

# The Most Powerful “Machine” Ever Invented?

If your child, grandchild, or maybe a young student approached you and asked the above question – how would you respond?

Before deciding on your answer, a good definition of “machine” is any mechanical or electrical device that transmits or modifies energy to perform or assist in the performance of tasks. “Powerful” is defined as having great power, force, potency, or effect.

Several answers come to mind including the car, radio, telephone, television, H-Bomb...

Not having “the” answer, I decided to use one of the most powerful search engines ever invented - “Google.” Much to my surprise “Most Powerful Machine Ever Invented” returned zero, nada, zip results/hits.

Why the surprise? My search checked 8,058,044,651 – yes that’s Billion -- web pages in the blink of an eye and could not find one match. The current population of Earth is about 6.5+ Billion – thus Google searched more documents (web pages) than there are people currently alive on the Earth and could not even point me in the right direction.

Just to be sure I tried Yahoo – same results. Is it possible no one ever asked this question before? I find this hard to believe. Is it possible no one ever bothered to “write” down the question or ponder the answer in such a way that it has not made it on to the World Wide Web? Could be.

I submit to you that the answer is the PC or Personal Computer. One study indicated there was a billion PCs sold worldwide at the end of 2002. The same study suggested a growth rate of 10 percent per year - with more than 130 million PCs being sold each year. Using these numbers, it appears there will be 1.5 billion PCs sold by the end of 2005. Given the current human population on Earth –there is a PC for every 4 people, simply staggering.

What makes the PC the most powerful machine ever invented? The simple answer to this is “We do.” We use our PCs to perform all kinds of tasks from email to watching movies on DVDs. PCs can enable us to telecommute part time – or work from home full time. Some PCs are portable and can go virtually anywhere we wish to travel – even into outer space. Some would argue the Internet and not the PC. However take the PC out of the Internet and what’s left? One could easily argue it is the power of the PC that makes the World Wide Web possible.

The true power of the PC-machine is our Creativity and the time to apply it. Consider the known history of the human race and how few of us throughout the Ages had both the time and tools to use our Creative talents for the benefit of mankind. Statistically, I think one would be hard pressed to show 1% of all the people ever born on Earth could qualify.

Slowly but surely, the PC is helping the human race rapidly close in on 1% and I suspect within a generation (two at the most) this number could easily grow to 5%. The creative talent of less than 1% of all the people that ever lived have certainly given us amazing discoveries. For just a second or two – try to imagine what 5% could do as individuals and/or collectively. Can you say “e-R-e-n-a-s-c-e-n-c-e”?

Can the PC give us the cure for Cancer or Aids? Can the PC cure our energy issues or grow enough food to feed the world? Can the PC bring freedom to peoples living under dictatorial governments? Certainly not. However, the PC is the device that can assist US in unleashing the limitless potential of the human spirit to usher in a new eRenaissance, or even something as simple as a web page – trying to answer a child’s question.