

A DESIGN HISTORY OF THE WIRELESS ICON

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«Icon (Computers) a graphical symbol for a data object whose form suggests the nature or function of the object; especially, such a symbol as viewed on the computer screen. In a graphical user interface, pointing to and clicking on an icon may cause any of several types of actions, such as opening a file or executing a program, depending on how the icon properties are defined. » [1]

« Three curved lines sitting atop a little point — nothing says ‘wireless’ quite like this ubiquitous icon. An illusion of movement arises from the increasing size of the curves and the space between them. » [2, p. 453]

«As the waves are sent out, they become larger and larger, reaching not only one intended receiver but any number of unknown receivers who might together form an audience. The members of a wireless network are not to be found at the end of a cable, but rather at unknown coordinates in the electromagnetic ocean. The location of each wireless station is not a given, present in the structure of the network itself. A wireless station must be made ‘discoverable,’ and the attraction of discovery is a constituent part of both radio astronomy and amateur radio. » [3, p 312]

«Wireless communications often deal with extremely long distances, whether researching an uncharted region of outer space or establishing a connection with an unknown conversation partner. » [2, p.461]

« The waves in the wireless icon will continue to grow, crossing any imaginable boundary and overcoming any conceivable distance.... Omnipresence, overcoming borders, and universal accessibility—these common impressions of wireless connectivity are what the wireless icon makes visible. » [3, p. 289]

« ...what is commonly taken to be the wireless icon is only one of many icons that are used in connection with different generations of wireless technology. » [3, p. 297]

« The particular icon only became popular due to its use for marking local wireless area networks. It differs significantly from seemingly related trademarks like Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. » [4, p. 69]

« Vic Hayes has been called the "father of Wi-Fi" because he chaired the IEEE committee that created the 802.11 standard in 1997. Before the public even heard of WiFi, Vic Hayes established the standards that would make WiFi feasible. The 802.11 standard was established in 1997. » [5]

«Phil Belanger, a founding member of the Wi-Fi Alliance who presided over the selection of the name "Wi-Fi", also stated that Interbrand invented Wi-Fi as a play on words with Hi-Fi, and also created the Wi-Fi logo. The yin-yang Wi-Fi logo indicates the certification of a product for interoperability. » [6]

« The principle of Yin and Yang is a fundamental concept in Chinese philosophy and culture in general dating from the third century BCE or even earlier. This principle is that all things exist as inseparable and contradictory opposites, for example female-male, dark-light and old-young. The two opposites attract and complement each other and, as their symbol illustrates, each side has at its core an element of the other (represented by the small dots). Neither pole is superior to the other and, as an increase in one brings a corresponding decrease in the other, a correct balance between the two poles must be reached in order to achieve harmony. » [7, p.14]

« This has pretty much been answered, but just for clarification there is both a logo and a symbol for WiFi. The logo's meaning is described by Akshat Dharmasakti. The symbol, which we are more familiar with since it appears on most WiFi enabled devices, is a design that is emulating a generic broadcast or antenna. The starting point (the dot at the bottom) symbolizes the WiFi source. The waves emanating from it, represent the strength/power of the WiFi's area, therefore signifying the strength of the device's connection to the WiFi source. » [6]

« The word "Bluetooth" is derived from the surname of King Haakon Bluetooth - a 10th century Danish monarch who famously united Denmark and Norway into one kingdom. » [8]

«King Harald Gormsson is famous for ruling Denmark and then Norway

between about 940 and about 986. King Harald was also famous for completing his father's work of unifying the various Danish tribes into one Danish kingdom around 970. Even though, he was only able to maintain this unification for a few years.

Like many medieval rulers, he also had a nickname: Blatonn in Old Norse (a member of the Germanic family of languages) or Blatand in Danish. It means Bluetooth. The exact origin of the nickname is up for debate, but many scholars believe that King Harald was called Bluetooth because he had a conspicuous dead tooth that exactly looked black and blue. It does make sense. » [9]

«That is when Intel engineer Jim Kardach took on the role of a cross-corporate mediator devoted to getting various companies together to develop an industry-wide standard for low-power, short-range radio connectivity...Later, Kardach read *The Vikings* by Gwyn Jones that featured the reign of Harald, whom he viewed as an ideal symbol for bringing competing parties together, as he explained:

“Bluetooth was borrowed from the 10th-century, second king of Denmark, King Harald Bluetooth; who was famous for uniting Scandinavia just as we intended to unite the PC and cellular industries with a short-range wireless link.” » [9]

« The Bluetooth logo is influenced by the Nordic runes similar to the modern Latin “H” (Haglazl) and “B” (Berkanan). » [8]

«The millennium-old story doesn't end there. The Bluetooth logo also derives from “Harald Blatand”, with the long-branch Nordic runes for “H” and “B” comprising the design you see in the blue oval of the logo. The now iconic Bluetooth logo is in fact a combination—officially known as a bind rune—of King Bluetooth's initials in Scandinavian runes: * and ð. When you join the two to make a bind rune and drop it on a blue background, you get the acquainted Bluetooth logo. » [9]

«Just as these mythological symbols seem to unify competing elements, the computer protocols that use these symbols claim to unify competing standards. » [4, p. 72]

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