

INTERNET : THE BIGGEST VIRTUAL LIBRARY OF THE WORLD

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The Internet is a network of computer networks or the information superhighway that provides a common platform to individuals for sharing their ideas.

The computer communication networks are now widely accepted as essential for the economic development of any country. Internet is global communication channel of more than 2 million interconnected computer sites. With more than 30 million users, the Internet is estimated to be growing at an astounding rate of 10 percent a month. A vast array of information is available on the Internet viz., **Business, Recreational, Shopping, Academic, Educational, Legal, Medical, Entertainment, Religious** etc.

The software programs which run on your computer or elsewhere to which you can connect, or, as is often the case, one piece of the software runs on each end. Some of the programs, likearchie and WAIS, are indexing programs which attempt to provide subject access to information available on server around the world while others, like Gopher, WorldWide Web, Hytelnet and LIBS facilitate connection to other services and aids. Internet can be used for problem solving, in acquiring, cataloguing, indexing, storing, retrieving and disseminating information. To carry out these activities Libraries can link with the following systems.

E-Mail

Electronic mail or E-mail is the most popular use of the Internet today. Using E-mail provides a real feel of Internet's energy and reach. Electronic mail allows a message to be sent and received from one computer to the another on the network, on a one to one or one to group communication basis. There

are many services via electronic mail, such as Electronic Bulletin Boards, which are frequently called electronic discussion groups, Teleconferences, Mailing lists, News groups, Listservers and Network Publishing.

File Transfer

The File Transfer Protocol (FTP) Which is a part of Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) allows a users to transfer data file which include text, pictures, Sound bytes, map, etc to or from a remote computer. The FTP on Internet is used to obtain text files or software and download to your computer.

Remote Login

By Telneting, an Internet user can establish connections with a multitude of Bibliographic databases, Campus information system of various universities, full text databases, data files and other online services.

Electronic Publishing

Publishing on a vast network is becoming increasingly common. Many such Publishing and lists have been in existence since the late 1980's. There are thousands of available covering topics of academic and social interest.

Information resource sharing has been the basic tool used by the Information profession in satisfying the growing needs of their customers within limited budgets. Online communications, perhaps the

ultimate in democratic exchange of Information, eliminates barriers. So, the Internet as a tool which not only facilitates existing networks, but also opens up resource sharing, at a relatively cheaper cost.

The Internet has been emerging as virtual biggest library of the world, which could enable to provide information on any topic. However, to make sure regarding share of information the developed countries should assist to setup Internet in developing countries. The Internet connectivity is now expected to be available on commercial basis in India. Videsh

Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (VSNL) has taken the lead in the aspect. Earlier this service was available only for Govt. and educational institute such as ERNET, SIRNET, NICNET, INDONET etc.

The rise in the popularity of Internet has alarmed that unbridled access could be used to distribute pornography, spread religious unorthodox or encourage political dissidence. However, none of the Govt. has come up with any foolproof plan to prevent the inflow undesirable material on the network and experts say such control is technically difficult.

A better future does not happen automatically without effort. It will happen because men and women - sometimes as individuals, sometimes as enterprises working for profit, sometimes as voluntary non profit making groups, and sometimes as governmental agencies - will address problems with muscle and mind, and will probably overcome, as has been usual throughout history

*Julian L. Simon and Herman Kahn
in the Resourceful Earth:
A response to Global 2000*