

CrossTalk

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter May, 2023

Crazy Inventions

It has often been said that there are no limits to human imagination. For millennia, inventors, scientists and others have been coming up with ideas that have profoundly changed the way we live; take the mobile phone as just one recent example. And yet, for every successful invention that has made it to a production line, there are probably tens, even hundreds, of thousands of patents for every conceivable type of contraption still waiting to get onto the market. Some of these may be worthy of development, perhaps in the future, but it is safe to say that many will never make it that far.

Here are a few examples that hold patent rights but are wistfully sitting in limbo filed away in a patent office somewhere hoping to be "discovered" by a venture capitalist/investor; and it's easy to see why.

Take, for example, the Fork Timer. It was patented in 1995 in the USA. The idea is to help you with your dieting by slowing down your intake of food. After you place some food in your mouth, a red light on the handle comes on. You then have to wait until the light turns green before taking another morsel of food using this fork. You see, according to the inventor, slowing down your intake of food can help you lose weight.



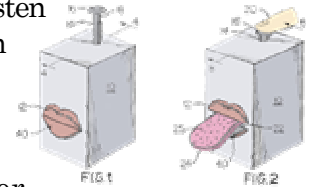
Patent No: 5,421,089
US Patent Issued June 6, 1995

As everyone knows, a dog's life is much shorter than a human's, perhaps seven times shorter. So how are dogs, or their owners, going to keep track of "dog time" with respect to their life expectancy? A Doggy Watch, of course. It works by multiplying the duration of seconds, minutes and hours by a factor of 7, so 24 hours of normal human time equals 168 hours of dog time, 1 week equals 7 weeks, etc. For Fido, time flies, but you always knew dogs had their own sense of time, right?



Patent No: 5,023,850
US Patent Issued June 11, 1991

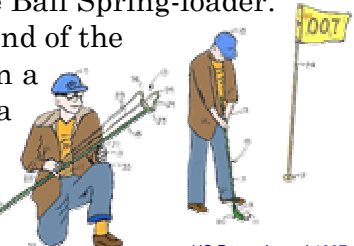
Now, you know how much you hate licking stamps and envelopes to moisten the adhesive agent on them when sealing an envelope or affixing a stamp. This invention frees your tongue from the indignity of ever having to do this again. As you push this contraption's "tongue" out with the plunger, it passes over an internal wet pad, gets moist and, voila, instant wet tongue!



Patent No: 4,300,473
US Patent Issued Nov. 17, 1981

Okay, you don't like going to the golf range to practice your tee shots, but when it comes to a friendly round on the golf course, you can never get the length you want off the tee. Here's the answer: the Ball Spring-loader.

It'll get you from one end of the fairway to the other in a single shot; and as a bonus, it converts to a normal putter once you get onto the green. Now, that's my style of golf....



US Patent Issued 1987

"Inventions" like these seem to be totally ridiculous, but consider some of Leonardo da Vinci's concepts, say his flying machines. From today's perspective, he was a genius, years ahead of his time, but what did people think of his ideas 500 or so years ago when he first came up with them? A flying machine? Was he off his rocker? He never actually built one of his "flying machines" and this may have been seen as proof that he was not a little crazy. Yet, today every one of his concepts for air travel, and more, is in use, so, who's to say that some day, "dog-time" won't be useful....



TOP: Leonardo's flying machine
BOTTOM: His helicopter

Net News

NET LESSONS: Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons on the net!*

Check out these crazy patents: www.newsweek.com/30-most-bizarre-inventions-history-1539218

Some Thoughts for the Month



Joshua Says: Many of you want English skills in order to visit foreign countries where English is spoken. For those who fit into this category, there is an inconvenient problem, the cost. 30 years ago, Japanese people could easily head off for a holiday overseas, but these days, with a weak yen and high inflation in most overseas destinations, the cost is problematic. On the other hand, Japan can expect to receive many foreign tourists here for the same reasons. Is this a new incentive to study?

Junko Says: Your brain is changed in many ways depending on what you do, feel or think. Amazingly, the human brain can respond to stimuli and can “change” over a person’s lifetime, forming new neuronal networks. Improving your cognitive abilities, such as learning to speak in English, is also said to form new neuron networks in the brain. This is another reason to set your modest English study goals for the new term.



Marek Says: Speaking of last-minute inventions, Russia has almost all but run out of long-range missiles and, as we know “necessity is the mother of invention”, so the Russian engineers repurposed old IIWW era bombs and stuck wings and GPS chips on them to make them glide for up to 40km, when dropped from a plane, hitting their targets with deadly accuracy. They’re cheap as chips (pun intended) and almost impossible to shoot down by modern anti-air artillery.

