Internet

The Internet is a global system of interconected computer networks that use the standard Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to serve several billion users worldwide. It is a network of networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks, of local to global scope, that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies. The Internet carries an extensive range of information resources and services, such as the inter-linked hypertext documents of the World Wide Web (WWW), the infrastructure to support email, and peer-to-peer networks.

Most traditional communications media including telephone, music, film, and television are being reshped or redefined by the Internet, giving birth to new services such as voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and Internet Protocol television (IPTV). Newspaper, book and other print publishing are adapting to website technology, or are reshaped into blogging and web feeds. The Internet has enabled and accelerated new forms forms of human interactions through instant messaging, Internet forums, and social networking. Online shopping has boomed both for major retail outlets and small artisans and traders. Business-to-business and financial services on the Internet affect supply chains across entire industries.

The origins of the Internet reach back to research commissioned by the United States government in the 1960s to build robust, fault-tolerant communication via computer networks. While this work, together with work in the United Kingdom and France, led to important precursor networks, they were not the Internet. There is no consensus on the exact date when the modern Internet came into being, but sometime in the early to mid-1980s is considered reasonable.

The Internet has made possible entirely new forms of social interaction, activities and organizing, thanks to its basic features such as widespread usability and access.

Social networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace have created a new form of socialization and interaction. Users of these sites are able to add a wide variety of items to their personal pages, to indicate common interests, and to connect with others. It is also possible to find a large circle of existing acquaintances, especially if a site allows users to utilize their real names, and to allow communication among large existing groups of people.