
Subject: DOS 2 history (ping: Wayne)
Posted by [grindstone](#) on Wed, 02 Sep 2026 15:14:33 GMT
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Always think of you when I read this stuff. Memories of the stacks of Byte magazines and so on that were around my house...different times. Sometimes, the world is so different now that I question my own memories of what actually was, you know? I mean -- it doesn't _seem_ like it was that long ago but...

<https://nemanjatrifunovic.substack.com/p/the-road-to-ms-dos-2>

Subject: Re: DOS 2 history (ping: Wayne)
Posted by [gofar99](#) on Thu, 03 Sep 2026 01:41:23 GMT
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Cool stuff, I remember the early stuff. I had an XT with the "piggy back" ram chips and the 10 meg drive, a phone modem. Hot stuff back then.

Subject: Re: DOS 2 history (ping: Wayne)
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 03 Sep 2026 15:24:27 GMT
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Thanks for the link!

For me, that stuff is still very fresh on my mind. I still have some of those old 1970s Byte magazines - containing articles I thought were historic - and I still run my old 1970s computers regularly. I've even written BIOS to support large IDE and flash drives for my Altair 8800 computers. So it's all very near and dear to my heart. Still.

The improvement of providing subdirectory support after MS-DOS 1.0 (which also didn't exist in CP/M) was pretty significant. It sucks to have a "lot" of disk space but now way to create subdirectories. Over a megabyte of storage was a "lot" back then, but again, the point is can you imagine having one big flat filesystem? That's how it was prior to MS-DOS 2.0.

The multi-user/multi-thread issue remained for several years after that though. It was a security and performance problem for both PC and Mac users well into the 1990s.

Subject: Re: DOS 2 history (ping: Wayne)
Posted by [grindstone](#) on Thu, 03 Sep 2026 17:19:33 GMT

Wow Bruce you were in the rarefied air with that setup -- I bow to your superiority.

And I know that time softens the rearview mirror perspective, but...there was something cool about it all being so new and everyone making their way and...the excitement of finding someone else diving-in, too. Simpler times, for sure, and with plenty of pain/work/learning, but somehow "cleaner" than now.

Just wistful, maybe.

Used CP/M only a few times. Stuff is blurry in there (perhaps not entirely free of misspent youth). But I read a lot of manuals for a lot of stuff and for me. Kept AT machines until early 2000's, though :)

It's just...I mean, we ran factory floors from 286's (SCO!) full of serial cards fer gawdsake, but it takes a gig for a browser w/ not too-bad j-script crap to load a page anymore...sigh (and stay off my lawn!).

It's cool to me that it was Paul Allen arguing for progress and reason (and that a piece of IBM, as always, was opposing The Right Thing (tm)) like clockwork.

Cool to hear of your continued curiosity to Tinker, Wayne! Love it (and miss seeing it as much in our contemporaries--hope its only me).

Thanks for indulging me.

Subject: Re: DOS 2 history (ping: Wayne)
Posted by [gofar99](#) on Fri, 04 Sep 2026 02:13:22 GMT
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Hi I have one of the 10 meg (CMI I think) drive that actually works and is error free. It make a lot of noise when working as well. I have one of IBMs color monitors (VGA) as well. The PC got lost somehow during one of my many moves. I have sets of DOS 3 and 5 on floppies. I remember the "good ole days". I used to mark up texts that contained errors. It seemed as if everyone wanted to write a book and most really didn't know what they were writing about. Even now I occasionally have to go into the pseudo DOS on modern PCs to do something it can do better than Windows 11.

Subject: Re: DOS 2 history (ping: Wayne)
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 04 Sep 2026 02:45:28 GMT
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You guys are my kinda guys. That's cool stuff! Both of you!

Check this out. It's too retro for the metro.

Back when the Altair 8800 was sold, there was literally no such thing as a full screen editor. No micros had 'em, not even any minicomputers had them. For about \$10,000 (in 1970s dollars) you could buy a dedicated word processor but you literally couldn't edit a file on your million-dollar minicomputer or mainframe. People used line editors instead.

Screen editors weren't made 'til the very late 1970s and weren't popular until microcomputers used memory-mapped displays. So most systems had no screen editor.

When full-screen editors and word-processors hit the scene, they were all the rage. People called that kind of user-interface WYSIWYG (pronounced wizzy-wig) which stood for "what you see is what you get." Remember that, guys?!!

There were many reasons that full screen editors weren't available. For one thing, even the most minimal full-screen editor needs about 32Kb. Lots of code to make it all happen. So that takes up half your memory if you have a fully-loaded 8-bit microcomputer of the day, which maxxed out at 64Kb. And even competent minicomputers usually didn't have much more than that.

But even more importantly - there was no way to update the whole screen rapidly. The interface to the terminal was RS-232 - a serial connection usually running a maximum of 9600 baud. That's about 960 characters a second. The typical terminal had an 80 x 24 display, which is an array of 1920 character spaces. So to fill a screen takes a full two seconds. (!)

That's no bueno. Nobody would ever write a full screen to do updates. Even just a full line update took enough time it's kinda noticeable. So back then, you did clever cursor positioning to make a decent user-experience on programs that filled data in specific positions on a display. Your program would create a page upon startup, and then only update certain sections for the user.

Well, knowing all this, I was really driven to make a full-screen editor for my Altair 8800 for its 50-year birthday. It uses every trick I could throw at it, and it works pretty darn good. Way better than it has a right to, given the technology it used.

Check it out if you feel like going down memory lane:
Altair Editor, a full-screen in-memory text editor for the Altair 8800