln

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