In 1980, Frank Mankiewicz—then president of National Public Radio—coined the word "retronym," for a term specifying the original meaning of word after a newer meaning has overtaken it. The term was popularized by New York Times “On Language” columnist William Safire in a 1992 column, where the writer wondered what people would call “regular mail” after the advent of email (snails didn’t come up). Retronyms had been used long before 1980, though; here are a few of them.

1. Quill pen

Until metal-nib pens became popular in the early 19th century, “pen” meant an implement for writing with ink made from a wing or tail feather of a large bird. The word comes from Old French penne, which in turn comes from the Latin penna, "feather."

2. Railroad car

In 1869, when Mark Twain described in The Innocents Abroad the “peculiarities of French cars,” he wasn’t talking about Citroëns that turned out to be lemons. At that time, “cars” were train cars. In the 1890s, when the term “car” hitched itself to the automobile, the retronym “railroad car” became necessary.

3. Live music

Although musical automatons, wind-up music boxes, and player pianos were around earlier, before Thomas Edison’s introduction of the phonograph cylinder in 1878 and its worldwide popularity in the following decades, if you said the evening’s entertainment would include music, everyone knew live musicians would be there to provide it.

4. Silent film

Filmmakers had experimented with coordinating recorded sound and movies since 1895, but until the improved sound quality of The Jazz Singer broke the psychological sound barrier in 1927, silent films were, for the most part, known simply as movies or “the pictures.”

5. Human computer

From the early 1600s until the 1940s, when electronic computers came along, “computer” meant a person who performs calculations. Teams of people would perform long and often tedious calculations, dividing the work so that the calculations could be done in parallel. During World War II, some women computers for the Manhattan Project became the first professional programmers of electronic computers, making the retronym necessary to describe their earlier role.

6. Snail mail

Electronic communication created the need for a profusion of retronyms. Safire may not have known the term snail mail in 1992, but back in 1982, someone posted a comment using the term as if it was already familiar to other members of his online newsgroup: “Our Unix-Wizard mail is slower than snail mail these days.”

7. Friend IRL

Before online communication, there were pen pals, but usually when you met people, for the first time or the hundredth time, it was “In Real Life.” And you “befriended,” not “friended,” them.

8. Meatspace

The place where online communication occurs is cyberspace, so some wag came up with meatspace for the place where you interact with others in the flesh.

9. Offline

Once calculating, data entry, and dating could be done online (while connected to a computer or a network), there had to be a word for doing the same while unplugged.

10. Brick(s)-and-mortar store (US) high-street shop (UK)

When we started “Click[ing] here to add to cart,” we needed a way to distinguish online stores from the kind you can walk into. North American usage alternates between “brick and mortar store” and “bricks and mortar store,” while UK speakers favo(u)r “high-street shop.” Speaking of cable-based video-on-demand, the Annapolis Capital for October 6, 1998 said, “Still, the top chains believe the traditional brick and mortar video store will be around for some time.” It’s hard to explain why “high-street shop” began its steep rise about 1970. Perhaps shops on the high street (or main street, to Americans) were being contrasted with suburban malls initially.

11. Natural language

Even before there were computer languages, there were constructed languages like Esperanto and Interlingua, so what were formerly known as “languages” became “natural languages.”

12. Vinyl disk

Offline, other changes created a need for retronyms. Those black spinning platters people used to call “records” suddenly became “vinyl disks” with the advent of compact disks.

13. Landline

When “phone” stopped meaning something tethered to the kitchen wall, we started calling the immobile phones “landlines.”

14. Business partner

Back in the day, outside of special contexts like tournament bridge and ice dancing, when someone referred to “my partner,” you thought business partner. But with changing domestic arrangements for unmarried couples of the same or opposite sexes, “partner” has come to mean life partner, and when you mean business, you’ve got to say so.

15. Film camera

In 1889, Kodak introduced a camera with roll film, replacing those tricky glass plates or low quality paper negatives. Who would ever want anything else? In 1975 Steve Sasson at Kodak built the first working CCD-based digital still camera, leading to the day in 2004 when Kodak ceased production of film cameras (formerly known as “cameras”).