

TOP 7 'INVENTIONS' THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

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Scientists, from the British Science Association, have drawn up a list of the top 5 things that have changed the world.

1. GPS Technology

Originally developed as a navigation system by the United States military, the Global Positioning System uses a network of satellites around the Earth to pinpoint the exact position of a receiver anywhere on the planet. It is now used in cars, aircraft and boats. Geologists use it to track the movements of continental plate tectonics and glaciers while conservation scientists have tagged turtles with GPS receivers to follow their epic migrations.

2. The Bar code

These boring sets of [black and white lines](#) can now be found on almost every single item bought from a shop. At first glance, it seems hard to see how they possibly made any impact on the world, but they have fundamentally changed the way we shop. Norman Woodland first developed an early form of the bar code in 1949 by combining ideas from movie soundtracks and Morse code to help him speed up store checkouts.

3. Social Networking

Around the world, every day, more than three billion minutes are spent by computer users on Facebook. Along with other social networking sites such as MySpace and Twitter, it has completely changed the way we interact and who we interact with. Millions of people now communicate tiny details of their professional and personal lives by poking, twittering and posting. Online social networking has allowed people to rekindle friendships with friends they lost touch with years ago.

4. Text messages

Text messaging has created a new vocabulary and new grammar that is almost incomprehensible to those who do not use it. LOL and FYI have now passed into everyday English. It has also changed the way people use their thumbs – the old QWERTY keyboard layout suddenly became redundant..

5. Electronic Money

In the UK there were 7.4 billion purchases made during 2008 with plastic cards. Combined with internet banking, cards have made the cheque almost redundant. Credit cards gave us greater convenience for spending, greater security and the ability to spend money anywhere in the world. They also brought us internet fraud and record levels of debt that have contributed to the global credit crunch.