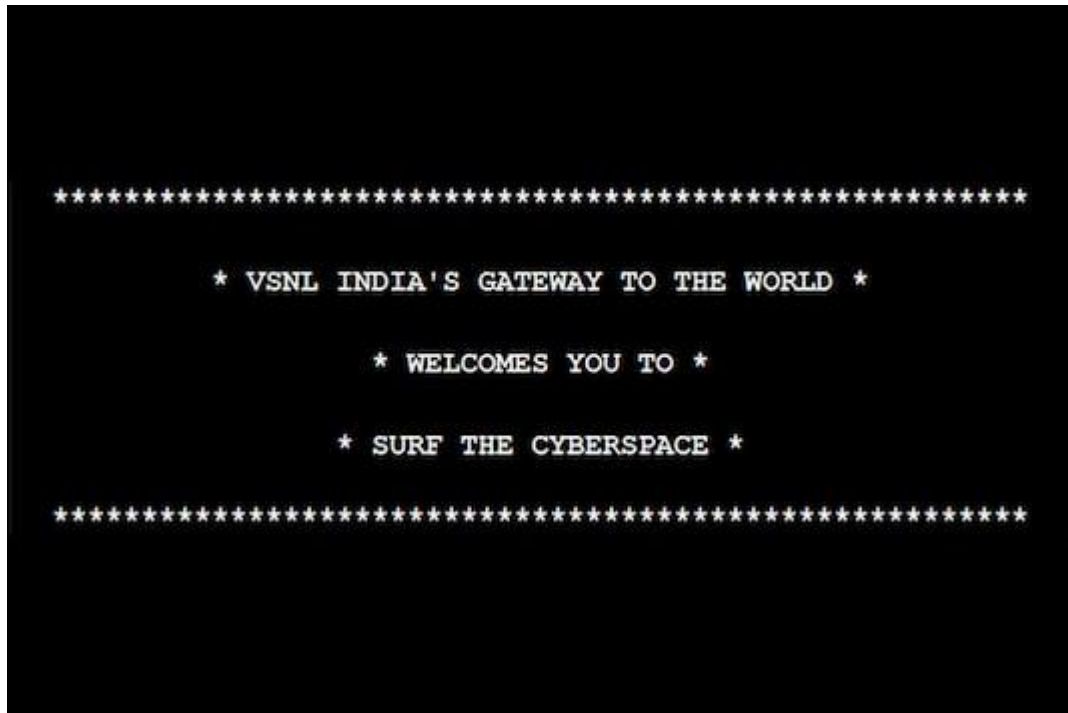


20 years of Internet in India: On August 15, 1995 public Internet access was launched in India



It was on August 15, 1995 Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited formally launched the Internet for the Indian public.



Deepali Moray

-
- IBNLIVE.COM
 - **LAST UPDATED:** AUGUST 15, 2015, 7:48 AM IST
-

SHARE THIS:

It was on August 15, 1995 Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) formally launched the Internet for the Indian public (IBNLive is commemorating the 20th anniversary of the momentous event with [a special series](#)).

Today, it has been exactly [20 years since the Internet entered our country's e-sphere](#) and has been powering our lives in ways unimaginable back then. From education, banking, shopping, to the notorious hacks and scams; Internet has become ubiquitous. It has moved from the [bulky desktops in cyber cafés](#) and arrived [into the palms of people](#); the future looks even more sweeping with balloon Internet complete with flying cars and virtual reality zones where all that is needed to explore is – human imagination.

ADVERTISING

The [early history of Internet in India](#), in fact, dates back to 1986 when it was launched in the form of Educational Research Network (ERNET) meant only for the use of educational and research communities. It was a joint undertaking of the Department of Electronics (DOE) of the Government of India, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which provides technical assistance to developing nations.

There was also the NICNet that began in 1988, the network was operated by the National Informatics Centre with the purpose of improving communications between government institutions.

Bringing the technology to India wasn't exactly a smooth process; rather marred by negative criticism and publicity when it was first launched as Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) Gateway Internet Access Service (GIAS).

People who spearheaded the digital revolution included tech evangelists like Kanakasabapathy Pandyan, VSNL chairman BK Syngal, technology director at VSNL Amitabh Kumar, and other corporate honchos, and also an iconic Hindi cinema personality - Shammi Kapoor. Bringing them together was their love for computers and the digital revolution they could foresee in Internet.

ADVERTISING

The Gateway Internet Access Service (GIAS) was launched on August 15, 1995 in Bombay (now Mumbai), Delhi, Calcutta (now Kolkata) and Madras (now Chennai). The initial launch of Internet services in India was with [a rate of Rs 25,000 for a 250 hour TCP/IP account for commercial organisations at 9.6 kbps speed](#).

The official launch of the Internet for the Indian public ended up being a big goof up as VSNL had no estimation about the hidden demand, this was coupled with hardware and network issues. However, post the botched launch, VSNL was able to add 10,000 Internet users in just six months.

Twenty years later, according to the latest data released by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), there are a total of 302.35 million Internet subscribers in India.