Apple Computer's Idea Generation

Take Xerox Corporation’s Palo Alto Research Center (PARC). In maybe the greatest electronic fumble of all time, by 1979 PARC had what’s in your computer system now: graphical user interfaces, mice, windows and pull-down menus, laser printers, and distributed computing. Concerned with aggressive competition from Japan in its core photocopier business, Xerox didn’t even bother to patent these breakthroughs. Apple Computer’s Steven Jobs visited PARC in 1979, adapted many of the ideas for the Macintosh, and the rest is history.

Companies can learn from this example. Often companies spend hundreds and millions of dollars on R&D only to benefit others. Protecting intellectual property is important in today’s “Flat Outsourced World”.

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