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# This Essex County Teen Invented 'Email' 35 Years Ago

What do Essex County, Livingston and Newark have in common? The birth of "Email," Shiva Ayyadurai and the American Dream.

By Eric Kiefer (Patch Staff) - Updated August 30, 2017 12:40 pm ET

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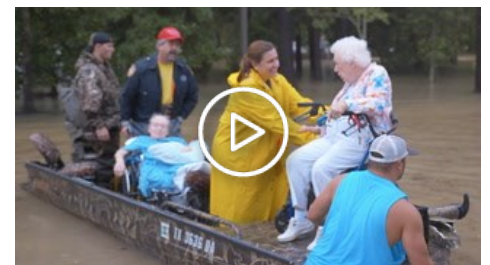


ESSEX COUNTY, NJ — What do Essex County, Livingston and Newark have in common? The birth of "Email," Shiva Ayyadurai and the American Dream.

Wednesday marks the 35th anniversary that Ayyadurai received the first U.S. copyright for "Email - Computer Program for Electronic Mail System," which is based on a system that the rock and roll scientist-turned senatorial candidate invented in 1978 as a 14-year-old working at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in Newark.

While the Livingston High School hall of famer and Fulbright Scholar's [claim that he "invented email"](#) has been challenged [[see Ayyadurai's full take on the debate here](#)], what's indisputable is the pride that the former Essex

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County resident's achievements have brought to his old stomping grounds.

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Here's how the system known as "Email" came to be, according to Neil Devine, executive director at the nonprofit Innovation Corps.

"In 1978, as a 14-year-old boy, Shiva invented email, when he was the first to convert the old-fashioned paper-based mail system consisting of the Inbox, Outbox, Address book, Attachments, Memo (To:, From:, Date:, Subject:, Cc:, Bcc:), Folders, etc. to its electronic equivalent, in a software system consisting of 50,000 lines of software code, which he named 'Email,' a term never used before in the English language. At the time, copyright was the only mechanism for protecting software inventions. Only in 1994 did the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals officially recognize software as a 'digital machine' allowing patents."



- See related article: [Meet One Of 2018's Most Unusual Senate Candidates](#)
- See related article: ['Inventor Of Email' Praises Trump's Withdrawal From Paris Accord \(VIDEO\)](#)
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Send local news tips, photos and press releases to [eric.kiefer@patch.com](mailto:eric.kiefer@patch.com)

Photo: Shiva Ayyadurai



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