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Amanda

Humble beginnings from an unexpected source. Back in the 90's two men, Dave Hampton and Caleb Chung spent eighteen months, nine designing and another nine creating, what we now know as the original furby. But where did this concept come from? While beloved by children from their initial launch in 1998, if you ask any adults, a not inconsequential number of them will admit they find the children's toy to be creepy or unsettling. But why is that? In an effort to discover how a toy could be so divisive, we went on a deep dive to get to the bottom of the little fuzzy electronic.

Dave Hampton, in an interview, stated that he got the idea for the furby [“after seeing a Tamagotchi...at a toy fair.”](#) This was ironic, as he also included his own distaste for the inspiring toy. There seemed to be a connection between not liking a design but seeing the potential to make something better.

Caleb Chung, on the other hand, has been noticeably scrubbed from the internet, save for the name he's built for himself as one of the creators of the furby. During our research, we did manage to get in contact with him, but he declined participating in an

interview. However, within the email he did mention that his inspiration came from an old movie that could no longer be found. He recalled, “it utterly terrified me as a kid. It was a long time before I felt comfortable leaving my toys out, which I’m sure my parents *loved*.” Chung reported that he did not remember the name of said movie, and thus, “an interview couldn’t tell you any more than I wrote here.”

Fortunately, the description Chung gave was enough to point us towards another lead. He had stated the movie was something about puppets, and it was “surprisingly graphic.” This launched a deep dive into this alleged piece of media, and we stumbled onto an old forum of people who remembered a movie called “The Last Day of Summer.”

Both Chung and Hampton refused to elaborate any more on this topic, but it seems to explain the origins as well as the difference in how modern kids receive the toy as opposed to their parents who bear the shadows of scars they can barely remember the source of. Perhaps this is also why, as the toy is rebranded again and again, its design has shifted from “unsettling” to extra cutesy- much more suitable, design-wise, for its target demographic.

Amanda. (2011). *Furby*. Flickr. Retrieved 2001, from

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/66376272@N07/6137468129/in/photostream/>.

[https://official-furby.fandom.com/wiki/A\\_Chat\\_with\\_Dave\\_Hampton](https://official-furby.fandom.com/wiki/A_Chat_with_Dave_Hampton)