10 Things You Didn’t Realize Were Invented in the 1970s

While sitting on a Miami beach in 1949, a spurt of inspiration hit inventor Norman Joseph Woodland. He drew in the sand an outline of what would today become one of the most effective retail inventions of all time – the UPC, otherwise known as the barcode. Inspired by Morse Code, which he learned in the Boy Scouts, Woodland patented his idea in 1952.

After numerous designs, awareness of Woodland’s idea grew and eventually the retail and tech industries got involved in trying to create a successful UPC. However, it wasn’t until decades later that Woodland’s idea finally came to fruition. On the night of June 25, 1974, a team from the National Cash Register installed new scanners and computers at the Marsh Supermarket in the small town of Troy, Ohio. Finally, at 8 a.m. on June 26, 1974, the first item with a UPC was scanned – a pack of Wrigley’s Juicy Fruit chewing gum, which is now preserved at the Smithsonian Museum.

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