

FREQUENCY HOPPING

FROM
1941

Today we can sit in our yards and ask a search engine “What can I play today?” without our laptop needing a wire to connect it to the internet. This is all thanks to an invention by Hedy Lamarr and George Antheil.

When they came up with their invention, though, neither of them was thinking of laptops or smartphones, but of submarines and torpedoes (underwater weapons with their own engine and explosive charge). The extremely complex process that they designed is the basis of modern technologies such as Bluetooth and WLAN.

Born in Austria, Lamarr experienced a variety of exciting events during her life. As a 19-year-old actress she appeared naked in a film that also contained a love

Pope Pius XI

Hedy Lamarr

When Lamarr left her husband, she looked not only for a new life but also for a new name. Her real name when she married was Hedwig Eva Maria Mandl.

scene—no big deal nowadays, but things were very different in 1933. The pope even said that she would go to hell for it.

Lamarr married young, which was not unusual in those days. Her husband was an arms dealer, and so she learned a great deal about weaponry. She accompanied him on his business trips, listened attentively, and thought her own thoughts.

She and her husband were not happy, however, and four years after the wedding, she left him and went first to Paris, then

Bluetooth is a technology that allows for short-range wireless transmission of data, such as music, videos, and pictures, by radio. Two compatible sets can communicate without the need for any cables.

The word Bluetooth comes from the name of a tenth-century king of Denmark and Norway who was called Harald Blåtand (the Danish for “blue tooth”). He is said to have been a very skillful diplomat who succeeded in uniting people, as does Bluetooth. Initially “Bluetooth” was the code name for the technology, but no one could think of anything better, so the name stuck.