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Homeland Security & Cybersecurity

The Internet

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Lesson 22
Internet Infrastructure

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The Internet

The Internet is at the crux of the homeland security / cybersecurity concern because **the Internet provides an avenue for attacking critical infrastructure** from anywhere in the world and **the Internet itself is a critical infrastructure** on which many other critical infrastructures depend.

1. **Cyberspace** provides an **avenue for attacking** critical infrastructure from anywhere around the world;
2. **Cyber components** make critical infrastructure **susceptible to subversion, disruption, or destruction**; and
3. **Cyberspace** itself **is a critical infrastructure** on which many other critical infrastructures depend.

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- Not surprisingly, the Internet is the youngest of the four infrastructures we examine in this course.
- Developed in the 1960s, the Internet has undergone rapid evolution that may be summarized in **three epochs**...



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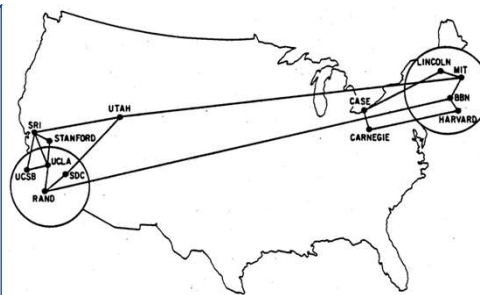
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Epoch 1: The creation and expansion of the ARPANET for government-related research from 1969 to 1981.



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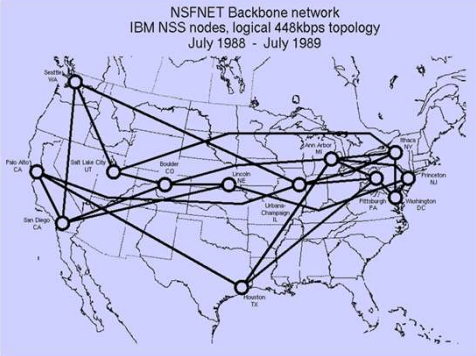


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Epoch 2: The introduction of the TCP/IP protocol and transition to NSFNET resulting in rapid proliferation among universities from 1982 to 1995, and



NSFNET Backbone network
IBM NSS nodes, logical 448kbps topology
July 1988 - July 1989

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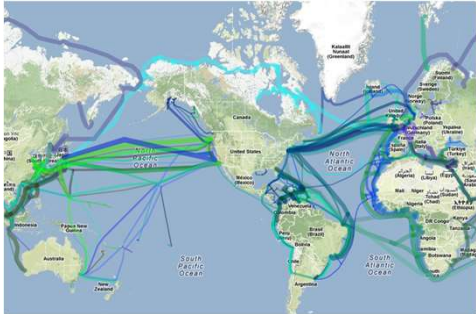


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Epoch 3: Its explosive growth from 1995 to present following release from government and introduction of HTML protocols creating the worldwide web.



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Experts say we are on the verge of a **fourth epoch** characterized as “The Internet of Things” where communications between people will be vastly outstripped by communications between appliances.



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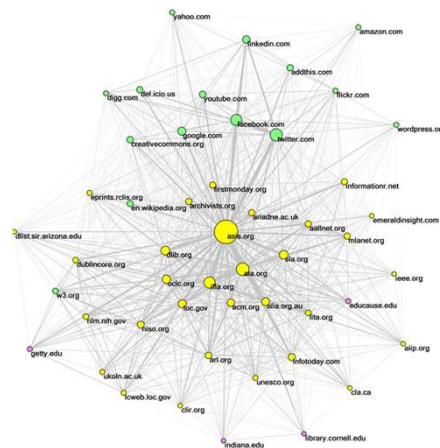
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Although the Internet has undergone rapid evolution, it remains at its heart a simple collection of **links, routers, and protocols** providing a common medium for communications between different computers.



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Nobody owns the Internet,
however the vast majority of links
and routers are owned by a small
number of very large, Tier 1,
corporate Internet Service
Providers.

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**In the US there are only 7 Tier 1
ISPs.**

**Tier 1
Internet Service Providers**

- AT&T
- Verizon
- Sprint
- Century Link
- Level 3
- NTT/Verio
- Cogent

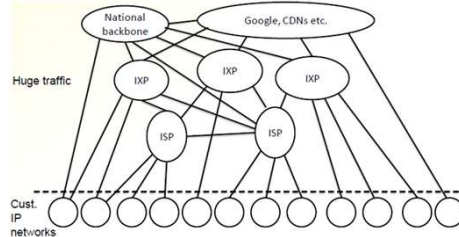
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These ISPs, in turn, interconnect among themselves and with smaller ISPs through about 350 Internet Exchange Points, enabling a communications path between computers just about anywhere in the world.



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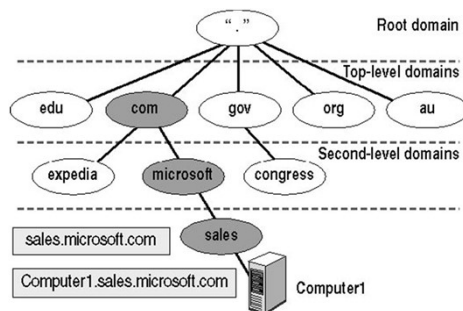
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The key to facilitating this global data exchange is the **Internet Protocol addressing scheme**.



