Transformations: The Calculator

The calculator's story is about how technology developments have reached lightning speed, altering the continuity of technology that used to bridge many generations. Technology now changes so quickly that today's common gadgets quickly become obsolete. Calculating technology was static for thousands of years, but in the last century it changed quickly, moving from a luxury item to just another example of electronic clutter that fills junk drawers.



Abacus 2000 BC

The abacus was used in ancient Sumeria and Egypt, with similar technology spreading to every populated continent. The abacus remained widely used, even in school settings, through the 1960s.



Slide Rule 1600's

The slide rule, used primarily for multiplication, division and logarithmic functions, was the primary calculation tool of engineers and scientists throughout the 1960s and until the advent of the pocket calculator. The slide rule was used to put a man on the moon.



Monroe Adding Calculator 1914

This mechanical calculator was extremely complicated, with over 4000 parts. It became a mainstay of families and businesses from 1914 through 1960, but its cost of roughly \$1400 made it a luxury item for family use.



Anita MK VIII 1961 and Anita 1000 1971

This first electronic calculator quickly made the mechanical calculators obsolete. Its cost in 1961 of \$1000 made it very competitively priced with mechanical calculators. By 1969, electronic calculators had greatly shrunk in size and cost and the now standard 10-key board was developed.



Casio fx-82D 1989

In the 1970s and 80s, improvement in battery technology, solar capabilites and microprocessors brought on the age of pocket calculator. Calculators became portable devices that even students might have and use. The debate began on whether math calss time shoud be spent on basic caluclations or more broad math thinking skills.



Casio fx 7000G Graphing Calculator 1985

Graphing calculator technology debuted in 1985, but really progressed quickly through the 1990s. Graphing calculators represented the first time a calcultor could do more than one function at a time, and the complex transformations and calcultations needed to create graphs from functions required a large increase in processing capabilities, internal memory, and display technology



iPhone 2007

Calculators seem largely a thing of the past, staying in the junk drawers they were earlier relegated to. Now it was become easier to reach into your back pocket and pull out your cell phone, again making recent technology nearly obsolete