Dear Internet,

School taught me that you started out as ARPANET: two computer systems (specifically, UCLA’s Network Measurement Center and SRI’s NLS system) connected together way back on October 29, 1969. I recently learned the TCP/IP standard wasn’t adopted until March 1982 and that access to the TCP/IP network wasn’t expanded until 1986 when the NSF provided access for researchers to connect to supercomputer sites in the United States at the blazing speed of 56 kbit/s.  
  
Surprisingly, commercial ISPs didn’t come around until the late 1980s and early 1990s, at which point the ARPANET was decommissioned.

I remember in the early 1990s that using a computer to instant message someone on the other side of the world was a big deal because that was as close to real time as possible without racking up a major long distance bill on the landline. Although, I am curious what the latency was back then…

These days, you are providing us a way to wirelessly use pocket computers to check in to our favorite coffee shop, stream music and video while laughing at dank memes on social media, and pay our tab with a tap using our virtual wallet.

You connect so many computers together that a new IP protocol had to get standardized to support them all as they continue to grow in number. Everything from a white paper on cutting edge research to an old blog about cats have their own IP address. Not to mention all the people connecting to read more about them.

In the future, we will likely expect more from you as an increasing number of Internet users expect wireless networks to handle as much traffic as broadband networks and as laptops and desktops are either relegated to gaming or office work.  
  
Perhaps we will rely on you even more as companies forgo conventional desktops and, instead, opt for thin clients made of a graphics card and Ethernet card with multiple screens that connect to a cloud server instance that instantiates only on user login, then loads user settings and workspaces from a centralized server. Then, when the user is done, saves instance data back to the centralized server and then deactivates to save resources.

Some systems already implement you using light out in the open air because data is transmitted faster that way. In addition to the huge bundles of cable that stretch across the ocean floor to connect both sides of the world together.

I look forward to what you will become in the future – even if it is dangerous, high-powered laser beams and even danker memes.

Sincerely,

Jose

Works consulted: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet