

## 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

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 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 *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 say your T1 line

Is fast, better watch what you say

And consider the speed of a truck full of tapes

As it barrels on down the highway.

And we walked...

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.

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...

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. (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>>  
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