

# The internet: history

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The Internet has had a relatively brief, but explosive history so far. It grew out of an experiment begun in the 1960's by the U. S. Department of Defense. The DoD wanted to create a computer network that would continue to function in the event of a disaster, such as a nuclear war. If part of the network were damaged or destroyed, the rest of the system still had to work. That network was ARPANET, which linked U. S. scientific and academic researchers. It was the forerunner of today's Internet. In 1985, the National Science Foundation (NSF) created NSFNET, a series of networks for research and education communication. Based on ARPANET protocols, the NSFNET created a national backbone service, provided free to any U. S. research and educational institution. At the same time, regional networks were created to link individual institutions with the national backbone service. NSFNET grew rapidly as people discovered its potential, and as new software applications were created to make access easier. Corporations such as Sprint and MCI began to build their own networks, which they linked to NSFNET. As commercial firms and other regional network providers have taken over the operation of the major Internet arteries, NSF has withdrawn from the backbone business. NSF also coordinated a service called InterNIC, which registered all addresses on the Internet so that data could be routed to the right system. This service has now been taken over by Network Solutions, Inc., in cooperation with NSF.