



INTRODUCTION

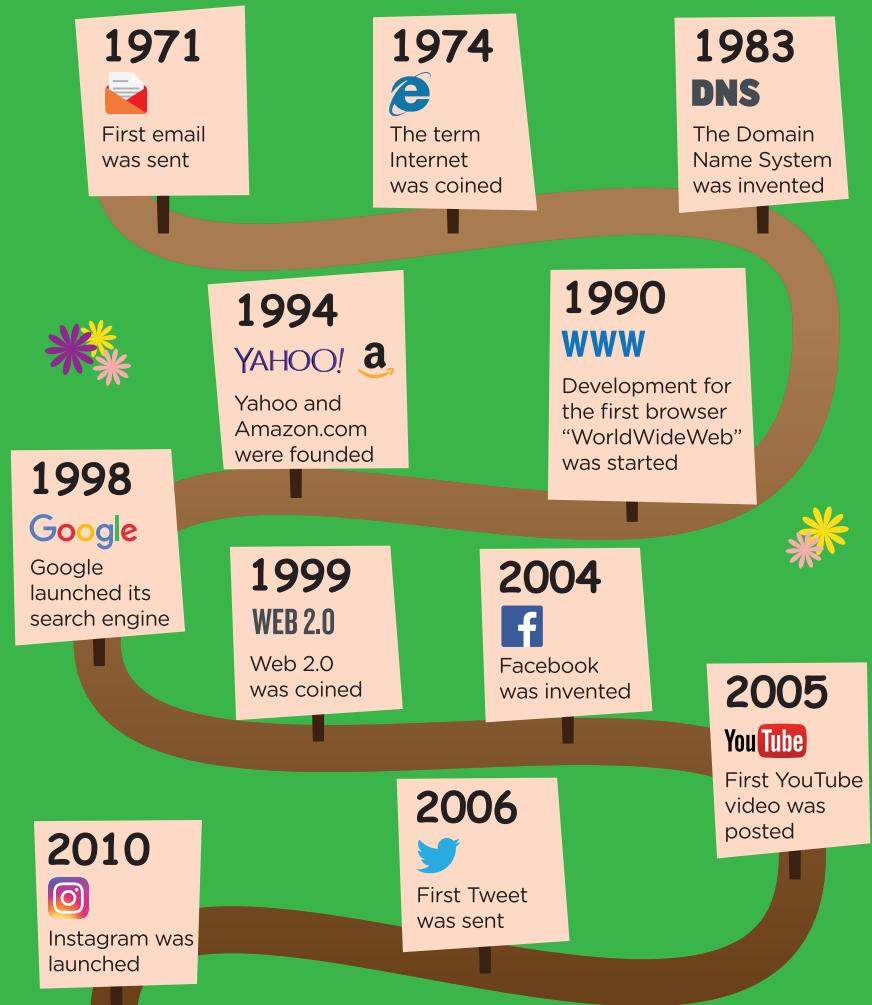
The Internet has evolved into a navigational, transactional and social tool. Since the 1990s, the Internet has become a household name as it is used widely as part of modern living for people of all ages. Now, the emergence of Web 2.0 and social media spaces, powered by the proliferation of smart devices, have changed the way people from around the world connect, work, learn, create, enjoy and even laugh.¹

Beginning as a tool for navigational purposes, users can now find information in a one-way communication stream via the Internet. With advanced software programming, the Internet allows users to perform transactions such as making purchases, asking questions, getting responses and finding information easily.²

Through high-speed connections and better infrastructure, information in various formats (such as moving visuals, images and audio) can be published and accessed easily. Today, the Internet as a social tool enables people to connect online to socialize and interact. Netizens can write blogs, communicate in “live chats”, cast votes, upload posts, give and share first-hand information, give support with ‘like’ responses and so on.

TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNET

KEY MILESTONES OF THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNET³



SOCIAL MEDIA CONCEPT AND IMPACT

SOCIAL MEDIA CONCEPT

The concept of social media refers to the online publishing and communication tools, sites and destinations of Web 2.0 that are rooted in conversations, engagements and participation.⁴ Examples include Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Flickr, YouTube, SlideShare, and many more.

IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The increasing pervasiveness of the Internet and social media has given rise to new ways of information sharing and communication. The impact can be **positive** as well as **negative**.⁵ To help us think deeper on this topic, let us analyse the related issues in the next section.



PROS & CONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA⁶



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Through crowdsourcing and crowdfunding, netizens appeal for help that support common causes.

Regardless of race or nationality, the public can donate to help pay for medical expenses for a terminally ill child in countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, etc.

There are agencies that use online platforms for members of the public to report cases of families and elderly who are in need of support. However, overwhelming responses may also result in the agency having to spend extra time and effort to identify duplicate cases from new ones.



CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Think before you post or upload, as your posts can be used as evidence.



Information shared online is increasingly being used as evidence in court proceedings. These include videos, photographs and textual postings.



There are also a number of cybercrime such as cyberbullying and extortion. Frank postings such as "I will be on vacation for 5 days", or "I will be back tomorrow!" provide clues to potential burglars.



You may be entertained in the comfort of your home, or while 'on the go' in public transportation such as trains and buses.

ENTERTAINMENT

You can be entertained 24/7 so long as you have a digital smart device.

Parental control and guidance are needed for age-appropriate resources. Online gaming, in particular, may lead to addiction, with dire consequences such as extortion and loss of wealth. Illegal downloading of songs and movies leads to loss of earning for the artistes and production companies.



PROS & CONS

EDUCATION

There are sites that promote free education for all.



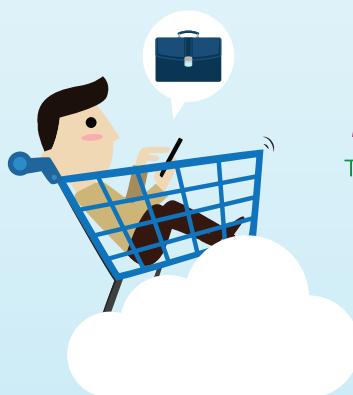
Online resources, such as activity sheets, videos, quizzes, textual and graphical notes and powerpoint presentations, can help educate home-based learners and provide continuous education in crisis situations which require schools to be closed.

However, there may be individuals who do not use information ethically or responsibly. Cases of plagiarism are being highlighted in the news from time to time. This act of plagiarism is equivalent to 'stealing the works of others', as the author, creator or inventor is not acknowledged.



MARKETING AND BUSINESS

The Internet facilitates global marketing and business transactions.



Through online channels, you may do the following:

- sell and buy products and services at a cheaper cost
- look for job opportunities

However, people may fall prey to online scams such as dating as well as job offers. In addition, paid advertisements do exist. Social media influencers can be hired to market and sell products and services.



NEWS UPDATES AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

What's trending include online discussions on topics that are 'current and hot'.



Journalists and investigators may use online sites to get 'tip-offs' on news and discussions on important events that affect the security of a country.

There are people who may abuse online platforms to launch personal attacks that may lead to unfair public humiliation. In addition, candid comments may not be taken positively and may have dire consequences.



PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Internet is fast becoming a powerful tool to connect and 'stay in touch' with the public on a massive scale.



The quickest and easiest way to stay connected on a cheap and massive scale is via online dissemination. In the case of artistes, they can update their fans on their projects and personal news.

The pressure to stay connected on a 24/7 basis may result in a lack of privacy, loss of sense of time and deprivation of sleep and rest.



INFORMATION LITERACY: TIPS ON EVALUATING VIDEOS⁷

Several studies have shown that videos are fast becoming the most preferred source of online information. Here are some tips on how you should evaluate videos.

- WHAT IS THE SUBJECT OR TOPIC?
- IS THE INFORMATION PRESENTED COMPLETE OR PARTIAL?
- WHAT IS THE STORYLINE?

A good video will have a storyline to present the subject and content fairly i.e. it should include pros and cons. Do question the validity of the content and the depth of research that goes into it. It may be produced as an introduction to a subject.

- WHY WAS THIS VIDEO CREATED?

In terms of purpose, does the video contain materials for education, entertainment, promotion, personal enjoyment, selling and marketing, recruiting support, influencing, or campaigning? Be on the lookout for hidden messages embedded in the video.

- IN WHAT CONTEXT WAS THIS VIDEO PRODUCED?
- IS IT REFERRING TO A SPECIFIC CULTURE AND SETTING SUCH AS ASIAN, WESTERN ETC?

You may also want to find out where the video is hosted and check if it is credible or not.



- WHO PRODUCED THIS VIDEO AND WHAT IS HIS/HER INTENTION?
- WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?

A video may be meant for certain target audience, such as children, teenagers, adults and the elderly. It can also be targeted at audience of a certain gender.

- HOW DO I FEEL AFTER WATCHING THIS VIDEO - HAPPY, SAD, MAD, PROVOKED OR INFLUENCED?
- IS THIS VIDEO ACCESSIBLE AT A SITE WHICH IS CREDIBLE?

Videos may have the power to influence you in a negative or positive manner. As a discerning user, be aware of their impact and the influence it may have on you – such as feelings and thoughts.

- WHEN WAS THIS VIDEO PRODUCED?
- IS THIS AN OLD VIDEO?

The currency of the video is important as it can be an indication of whether the contents are out-of-date or not.

Disclaimer: This publication is intended for education purposes only. Readers are advised to refer to other sources for more updates on this topic.

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