

# The origin of some familiar icons on the computer

The instruction symbol works on computers that are familiar to users every day, but few know about their origins.

**The instruction symbol works on computers that are familiar to users every day, but few know about their origins.**

## Power

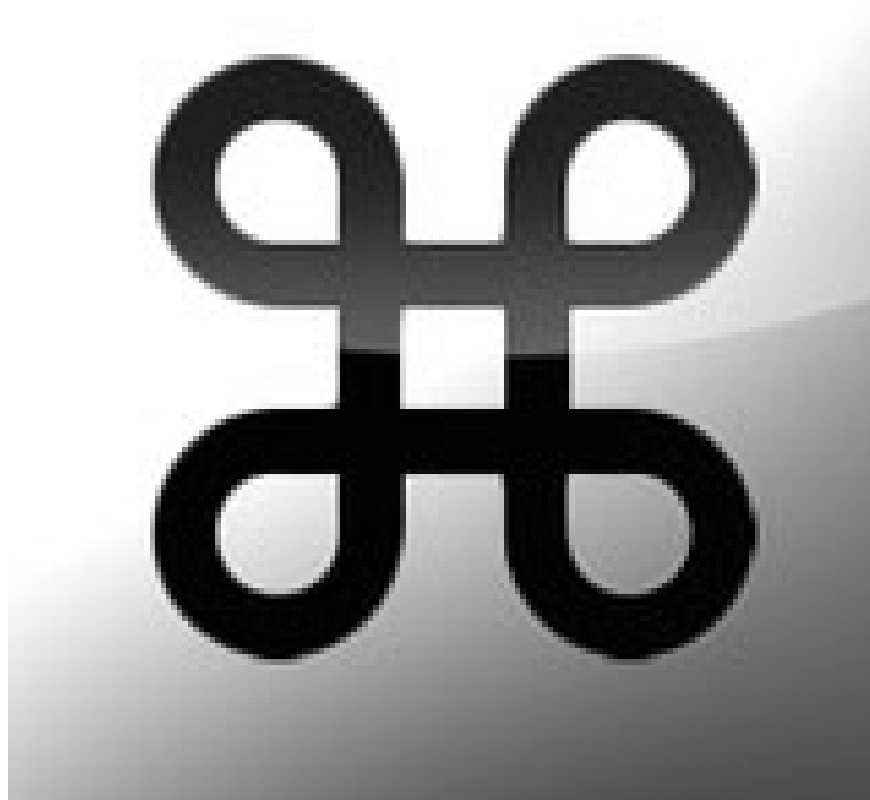


This symbol is very famous. It was printed on the T-Shirt and was the first button you had to press when using the computer. Even this logo is printed on the NYC condom label.

In World War II, technicians used binary systems to show the state of the power sources for switches. They use character 1 to indicate ON status and character 0 to indicate OFF status. In 1973, the International Electrotechnical Commission (International Electrotechnical Commission) decided to combine these two characters to become an icon with a defective circle and a straight line inside to indicate the state of 'rest'. (standby).

The IEEE (International Electrotechnical Commission) decided to treat this symbol as a symbol of 'electricity'. Since then, many electronic devices have used this symbol for the power key.

