

The Silicon Valley

The **Silicon Valley** is a big area in California, south of San Francisco, which is famous for being home of the best-known technology companies. The expression “Silicon Valley” appeared for the first time in 1971 on a report, whose title was “Silicon Valley, USA”, written by journalist Don Hoefler, who examined the rise of technological development in the region. Cities like San José, Santa Clara, Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Menlo Park have become world-famous thanks to the IT companies which have settled there over the years.

■ Early days

In 1951, Fred Terman, an American engineer and professor at Stanford University, established Stanford Research Park as a partnership between Stanford University and the City of Palo Alto, providing a base of operations, for both military and commercial technological innovations, for companies such as Hewlett Packard, Lockheed, and Xerox. Soon after, in 1955, William Shockley opened his own firm, Shockley Semiconductor Laboratory, in Mountain View. Two years later, in 1957, several Shockley employees resigned to start a competing firm, Fairchild Semiconductor. Fairchild employees would later go on to start many other technology companies, the most famous of which was Intel.

conglomerate: *conglomerato*
to rank: *classificarsi*
revenue: *reddito*




■ The development of the area

Bit by bit, a great number of new IT companies began to appear in the area, making it the world hub of technology. For this reason, the Silicon Valley is able to attract investors from all over the world and is home to some of the world’s richest people. The following are the biggest IT companies born and still based in the area.

- **Apple**, founded by Steve Jobs in 1976 and based in Cupertino, in the area of Santa Clara. Today, the company is estimated to have a **revenue** of more than \$390 billion a year.
- **Alphabet**, founded in 2015 and based in Mountain View, is the **conglomerate** which includes Google Inc., the most famous brand of the group.
- **Meta**, formerly known as The Facebook Inc., was founded in Menlo Park in 2012. The company owns and operates Facebook, Instagram, Threads, and WhatsApp and **ranks** among the largest information technology companies in the world.

1  Complete the table with the missing information.

Date	Event©
1951	1.
1955	2.
3.	Shockley's employees started Fairchild Semiconductor
4.	The expression "Silicon Valley" was used for the first time
1976	5.
6.	The Facebook company was founded in Menlo Park
2015	7.
8.	The Facebook company changed its name in Meta

2  Answer the questions.

1. Where is Silicon Valley located?
2. Who was the first to use that expression?
3. Where was it used for the first time?
4. What was Stanford Research Park?
5. Where is the town of Cupertino located?
6. How much is the annual Apple revenue?
7. What is the most famous company of the Alphabet conglomerate?
8. What social media applications does Meta own and operate?

3  Briefly describe how the following social media apps work.

1. WhatsApp
2. Instagram
3. Telegram
4. Threads