Mandey dit : L'Academie française a dévoilé les nouveaux mots 2023. En voici un petit lorilège: 1) ghoster: comme un fantôme (ghost, on ne répond plus aux messages. 2) la complosphère; les groupes sur le Web qui parle de complots. 3) avoir un crush; il y a quelqu'un qu'on aime beaucoup!! 4) le flexoffice: travailler à la maison, au bureau, à l'hôtel, comme on veut, à l'heure qu'on veut. 5) c'est instagrammable: c est assez joli pour pouvoir prendre une photo et la publier sur les réseaux sociaux. 6) Chiller: se reposer 7) Écoanxiété: sentiment de peur et d'angoisse face au réchauffement climatique Et mon préféré; boboiser: devenir bourgeois bohème. Un bobo désigne une personne aisée et cultivée, affichant son anticonformisme. (comme moi !)



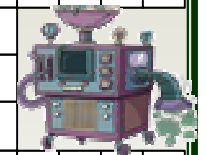
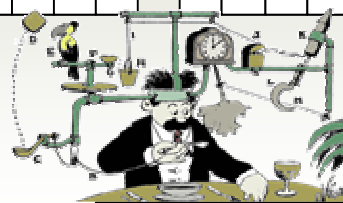
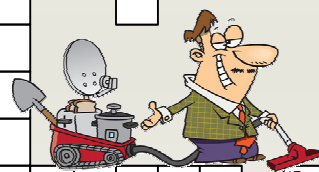
ACROSS

- 1 fastening or attaching
- 5 absurdly humorous
- 7 abstract ideas
- 9 "there you are!"
- 11 process of ingesting food
- 12 proceed despite risk
- 13 a device
- 16 1,000 years
- 17 in a state of disregard or forgotten
- 18 humiliation, shame
- 19 a small quantity of something
- 20 deeply and completely

DOWN

- 2 between the tee and the green on a golf course
- 3 gives an inventor sole rights to an invention
- 4 continuance of time
- 6 exchanges or replaces
- 8 sadly, pensively
- 10 a substance that bonds
- 14 a pushing action tool
- 15 to make wet

Play A Game! Find the answers on P1



(print version [here](#))

Adverbs: Fill in the gaps with the most appropriate adverbs from the list below.

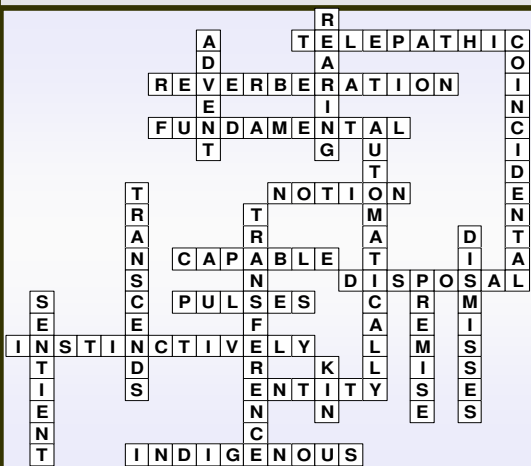
always, constantly, eventually, never, carefully, diligently, surely, usually, slowly, ever, seriously, rarely, reluctantly, suddenly, hesitantly, calmly, politely, endlessly, unfortunately, poorly, finally, cheerfully, anxiously, tentatively

Harry _____ drives _____ and _____ on his way to work. Even so, he _____ arrives late. During the day he works _____ and _____ completes his assigned tasks with time to spare. And he has _____ missed a day's work since joining our company. But last week he called to say that he had been in a traffic accident on his way to work. It was not a serious accident, but he needed to go, _____, to the police station to fill out a report; he would _____ be back at work the next day. It has now been over a week since he called and he still hasn't turned up for work. We have tried _____ to reach him by phone, but he never answers our calls. We became _____ worried about him, so our boss _____ decided to send someone to his apartment to find out if he _____ intended to return to work, or not. I was, _____, chosen for the job.



As I _____ approached the door of his apartment, I heard someone singing, _____. I _____ knocked on the door. After a short moment of silence, Harry _____ open the door and _____ invited me inside. We exchanged greetings, _____, than I _____ asked him "what's going on?"

"Oh", he said. "After I had the accident and while I was filling out a report for the police, I _____ had an epiphany". He went on to say he couldn't see the point of continuing to work in the same _____ boring job, so he decided to chuck it in and follow his dream of _____ becoming an opera singer! Well, great for you Harry, but how can I explain this to my boss?"



- ### Last Month's puzzle Solution
- ACROSS**
- 3 communicate without words or signals
 - 5 repetition of a sound
 - 6 basic, essential
 - 9 vague idea
 - 12 having ability
 - 13 make use of
 - 16 rhythmic contractions and expansions
 - 17 by feeling, not conscious thought
 - 19 something having a distinct existence
 - 20 native (people)
- DOWN**
- 1 help growing up
 - 2 start of something momentous
 - 4 accidental
 - 7 aware without conscious control
 - 8 greater or better than the standard
 - 10 movement from one position to another
 - 11 blocks from consideration
 - 14 statement believed to be true
 - 15 having consciousness and feelings
 - 18 related by blood or marriage

Don't forget... Our SPECIAL 1+1 Campaign offer! Up to 50% off!!
See our notice board, or ask Junko in our office, for the details.