# Ahead of Their Time

Sometimes ideas for inventions sound crazy because they are ahead of their time. One communication idea that people thought was crazy when it first appeared is now used all over the world. The idea was the basis of the first fax machine, and it was invented way back in 1856.

Caselli called his machine a pantelegraph. It was almost 2 m tall.

## How Does It Work?

A message is written with ink on a metal plate.

2 The plate is placed under a pendulum.

3 The pendulum's metal tip swings over the plate, touching the surface.

4 When the tip touches an uninked section, it causes an **electrical circuit** to be completed.

5 This sends power down a telegraph line to a pendulum on the receiving machine.

6 The receiving pendulum swings, causing the tip of the receiver to move over chemically treated paper.

7 Each electrical impulse discolours the paper, leaving an exact image of the original message.

**Q: What was the best invention in the world?**
***A: The wheel. It got everything rolling!***

Giovanni Caselli, an Italian priest, invented a large, heavy machine that could send and receive an actual copy of written notes or pictures. His neighbours called him crazy. Some people thought he was using an evil form of magic. The French government did use the machine for a few years, but then it disappeared. Maybe it cost too much money. Or maybe it was just a good idea ahead of its time.

Sample Page © Badger Learning