



BY MAURY WRIGHT, EDITOR IN CHIEF

EDN AT 50

Welcome to the 50th-anniversary issue of *EDN*. Although we've been celebrating with our "Milestones That Mattered" columns and other excerpts from the past all year, this issue includes a special section that's dedicated to our anniversary and, more important, to the last five decades of the most exciting industry ever. Of course, you'll find a bit of speculation about the future, as well. And I'd like to share some of our online celebration plans with you, too.

The 50th-anniversary section of this print edition of *EDN* begins after our regular features section, starting on pg 123. As we planned this section, we first discussed a series of articles on technologies that have been driving forces in the industry and that will continue to drive the industry forward. It quickly became apparent, however, that a more meaningful set of articles might focus on higher level trends in the industry that have been with us for more than five decades in one way or another and that will be with us for some time yet.

Picking trends was also tough, but we settled on four: miniaturization, software-ization, virtualization, and thermal efficiency. It's easy to see that smaller is an enduring trend. The second trend focuses on the fact that an ever-increasing number of functions that engineers once implemented in hardware, now migrate to software. Virtualization started at least as early as IBM mainframes and plays key roles today in applications such as compelling video games. Finally, all electronic functions and measures of performance have a thermal cost. I believe you'll find the stories on these trends both compelling and entertaining.

You'll also find a poster with a time line of "Milestones That Mattered"

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packaged with this print issue. Some of the milestones have appeared in previous issues, and others will be brand new to you. The poster includes brief descriptions of each milestone. Check out the interactive version of the time line at www.edn.com/timeline to get more detail on each, including stories from our archives going back to 1956.

You may note on the poster that the last of the milestones that we've chosen is from 1996. We chose to invoke Leibson's Law. Steve Leibson is a former *EDN* editor in chief, and he declared that it takes anything 10 years to catch on. In fact, you'll find examples of that law, such as Ethernet, on our time line. Had we created a time line in the early 1980s, a decade after work on Ethernet started, we wouldn't likely have chosen Ethernet as a milestone.

Without question, many innovations have debuted in the past decade. But we found that it was simply too soon to bestow milestone status. The interactive time line, however, will live into the future. We'll add milestones from the last 10 years and perhaps ones we missed from the past, and we will happily take you suggestions.

Other goodies await you in the 50th-anniversary section of our Web site, www.edn.com/50th. You will find the entire contents of our 25th-anniversary issue from Oct 14, 1981. I'd encourage you to spend some time with it. The articles are compelling, and the projections were uncannily accurate.

We'll also offer up some audiocasts from industry luminaries discussing the industry's past, present, and future. The audiocasts will also shed additional light on the four cornerstone trends that we've chosen. You'll even find some reflections from previous *EDN* chief editors.

Our work on the 50th celebration has been a year-long process. And we'll have a few more surprises later in the year. I'd like to thank everyone in the *EDN* family for all of the extra effort. I hope you readers enjoy the results as much as we did in producing the entire 50th project. And I encourage each of you to think about and embrace the fact that there is no more exciting industry to which you could dedicate your life's work.[EDN](http://www.edn.com)

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