Though it seems like the computer mouse has always been around, there indeed was a time when it was non-existent and people had to resort to ghastly artifacts like the punch card to operate computers. **Here is a brief history of the humble computer mouse.**

Many of us use computers everyday, but we rarely give a thought to how they evolved to be what they are today. Leaps and bounds in technology have enabled the computer to be used by almost anybody intuitively, without the need for advanced training. However easy it may seem to operate a computer today, this feat would not have been possible without a small device known as the mouse. It plays a very important role in enabling navigation through computer content, and often goes unnoticed by people, when they use it. It is an electronic device, smaller than the palm, that has one or more buttons. This device makes computer operation easy and hassle-free. To put it simply, it is used for moving the cursor displayed on the computer monitor, to select a displayed option.

The computer mouse has been through various technological advancements till now, which include physical changes, as well as modifications and enhancements in features.

"It would be wonderful if I can inspire others, who are struggling to realize their dreams, to say, if this country kid could do it, let me keep slogging away''. - Douglas Engelbart.

The mouse was invented by a US inventor, Douglas Engelbart. He is not only the inventor of the mouse, but of many other devices, including specialized machinery.

His most famous invention is of course the computer mouse, which is used all over the world. Moreover, he also contributed to the development of Internet technology, and the modern graphical user interface.

In 1964, a full-scale working model of the mouse was developed and used with a Graphical User Interface (GUI), known as 'Windows'. It was a shell made of wood, with two metal wheels. Douglas Engelbart filed for, and received a patent for this, in 1970. In the patent application, he mentioned it as an "X-Y position indicator for a display system." It was simply named 'mouse', as the wire that was connected behind, was similar to the tail of a mouse. The name stuck and till today it is known as a 'mouse', in computer parlance. Engelbart acquired more than 45 other patents to his name.

In the 1960s and 70s, while at the Stanford Research Institute's Augmentation Research Center, he concentrated on developing a system called the 'oNLine System' (NLS). Many of his inventions such as the mouse and 'Windows' GUI prototype were components of this system. In 1968, there was a public presentation, organized at the Augmentation Research Center, to display the mouse, his version of Windows, hypermedia, and video teleconferencing. This conference lasted for an hour and a half. Before the invention of the mouse, various input devices like light pens, graphic tablets, and joysticks were used as a substitute for keyboards.

In 1984, Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple, Inc., re-designed the mouse for his Macintosh computers. Douglas Engelbart received the 1997 Lemelson-MIT award, along with a prize money of $500,000, which is the highest monetary award given for any invention till date. In 1998, his name was eventually introduced in the 'National Inventors Hall of Fame'.

The invention of the mouse has proven to be extremely useful for operating computers easily. There are many user-friendly functions being introduced in the 'mice' manufactured today, thereby enhancing their usability. This small device has undergone many changes since its invention by Douglas. If it wasn't for his invention, navigating through a computer would be far from the easy task it is today.