SWENG - Max Levchin

Introduction  
  
Maksymilian Rafailovych "Max" Levchin or Максиміліан Левчин in his native language Ukrainian is a Ukrainian-American Software engineer and co-founder of Field Link, which later became PayPal. This is a short biography of his work and impact.  
  
Beginning to Code  
Max Levchin began coding at a young age and probably not in the way you’d expect. He started on a programable calculator [1]. It was here he learned about functions, variables and began making his own programs. He did not have access to a computer until about the age of 16 so the vast majority of his programming was done on notepads. He would go to the park and write code including his personal versions of Snake and Tetris. He moved to the United States in 1991 and achieved a bachelor’s degree in computer science from University of Illinois in 1997.   
  
Start-ups  
Max Levchin co-founded 3 start-ups prior to his success with PayPal. From ’94 to ’95 he founded SponsorNet New Media, an ad banner network which he made zero from. He has written:

‘2. NetMomentum Software (white-label classifieds for newspaper sites '96))’ [2] .

However, it was with NetMeridian Software in ’97 (He wanted to use the same logo) where he found his first success. The ListBot and PositionAgent programs they developed were bought by LinkExchange for a modest amount. ListBot was an email list hosting service and PositionAgent was a search engine monitoring service [3]. It’s clear he had a business mindset from the beginning of his software career. Developing services that created ways to monetise the internet. It is the beginning of modern-day analytics. These tools were noteworthy for their time. Microsoft event took an interest purchasing LinkExchange in 1998.   
  
PayPal  
It was in 1998 when Levchin and Peter Thiel founded FieldLink. This was a security company that provided a way for users to encrypt data on their PDA device. It was not here they found their success but after they changed their company name to Confinity. They began to switch their focus to the “digital wallet” market. It was in 1999 they released the first version of their payment system ‘PayPal’. This in my opinion was a big leap in innovation. In the 1990’s sending money online was something only banks could reasonably achieve. This payment gateway changed the landscape of the internet. It would allow for the growth of everything from huge online stores such as eBay to individuals who wanted to send money to a family member.