

The History of the Internet - Part III

Lead: In the 1960s, scientists for the defense department began developing a de-centralized and indestructible data network designed to survive a nuclear war. That was the birth of Internet.

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

Content: Most U.S. military research and development since World War II has been done by universities and contractors such as the RAND Corporation. They worked on everything from missiles to mashed

potatoes. One of the jobs assigned to these contractors was to develop a communications system that would keep commanders in touch with units on the battlefield even after the destruction of a nuclear war. The Defense Department also funded this to help researchers share the few supercomputers around at the time. The network first connected four locations in 1969: UCLA, UC-Santa Barbara, Stanford and Utah. Gradually more and more locations, now called nodes, were brought into the Defense research network. By 1977 scientists had sent from a van traveling on a San Francisco freeway computer data over radio, satellite, and landlines 94,000 miles out and back again

instantly.

By that time the anarchy that seems to prevail in the Internet today was beginning to creep in. Scientists began to send personal E-mail, then user groups formed. The first group was appropriately, "Science-Fiction lovers." Then came winetasters and hackers.

A rival network was started between the University of North Carolina and Duke in the late seventies and in a decade this Usenet had 5000 nodes and had spawned all sorts of off-color user groups. Sex, drugs and rock-and-roll had invaded the staid world of military computer research. Science fiction writer Bruce Sterling

said, it was "as if some grim fallout shelter had burst open and a full-scale Mardi Gras parade had come marching out."

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

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Resources

Bates, Stephen and Edwin Diamond. "The Ancient History of the Internet," *American Heritage* 46 (6, October, 1995): 34-46.