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History of the Internet

From ARPANET to the modern web — the key milestones that connected the world.

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1969-10-29

First ARPANET message

[arpanet, milestone]

The first message sent over ARPANET from UCLA to Stanford Research Institute. The system crashed after transmitting "LO" — the intended message was "LOGIN".

1971-01-01

First email sent

[email, communication]

Ray Tomlinson sends the first network email and introduces the @ symbol to separate user from machine name.

1973-01-01

TCP/IP proposed

[protocol, tcp]

Vint Cerf and Bob Kahn publish the foundational paper describing TCP, the protocol that would become the backbone of the internet.

1983-01-01

ARPANET switches to TCP/IP

[protocol, milestone]

The official switchover from NCP to TCP/IP marks the birth of the modern internet. All hosts must convert by this date.

1989-03-12

Tim Berners-Lee proposes the World Wide Web

[www, cern]

A memo titled "Information Management: A Proposal" is submitted at CERN, describing a system of hyperlinked documents.

1991-08-06

First website goes live

[www, website]

Tim Berners-Lee publishes the first web page at info.cern.ch, explaining the World Wide Web project.

1993-04-30

CERN makes the web free

[open-source, cern]

CERN releases the World Wide Web software into the public domain, ensuring anyone can build on it.

1993-11-01

Mosaic browser released

[browser, mosaic]

NCSA Mosaic becomes the first popular graphical web browser, making the internet accessible to non-technical users.

1994-07-05

Amazon founded

[ecommerce, startup]

Jeff Bezos incorporates Amazon as an online bookstore in his garage in Bellevue, Washington.

1995-09-04

eBay launched

[ecommerce, auction]

Pierre Omidyar launches AuctionWeb (later eBay). The first item sold is a broken laser pointer for $14.83.

1998-09-04

Google founded

[search, startup]

Larry Page and Sergey Brin incorporate Google in a garage in Menlo Park, California.

2001-01-15

Wikipedia launched

[wiki, knowledge]

Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger launch Wikipedia, a free encyclopedia that anyone can edit.

2004-02-04

Facebook launched

[social, startup]

Mark Zuckerberg launches TheFacebook from his Harvard dorm room.

2005-02-14

YouTube launched

[video, startup]

Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim activate the domain youtube.com.

2006-07-15

Twitter launched publicly

[social, microblog]

Jack Dorsey's microblogging platform opens to the public after months of internal use at Odeo.

2007-01-09

iPhone announced

[mobile, apple]

Steve Jobs unveils the iPhone at Macworld, calling it "a revolutionary product that changes everything."

2008-01-01

Mobile internet surpasses desktop in many countries

[mobile, trend]

The shift to mobile browsing accelerates globally, fundamentally changing how the web is designed.

2016-11-01

Mobile traffic surpasses desktop globally

[mobile, milestone]

For the first time, more than 50% of all web traffic worldwide comes from mobile devices.