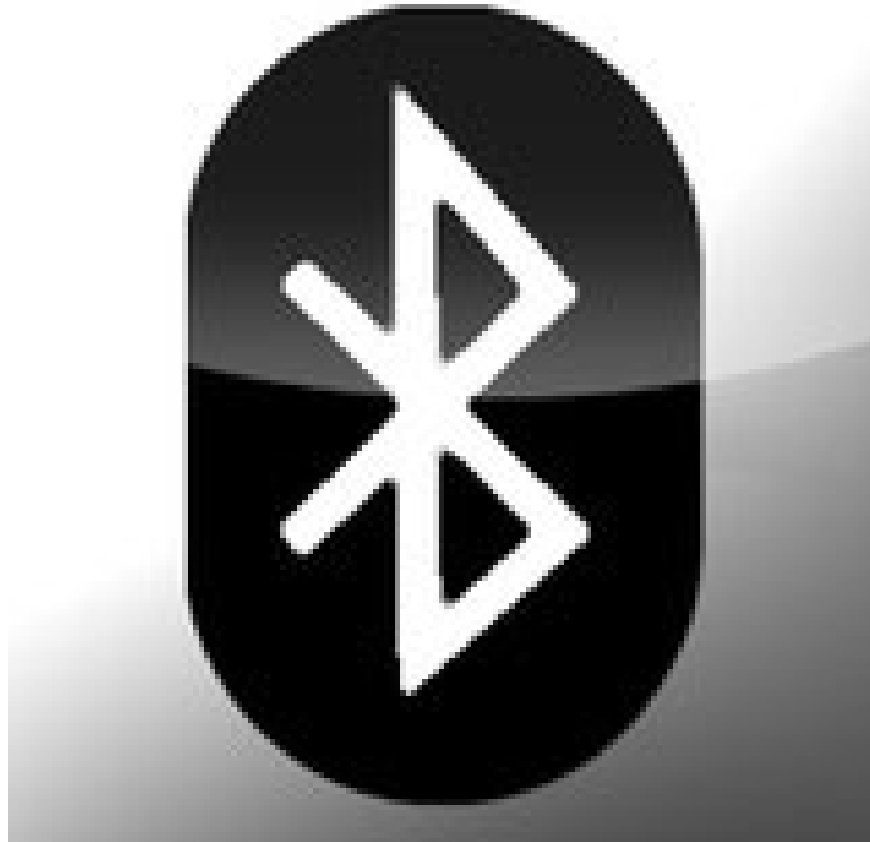
## Command



Many people will be surprised to learn that the famous Command icon on Macs is related to the Swedish camp. According to Andy Hertzfeld of Mac development research, when studying the menu of commands directly from the keyboard, the team members decided to add a special function key. The idea is simple: When pressed with other keys, this key will execute the corresponding commands.

Initially the team decided to still use the Apple logo but then they found there were too many Apples biting on the screen. Susan Kare then gave an icon from the international symbol dictionary. This symbol represents a stylized flower pattern that was used in Sweden to indicate campsites. In addition, this symbol is also a Gorgon loop, a non-ending loop and in the Unicode encoding, which means "attention grabbing point". Since then, the Command icon is still used on Macs to this day.

## **Bluetooth**

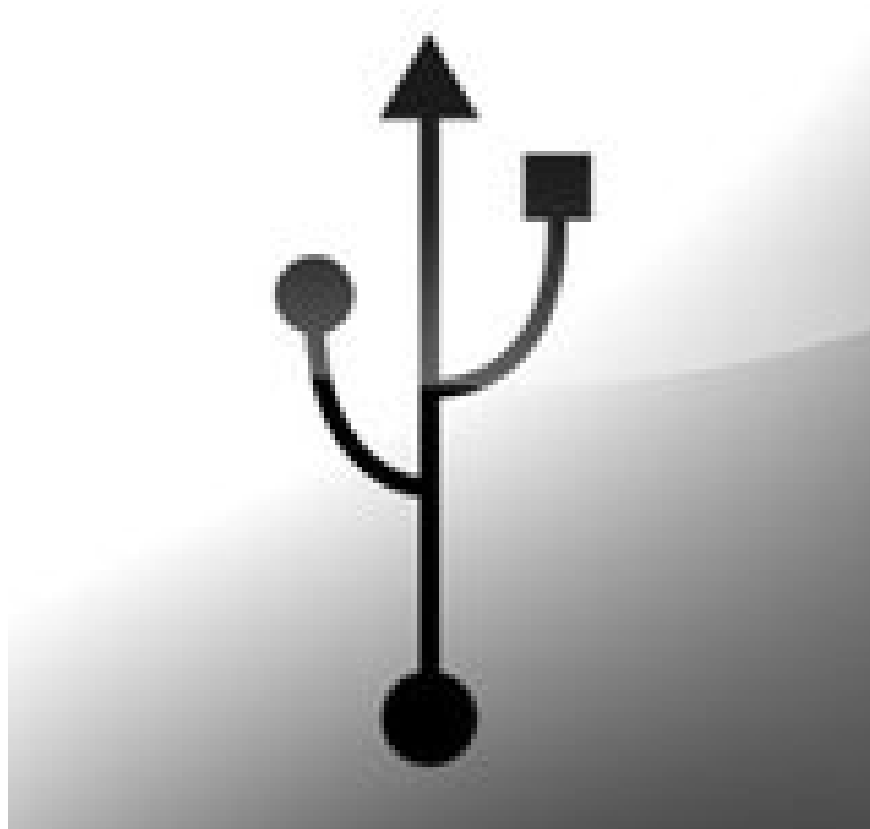


Did you know that the familiar Bluetooth icon on your computer is related to the story of the Danish king Harald Blåtand in the 10th century?

This king was so famous for eating blueberry so much that many people believed that at least one tooth of this king had green color that could not be erased. The Bluetooth logo is a combination of two ancient Rune characters representing the first two names of King Harald. Initially the Bluetooth logo is also shaped like a tooth.

