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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Documentation of the transistor's invention

From: James Easton <pulsar@compuserve.com>
Date: Thu, 11 Sep 1997 21:21:31 -0400
Fwd Date: Fri, 12 Sep 1997 00:30:29 -0400
Subject: Re: Documentation of the transistor's invention

Regarding...

>From: "WHITE" <mjawwhite@digitaldune.net> [John White]
>Subject: Re: Documentation of the transistor's invention
>Date: Mon, 8 Sep 1997 06:58:23 -0700

John wrote:

>There is an "in-house" piece written by W. Shockley: "The Theory of
>P-N Junctions in Semiconductors and P-N Junction Transistors" Bell
>System Technical Journal 28:436 (1949), which predates "Electrons and
>Holes" by about two years.

John,

Do you possibly have a copy of this? It's a "must-see" for sure.

>Negative evidence usually isn't worth much, unless it rules out, in
>toto, existence of positive evidence. This thread, for any number
>of reasons, and not the least of which would be simple historical
>value, bears deeper scrutiny.

Yes, I think it's a worthwhile exercise, even if only from a historical context.

>From: werd@interlog.com [Drew Williamson]
>Date: Tue, 9 Sep 1997 19:58:42 -0400 (EDT)
>Subject: Phil Corso stole my book!

Drew wrote:

>For the record;

>Dec. 16, 1947 Shockley, Bardeen and others announce the first
>recognition of the transistor effect.

Drew,

Do you have a reference for this? It's one of the key facts to be established.

>July 1, 1948 The New York Times announces the discovery in its "News
>of Radio" section.

Some years back whilst studying Computing at College, I wrote an essay on the history of computing - no doubt a dreadful one. Nonetheless,

it began by referring to the press announcement of the transistor's invention, a brief few paragraphs tucked away in the pages of a US daily newspaper.

I can't recall the date of the newspaper announcement, but I believe it was the New York Times. This first public announcement is one of the other key historical facts and I'm looking into it. A number of timelines attribute the invention of the transistor to 1948, possibly based on a later, formal press release from Bell Labs.

>Date: Wed, 10 Sep 1997 08:37:18 -0400
>From: BOB SHELL <76750.2717@compuserve.com>
>Subject: Re: Documentation of the transistor's invention

Bob wrote:

>I have no expertise about transistors.

Bob,

I don't think any of us here have, but a little grass roots research should be within our capabilities.

>But during my teens I was a religious reader of the old science >fiction/science fact magazine Analog.

I didn't realise it was available that far back. ;)

>I distinctly remember an article they published some time in the >mid-60s about the transistor, and in this article they pointed out >that the transistor had actually been discovered (which is more >accurate than invented) many years before the official invention by >Bell Labs, but at the time of this discovery no one could conceive >of any use for it so it was written up in some journal and then >forgotten.

It's unlikely this wouldn't be part of the historical record; there doesn't seem to be any references to it.

However, I wonder if it's a reference to a "transistor effect", or similar.

Your mission, should you accept it, is to find a copy of the actual issue.

>I wonder if anyone else on this list used to read Analog back then, >and if they recall the article, or even better if someone might still >have a copy of it.

Maybe worth an enquiry to the sci-fi newsgroups?

>Date: Wed, 10 Sep 1997 07:04:57 -0400
>From: Steven Kaeser <steve@konsulting.com>
>Subject: Re: Documentation of the transistor's invention

Steve wrote:

>>The original paper on the development of the transistor is >>apparently:

>>J. Bardeen and W.H. Brattain, "Physical Principles Involved in >>Transistor Action", Phys. Rev. 75, 1208-1225 (1949).

>I work three blocks from the Library of Congress.

>The article looks like it's only 17 pages long, and I'll see if I can >track it down and copy the relevent section. If someone else locates >it, please let me know.

Steve,

If it wasn't too much trouble to obtain a copy, it could be a more direct route.

Unless we want to effect a breakdown on the UpDates mail server, and probably Errol, that's too many pages to scan and post here.

If you can easily access to a photocopy of the original paper and mail me a copy, I would be happy to scan the entire document and upload it to my web site. You can perhaps let me know if that's feasible.

James.
E-mail: pulsar@compuserve.com

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