1. Alan Turing - Theory of Machine Intelligence and the Turing Test

Alan Turing was a pioneering mathematician and computer scientist who made significant contributions to the field of artificial intelligence (AI). In 1950, he proposed that computers could achieve intelligence, which was a groundbreaking idea at the time. To explore this concept, Turing introduced the famous Turing Test. This test is designed to determine whether a machine can imitate human thought to such an extent that a person cannot tell if they are interacting with a machine or a human.

Turing's idea seemed like science fiction in the 1950s, but it laid the groundwork for important discussions about machine intelligence. The Turing Test evaluates a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behavior comparable to a human. If a machine can successfully fool a human evaluator into thinking it is human, it is said to have passed the test.

Today, the Turing Test remains a central topic in AI research. It raises important questions about the nature of intelligence and what it means for machines to think. Turing's work continues to inspire scientists and researchers, influencing how we understand and develop artificial intelligence in our modern world. His vision of intelligent machines has become increasingly relevant as technology continues to advance.

2. Tim Berners-Lee – The Eden of the Semantie Web.

The Inventor of the World Wide Web Born on June 8, 1955 in London, England, he is widely recognized as the inventor of the WWW, a revolutionary system that transformed the way people access and share information globally. TBL attended Queen’s College, Oxford, where he studied physics. He made his first PC there using basic ports, such as TTL gates and an old TV. In 1980 TBL worked as an independent contractor at CERN (The EU Org for Nuclear Research) in Geneva, Switzerland. It was there that he developed a prototype system called Enquire, which allowed researchers to share information more efficiently. This laid the foundation for what would later become the Web.  
In 1989 TBL proposed a system to share info using Hypertext. This marked the birth of the WWW.  
In 1990 the first web browser – World Wide Web.  
August 6, 1991 - first website info.cern.ch.

URL (Uniform Resource Locator), HTML, HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)

In 1994 he founded the W3 Consortium – an org that develops open Standards to ensure that the web remains free, accessible and interoperable. In November 2009 TBL launched the WWW foundation. In 2016 he started to work a Solid. In 2004 he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II and named in Time’s “100 First Important people of the 20th Century!”.

In 2016 he received the Turing Award. In summary TBL has fundamentally changed and transformed modern society as we know it.

3. John von Neumann – Self-Replicating Machines.

John von Neumann was a Hungarian-American mathematician and polymath who made foundational contributions across mathematics, physics, computer science and economics. Born in Budapest in 1903, he showed early talent for mathematics and later moved to the U.S., where he joined the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

He was instrumental in formalizing quantum mechanics, developing set theory, and creating game theory alongside economist Oskar Morgenstern, which transformed economic and strategic analysis. In computer science, he developed the “von Neumann architecture” - a groundbreaking design in which a computer's program and data are stored in the same memory, forming the basis of most modern computers.

During WWII, he worked on the Manhattan Project, applying his expertise to the development of nuclear weapons. Von Neumann's work across these fields left a lasting impact, making him one of the most influential scientific figures of the 20th century. He passed away in 1937, but his legacy lives on in the fields he helped shape.

4. Larry Page and Sergey Brin – The Importance of Big Data and Ranking Algorithms.

Larry Page and Sergey Brin are American computer scientists and tech entrepreneurs who co-founded Google, transforming the way people access and use information on the internet. The two met in 1995 at Stanford University. Together they developed a search algorithm, later named “Page Rank”, that prioritized web pages based on relevance and citation-like “link popularity”, allowing users to find the most pertinent information quickly. This innovation became the foundation of Google, which they officially launched in 1998 from a garage in California.

Google rapidly expanded beyond its role as a search engine to encompass a wide array of products and services. They were also interested in ambitious projects involving AI, cloud computing and robotics. In 2015 they restructured Google to form Alphabet Inc., which would allow them to pursue these and other projects like self-driving cars (Waymo) and life sciences research through Calico.

