

BEFORE

What is important to Me?

One day, three years ago. One crisp summer night, about 10 at night, a light shined from my brother's room. At the time I was too tired to see what was going on, so I went to bed. I had a rough night, I woke up around 3 in the morning. The noise from my brothers room rattled into mine. I was really angry and I dragged my feet over to his room. I saw him on the ground, with a metal box at his feet, and wires overflowing from it. When I asked what it was, he looked over and said, "It's a computer." I did not quite understand computers, and I told him that we had a perfectly good computer in the basement. However, he turned and said, "This is my own." When I returned to my bed I wondered where we were going to put the new computer, and why would he build one.

I woke up at 8 in the morning and he emerged from his room with his metal box in hand. I followed him downstairs, and he connected four wires to the box, one for a monitor, one for a mouse, one for a keyboard, and one went right into the wall. He gingerly pushed the power button on the box and it all came to life. Bright blue lights shined from the box and nearly blinded me. I thought it was broken, however, a light came on the screen. It was the loading screen for the Windows Operating System. I was astounded at what he accomplished, however, I never saw what it actually was. I saw it as some computer that looked cool, or just another toy on the shelf. However, my brother saw it as something more, and I never saw it until I got a computer of my own.

My brother sold the old computer and, I saw my brother cleaning that computer every day, and making sure to clean in every single crack of it. The computer looked downright gorgeous. I would ask to work and play games on it. He would let me, and since it wasn't mine, I didn't do anything stupid on it. Over the amount of hours on that computer, divided between work and pleasure, I started to feel attracted towards computers. I saw it as the perfect tool for work and play. I would stay on that computer for as long as I could before my brother would kick me off. Those were the days, however, when my brother left for college, three years later, he took his computer with him. We needed a new computer. My brother did all the research on newegg.com and found a computer that he thought would be perfect for me. It

AFTER

At three in the morning the bright light from my brother's room accompanied by strange noises rattling into mine roused me from a deep sleep. Dragging myself out of bed to investigate, I found him on the floor with a metal box at his feet. "It's a computer," he grinned. "I built it myself." Confused because we already had a perfectly good computer, he announced, "This is my own." I returned to bed wondering where we would put his new computer and why he had built one.

Five hours later, he walked into the kitchen with his metal box in hand. He connected four wires and pushed the power button. Bright blue lights glowed from the box, and the loading screen for Windows appeared on the screen. Astounded at what he had accomplished, I stared at the cool-looking machine—no doubt only another toy for the shelf downstairs.

He cleaned that downright gorgeous computer every day attacking every crack, but he allowed me, his thirteen-year-old kid brother, to use it. I played on that computer for as long as I could before he shouted, "Enough!" When he left for college, he took his computer with him but not before finding a new one for me. It arrived a week later. Although thrilled to finally have my own PC, I did not connect to it in the same way I had attached to my brother's creation.

While I took good care of my computer, nothing compelled me to do so. When my brother returned home for the summer, I realized the reason I felt so detached. He had built his computer just the way he wanted it, and we got mine as if we had adopted a stray cat. Since that summer, I have wanted to build a computer for myself, but even if I dismantled my PC and added all new parts, I still would never come close to my brother's feelings of pride and ownership.

Although it still seems like some distant object I cannot reach, I could not survive a day without my computer. I have most of the world's existing knowledge at my fingertips, and I am one click away from all the entertainment I could possibly want. I would feel lost without my PC and certainly would have a much harder time completing my schoolwork.

My dad tells stories about his first computer and its 256 mega-

arrived in the mail about a week later and my brother left for college. I was ecstatic to finally have a computer of my own, however, something was missing. I didn't feel as attached as I was with my brother's computer. It was just another toy for me to play with.

I tried to take care of my computer, however, nothing was compelling me to do so. I just continued using the computer at my own pleasure. When my brother returned home for summer break with his computer, I realized what was so different. He built his computer. He had an emotional bond with his computer, which I could never have. He put that computer together with his own two hands, and he just found mine like a stray cat. I've only opened my computer up once to add one simple wifi chip. Ever since then I've been wanting to build my own computer. I could never have that same emotional attachment to my computer that my brother has with his. Even if I were to take apart my computer and add all new parts, I still wouldn't have that same feeling. As of right now, it seems like some distant object that I can't reach.

It may feel like some distant object, however, I can't see me going a day without that computer. It is everything I could ever want. I have the a world of information at my fingertips, I am one click away from being entertained, and I can even talk to anyone in the world instantly. Without it I would be lost. I would not be able to complete work on time and my days would be longer than watching paint dry. Its astounding at what computers do and it is even more amazing looking at the history of computers. Over the past thirty years, computers have advanced so rapidly. I've heard stories of my dad when he was young. One of the first computer games he bought was a game that was on three separate floppy disks. He would have to download one at a time and switch disks after each one was finished. I have heard some other stories that about computers only having about 256 megabytes of memory on them. I have a wristband that has that same amount of storage on it. In 1992, there was a game called Wolfenstein 3D. At the time, this was a pretty big game. It was roughly 16 megabytes. If you do the math then you can have about 16 copies of Wolfenstein 3D on that 256 megabyte hard drive. If you look at today's hard drives, some go into terabytes of memory. In one terabyte of memory, there are roughly 1048576 megabytes. So in theory, you can have approximately 65,536 copies of Wolfenstein 3D on that hard drive. I am just astounded at how fast we advanced over the past 20 - 30 years. We have this desire for more powerful computers. Eventually there will be a time where computers will be obsolete, however, that is probably not going to happen for a very long time. As Americans, we always look for the next big thing. We need people to continue to advance computers, and there are more and more opportunity in this field, which is why I would like to continue in this field. I wish to learn and help continue to advance computers. I would be a completely different person if it wasn't for my brother, his computer and his emotional bond between them.

bytes of memory; today, I have a wristband that has that same amount of storage. Perhaps computers eventually will become obsolete, but at this point, the world needs people to continue to advance the field, and I desperately want to become part of that advancement. Building a good house requires a solid foundation, and I look forward to creating the blueprint of my future in the computer science laboratories at the University of Connecticut.