

Today is the 29th anniversary of email, as copyrighted by this man



by **COURTNEY BOYD MYERS**   [Tweet](#) — 30 Aug '11, 12:01am in

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On August 30th, 1982, 29 years ago, 16-year old **V. A. Shiva** copyrighted “EMAIL” along with the GUI we still use today with the fields “To: From: Cc: Bcc: Subject: Reply, Reply All, Forward” and Email body and attachment.

“When I first heard the word ‘electronic mail,’ I literally felt it was sending electricity through paper. Those two words juxtaposed together in 1978 were absolutely

electronic messaging systems in place, Shiva is responsible for having transformed what was known as office mail into the very first email system. “That is what I developed, starting in 1978, as a 14-year old, for which in 1981 I was awarded recognition by the Westinghouse Science Awards for innovation, and in 1982 the First US Copyright for EMAIL,” he **writes**.

“The guys before me we’re involved in text messaging. Messages sent from one computer to another computer. Before that Tom Van Vleck was the first to send a message within the same computer to another user in the mainframe. Leonard Kleinrock sent a message across two computers on the asme network. Ray Tomlinson sent a message across multiple users across multiple computers. But my concept of email was patently related to office mail. That’s what I built: a database, a networking infrastructure and software programming language for email,” said Shiva to me over a Skype call.

Here’s the Certificate of Copyright Registration that Shiva submitted:

Nearly 30 years later and **V. A. Shiva** is now teaching a class at MIT called “Systems Visualization,” which is currently oversubscribed. It’s a cross discipline class that enables engineers to connect multiple subsystems. built to educate MIT engineers on how to do that. The class aims to artistically answer, in drawing form, the design of services and concept. How do you build a health care system? Or how do we visualize human health in today’s advertising driven society? How do you innovate? How is innovation affected by cultural mores?

When asked about the future of email, Shiva thinks it’s

email communications. Facebook may do some integrated email but fundamentally it will be email.

He writes:

Ironically, even as Zuckerberg declares as some trade journals said, "EMAIL IS DEAD", he is launching @Facebook as a direct challenge to GMail. He says it will have EMAIL in it, along with other types of "messaging." Facebook produces billions of EMAIL messages everyday."

For this anniversary, V. A. Shiva (himself!) developed the following infographic depicting the History of Email and Growth of Email Accounts. (Click the image to enlarge)

Featured image source: [pio3/Shutterstock](#)



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