

Steve Wozniak on Apple, the Computer Revolution, and Working With Steve Jobs By

[Brandon Lisy](#) December 04, 2014

1976 *The Apple I computer goes on sale for a retail price of \$666.66.*

Steve Wozniak, who co-founded Apple ([AAPL](#)) with [Steve Jobs](#) and designed the company's first product, the Apple I, remembers the early days.

You said you saw a revolution coming. Do you think Steve Jobs did?

He had always spoken about wanting to be a person that moves the world forward, but he couldn't really create things and design them like I could. Steve wanted a company real badly. His thinking was not necessarily about what computers would do for the average Joe in the average home. Steve found the words that explained what these computers would do for people and how important it was a little later in life.

You mentioned you didn't like conflict. Did Steve like conflict?

Steve was going to make sure that his position was strong and forceful and heard by others. Thankfully he had the best brain. He usually had a little, tiny suggestion, but almost always he was right.

How many computers did you sell?

We only sold about a hundred Apple I's. Of the Apple II's, we probably sold a few thousand through the first year. And then [we designed] a spreadsheet program that let small businessmen do more work in one hour than they could do in 10 years with pencil and paper. Sales shot up. It was maybe five years before we sold a million—the first computer ever to sell a million.

Did you think Apple would become a behemoth?

When we started the company, I knew that the computer was so far ahead of anything the rest of the world had ever seen. We knew we had a revolution. Everyone who joined Apple, this was the greatest thing in their life.

Talk a little bit about the summer you built the Apple I.

I was totally aware that a revolution was close to starting, that pretty soon we were going to have computers that were affordable. Every computer before the Apple I looked like—you have to imagine the most awful, not understandable computer you've ever seen in a museum or in a new movie. That's what they all looked like. They had these big front panels of metal switches and lights and stuff, and nobody could understand them except a computer expert. The Apple I was the first one to have a keyboard and a video display. A television. You would type on the keyboard and see your words on the television, or the computer could type its own words on the television and play games with you and ask questions and give answers. That was a turning point in history.

And where were you doing all this work?

The work was being done—soldering things together, putting the chips together, designing them, drawing them on drafting tables—at my cubicle at Hewlett-Packard ([HPQ](#)) in Cupertino [Calif.]. That was an incredible time. It let me do a lot of side projects, and it was five years to the summer of '75, when I built the Apple computer, the first one. The next summer I built the Apple II computer.

We always hear about the garage. Is that a big part of the story?

The garage is a bit of a myth. We did no designs there, no breadboarding, no prototyping, no planning of products. We did no manufacturing there. The garage didn't serve much purpose, except it was something for us to feel was our home. We had no money. You have to work out of your home when you have no money.

Lisy is a *Bloomberg Businessweek* contributor.
