The X window system turned 38 years old this week, and although it has more rivals than ever, it is still the go-to for a graphical desktop on Unix.

The first public release of the X window system, according to Robert W. Scheifler's announcement, was 19 June 1984. X itself was a rewrite of an older windowing system called W, which ran on a research microkernel OS called the V-System (V?W?X, you see.) Both the V-System and the W window system seem to have now been lost, although Bryan Lunduke has an interesting history.

About the only relic that you can see today, if you're curious, is the V-System manual [PDF].

Just two years after launch, X had already reached version 10 ? the oldest point release showing in the release history on the X.org Foundation web page. X11R1 was introduced in 1987, and with some modifications, that's what the world is still using today.

That is quite a feat of longevity, considering that that's the same year as OS/2 1.0 came out, as well as Acorn's Archimedes range.

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[2] https://www.theregister.com/2022/06/22/the_x_window_system_just/