Internet

The **Internet** is the global system of interconnected [computer networks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_network) that use the [Internet protocol suite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_protocol_suite) (TCP/IP) to link billions of devices worldwide. It is a *network of networks* that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope, 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](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypertext) documents and [applications](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_application) of the [World Wide Web](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Wide_Web) (WWW), [electronic mail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Email), [telephony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voice_over_IP), and [peer-to-peer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer-to-peer) networks for [file sharing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File_sharing).

The origins of the Internet date back to research commissioned by the [United States federal government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_government_of_the_United_States) in the 1960s to build robust, fault-tolerant communication via computer networks.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet#cite_note-1) The primary precursor network, the [ARPANET](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ARPANET), initially served as a backbone for interconnection of regional academic and military networks in the 1980s.

Although the Internet has been widely used by [academia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academia) since the 1980s, the [commercialization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commercialization) incorporated its services and technologies into virtually every aspect of modern life. Internet use grew rapidly in the West from the mid-1990s and from the late 1990s in the [developing world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developing_world).[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet#cite_note-4) In the 20 years since 1995, Internet use has grown 100-times, measured for the period of one year, to over one third of the [world population](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet#cite_note-5)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet#cite_note-stats-6)

Most traditional communications media, including telephony and television, are being reshaped or redefined by the Internet, giving birth to new services such as [Internet telephony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_telephony) and [Internet television](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_television). Newspaper, book, and other print publishing are adapting to [website](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_site) technology, or are reshaped into [blogging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blogging) and [web feeds](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_feed). The entertainment industry was initially the fastest growing segment on the Internet. The Internet has enabled and accelerated new forms of personal interactions through [instant messaging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant_messaging), [Internet forums](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_forum), and [social networking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_network_service). [Online shopping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_shopping) has grown exponentially both for major retailers and small [artisans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artisan) and traders.

The Internet has no centralized governance in either technological implementation or policies for access and usage; each constituent network sets its own policies.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet#cite_note-7) Only the overreaching definitions of the two principal [name spaces](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Name_space) in the Internet, the [Internet Protocol address](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IP_address) space and the [Domain Name System](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domain_Name_System) (DNS), are directed by a maintainer organization, the [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Corporation_for_Assigned_Names_and_Numbers) (ICANN).