

Everything that can be invented has been invented...

...or so thought Charles H. Duell, who was the Commissioner at the U.S. Office of Patents in 1899. Fortunately for us, no one listened to Mr. Duell, otherwise we wouldn't have gone on to create things like vacuum tubes, transistors, and silicon chips; and spaceships, smartphones, and tablet computers.

The strange thing is that people continue to have a tendency to think "this is as good as it gets." Consider a type of "silicon chip" called a Field-Programmable Gate Array (FPGA), for example. When the first FPGAs arrived in the scene in the early 1980s, many engineers said that these components would only ever be useful in the context of implementing slow, simple logic functions. However, today we have devices running at hundreds of megahertz containing the equivalent of 20 million logic gates. Does this mean that we have finally reached the point where we can say "this is as good as it gets"?

In his presentation, Max will consider many aspects of technology, from 2000-year-old steam engines to 200-year-old mechanical control systems to the latest-and-greatest in today's FPGA technologies and some thoughts on what we might expect in the years to come...

Gjesteforelesning - Guest lecture
Simula torsdag
16.februar kl 12:15