# The mother of invention

by BRIAN LOCKHART

If ?necessity is the mother of invention,' then maybe innovation is the child of invention.

Or something like that.

It has long been considered that most, if not all, inventions have been thought of, created, and produced, based on a need for that product or tool.

Somewhere, at some time, someone realized if they had a tool or device to make a job easier, that they knew someone else would buy and use, then they could create that tool to make life easier.

Although, many modern inventions have a tendency to stray from ?need' to ?would like to have' for no other particular reason.

Movies weren't really created for a need. They were created for entertainment. Someone figured out if you took a series of photographs and flashed them at 24 frames-per-second, it would give the illusion of movement and live action. Pretty smart.

Video games are another example of something you may want, but don't need. No one really needs a video game and playing Minecraft won't make your life any easier. It was the innovative process derived from the invention electronics that makes it possiblefor you to sink a battleship with a cruisemissile or pilot a 747 on your computer from the comfort of your easy chair.

That's pretty clever ? and a lot of people have made a lot of money designing games for no other reason than someone will buy them for their entertainment value.

Necessity has of course, spawned most of the great inventions in society.

?If only there was a way...? must have been a thought in the minds of a lot of people over the eons.

Someone figured out you catch more fish with a net, than you do dangling a single worm from a hook.

Someone figured out that attaching a sail to a boat, will propel you through the water a lot easier than hanging over the side with a paddle.

And someone realized that if you took tiny little kernels of wheat, ground them down, added water, and baked, you could make bread and feed your family.

The curious thing is not all societies figured out all the answers on their own ? except for maybe one.

There are societies that had advanced writing systems and mathematics, yet never figured out the wheel.

In some places, the people came up with some very good solutions to raise crops and feed their people, and yet the concept of metals was non-existent.

There is one concept that seems to be almost universal and even the most primitive societies managed to figure it out ? the bow and arrow.

From North America to Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, and even isolated island communities, they all managed to figure it

out. There is an island off the coast of India that is so remote and hostile, they have absolutely no connection with the outside world. Yet they have been seen firing arrows at passing aircraft or anyone who comes near their island.

Many inventions have been shared between different societies. If one group came up with a new idea, sooner or later a visitor from a nearby region would see it and take the idea home with them.

And yet the bow and arrow was created in places where there was no sharedinformation.

The weapon is incredibly complicated when you think about it.

First someone has to come up with the idea of propelling a pointed shaft at a target. An arrow head must be designed to slice through whatever you are shooting at.

A bow must be designed to have the right amount of curve, flexibility, and spring, to shoot the arrow with force.

And someone had to put enough thought into the project to realize that attaching a stabilizer to the rear of the shaft, in the form of feathers or something similar, will help guide the arrow through the air in a straight line.

I've done quite a bit of research trying to find out how a society that never invented the wheel, or never came up with the conceptof a written language or mathematics, still managed to figure out that aerodynamics needed to send an arrow through the air in a stable fashion ? and did it independently with no outside influence.

There seems to be no answer to that.

I guess if you really need something, someone will figure it out.