Fascinating Science Facts At Your Fingertips

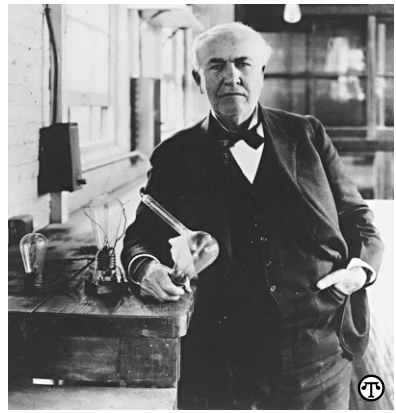
(NAPSA)—Thomas Edison patented about 1,100 inventions, but he didn't invent the lightbulb. Patterns in a Utah cornfield led to the development of television. Alvin and the Chipmunks have an important place in the history of recorded sound.

These are just a few of the fascinating facts available to science students at the IEEE Virtual Museum, www.ieee.org/museum. The site is designed for youngsters ages 10 to 18, their teachers and the general public. The museum has been recognized for its quality and learning value by the National Science Teachers Association and the National Science Digital Library Report for Math, Engineering and Technology.

Students and others can explore a growing range of online exhibits. Each gives an in-depth look at the histories of the technologies engineers have created over the centuries and that revolutionized how people work, play, learn and communicate. Current exhibits cover the history of electricity, how sounds are recorded and played and the use of microwaves in radar, satellites and global positioning systems. Others include women's contributions to technology and Edison's remarkable role as America's most prolific inventor.

The museum uses a variety of media to inform and teach, including text, illustrations, interactive displays and audio and video clips, as well as links to other important online resources. It emphasizes the cultural and social effect of each technology, as well as the technology itself.

For example, visitors to "Powering the Electrical Revolution: Women and Technology" can learn not only how telegraph and telephone switchboards helped create employment opportunities for 19th century women, but also how these technologies worked. The electricity exhibit, "Socket to Me," explains in plain language how a computer operates.



With some 1,100 patents, Thomas Edison was America's most prolific inventor.

Exhibits feature profiles about many technology pioneers. They include Alessandro Volta, the scientist who created the first battery; Countess Ada Lovelace, thought to be the first computer programmer; and Philo T. Farnsworth, who proposed an early TV system in 1922.

Respected historians and technologists representing major corporations and universities develop the material for the museum. All these experts are members of the IEEE, a global association of some 375,000 engineers, scientists and allied professionals. Their technical interests benefit the public through the development of a vast range of applications, including computers, communications, medicine and transportation.