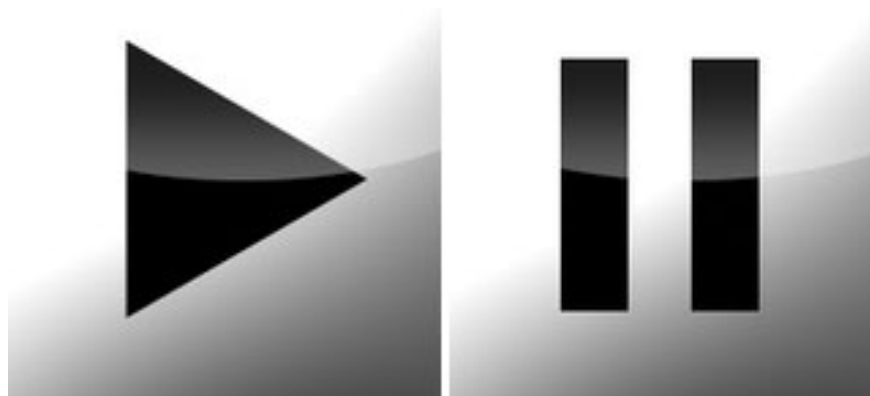
In addition, other significant Bluetooth technology relates to the Danish king. King Blåtand is famous for his ability to negotiate and reconcile, helping the parties to talk to each other. It was this king who helped Norway, Denmark and Sweden end their war with each other. Also, Bluetooth technology enables different devices to communicate as between a computer and a phone and a car ".

**USB**



The USB logo is a stylized version of Neptune's powerful Dreizack trident. But instead of the three triangular heads at the top of the spear, the founders of the USB standard have replaced a triangle, a square and a circle. This change implies that many different peripherals are compatible with this connection standard.

### **Play / Pause**



Play / Pause icons are not derived from computers but come from electronic organizers, music players and all devices with music or video features. Both triangular symbols rotate to the right and the icon of two parallel vertical bars does not have a clear origin.

These two symbols first appeared on a magnetic tape player in the mid-1960s. The Play icon with the right arrow head shape simply shows the direction of the tape. If there are two triangular symbols turning in the same

direction to the left or right, it is simply the tape that rotates faster in the corresponding direction.

Many people believe that the Pause symbol describes the symbol of an open connection on the electrical diagram. Others claim that this symbol is simply a Stop icon cut off in the middle. But there is a stronger assumption: the Pause symbol originates from the silent sign in the lyric (the caesura, calmo or calmato mark) with the symbol being crossed out in parallel.

## **Sleep**



The Sleep icon indicates the status is not ON but also OFF of an electronic device. Initially IEC used the Power symbol today (a circle cut off by a brick) to indicate the Standby status.

After being taken over by IEEE to make the Power icon, a US government agency decided to change its name to "Sleep" status. The symbol of the Sleep Moon crescent is now widely used in the Americas and Europe. However, in Japan sometimes you will see a Zzzz button.

**@ (At)**

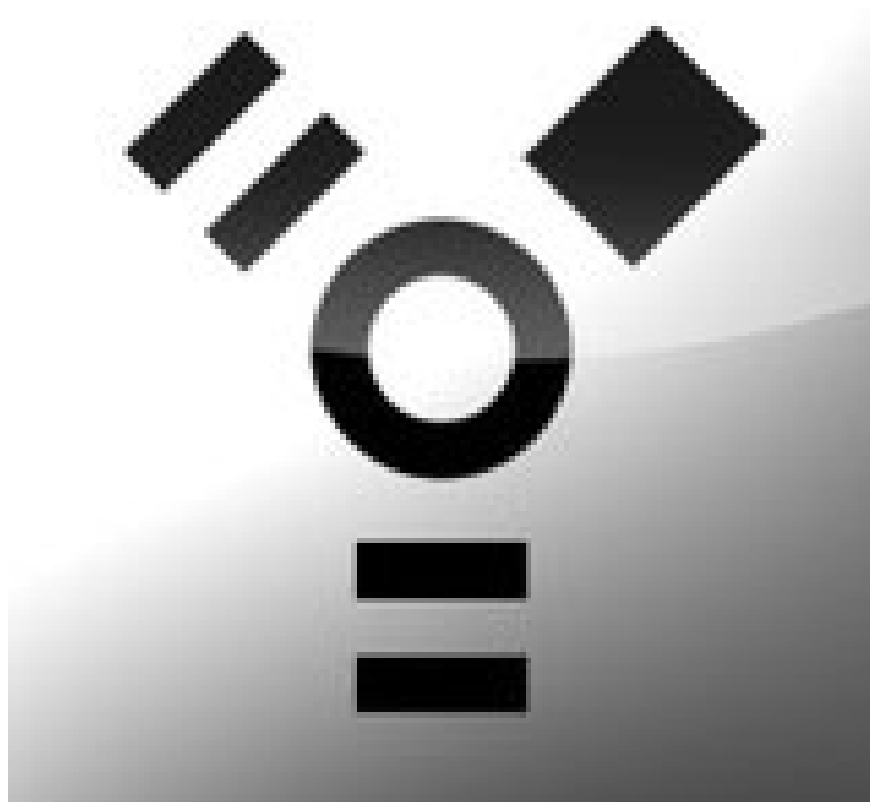


The @ symbol is the only symbol on the computer that can be found in the design and architecture collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoMA). This symbol has had a strong development process in recent years.

