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Reading Response: "The World Wide Web," Tim Berners-Lee

Tim Berners-Lee's original intention for the World Wide Web was to build a network of knowledge and information "that is as easy to update as to read" (797). It is safe to say that the web has accomplished just that, and so much more, since this article was published over two decades ago. By 1994, Berners-Lee had accomplished the first half of that goal, which aimed at building a pool of human knowledge. Since then, however, the World Wide Web has easily become a space of universal collaboration that is not only easy to update, but also *invites* and *encourages* such contributions from users worldwide. After reading this article, one statement stood out the most:

*"The availability of browsers and the availability of quality information have provoked each other" (796).*

There is so much truth in the above statement today, which only proves the Web's accomplishment of Berners-Lee's initial goal. Anyone with access to the Web also has access to endless resources on any given topic. This wide availability further encourages users to contribute new information or update existing information on the Web. These behaviors result in a cycle of continuous knowledge sharing, consulting and editing that was only made possible through Berners-Lee's World Wide Web.

Prior to reading this article, I was unfamiliar with the other hypertext systems available in the 1990s (i.e. WAIS and Gopher). I now wonder how those systems both progressed after this article was published, and at what point it became clear that the World Wide Web and HTTP would become the dominant protocol. This article also taught me the meaning behind "/" and "?" when expressed in URLs; the former represents a hierarchical space and the latter separates the address of an object from a query operation applied to it. Considering my frequent exposure to URLs, I had always assumed I fully understood the purpose and organization of their actual notations.

One particular paragraph in Berners-Lee's article addressed HTML+ as an "under development...enriched version of HTML" (795). It is interesting to compare Web developments and upgrades from 1994 to 2015. Twenty years ago, Berners-Lee was excited at the prospect of HTML+, which he claimed would allow "for more sophisticated online documentation, form templates for the entry of data by users, tables and mathematical formulae." I can't help but wonder what 1994 Tim would think of the progression of the W3, from HTML 2.0 to HTML5. I was also interested by the fact that the article made no mention of styling or

formatting on the Web. I have always preferred writing CSS over HTML (although I understand the importance of the latter to functionality), so this article sparked my interest regarding the timeline of styling languages. After some research and to my surprise, I learned that CSS was initially introduced in December of 1996, only a couple of years after this article was published.