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Thread: [The worlds first webcam was literally invented because of... coffee.](#)

techpacket - April 22, 2026, 9:44 pm

Hello guys,

I was just grabbing a cup of coffee and realized that the only reason we have webcams today (for Zoom, streaming, whatever) is because some researchers in the 90s were too "lazy" to walk down a flight of stairs.

Back in 1991, at the University of Cambridge, there was only one coffee pot for the entire computer science department. It was located in a room called the "Trojan Room."

The problem? People would walk all the way across the building or down three floors just to find the pot empty. Total waste of time, right?

So, being the legends they were, they didn't just deal with it. They rigged up a camera, pointed it at the coffee pot, and connected it to their internal network. They wrote a program called "XCoffee" that showed a tiny 128x128 grayscale image on their screens so they could check the coffee level in real-time.

When the web actually became a thing a couple of years later, they put the stream online, and for some reason, millions of people around the world started tuning in just to watch a coffee pot in England. It became the first-ever "viral" livestream before that was even a word.

It's just a classic reminder that laziness + engineering = innovation. We didn't get webcams for security or video calls; we got them because a bunch of programmers wanted to make sure there was caffeine left before they got up from their chairs.

What's the most "over-engineered" thing you've ever built just to avoid doing a simple task? I know I'm not the only one lol.