The Business of Computing

THE COMPUTING BUSINESS: THE IMAGE
THE COMPUTING BUSINESS: THE REALITY
The Computing Business: The Image

The IT Crowd (TV) (2006–2013)
The Computing Business: The Image (Cont’d)

Office Space (1999)
The Computing Business: The Image (Cont’d)

Silicon Valley (TV) (2014–)
The Computing Business: The Image (Cont’d)

Bill Gates (1955–)

Steve Jobs (1955–2011)
The Computing Business: The Reality

1880–1950
• mechanical hardware companies
• (electro)mechanical calculator
• IBM

1950–1975
• electronic + computer + startup / custom software companies
• mainframe, minicomputer
• IBM, DEC, Intel

1975–2000
• electronic + computer + startup / package software / ISP / Web 1.0 service companies
• PC, workstation
• IBM, Apple, Microsoft, Intel, AOL, Amazon

2000–2017
• electronic + computer + startup / package software / ISP / Web 2.0 service companies
• PC, handheld
• IBM, Apple, Microsoft, Intel, Amazon, Google, Facebook,
The Computing Business: The Reality

- Each corporate era has typical progression:
  1. Advent of new technology
  2. Company proliferation
  3. Company decimation / consolidation

Note that the new technologies in (1) have often been developed by academia and paid for by governments, e.g., GUI / mouse, Internet, Web 1.0, basic AI.

- Corporate computing is, in many cases, male-dominated; came originally from classic Western corporate model and subsequently from hacker culture (brogrammers).

- Despite women being first computer programmers and developing key technologies (e.g., Grace Murray Hopper (compilers, COBOL)), have often been marginalized; this may (finally) be changing.

- Inspired by 2009 non-fiction book by Ben Mezrich; Aaron Sorkin wrote screenplay at same time.
- Commercial and critical success.
- Seen as inaccurate by almost all actual people depicted; however, Sorkin’s stated intent was not to let the truth get in the way of good storytelling.
- Mark Zuckerberg said his wardrobe was accurate.