This symbol @ has many names: snails (in France and Italy), small mice (China) and monkey tails (in Germany). In 1971, Raymond Tomlinson, programmer of Bolt, Beranek & Newman, decided to add an icon between the email address to separate user names and server addresses.

Previously, the @ symbol was mounted on American Underwood keyboards in 1885 as a shortcut to express the meaning of "at scale". Many people believe that the @ symbol dates from the 6th century, when priests see it as a better way of writing the word "at" or "towards" (toward) in Latin.

**Firewire**



In 1995, a small group of Apple FireWire developers decided to create an icon that could reflect the technology they created.

Researchers created the FireWire standard with the desire to create a high-speed connection for digital audio and video. So they chose an icon with 3 heads representing data, sound and images. Initially the icon was red but then turned yellow without revealing the obvious cause.

**Multi-color rotating ball on Mac OS**

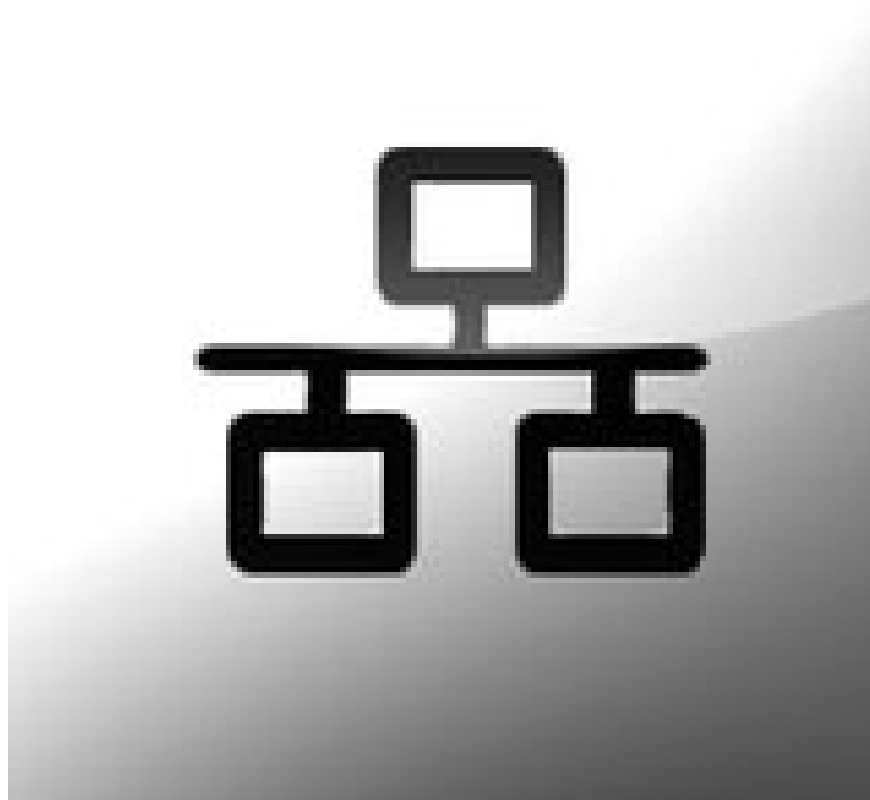


This symbol is known for a lot of names: hypnotic rotation, death ring, pizza turning, death beach volleyball (SBBOD - spinning beach ball of death).

Apple officially calls it a cursor when waiting, but most Mac users hate it. This icon appears when an application is suspended. This icon replaces the "wait" wristwatch icon that appears on the first Mac OS versions.

The origin of this design is still mysterious but it seems that Apple removed the clock icon because it reminded the user that the device is hanging but the time is still floating. However, this rotating ball icon is still very beautiful.

## **Ethernet**



The Ethernet port icon is designed by an IBM employee named David Hill.

According to Hill, the icon is in a set of symbols describing the types of intranets at the time. Square blocks in the avatar represent computers or terminals in the intranet. All of these devices connect to the local network and communicate with each other.

*Source: Gizmodo*

You finished reading the article "**The origin of some familiar icons on the computer**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.