Both Page and Brin gradually stepped back from active management allowing them to focus on broader initiatives. Their contributions have left an incredible mark on technology, shaping modern information access and establishing them as pioneering figures in the digital age.

5. Bill Gates – The Prediction of the Personal Computer Era.

Born on in October 1955. Bill Gates is an American business magnate, software developer is and philanthropist who co-founded Microsoft Corporation, which became the world's leading software company and played a major role in the personal computer revolution. In 1975 he dropped out of Harvard University to join his friend Paul Allen in founding Microsoft, with the vision of putting a PC on every desk in every home.

Under Gates leadership MS developed its first major product, MS-DOS an OS that became the industry standard for IBM PC’s.

In 1985 MS launched Windows a graphical OS that simplified computer use for millions and led to MS's dominant tools for businesses and households alike, securing MS’s position as a tech powerhouse throughout the 90s and 20s. In 2008 he stepped down to focus on philanthropy through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which he co-founded with his then wife. It is one of the world's largest private charitable organizations with initiatives in global health, education, poverty alleviation, and climate change. His efforts have been instrumental in funding efforts to eradicate malaria and polio, improve access to clean water. Gates has had a profound impact on technology, business and the global health, make him one of the most influential figures in modern history.

6. Steve Jobs – Intuitive Interface and the Concept of Devices as "Extensions" of Humans

Born on February 24, 1955, grew up in Silicon Valley, where he developed an early interest in electronics. In 1976 along with Steve Wozniak and Ronald Wayne, He founded Apple Computer from a garage. Their first product, the Apple I was soon followed by the Apple II one of the earliest successful PC, which helped Apple gain a foothold in the emerging computer market.

The PC with a GUI, which made computing more accessible and intuitive. However, shortly after, a power struggle led Jobs to leave Apple in 1985. He went on to found NeXT, a computer platform development company, and acquired Pixar, a small animation studio that later became a leader in computer-animated films. Jobs returned to Apple in 1997 when the company was on the brink of bankruptcy. Under has vision Apple launched the iMac, iPod, iPhone and iPad - products that redefined their respective markets. The iPhone in particular transformed the smartphone industry.

Jobs passed away on October 5 2011, but his visionary approach to innovation and focus on simplicity, beauty and user experience left a lasting impact, establishing him as one of the most influential figures in tech history.

7. Linus Torvalds - The Future of Open-Source Software

Born on December 28, 1989 in Helsinki, Linus Torvalds developed an interest in programming early on. While studying computer science at the University of Helsinki in 1991, he began work on what would become Linux, initially as a personal project. By sharing his code online and inviting contributions, Torvalds launched one of the most successful open-source projects in history.

Linux quickly gained traction among programmers and became the core of countless systems, from PCs and servers to mobile devices, supercomputers and embedded systems.

Beyond Linux, Torvalds also developed Git, which became the standard tool for version control and collaboration widely used by developers and companies to manage projects globally. Torvald’s work has democratized software development, fostering innovation through open-source principles and making him a central figure in modern computing and open-source culture.

9. Bruce Schneier - Predictions about Mass Surveillance and Privacy Risks

Born on January 15, 1963, Bruce Schneier became interested in computer security early on, and he pursued a career dedicated to making complex security principles accessible and relevant to both experts and the general public. He has degrees in physics, Cand a Master's in computer science from American University in 1994, Schneier published “Applied Cryptography”, a groundbreaking book that introduced cryptographic technologies to a broad audience. His clear explanations and focus on real-world applications made cryptography more accessible and practical for many. Schneier also created several cryptographic algorithms – “Blowfish” and “Twofish”, which are widely used in encryption and have been pivotal in advancing data protection.

Through his writing, public speaking and advocacy he has played a crucial role in shaping modern cybersecurity discourse, earning Bruce Schneier a reputation as a leading voice on how society should address the complex challenges of security in the digital age.

