Phonographs

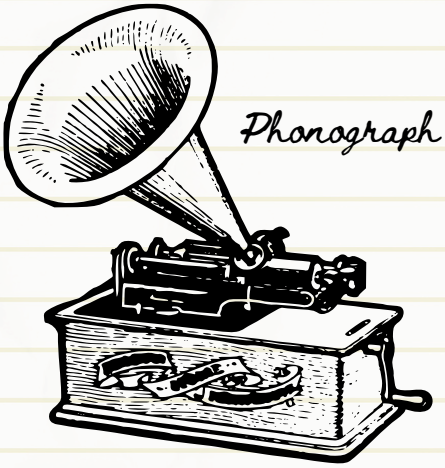
A phonograph is a device used to reproduce sound. Sounds can be converted onto a surface using a small needle that is moved by soundwaves. The needle creates small grooves in the surface. The grooves can then be traced back and the sound can be heard using a horn. Some phonographs could not only play, but also record sounds.

The phonograph was invented in 1877 by Thomas Edison (the inventor of the light bulb). The design was improved upon by Alexander Graham Bell (the inventor of the telephone). He called his invention a graphophone. The main difference between the two machines is that the phonograph originally uses wax coated tinfoil cylinders and later switched to cast wax cylinders, while the graphophone uses wax coated cardboard cylinders.

Records were originally a cylinder shape and then were later adapted into a disk shape with the invention of the gramophone by Emile Berliner. This allowed people to make copies of the same recording, using a mold. The first machine to use a disk shape was the gramophone, invented by Emile Berliner.

Fun facts!

- Edison initially invented the phonograph to be a dictation machine but it evolved to primarily be used for music.
- After Edison's first attempt at recording his voice, he cranked the lever to listen to it back. He was surprised to hear his voice play back to him, as his ideas rarely worked the first time.
- The first recording Edison shared with the public said: 'Good morning. How do you do? How do you like the phonograph?'


Phonograph


Gramophone