Title: Richard Sites papers
Identifier/Call Number: X7855.2017
Contributing Institution: Computer History Museum
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 7.04 Linear feet, 4 record cartons, 1 manuscript box, 1 half manuscript box, and 1 newspaper box
Date (inclusive): 1965-1997
Abstract: The Richard Sites papers, which range in date from 1967 to 1997, consist of materials that Sites collected during his career as a computer architect, software engineer, and professor of computer science. Materials include manuals and reference guides, newspaper and magazine clippings, periodicals, and newsletters. The papers also hold some marketing materials, correspondence, memos, and internal reports from DEC and IBM, as well as a small amount of audiovisual materials. While the majority of the collection pertains to Sites' work on the Alpha architecture and other projects that Sites worked on at DEC during the late 1980s and early 1990s, materials from his early career are also found throughout the collection.
creator: Sites, Richard L.
Processing Information
Collection surveyed by Sydney Gulbronson Olson, 2017.
Access Restrictions
The collection is open for research.
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of Item], [Date], Richard Sites papers, Lot X7855.2017, Box [#], Computer History Museum.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Biographical/Historical Note
Richard (Dick) Sites is a computer architect, software engineer, and professor of computer science who is considered to be one of the fathers of computer architecture and is known for co-architecting the Digital Equipment Corporation Alpha computers.
Sites earned a BS in Mathematics from MIT in 1969, studied at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1969 to 1970, and earned a PhD in Computer Science in 1974, where Don Knuth was his advisor. During his time as a student, he worked at several companies including IBM, Burroughs, and Hewlett-Packard.
In 1976, Sites became an Assistant Professor of Computer Science at University of California, San Diego, where he taught until 1980. From there, he took a job as a corporate consultant engineer at DEC, where he stayed through 1996. While at DEC, he focused on VAX microcode, Alpha architecture, binary translation, and address tracing. One of his notable accomplishments was co-designing the 64-bit Alpha RISC chip with Rich Witek, which debuted in 1992.
After leaving DEC, Sites worked as an Adobe Fellow at Adobe systems, a senior staff engineer at Google from 2004 to 2016, and a visiting professor at National University of Singapore in 2016. Sites holds over 60 United States patents for hardware and software and is a member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering.
Scope and Content of the Collection
The Richard Sites papers, which range in date from 1967 to 1997, consist of materials that Sites collected during his professional career. Materials include manuals and reference guides, newspaper and magazine clippings, periodicals, and newsletters. About a third of the collection consists of manuals and user guides from companies such as Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC), International Business Machines (IBM), Burroughs, Hewlett-Packard (HP), and Cray Research Inc. Another third of the papers is made up of newspaper and magazine clippings, most of which pertain to the introduction of the Alpha architecture and microprocessors, as well as other projects that Sites worked on at DEC during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The collection also includes a number of periodicals and newsletters, such as Digital Technical Journal, Microprocessor Report, Forefront, Byte, and DEC Professional, most of which relate to Sites' work at DEC. Also included in the papers are some marketing materials, correspondence, memos, and internal reports from DEC and IBM. Finally, the collection contains three VHS tapes, 1 CD for iPods, and a small number of photographs.
Separated Material
Physical objects and ephemera were separated from the main collection. To view catalog records for separated material search the CHM catalog at http://www.computerhistory.org/collections/search/.

Related Collections at CHM
Alpha architecture, Lot X6636.2013, catalog number 102624691.
Alpha Microprocessor Group History, Lot X1766.2000A-B.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Alpha (Microprocessor)
Digital Equipment Corporation
IBM System/360