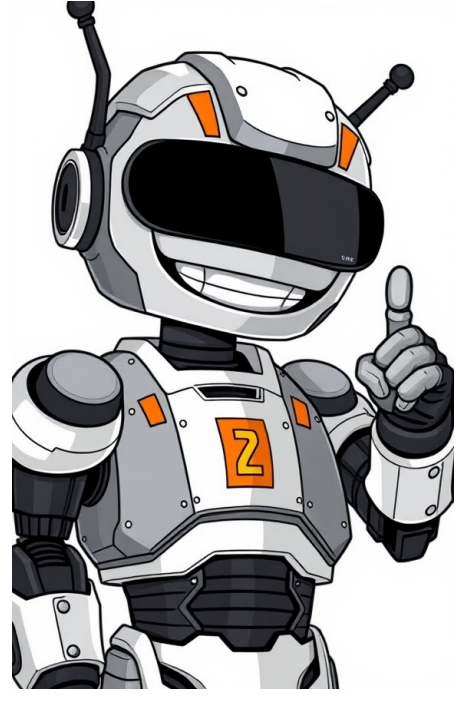


I'm not a robot





A Pixar computer at the Computer History Museum in Mountain View with the 1986-95 logo on it Pixar got its start in 1974, when New York Institute of Technology's (NYIT) founder, Alexander Schure, who was also the owner of a traditional animation studio, established the Computer Graphics Lab (CGL) and recruited computer scientists who shared his ambitions about creating the world's first computer-animated film.[citation needed] Edwin Catmull and Malcolm Blanchard were the first to be hired and were soon joined by Alvy Ray Smith and David DiFrancesco some months later, who were the four original members of the Computer Graphics Lab, located in a converted two-story garage acquired from the former Vanderbilt-Whitney estate.[11][12] Schure invested significant funds into the computer graphics lab, approximately \$15 million, providing the resources the group needed but contributing to NYIT's financial difficulties.[13] Eventually, the group realized they needed to work in a real film studio to reach their goal. Francis Ford Coppola then invited Smith to his house for a three-day media conference, where Coppola and George Lucas shared their visions for the future of digital moviemaking.[14] When Lucas approached the group and offered them jobs at his studio, six employees moved to Lucasfilm. During the following months, they gradually resigned from CGL, found temporary jobs for about a year to avoid making Schure suspicious, and joined the Graphics Group at Lucasfilm.[15][16] The Graphics Group, which was one-third of the Computer Division of Lucasfilm, opened in 1979 with the hiring of Catmull from NYIT,[17] where he was in charge of the Computer Graphics Lab. He was then reunited with Smith, who also made the journey from NYIT to Lucasfilm, and was made the director of the Graphics Group. At NYIT, the researchers pioneered many of the CG foundation techniques — in particular, the invention of the alpha channel by Catmull and Smith.[18] Over the next several years, the CGL would produce a few frames of an experimental film called *The Works*. After moving to Lucasfilm, the team worked on creating the precursor to RenderMan, called REYES (for "renders everything you ever saw"), and developed several critical technologies for CG, including particle effects and various animation tools.[19] John Lasseter was hired to the Lucasfilm team for a week in late 1983 with the title "interface designer", he animated the short film *The Adventures of André & Wally B.*[20] In the next few years, a designer suggested naming a new digital compositing computer the "Picture Maker". Smith suggested that the laser-based device have a catchier name, and came up with "Pixar", which after a meeting was changed to "Pixar".[21] According to Michael Rubin, the author of *Droidmaker*: George Lucas and the Digital Revolution, Smith and three other employees came up with the name during a restaurant visit in 1981, but when interviewing them he got four different versions about the origin of the name.[22] In 1982, the Pixar team began working on special-effects film sequences with Industrial Light & Magic. After years of research, and key milestones such as the Genesis Effect in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* and the Stained Glass Knight in *Young Sherlock Holmes*.[17] the group, which then numbered 40 individuals, was spun out as a corporation in February 1986 by Catmull and Smith. Among the 38 remaining employees were Malcolm Blanchard, David DiFrancesco, Ralph Guggenheim, and Bill Reeves, who had been part of the team since the days of NYIT. Tom Duff, also an NYIT member, would later join Pixar after its formation.[2] With Lucas's 1983 divorce, which coincided with the sudden dropoff in revenues from Star Wars licenses following the release of *Return of the Jedi*, they knew he would most likely sell the whole Graphics Group. Worried that the employees would be lost to them if that happened, which would prevent the creation of the first computer-animated movie, they concluded that the best way to keep the team together was to turn the group into an independent company. But Moore's Law also suggested that sufficient computing power for the first film was still some years away, and they needed to focus on a proper product until then. Eventually, they decided they should be a hardware company in the meantime, with their Pixar Image Computer as the core product, a system primarily sold to governmental, scientific, and medical markets.[23][24][25] They also used SGI computers.[24] In 1983, Nolan Bushnell founded a new computer-guided animation studio called Kadabrascope as a subsidiary of Chuck E. Cheese's Pizza Time Theatres company (PTT), which was founded in 1977. Only one major product was made out of the new studio, an animated Christmas special for NBC starring Chuck E. Cheese and other PTT mascots, known as "Chuck E. Cheese: The Christmas That Almost Wasn't". The animation movement would be made using tweening instead of traditional cel animation. After the video game crash of 1983, Bushnell started selling some subsidiaries of PTT to keep the business afloat. Sente Technologies (another division, was founded to have games distributed in PTT stores) was sold to Bally Games and Kadabrascope was sold to Lucasfilm. The Kadabrascope assets were combined with the Computer Division of Lucasfilm.[25] Coincidentally, one of Steve Jobs's first jobs was under Bushnell in 1973 as a technician at his other company Atari, which Bushnell sold to Warner Communications in 1976 to focus on PTT.[26] PTT would later go bankrupt in 1984 and be acquired by ShowBiz Pizza Place.[27] A Luxo Jr. figure display in Hong Kong In 1986, the newly independent Pixar was headed by President Edwin Catmull and Executive Vice President Alvy Ray Smith. Lucas's search for investors led to an offer from Steve Jobs, which Lucas initially found too low. He eventually accepted after determining it impossible to find other investors. At that point, Smith and Catmull had been declined by 35 venture capitalists and ten large corporations,[28] including a deal with General Motors which fell through three days before signing the contracts.[29] Jobs, who had been edged out of Apple in 1985,[2] was now founder and CEO of the new computer company NEXT. On February 3, 1986, he paid \$5 million of his own money to George Lucas for technology rights and invested \$5 million cash as capital into the company, joining the board of directors as chairman.[2] In 1985 while still at Lucasfilm, they had made a deal with the Japanese publisher Shogakukan to make a computer-animated movie called *Monkey King*, based on the Monkey King. The project continued sometime after they became a separate company in 1986, but it became clear that the technology was not sufficiently advanced. The computers were not powerful enough, and the budget would be too high. As a result, they focused on the computer hardware business for years until a computer-animated feature became feasible according to Moore's law.[3][13][32] At the time, Walt Disney Studios made the decision to develop more efficient ways of producing animation. They reached out to Graphics Group at Lucasfilm and to Digital Productions. Because of the Graphics Group's deeper understanding of animation, and Smith's experience with paint programs at NYIT, it convinced Disney they were the right choice. 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