

Bill Gates' Career

Produced by GAIN Updated 2020

Bill Gates started his career in computers in 1975, when only big institutions could afford to run the kind of computer we might recognise today.

1. He wrote a new version of the **BASIC** programming language, for computer hobbyists. It was for use on a kit computer called the [Altair](#). He set up the Micro-Soft company and started selling this version of BASIC.
2. He went on to develop [MS-DOS](#) for use on the IBM PC. This was where his business studies at Harvard came in useful. He had the vision to see the potential of computer technology for every-day individuals in the office and at home. This led him to negotiate a leasing arrangement with IBM rather than an outright sale of his operating system, which turned out to be hugely profitable.

3. Windows took off in 1990 when [Windows 3.1](#) was released. See [Windows evolution](#) for a brief outline of each version from 1 to 10.

The Triumph of the Nerds

In 1996 Channel 4 broadcast this documentary series about the origins of the Personal Computer. Find it on [Have you seen.](#)

It covers everything outlined above, and more. Here is the [Wikipedia](#) page about the series.

See also [Wikipedia](#) for more on Bill Gates.

The Altair 8800

It cost \$395 initially, if you were prepared to spend many hours soldering all the electronic components onto circuit boards.

[What could it do?](#) [Loading BASIC](#)