

Timeline of the Internet

How four linked US research computers grew into a network used by about 6 billion people.

Oct 1969

ARPANET's first words

UCLA sends the first message to the Stanford Research Institute. The system crashes after two letters: "LO".

1972

Email arrives

Ray Tomlinson writes the first basic email software, and ARPANET is shown to the public.

Jan 1983

Switch to TCP/IP

ARPANET adopts Cerf and Kahn's TCP/IP rules, letting different networks join into one internet.

Mar 1989

The web is proposed

Tim Berners-Lee, at CERN, proposes a system for sharing linked documents.

1990

First website

HTML, HTTP and URLs are defined, and info.cern.ch goes live as the first web server.

Apr 1993

The web is made free

CERN puts the web software in the public domain, so anyone can build on it.

Aug 1995

India goes online

VSNL launches India's first public internet service on Independence Day.

2025

6 billion users

About 74% of the world's population uses the internet, says the ITU.



Internet or web?

The internet is the network that links computers. The web is one service on it: pages joined by links. Email and messaging apps use the internet too.