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- IP addresses are controlled by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, "**ICANN**", a global non-profit agency operating out of Los Angeles.
- A department within ICANN called the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority, "**IANA**", manages several hundred geographically distributed **Domain Name Servers**.



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- IANA Domain Name Servers supply ISP routers with IP address translations that are essential to delivering communication packets to their correct destination.
- Although there are hundreds of Domain Name Servers, IANA maintains master IP address lists on only **13 "root servers"**.




Internet Assigned Numbers Authority

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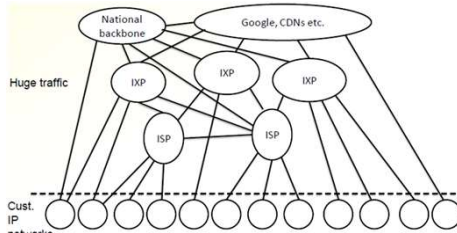
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From this brief description we can see that despite its globe spanning architecture, the Internet has at least two points of vulnerability:


- 1. The IXPs, and**
- 2. The root servers.**



The diagram illustrates the Internet's structure. At the top, 'National backbone' and 'Google, CDNs etc.' are connected to three 'IXP' (Internet Exchange Points). These IXPs are connected to two 'ISP' (Internet Service Providers). The ISPs are then connected to a row of 'Cust. IP networks' (Customer IP networks). A yellow box labeled 'Huge traffic' is positioned to the left of the IXPs, indicating the volume of data passing through them.

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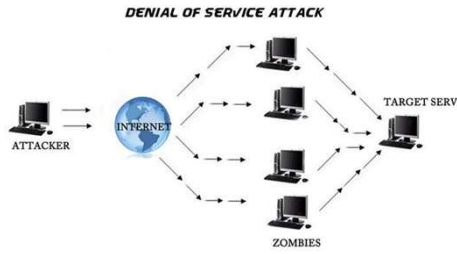
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- A Denial of Service attack is one that attempts choke off a computer's communications by overwhelming it with spurious requests.
- A Denial of Service attack effectively neutralizes a computer by cutting off access to it.

DENIAL OF SERVICE ATTACK



The diagram shows an 'ATTACKER' sending traffic to the 'INTERNET'. From the Internet, the traffic is directed to 'ZOMBIES' (represented by computer icons). These zombies then send traffic to a 'TARGET SERVER', illustrating how a large number of compromised machines can be used to overwhelm a target.

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It is surmised that a well-timed and coordinated massive Denial of Service attack **could bring down any number of IXPs taking down significant parts of the Internet.**



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- **A more likely target, though are the DNS root servers.**
- In fact, in December 2015, a coordinated Denial of Service attack from many sources succeeded in neutralizing 3 of the 13 IANA root servers.



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The Internet is classified as part of the Information Technology infrastructure in **PPD-21**, but also **forms the underlying support for most of the Communications infrastructure.**



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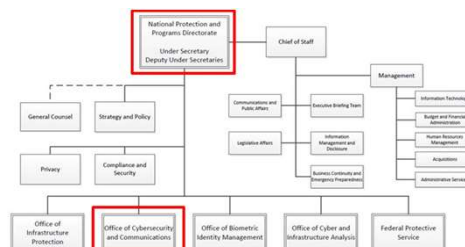
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The Department of Homeland Security **Office of Cybersecurity and Communications** under the National Protection and Programs Directorate is the designated **Sector-Specific Agency** for the Internet.



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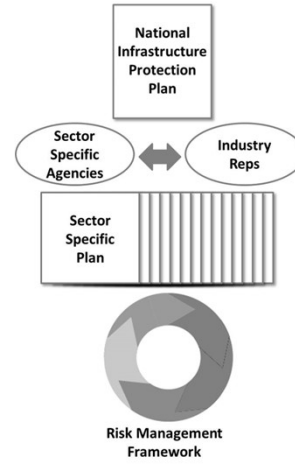
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DHS has no regulatory authority over the Internet but works with ISPs and ICANN on a voluntary basis.



Risk Management Framework

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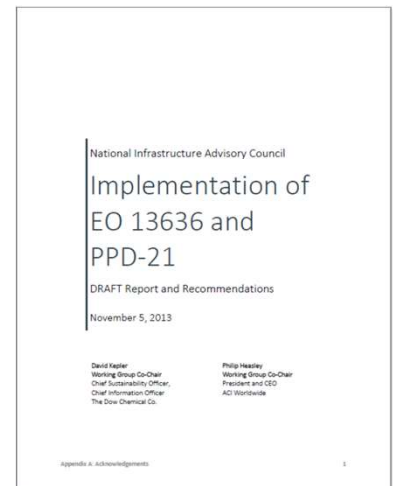
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In response to a NIST Request for Information stemming from **Executive Order 13636**, Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity, the Department of Homeland Security in May 2013 stated that it was not adverse to the NIST Cybersecurity Framework, but it was already employing the **Cyber Assessment Risk Management Approach, "CARMA"**, to assess cybersecurity in the Information Technology Sector.



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Conclusion

Questions?



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