



What is the Internet?



The Internet is a massive computer **network**. It links millions of computers around the world and allows their users to share information. "Internet" stands for "Interconnected Network of Networks".

Development of the Internet

Before the Internet was developed, the information on one computer could not be accessed by another computer. It was this problem that led the United States Department of Defense to fund the Advanced Research Projects Agency in a bid to develop an effective networking system.

The US Department of Defense was concerned that an enemy strike or war could destroy or isolate vital information if it could only be accessed from the one computer. In 1969, the Advanced Research Projects Agency's ARPAnet was launched. It involved connecting a computer at the University of California in Los Angeles with a computer at the Stanford Research Institute a few hundred kilometres away. The first message sent was "login", and it resulted in the Stanford computer **crashing**.

It was not until the 1980s that personal computers began to hook up to the Internet. This widened the use of the Internet. Instead of only being used to share research and academic information, companies and individuals began to see the potential of the Internet.



Today's computers developed from mechanical calculators.

World Wide Web

Other than the initial networking of computers, the major development in the Internet came in 1990 with the creation of the World Wide Web (WWW). The World Wide Web enables users to find their way around the Internet, to send documents back and forth, to post their own webpages on the Internet and to find other pages easily.

History of the computer

Without the computer, there would be no Internet. Computers evolved from mechanical calculators that were being invented as far back as the 1600s. The first successful attempt to store and sort a large amount of information came in 1890 when an American, Herman Hollerith, developed a machine to calculate the results of the national **census**. The language used in computer data processing was developed during World War II to help decode coded information. The first personal computers available to the public went on sale in 1974.