

NEWS

The '640K' quote won't go away -- but did Gates really say it?

Bill Gates denies making 1981 comment about limits of RAM needs, despite popular legend

By Eric Lai

Computerworld |

JUN 23, 2008 12:00 AM PST

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founder Ken Olsen's [1977](#) quip, "There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in his home." (Olsen did actually say that, but he said later that the quote was taken out of context, and that he was referring not to PCs but to computers set up to control houses.)

Despite the enduring popularity of the legend about the 640K comment, though, it's hard to find solid proof that Gates ever said it. For example, Wikiquote, an offshoot of Wikipedia, offers [no strong evidence](#).

A claim that a profane variation of the quote was included by author Stephen Levy in his seminal book *Hackers* turns out to be untrue. And in March, the Bits technology blog

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