Fondazione Guglielmo Marconi

Paul Baran was born on April 29, 1926 in Grodno, Poland (now USSR). He received a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Drexel University in 1949, and an M.S. in Engineering (Computers) from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1959.
In 1949, Mr. Baran joined the Eckert-Mauchley Computer Company, where he was a technician on the first commercial computer, the UNIVAC. In the early 1950's Mr. Baran went to Raymond Rosen Engineering Products, where he served as development engineer and later field engineer on the first telemetering system at Cape Canaveral. In 1955, he joined the Ground Systems Department at Hughes Aircraft, where his work involved radar data processing and systems engineering.
Mr. Baran joined the RAND Corporation in 1959, where he remained until 1968, and where he proposed highly reliable and survivable communication networks using a mesh connection of redundant links. He concluded that such networks had to convey all digital message blocks (now called packets), which traverse the network using information contained in each message block. This scheme allows creation of virtual circuits or illusion of direct connection among nodes. Also at RAND, in 1964, he developed the doorway gun detector. He was an early writer on the issue of computer privacy, and the first computer scientist to testify on the issue in Congress (1965). In 1968, Mr. Baran left RAND to co-found the not-for-profit Institute for the Future, which developed long-range forecasting techniques for the communications industry.
In 1972, Mr. Baran co-founded Cabledata Associates, Inc. whose offshoot companies included: Comprint (computer printers); Equatorial Communications Co. (the first V SAT company, now part of CONTEL); Telebit (manufacturer of very high speed modems for impaired dial-up telephone lines); and Packet Technologies (interactive cable TV and a fast packet switching for voice and data on T1 lines). In 1986, Mr. Baron co-founded

Metricom, Inc. (electric / utility industry remote metering and distribution automation), and, in 1989, InterFax, Inc. (interactive facsimile).
Paul Baron has authored over 60 papers in various fields and has been issued several patents, including those for the underlying technology at Equatorial Communications, Telebit, Packet Technologies/StrataCom, Metricom and InterFax. He has received a number of awards, including: Silver Medal for Product Excellence (for the Telebit Trailblazer Modem) from PC WORLD (1986); the Edwin H. Armstrong Award from the IEEE Communications Society (1987); the UCLA Advanced Computing Technologies Act One Pioneer Award (1989).
Mr. Baran is a member of the IEEE, the ACM, and SPIE. He served on the National Research Council, Committee on Review of Switching ...in the National Security (1986-88). He has served on the Editorial Board of COMPUTER NETWORKS AND ISDN SYSTEMS for over 10 years, and authored a chapter on Packet Switching in Fundamentals of Digital Switching, 2nd edition (J. McDonald, ed.), 1990.
Mr. Baran won the 1990 IEEE Alexander Graham Bell Medal "For Pioneering in Packet Switching." In 1991, he received the Marconi Prize for the original ideas underlying packet switching and many other communications advances.

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