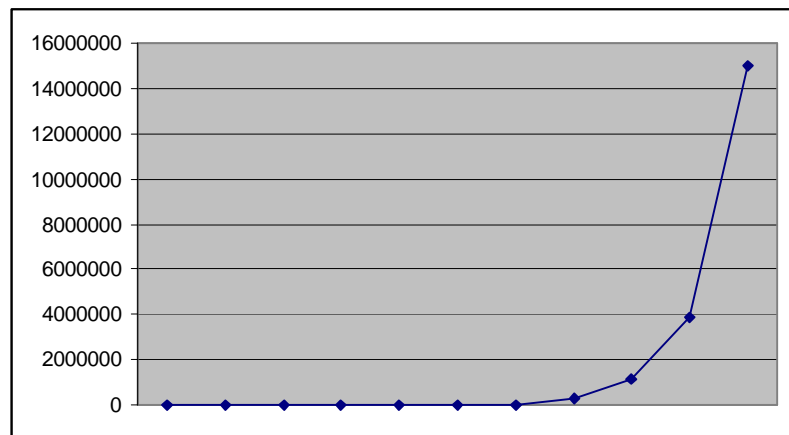


# The History & Structure of The Internet – Research Document

The Internet is an enormous global network of millions of computers and hundreds of millions of users. It wasn't always such a large network.

The table and chart below show the growth of the Internet. From a very small network it has grown to an enormous size, spanning the whole globe.

Year	Hosts (Computers)
1968	4
1972	23
1976	111
1981	213
1983	562
1985	1961
1987	28174
1990	313000
1992	1136000
1994	3864000
1996	15000000



To ensure that all the computers on the Internet can communicate with each other common standards, called *protocols* have been developed. To ensure that these standards are available to everyone, they are openly published so that any company can enter the marketplace and compete. These standards must not be allowed into private ownership as this would allow a private organisation to effectively 'own' the internet.

The most important of the protocols that must be followed are the protocols for computer addresses and names. The addresses are important because all computers need a unique number to communicate on the internet – just like telephone numbers. Since most humans have difficulty dealing with numbers only, names can also be used. Since the names also must be unique, agreement on how the names are allocated is also important.

Since the Internet is intended to be an international network, no one country should have complete ownership of it either.

To this end a series of international committees and organisations decide upon the standards to be followed. Individual members/users of the Internet can actually vote to elect members of some of the committees.

The original creators of the Internet were scientists. Scientists tend not to take 'political' views of things. Instead they will tend to think in terms of right and wrong. In the world of technology, thankfully, right and wrong are clearly distinguishable – because 'right' works and 'wrong' doesn't.

As such many of the standards developed are geared towards reliability and dependability, rather than towards any political goal. Most scientists and engineers will back away very quickly from a wrong or failed idea, where politicians (non-scientists) may defend the idea for fear of losing face.

As long as the scientists and engineers 'run' the Internet, rather than countries or companies, and the standards are kept open the Internet will continue to grow and operate smoothly.

## Suggested reading:

The growth of the internet:

- ✂ <http://www.davesite.com/webstation/net-history.shtml>
- ✂ <http://encarta.msn.co.uk/find/Concise.asp?z=1&pg=2&ti=781531616&MSID=1c4dff8798814eba872c686b691bcbe2>

Official Sites:

- ✂ <http://www.icann.org/general/structure.htm>
- ✂ <http://www.isoc.org>

On-line encyclopaedias:

- ✂ <http://www.webopaedia.com/>
- ✂ <http://www.howstuffworks.com/>
- ✂ <http://www.howstuffworks.com/internet-infrastructure.htm>

Who Owns The Internet?

- ✂ <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=who+owns+the+internet%3F>
- ✂ <http://www.cs.utah.edu/~scook/tech/tech12.htm>

Who Runs The Internet?

- ✂ <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=Who+Runs+The+Internet%3F>
- ✂ <http://www.press.umich.edu/jep/works/node8.html>
- ✂ <http://www.howstuffworks.com/framed.htm?parent=internet-infrastructure.htm&url=http://www.isoc.org>

You can look for other documents on the Internet yourself at any of the major search engines.