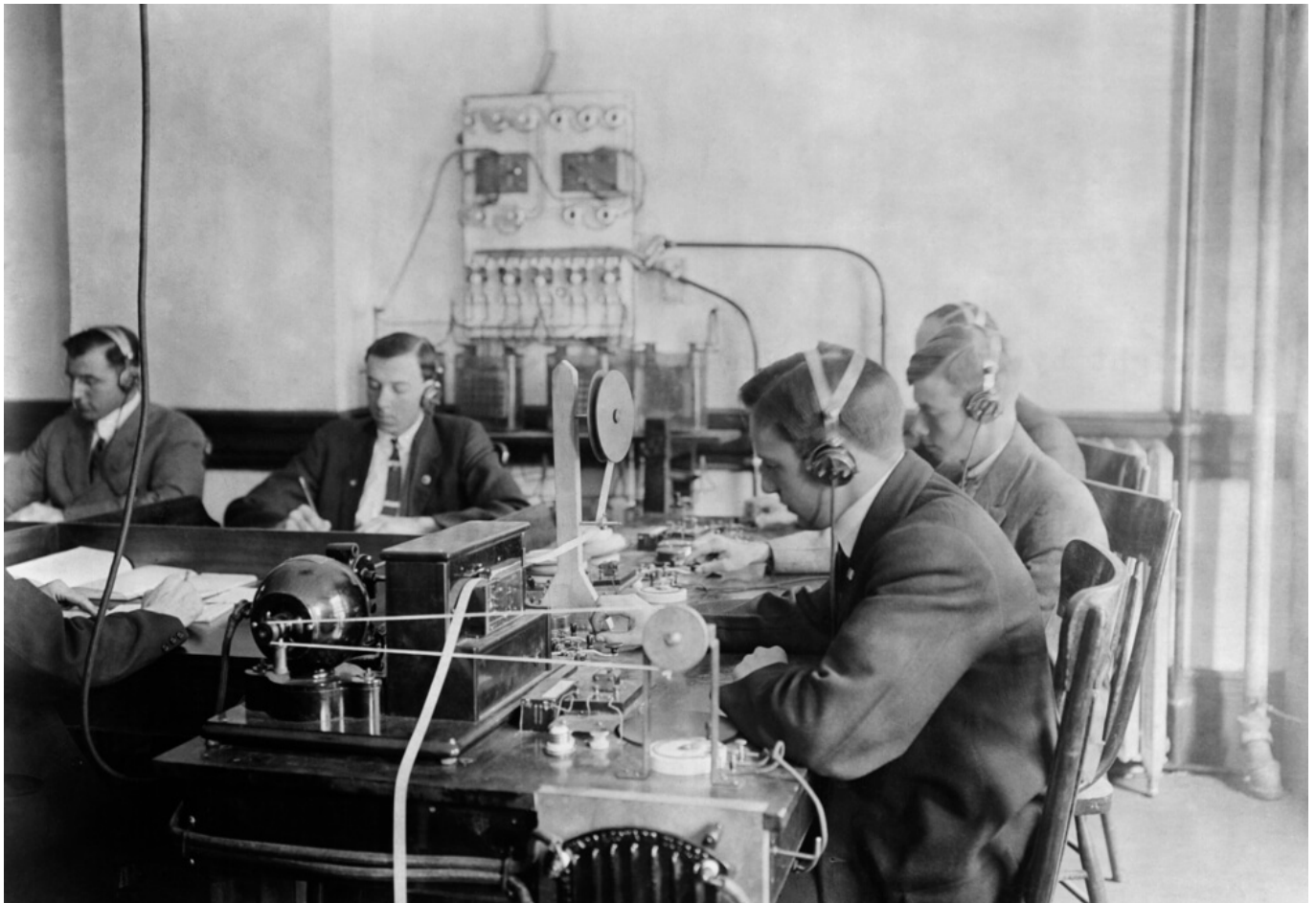




By: *Elise Quevedo*

Let's pay tribute to the pioneers of modern technology



As I head for Mobile World Congress (MWC) Barcelona 2025, let me share a memorable fact about this year's congress, which inspired this article.

Did you know this is the first time GSMA has **renamed** four of the event's key stages after pioneers who have laid the groundwork for our modern technological landscape? These stages will be known as Marconi, Turing, Johnson, and Lamarr.

Kudos to **Lara Dewar**, GSMA's CMO, and their marketing team for such a brilliant idea. This change reminded me that we always talk about the future of technology, but we need to remember that we would not have this present and future if it weren't for some pioneer men and women who wrote the first chapters.

In this article, let's discover these stages, pioneers, and other unsung heroes.

The Marconi Stage

Guglielmo Marconi is known as the father of wireless communication, and his pioneering work in radio transmission has evolved into the web of global communications we rely on today.

His legacy is embodied by the Marconi Stage, which emphasises topics like Connect X and 5G Inside. It shows how Marconi's early experiments have developed into technologies that permanently connect us.

The Turing Stage

Alan Turing's contributions to computing and artificial intelligence are vast. His ability to envision machines that could think and learn laid the foundation for the AI-driven world we navigate today.

The Turing Stage will delve into AI+ and Enterprise Re-invented, exploring advancements in AI, cybersecurity, and data ethics.

The Johnson Stage

Katherine Johnson's precise mathematical calculations ensured the success of NASA's early missions, exemplifying how meticulous attention to detail can lead to great achievements.



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The Johnson Stage highlights themes like Game Changers and Our Digital DNA. It reminds us that behind every leap in space exploration and data science lies the unwavering dedication of individuals committed to going above and beyond.

The Lamarr Stage

Celebrating Hedy Lamarr, an actress and ingenious inventor who co-developed frequency-hopping technology during World War II. This innovation paved the way for modern wireless communications, including Wi-Fi and Bluetooth.

The Lamarr Stage will host FC Barcelona's Sports Tomorrow Congress, which will focus on creative technologies and the fusion of digital media, entertainment, and communications. Lamarr's story is a powerful testament to thinking beyond conventional roles and daring to innovate in unexpected arenas.

Honouring Unsung Pioneers

While Marconi, Turing, Johnson, and Lamarr are well-deservedly recognised, the foundation of our technological progress has

been laid by many visionaries, some of whom history has overlooked.

These unsung pioneers played crucial roles in shaping the technologies we rely on today, yet their names remain less celebrated. It is time to bring a few of them into the spotlight.

Ada Lovelace

Before computers existed in their modern form, Ada Lovelace, a 19th-century mathematician and writer, saw the potential of machines beyond simple arithmetic.

Working with Charles Babbage on his theoretical Analytical Engine, Lovelace wrote the first-ever algorithm designed to be processed by a machine.

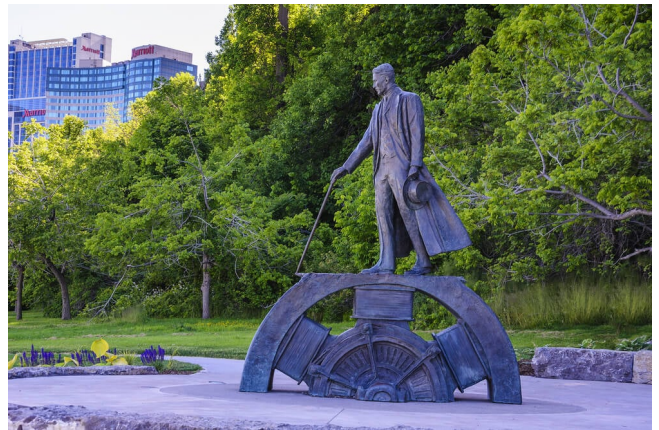
In essence, she envisioned the concept of software long before the first computer was built. She recognised that numbers could represent more than just quantities; they could symbolise musical notes, letters, and images.

Today, her vision underpins everything from artificial intelligence to modern programming languages.

Nikola Tesla

While Thomas Edison often receives credit for the adoption of electricity, Nikola Tesla's alternating current (AC) system truly electrified the world.

His work in electrical engineering laid the groundwork for everything from the national power grid to wireless energy transmission.



Nikola Tesla's innovations extended into radio waves, X-rays, and even early theories of radar, paving the way for many of today's advancements in wireless communication

Tesla's innovations extended into radio waves, X-rays, and even early theories of radar, paving the way for many of today's advancements in wireless communication.

Despite all of his extraordinary contributions, Tesla died in relative obscurity, with his genius largely unrecognised in his lifetime. Yet, his work lives on in every electrical device we use.

Radia Perlman

When we think of the internet's pioneers, I am sure names like Tim Berners-Lee and Vint Cerf often come to mind first, right? But without Radia Perlman, the internet as we know it might not even function. And don't feel bad if you also thought of Berners-Lee first; I did too for many years.

Perlman invented the Spanning Tree Protocol (STP), a key networking innovation that made large-scale Ethernet networks possible. Her work makes sure that data can travel efficiently across networks.

Despite her invaluable contributions, she is one of the less-known figures in tech history. She has also spent decades improving network security, making the internet safer and more reliable.

Gladys West

If you've ever used Google Maps (who hasn't) or any GPS-enabled device, then you owe a debt of gratitude to Dr Gladys West. She was a

mathematician and programmer who played a key role in developing the mathematical models that led to the creation of GPS.

Gladys West programmed early computers to refine satellite geolocation data, leading to the precision navigation systems we now take for granted

She worked at the US Naval Surface Warfare Center in the 1950s and programmed early computers to refine satellite geolocation data, leading to the precision navigation systems we now take for granted.

Her work went unrecognised for decades, overshadowed by other technological advancements in space and military applications.

It wasn't until recently that her contributions were fully acknowledged, proving once again that many of the world's greatest innovations stem from individuals whose names don't always make the headlines.

Gladys is an example of why I love storytelling. You don't need to be the most famous person in the room to make an impact on people and the world.

A Legacy Worth Celebrating and Carrying the Torch Forward

These pioneers, and many more, deserve to be remembered alongside the most famous names in tech history. Renaming MWC 2025's stages is a step in the right direction.

By honouring these individuals, we pay tribute to the past and inspire the next generation of innovators.

Every breakthrough stands on the shoulders of pioneers, both known and unknown, who paved the way for us all

Their stories show that progress is built on the vision, perseverance, and genius of those who dare to think beyond the limits of their time. Every breakthrough stands on the shoulders of pioneers, both known and unknown, who paved the way for us all. Let's make sure their contributions are never lost to history.

My question to you is, are you the next pioneer?