

History of Communication

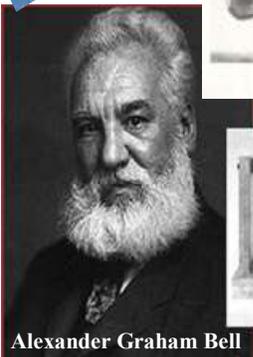


Animals have their own methods of communication. For example Dolphins use sound to communicate with other dolphins and to echolocate when hunting. From the early history of human existence there have been many ways of communicating each other. People from different parts of the world use a variety of languages to express their thoughts. Gradually civilization thrived and ways of communicating other continents became a general need to build up political and economical inter-relationships among them.

We find many curious and interesting methods of communication in the history of the world. Sri Lankan history reveals that messages were sent by birds often. And some messages were named after the bird that carried it. The postal system was one of the early forms of communication. Chou Dynasty created his own postal system in 1000 B.C. The mail would travel on a horse to the next pass. Romans had their own system called the "Cursus Publius", they used foot messengers. Genghis Khan made an early postal system using homing pigeons.

Middle Age in European history is a very important period. After the invention of the printing machine people in Europe gathered knowledge by reading. They started thinking. Hence, many inventions and theories came forward. Among them were telegraph, telephone, television and radio.

British inventors Sir Charles Wheatstone and William F. Cook invented the telegraph in 1837. Samuel Morse invented the telegraph communication system called the Morse code. It had long and short electrical impulses referring as dots and dashes. Each impulse is either a letter or number. The telegraph was an old machine, however it was very important and certainly a faster way for communication than mail.



Alexander Graham Bell



The introduction of the telegraph gave instant communication over long distance and inspired many inventors to find a means of transmitting sound over these same electric wires. Philip Reis, a German teacher of Science converted violin notes by a mechanical method into electrical signals and then passed the signals along wires to a receiving violin where they were converted back into sounds. Around 1860 he first used the word "telephone" to describe his invention, which in those days was dismissed as another amusing scientific toy.

Alexander Graham Bell who was a Science student at Edinburge Universty on his return to his home became a teacher of deaf mutes. He invented many electrical deaf aids to assist his pupils. In 1876 with his assistant Thomas A. Watson, he built a telephone system based on the scientific principles of magnetic induction. However, Italians proclaim that Antonio Meucci, an immigrant from Florence, Italy invented the telephone in 1949 and that he applied for a patent in 1871. Unfortunately he was not able to achieve it as he did not have enough money.

Unlike other communication methods telephones are bi-directional. Hence it became a very useful way of communication. Today almost every household owns a telephone and it is considered a necessity.