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War of The Currents

Why AC Won Over DC

Also referred to as the 'battle of the currents,' the AC vs. DC forms of current have long been in direct competition as far back as the 1870s, making this particular war over 150 years old. So when it comes to the actual uses of AC and DC, what made AC come out on top – and why? Read on to find out:

The Origins Of The War Of The Currents

Originally, AC and DC currents – alternating current (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kfwlbepods>) and direct current respectively – started their lives as two distinct lighting systems. The AC system was widely used for the first form of the electric street light, while DC was often used within the home as general day-to-day lighting, developed by Thomas Edison himself. While both systems had their quirks, it was the competition of two distinct electric systems – and companies – that ultimately led to the battle.

While originally, AC and DC had differing roles to play, it wasn't long before those competing companies – owned by Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse – were trying to get a larger slice of the pie. This competition – and the rumors and conspiracy that resulted from the media frenzy – are what ultimately led to the war of the currents, and led to the downfall of DC, with AC coming out on top.

Media Attention And Fatalities

At the center of the war of the currents was the concept that AC was more dangerous than DC, which was proven through multiple deaths resulting from hazardous systems in 1888 created by the Edison Electric Light Company. Equally, Edison claimed in 1886 that DC systems were dangerous and would lead to deaths. Despite these rumors – and plenty of media attention – by the 1890s, much of the fierce competition and scandal had died down, following additional safety features put in place for AC technology.

Why AC?

While, arguably, DC won the battle in terms of reputation, it was AC that became that standard for electric currents and power across the US. Thanks to a series of mergers, it soon became a non-issue. But beyond the war, there's plenty of other reasons why AC comes out on top. With greater efficiency through high voltage power lines and the ability to easily use transformers, AC quickly became a superior product.

Does DC Still Exist?

Up until 2007, DC systems were still used in the US – namely, in part of New York City. Across the '70s and '80s, many defunct DC systems were used across Europe, including in London, UK, and in Stockholm, Sweden. Today, AC is used for almost 100% of electricity systems across the planet, making it the one, true and sole winner of the battle of the currents.

As an electrical contractor, the history of AC vs. DC is just as fascinating to us as it is to you. If you're looking for professional electrical engineering services, get in touch with us today (<https://peaksubstation.com/contact/>) at IF YOU HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS, GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR TEAM (<https://peaksubstation.com/contact/>) TODAY AT 877-324-0909 (tel:877-324-0909) to find out more – and if you have any exciting snippets of electrical history, even better.

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