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Internet – An Update – I

Lead: The internet began as a connection between academics with scholarly as well as military interests. It has become a world-wide universal connection for business, politics and social life.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: The success of the Soviet space program sent waves of concern through the U.S. defense establishment and its university contractors where most military research was done. Since it is a given that scientific research is enormously

enhanced by the free exchange of ideas, failures, concepts and successes between scholars, the U.S. government concluded that some means of fast intercommunication could not but advance work of the U.S. military By the late 1960s a primitive network connecting major universities doing research for the U.S. Defense Department was in place.

Within twenty five years this tiny little network had morphed into, at least, the beginnings of the vast planet-encircling system by which billions of humans do business, develop political policy, pursue dreams and connect with each other for warmth or just social connection.

Sex, drugs and rock and roll, not to mention credit default swaps had taken over the world of boring military computer research. Science fiction writer Bruce Sterling described it correctly when he said, it was “as if some grim fallout shelter had burst open and a full-scale Mardi Gras parade had come marching out.”

Many in the government were not amused by all this innovation. They believed that only certified scholarly researchers should be able to use the networks, but if that is what they wanted, they turned its administration over to the wrong group: a bunch of academics known for their anti-establishment, nearly anarchist

mind-set. The most significant development making this possible was the creation of the software known as TCP/IP, which made it possible for networks to connect to networks. Soon the size and reach of the internet exploded. Next time: AOL, Amazon, Google and Facebook.

In Richmond, Virginia this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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