

American designs being made in China

This February we talked about the new Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs) and how I was replacing all of my incandescent light bulbs throughout our home.



John Deans

Since then I have not had to change a light bulb and our May electricity bill was one of the lowest in years. They light up well, put out less

heat, last five times longer and burn one-fourth of the energy. With those good things I consider the CFL conversion was a good idea.

A couple of weeks ago I discovered the downside of the CFL issue during a YouTube surfing session. I watched one of my favorite U.S. Congressman, Ted Poe, on the

House floor talking about CFLs. One of his major points was that the U.S.A. had banned the manufacturing of incandescent by 2014 thereby mandating that CFLs be implemented in every American household. He also stated another very disturbing fact.

All CFLs are made in China! Not a single manufacturing company makes them here in the United States. Our Congress passed a law that outsources the lighting of our homes to a communist coun-

try that does not like us. Where's my pitchfork and torch?
Back in 2004 *PC World* magazine had an article on the International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA) reporting that in China 96 percent of the computer software was pirated and only 4 percent was officially licensed. This included millions of illegal copies of Microsoft Windows and Office being distributed in Chinese homes and offices.

I had personal experience with this back in the late 1980s when I was the computer operations manager at a seismic company in Houston. I was tasked to give a tour to an entourage of Chinese clients and government officials of our 20,000 square-foot computer room that housed dozens of mainframes and supercomputers.

My job there was to keep all the computers running and the seismic software safe from hackers and thieves. At the end of the

Chinese delegation tour, one of our computer operators whispered in my ear, "John, one of those Chinese dudes in the blue suit just put a wire-tape of me into his briefcase!"

We confronted him and he then opened his briefcase, handed over the tape, laughed and said, "So sorry." He thought it was like a game and he lost because he got caught. I was furious when my bosses made nothing more of it so not to offend our new overseas clients. Though this was a single anecdotal event in my life experience I haven't trusted the Communist Chinese ever since.

Though we may not like it our economy is greatly dependent on Chinese manufacturing. Heck, my glorious iPhone is made in China.

It was designed by the geniuses at Apple Computer in California, but the actual iPhone devices are completely made in China and shipped over here in huge cargo containers by the millions. It turns out that all the iMacs and Apple laptops are now all made in China.

Remember a couple of years ago when the laptop battery recall was raging and over 3 million laptop batteries had to be replaced due to a fire hazard? Though the manufacture of those defective batteries was Sony out of Japan, after some deep reading they mentioned that the original manufacturing locations were majority was made in China.

Since Harper uses the best components like Intel motherboards and Seagate hard drives, most of that too comes from the communist country with small exceptions like Malaysia and Japan.

Ten years ago when I was on contract to Compaq Computer to build its new Gigabit network, I was given a tour of their six manufacturing facilities at their 400-plus acre campus in northwest Harris County. Each CCM (Compaq Computer Manufacturing) building had over 50,000 square-feet of production lines and hundreds of workings putting servers, desktops and laptop together.

It was an amazing sight to see American workers busy as bees making the best computers at that time right here in Texas. I worked with those workers and managers over a two-year period while our team was building the first gigabit network in the world as of 1998 that supported over 13,000 users.

Now that Hewlett Packard (HP) has owned Compaq for 10 years, those CCM buildings are now either converted to office space or subleased out to other companies. All HP and Compaq computers and laptops not only have their components manufactured in China but they are also assembled there instead of those CCM buildings in Texas.

Just recently Dell Computer has also started shutting down their manufacturing and assembly operations in Austin and will soon completely outsource those primary functions to their Chinese locations.

After some research on this subject of where our computer technology is being made I found that there was a single major production company based in Taiwan called Quanta Computer Inc., which was started up in 1988 by a guy named Barry Lam, who still runs it today.

Lam runs this monster Chinese computer company that makes servers, desktops and laptops for Alienware, Apple Inc., Compaq, Dell, Fujitsu, Gateway, Gericom, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Maxdata, Sharp Corporation, Siemens AG, Sony and Toshiba. That just about covers them all.

It looks like we have lost the vast majority of our computer hardware manufacturing to the Chinese but at least we still have Microsoft software being written here in our country. Oh, did I mention that India is being subcontracted to play more of an active role in software development for a majority of our nation's computer software industry?

Bottom line: Like it or not we are in a global economy with Americans being limited to designing and counting the technology arriving from foreign lands.

Next week's column: Online Web publishing.

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