Jay Wright Forrester Encyclopedia Article

Jay Wright Forrester

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Contents

Jay Wright Forrester Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Jay Wright Forrester.....3

Jay Wright Forrester

1918-

Electrical engineer who invented computer memory storage. Forrester was born in Nebraska and spent his early years on a cattle ranch. His first engineering project was to create a 12-volt electrical system powered by wind, which provided his ranch with electricity. After graduating from the University of Nebraska, he worked as a research assistant at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's high voltage lab, then went on to its servomechanisms lab. In the mid-1940s Forrester began work on the U.S. Navy sponsored Project Whirlwind, a huge computer developed at MIT as part of the United States's defense against the Soviet Union. While working on this project, Forrester invented the multicoordinate digital information storage device, which became known as magnetic-core memory storage, a precursor to modern random access memory (RAM).