12. James Gosling - Java as "Write Once, Run Anywhere"

Born on May 19, 1955 in Calgary, Alberta, James Gosling showed an early aptitude and went on to earn a Ph.D. in computer science from Carnegie Mellon University. In the early 1990s, while working at Sun Microsystems, Gosling led the team that developed Java, initially designed to enable interactive functionality for smart appliances. Java's key innovation was “write once, run anywhere” capability, which allowed developers to create applications that could run on any device with a Java Virtual Machine (JVM), regardless of hardware or OS. Gosling's work set new standards for object-oriented and platform-independent programming. He designed much of Java's syntax and core principles, emphasizing simplicity, reliability and security. Through Java and his ongoing work, Gosling has had a lasting impact on software development, influencing generations of programmers and solidifying his place as a key figure in modern computing.

13. Richard Stallman - Free Software as a Fundamental Right.

Richard Stallman is a key figure in the movement for free software, which promotes the idea that software should be available for everyone to use, modify, and share. He argued that access to software and the ability to change it is a fundamental human right. In the early 1980s, Stallman founded the Free Software Foundation to support this cause.

At that time, many people viewed Stallman's ideas as radical and unconventional. He believed that proprietary software limited users' freedom and creativity. Stallman introduced the concept of "copyleft," which allows developers to protect their work while ensuring that others can freely use and modify it. His philosophy emphasized that collaboration and sharing benefit everyone.

Today, Stallman's ideas have had a significant impact on the tech world. They form the foundation for many successful projects, including Linux, an open-source operating system that is widely used in servers and personal computers. The free software movement has grown, fostering innovation and community collaboration. Stallman's advocacy for free software has changed how people think about technology, highlighting the importance of software freedom as a right for all users.

14. Edsger Dijkstra – Programming as a Precise Science.

Born on May 11, 1930, in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Dijkstra initially studied physics at Leiden University before pivoting to computing. In 1956 he developed the shortest path algorithm, famously known as Dijkstra's Algorithm, which efficiently finds the shortest route between nodes in a graph - a solution widely applied in fields like networking, routing, and navigation systems. Dijkstra was a strong advocate of structured programming, emphasizing clarity and correctness in code. His 1968 paper “Go To Statement Considered Harmful" helped shift programming away from “goto" statements, encouraging a more organized approach to modern programming languages.

Edsger Dijkstra passed away in 2002, but his contributions remain central to computer science especially in algorithms, software design and system reliability.

15. Mark Zuckerberg - Social Networks as a New Form of Communication

Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder of Facebook, has played a crucial role in the evolution of social networks as a transformative form of communication. He predicted that these platforms would dramatically change how people connect and interact, enabling a global exchange of ideas, news, and information. This vision has come to fruition as social networks have become essential to modern communication.

Launched in 2004, Facebook embodies Zuckerberg’s idea by providing a space for users to share personal experiences, engage with diverse audiences, and discover trends in real time. It has evolved from a simple college social network to a comprehensive communication tool for billions worldwide. This shift has altered how people maintain relationships and consume news, often making social media a primary source of information for many.

Moreover, social networks have created new ways to interact, from direct messaging to community-building through groups and events. While they present challenges like misinformation and privacy issues, Zuckerberg's belief in social networks as vital communication platforms has reshaped human connectivity in the digital age, underscoring their significant impact on society and culture. Today, social networks remain central to how we communicate.

16. Guido van Rossum - Simplicity as the Core Value of Programming.

Born on January 31, 1956, in Netherlands, Van Rossum studied mathematics and CS at the University of Amsterdam. In the late 1980s, while working at the Centrum Wiskunde & Informatica (CWI) in Amsterdam, he began developing Python as a hobby project, intending to create a language that was both powerful and approachable for beginners and experts alike. Its syntax emphasizes readability and minimizes complexity. This helped it gain widespread adoption across fields and industries. Van Rossum served as Python's “Benevolent Dictator for Life” (BDFL). Major advancements, such as the transitions to Python 3 in 2008, showcased his commitment to continually improving the language. Through Python’s success and Rossum’s emphasis on an inclusive, open-source community, he left a great impact on software development and how millions of people learn and apply programming worldwide.

