Brief History of the Internet

What is the Internet?

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2001 describes the Internet as “an international information network linking computers, accessible to the public via modem links.”

The Dictionary of Sociology 1998 provides the following information – “A global network of computers (also known as the World-Wide Web) which allows instantaneous access to an expanding number of individual Web sites offering information about practically anything and everything—including the contents of daily newspapers, the price of goods in local shopping malls, library holdings, commodity prices, sports news and gossip, eroticism, and so-called chat-rooms (by means of which people can communicate with each other on-line about their interests, hobbies, and opinions).

The Internet is a product of the Cold War. It was originally developed by the Government of the United States during the 1970s as a means of sharing information and protecting communications in the event of a nuclear attack. During the 1980s it developed quickly, first into an academic exchange network, then as a means of mass electronic communication available in principle to anyone having access to a personal computer and a telephone line.”

Brief Internet Time-Line

1945 Vannevar Bush wrote an article about a device for making and following links between documents on microfiche
1957 USSR launched the first artificial satellite, Sputnik
1958 The USA Department of Defense formed the Advanced Research Projects Agency (APRA) to ensure that the United States was a leader in military science and technology – this included communication projects
1960s Research in USA on establishments of computer networks for sharing military information resulting in the establishment of ARPANET in 1967
1967 National Physical Laboratory (NPL) in England developed the NPL network – an experiment in packet switching
1970 First cross country link installed between computers in USA
1971 Ray Tomlinson invented email program to send messages across a distributed network
Project Gutenberg was started with the purpose of making copyright-free works, including books, electronically available
1972 Improvements made to email - @ sign introduced; could now list, file, forward and respond to messages
First computer to computer chat session
telnet protocol introduced – enabled logging on to a remote computer
1973 First international connections to ARPANET from London via Norway
ftp (file transfer protocol) introduced – method of transferring files between Internet sites
1974 First ARPANET mailing list
1975 Satellite links established across two oceans (to Hawaii and UK)
1970s By mid 1970s Australian universities were creating networks – files exchanged between computers at University of Melbourne and University of Wollongong
1981 BITNET network between USA universities established
More networks developed in Europe
1983 European Academic and Research Network (EARN) established
1984  Domain Name system introduced
1987  Email link established between Germany and China
1989  AARNET - Australian Academic Research Network - set up by Australian Vice Chancellors Committee and CSIRO
      First link between Australia and NSFNET via Hawaii on 23 June
1990  Archie was released – Archie created (archived) lists of ftp sites on the Internet
      The World comes on-line (world.std.com) became the first commercial provider of Internet dial-up access
1991  Gopher released – created a collection of menus of sites on the Internet
      World Wide Web released – the protocol developed by Tim Berners-Lee and others in Europe was based on hypertext
1992  Now more than 1,000,000 hosts on the Internet
      Veronica, a gopher-space search tool, was released – Veronica sites produced searchable menus of gopher menus
      World Bank came on-line
      The term "surfing the Internet" was first used
      Mosaic – a graphical browser – was introduced (a forerunner of Netscape)
      Businesses and media began to take notice of the Internet
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1994  The first banner ads appeared
      Mosaic Netscape released which became Netscape Navigator
      Opera browser released
1995  RealAudio, an audio streaming technology, sound files near real-time
      Traditional online dial-up systems such as CompuServe began to provide Internet access
      Internet related companies were first listed on the stock exchange
      Telstra took over the Internet infrastructure in Australia
      First version of Microsoft Internet Explorer released
      Yahoo released as a hierarchical search engine
1996  Internet users judged a performance by ice skaters - the first time a television sport show's outcome was determined by its viewers
      Google began as a research project at Stanford University
1998  Google launched as a company
      Blogger launched in 1999
2000  Australian government endorsed the transfer of authority for the .au domain to auDA
2001  Forwarding email in Australia became illegal with the passing of the Digital Agenda Act as it was seen as a technical infringement of personal copyright
2003  The first official Swiss online election took place in Anières
      Del.icio.us (social bookmarking site) established 2003
2004  First version of Mozilla Firefox released (an adaption of Netscape)
      Facebook launched
      Flickr established
2006  Twitter created
      • History of the Internet (Wikipedia) - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Internet
      • For a detailed list of Internet events see Hobbes' Internet Timeline - www.zakon.org/robert/internet/timeline
      • A brief history of the Internet http://www.walthowe.com/navnet/history.html
        This includes the Internet Learning Tree with articles about the Internet plus a glossary of Internet terms
      • A brief history of the Internet in Australia
      • http://www.rogerclarke.com/II/OzI04.html