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

Stone knives and bearskins: the real story

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.

And we walked seven miles to the schoolhouse –
 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 *Nobody'll ever need more than 640K*
 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
 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 seven miles to the schoolhouse –
 It really was uphill both ways –
 Through weather in summer and winter,
 Back in the good old days.
 Back when fortran was not even fortran IV
 And Unix was only a fad *For serious computing you need VMS*
 And we entered our programs on paper tape
 When I was a lad.

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 HyperSpace Express 20010410 from Steve Savitzky's songbook

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!*And filled up the chad-box with ones.

And we walked seven miles to the schoolhouse –
It really was uphill both ways –
Through weather in summer and winter,
Back in the good old days.
Back when fortran was not even fortran II
And the mainframe—Ha! Only a fad *we'll only ever sell six of 'em*
And we entered our programs on plugboards
When I was a lad.

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.

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