The concept of writing.
The invention of script and a comfortable system of writing and archiving had bigger influence on the development of the human race than any other mental progress in the human history.

James. H. Breasted
The concept of writing / University of Lapland 2009

15,000 B.C.

3,000 B.C.

1,450 A.D.

2,000 A.D.

Prof. Michael Hardt
Long before the invention of writing, human beings expressed their thoughts through pictures, images and image sequences to memorise contexts mainly for ritual purposes in religious ceremonies (mnemonic function).

Images and image sequences are used up until our time, parallel to writing.
The first script was used by the Vinça culture (5000 b.C.). This script disappeared 3500 b.C. but it is assumed that it influenced the development of the hieroglyphs* in Egypt (early indications 4000 b.C.).

The Egyptian and later the Phoenician system used mainly consonants (up to 300).

*ιερο γλυπτόν Hieroglyphos gr. holy carvings
We speak about script
when the images of an image system
do not permit different interpretations.
Hieroglyphs are a mixture of ideograms and phonograms.
b  [letter]
beth  the house  [sg]
houses  [pl]
Independent from the development in Egypt, the Chinese developed a logographical script system, basing on pictograms and ideograms. (1500 B.C.) It is independent from the spoken language.

This systems exists still today and is the most used system on earth (more than 1 billion users).
field  
plough  
strength  
man  
strong in the field,  
using the plough in  
the field
1000 b.C. the Greeks reduced the number of consonants and added vowels. This system is still in use today.
200 b.C. the Romans learned about the Greek alphabet from the Etruscans and developed the Latin alphabet which turned out to be the most flexible system to write different languages.
Emperor Constantinus / 320 a.C.
Papyrus roll
Codex Sinaiensis
Ogham Ireland, in use until 1000 a.C.
Scandinavia, in use until 1300 a.C.
Writing by hand was a rhythmic process going along with the sound of the feather on the parchment.
hand-written
drawn
carved
typed
Long Room Dublin Trinity College
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type</th>
<th>variation</th>
<th>principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideasequence</td>
<td>Single word</td>
<td>Sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iconogram</td>
<td>Mnemogram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logogram</td>
<td>Pictogram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideogram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract logo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonogram</td>
<td>Segmental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Syllabic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alphabetical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sign in the departure area at gate 20
Bergen Flesland 2003

ideogram
pictogram
alphabetical phonogram
logogram
continuous process

680  Arabic becomes writing system for the Islamic world: One god, one religion, one script.

1480  Korean kings promote the development of an own script: Han Gul (officially recognised in 20th century).

1923  Turkey introduces Latin as official script system.

1925 - 1938  Russia changes from Cyrillic to Latin and back to Cyrillic again.
languages (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>world-wide</td>
<td>5103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa + South America</td>
<td>1000 (approx.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

biggest languages

1. Chinese
2. English
3. Spanish
4. Russian
5. Hindi
6. German

100 biggest

90% of the world

written languages

663 (=13%)
Writing is no longer the only and most important medium to handle information within our high-tech society.

Other technologies have left writing far behind.

A society which is purely operating with writing is hopelessly overaged.
New technologies replace the old art of handwriting.

Today we use the key-board, tomorrow we will talk to our computer, the writing will be done automatically.

The information networks permit an information flow independent from time and place.

There are no borders on our planet except script systems and languages.
The new technologies have been invented in the cultural area of the Latin alphabet and English language which now dominate the global communication.

Do we all have to learn English and write the Latin alphabet?

Can we preserve minority languages and script-systems, take advantage of the diversity and variety?

How shall we organise the global visual communication?
What are we gaining when we give up our cultural achievement of writing?

Are we ruled by technology or are we ruling it?
The alphabetic labyrinth
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1995 Thames and Hudson Ltd. London
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2002 Verlag Hermann Schmidt Mainz
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1998 Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft
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