

When were generators invented

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Faraday created the first transformer in August 1831. A few months later he designed and made this simple piece of apparatus based on his ring, developing the first-ever electric generator.

Alternative name: Dynamo

Materials: Wire, cotton, iron, card, copper

Measurements: H: 280mm, W: 220mm, D: 40mm

This is Michael Faraday's generator. This apparatus consists of a tube of neutral material wound with a coil of wire, insulated in cotton, and a bar magnet.

Ten years after Faraday created the electric motor he returned to his electrical research and discovered electromagnetic induction in August 1831. A few months later he successfully conducted an experiment using this apparatus and demonstrated the relationship between magnetism and motion.

Faraday connected his apparatus to a galvanometer (an instrument that detects electrical current) and discovered that when he passed the magnet back and forth through the coil of wire, which remained stationary, the needle of the galvanometer leapt into action registering a current flowing.

As the magnet moves the lines of magnetic force repeatedly intersect with the wire exciting the electrons in the wire and generating electrical current. So if you exchanged the galvanometer with a light bulb today you would see it light up.

Virtually all electric power is produced using Faraday's principles, no matter whether the prime source of energy is coal, oil, gas, nuclear, hydro, or wind: all these fuels are used to drive a generator (or turbine) which generates the electrical current.

This object is currently on display in the Lower Ground Floor of the Faraday Museum.

The first surviving Faraday apparatus, dating from 1822, demonstrates his work in magnetic rotation. Faraday used this mercury

Made by Faraday in his laboratory in the basement of the Royal Institution in August 1831, thus creating the first ever electric

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