Then: The Invention of the Internet

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☰ WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will focus on the internet. The internet was built on every previous communication revolution and, in many ways, brought them all together in one place. The internet is a tool we can use to share our thoughts and ideas in any form we want to virtually anyone we want, at instant speeds. The internet has radically transformed how most of us live our lives and it has done so in a remarkably short period of time. Specifically, this lesson will cover::

1. The Invention of the Internet

📋 BEFORE YOU START

How did the internet change the world?

1. The Invention of the Internet

The invention and adoption of the internet is one of the biggest breakthroughs in the history of communication technology. This technological advancement arrived over the course of decades of development in the late 20th century, with the World Wide Web being introduced in the early '90s. The first internet browser, Mosaic, was created in 1992, making it possible for people without special technical skills to search for information online. Also in 1992, Congress permitted business projects on the internet (History.com, 2019). Given the new ease of access and commercial possibilities, the internet took off from there, growing to what it is today—a system used by about half of the world's population (International Telecommunication Union, n.d.).

The internet changed not only how fast we could receive information, but also what kind of information we could access. Anyone can publish anything on the internet, and many people do. But before the internet, writing presented to the public usually went through some type of editorial process first. This approach continues to hold true for types of media that predate the internet—newspaper editors fact-check articles, television news reporters carefully compose their scripts, and radio news broadcasters conduct a great deal of research for their shows. However, these types of quality controls are not necessarily built into all internet publications. (Now is a good time to remember what you read in previous weeks about credibility and identifying reliable sources.)

Despite the ongoing issue of determining the credibility of material found online, there are enormous benefits to communicating via the internet. For one, the fact that many different people can publish and share information means that we have access to more perspectives from a wider range of voices than ever before.

Groups of people who traditionally have not had a loud voice in society now have a platform to share their messages.

We also use the internet for one-on-one communication with friends, family, and colleagues around the world —which keeps us in touch and up-to-date in a way that hasn't always been possible. The internet changed the nature of how we work, how we live, and how we find information, and most likely will continue to do so well into the future.

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10 SKILLS ▸ 💬 **Communication: Skill Reflect**

Throughout history, technology has radically changed the way we convey information and connect with each other. In many ways, it has made our world smaller as new communication technologies have impacted virtually all areas of our lives—from politics to art to how we find love (hello, dating sites!). It has even altered how we study history! (Think about how you're taking this course online!) How has technology changed the way you communicate?

Much like the printing press, radio, and television, the internet has monumentally shifted how the world communicates and shares information. Next up, we'll consider what this means for the future.

📋 **SUMMARY**

In this lesson, you learned how the internet has affected multiple aspects of how we communicate and share information. **The invention of the Internet** has expanded the communications revolutions of the past, by making information-sharing even faster, more universal, and more equitable.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: Strategic Education, Inc. 2020. Learn from the Past, Prepare for the Future.

REFERENCES

International Telecommunication Union. (n.d.). *Statistics* [Infographic]. Retrieved September 22, 2020, from **www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx**

The Invention of the Internet. (2019, October 28). History.com. **www.history.com/topics/inventions/invention-of-the-internet**