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Many people think that the internet and the world wide web are the same thing. While they are closely linked, they are very different systems.

The internet is a huge network of computers all connected together. The world wide web ('www' or 'web' for short) is a collection of webpages found on this network of computers. Your web browser uses the internet to access the web.

So when you get home from school and ask to go on the internet, you should really say, 'Can I look at some of the world wide web?'.

How did the web begin?

Sir Tim Berners-Lee

In 1989 the world wide web was invented by Sir Tim Berners-Lee. He was trying to find a new way for scientists to easily share the data from their experiments.

Hypertext and the internet already existed at this point but no one had thought of a way to use the internet to link one document directly to another.

Three main technologies

Tim suggested three main technologies that meant all computers could understand each other (HTML, URL and HTTP). All of these remain in use today.

He also made the world's first web browser and web server. You can still see pages from the first web server online.

Why is the web so important?

The world wide web opened up the internet to everyone, not just scientists.

It connected the world in a way that was not possible before and made it much easier for people to get information, share and communicate.

It allowed people to share their work and thoughts through social networking sites, blogs and video sharing.

Evolution of the world wide web

The web has changed a lot since it was first created.

The first websites were made up of simple pages of just words and pictures, a bit like online books or magazines. Most people couldn't create their own webpages. Back then, to make a webpage you had to write HTML code by hand.

Web 2.0

As the web began to develop, people started communicating and sharing more. They used social network sites and blogs. It became much easier to create your own content on the web and to share it. This new type of web became known as Web 2.0.

Although the way people use the web has changed, the technologies haven't. Many of the technologies that ran the first webpages are still in use today.

The modern web

The web is still changing today. Search engines have become better at reading, understanding and processing information. They have found clever ways to find the content we want and can even show us other things that might interest us.