17. Robert Metcalfe - Ethernet as a Universal Networking Standard.

Robert Metcalfe is known as the inventor of Ethernet, a technology that allows computers to communicate over a network. In the early 1970s, he predicted that Ethernet would become the dominant standard for data transmission, both in homes and businesses. His vision came true, as Ethernet has become the most widely used networking technology around the world.

Ethernet works by sending data packets between devices connected to the same local network. This allows multiple computers and other devices to share information quickly and efficiently. Metcalfe's invention revolutionized how people connect and interact with technology. Initially designed for small networks, Ethernet has evolved to support faster speeds and larger systems, making it suitable for various applications, from personal use to large corporations.

Today, you can find Ethernet connections in almost every office and home, highlighting its importance in modern communication. Metcalfe’s work laid the groundwork for the development of the internet and shaped the landscape of computer networking. His prediction about Ethernet’s global success has proven accurate, making it an essential part of our daily lives and the foundation for countless technological advancements.

18. Steve Wozniak - Affordable and Simple Computers for Everyone.

Steve Wozniak is an influential figure in the world of technology. He co-founded Apple Inc. and is best known for creating the Apple I and Apple II computers. Wozniak had a strong vision: he wanted to make computers affordable and simple enough for everyone to use, not just large businesses or wealthy individuals.

His philosophy of "computers for people" shaped the future of personal computing. Wozniak believed that technology should be accessible to everyone, and he wanted to empower individuals through computers. In the 1970s, when computers were mostly used by corporations, Wozniak designed user-friendly machines that allowed everyday people to experience the benefits of technology.

The Apple II, launched in 1977, was a significant success and is often credited with paving the way for the mass-market personal computer (PC). It featured a keyboard, color graphics, and the ability to run various software programs, making it versatile for personal use.

Wozniak’s vision has had a lasting impact on the tech industry. Today, computers are a part of everyday life, and his dream of making technology accessible to all continues to inspire innovation in personal computing.

19. John McCarthy - Computers as Intelligent Assistants.

John McCarthy was an influential computer scientist who made significant contributions to the field of artificial intelligence (AI). In the 1950s, he predicted that computers would evolve into intelligent assistants, capable of performing complex tasks for humans. McCarthy believed that with the right programming, machines could think and learn, helping people solve problems more efficiently.

To support his vision, he developed the programming language Lisp, which allowed computers to process symbolic information and perform complex calculations. This language became essential in AI research and development. McCarthy also organized the Dartmouth Conference in 1956, which is considered the birthplace of AI as a field of study. During this conference, he and other experts discussed ways to create machines that could simulate human intelligence.

Today, McCarthy’s ideas have become reality. Computers and AI systems can now perform various tasks, such as recognizing speech, translating languages, and even making decisions. His pioneering work laid the foundation for modern AI, allowing machines to assist us in many aspects of life. McCarthy's vision of intelligent computers has transformed how we interact with technology and has opened new possibilities for the future.

20. Elon Musk (as an additional figure) - The Concept of Neural Interfaces and Human-Al Integration.

Elon Musk is a well-known entrepreneur and inventor who has been actively promoting the idea of integrating humans and computers through neural interfaces. He believes that this technology could change the way we interact with machines and significantly enhance human abilities. Neural interfaces are systems that connect the human brain directly to computers, allowing for seamless communication between the two.

Musk founded a company called Neuralink, which focuses on developing these neural interface technologies. He envisions a future where people can communicate with computers instantly, using thoughts instead of spoken words or typed commands. This could revolutionize many fields, including medicine, education, and entertainment. For example, people with disabilities could gain new abilities, and learning new skills could become much faster.

Musk's vision also includes the idea of expanding human intelligence. By merging our brains with technology, we could enhance our cognitive functions and better understand complex problems. While the technology is still in its early stages, Musk believes that neural interfaces could lead to a more connected and advanced future, where humans and machines work together in ways we cannot yet imagine.