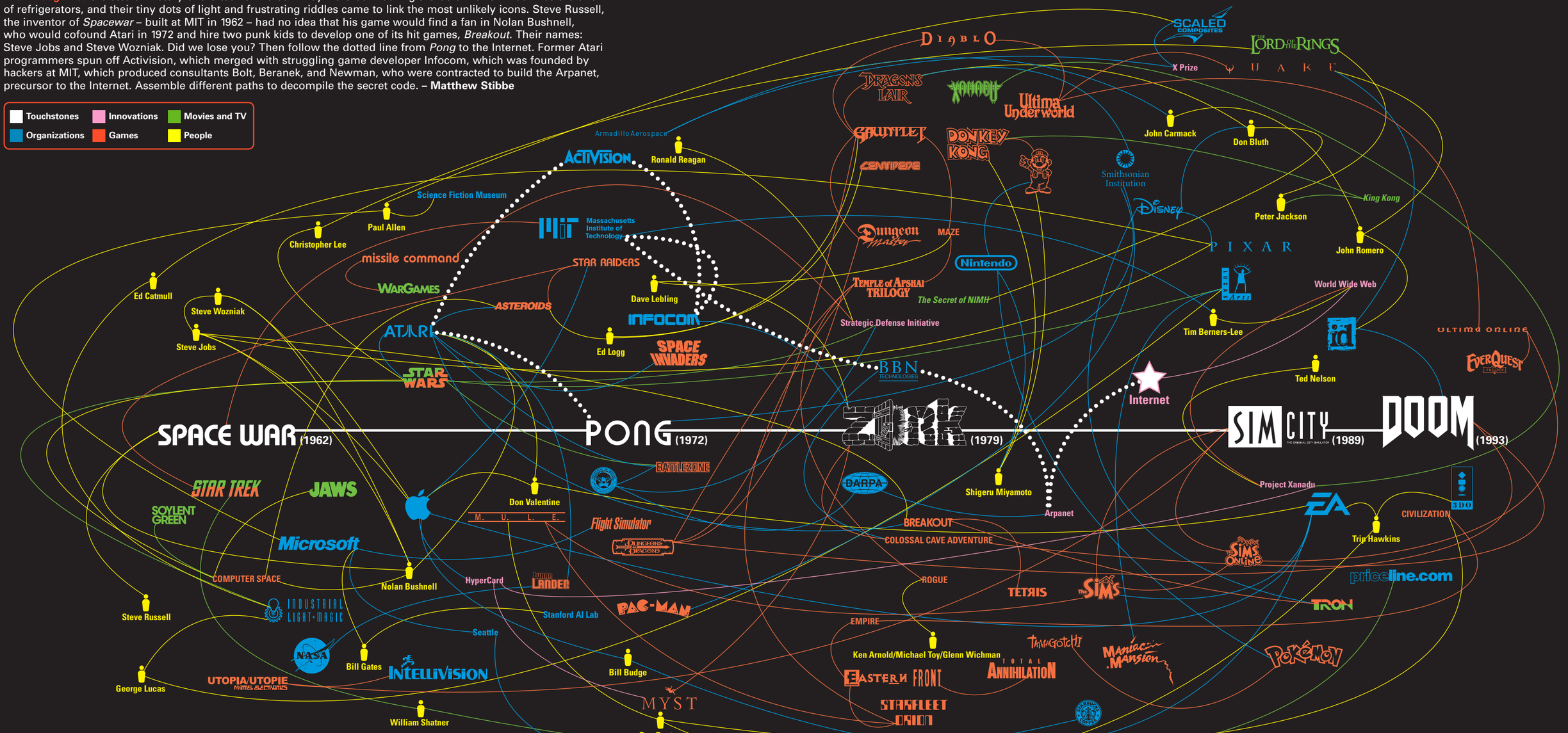
START

GAMES

How Pong Invented the Internet

Are videogames the stealth history of the tech universe? They were born during the Cold War on machines the size of refrigerators, and their tiny dots of light and frustrating riddles came to link the most unlikely icons. Steve Russell, the inventor of *Spacewar* – built at MIT in 1962 – had no idea that his game would find a fan in Nolan Bushnell, who would cofound Atari in 1972 and hire two punk kids to develop one of its hit games, *Breakout*. Their names: Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak. Did we lose you? Then follow the dotted line from *Pong* to the Internet. Former Atari programmers spun off Activision, which merged with struggling game developer Infocom, which was founded by hackers at MIT, which produced consultants Bolt, Beranek, and Newman, who were contracted to build the Arpanet, precursor to the Internet. Assemble different paths to decompile the secret code. **– Matthew Stibbe**

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