COLUMBIA | ENGINEERING
The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science

SHARE (http://www.addthis.com/bookmark.php?v=250&pub=xa-4a90e94e504278461)

Jordan Becker BS'84, MS'88
Vice President, BAE Systems

Jordan Becker's lifelong passion for technology got a kick start during his undergraduate years at Columbia Engineering when he jumped on an opportunity to join IBM Research's summer intern program. That exposure early on helped fuel a thriving career in tech.

"A lot of my focus has been involved in building complex software systems that deal with big data," says Becker, who is now a vice president at security and defense giant BAE Systems Inc.

The Internet certainly deals with massive amounts of data, and Becker was at the forefront of this life-changing technology due to his work at IBM. After starting at the tech behemoth in 1981, Becker carried on there even after earning his master's degree in electrical engineering at Columbia. His initial work at IBM was on signal processing algorithms and control systems for scanning tunneling microscopy.

During the early 1980s, Becker got involved in Internet research and development pursuits that focused his career for years to come.

From a technology standpoint, big data is a very exciting space because there are a lot of unsolved problems, and from a business perspective, it is an area where there's growth within the government and commercial markets.

"I was able to work on interesting programs at IBM, including the replacement for the ARPAnet Internet backbone with the National Science Foundation Internet backbone," Becker says. The Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPAnet) was the first experimental Internet pillar.

"That was the big Internet program during the '80s, and we built the router systems and management software for it at IBM."

IBM and MCI formed a new company called Advanced Network & Systems (ANS) in 1990 that Becker cofounded. That spin-off was sold to America Online (AOL) and became the Internet's core foundation for several years during the 1990s. Becker joined AOL with the acquisition of ANS in 1994 and helped run that Internet business as a subsidiary for several years.

Five years later, Becker transitioned to Science Applications International Corp., another high-tech leader in R&D and builder of systems for the U.S. government. He worked at Science Applications for 12 years as senior vice president and chief technical officer for the Information Technology and Network Services Group. These days, Becker leads a workforce of 1,200 employees as vice president and general manager of the Geospatial Intelligence (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) business area within BAE Systems Intelligence & Security.

Big data plays a pivotal role in his day-to-day functions when dealing with agencies within the Department of Defense and the U.S. Intelligence Community. "We develop software for several of the government's intelligence agencies," Becker says. His group looks at ways to access, store, and analyze data. "It's an area

of innovation. It challenges us in terms of storage systems, high-performance computing, and software processing technology."

Becker adds that from a technology standpoint, it is a very exciting space because there are a lot of unsolved problems, and from a business perspective, big data is an area where there's growth within the government and commercial markets.

Still, in broader terms, Becker believes there's much to be done in terms of big data.

"There is a lot of fundamental improvement ahead," he says. "With increasing performance requirements, there are new challenges just preventing the legacy systems from breaking down. And there are new systems required to push the envelope to leverage the new generation of powerful sensors being deployed to collect intelligence data. That's the next big step."

—by Janet Haney