

Did you know?

The Internet



Heaven or hell? Is there life without your laptop, mobile phone, computer and the Internet?

Using the Internet for booking flight tickets and train tickets, ordering books and new clothes, or scrolling through the news and funny pictures of cats. We take all this for granted now, but can you remember how it used to be? All that time queuing and travelling to make purchases and finding out information. Yet, it is less than 20 years since our lives changed so much.

The Internet as we know it, sparked into life 50 years ago when student Charley Kline at UCLA in Los Angeles sent the first simple transmission to a computer at Stanford University in San Francisco. The message was 'LOGIN', but the system crashed after the first three letters. However, this was truly the beginning of what would later become the Internet revolution.

These two universities were joined over the next two years by 30 more in this precursor of the Internet: ARPANET, developed and funded by the US Dept of Defense. Further networks were developed on both sides of the Atlantic and by 1984 over 1000 computers were connected to the network initiated at UCLA, and by 1987 that had jumped to 20,000. Although the Internet was primarily run for the benefit of government bodies, there was huge commercial interest. Many companies developed their own internal networks, but had limited scope to expand.

All this changed in 1987, when Tim Berners-Lee working at MIT, introduced a new system of communication using hyperlinks and a more user-friendly graphical interface. The World Wide Web was born and the subsequent development of the browser Mosaic (later Netscape) was responsible for the 1990s boom in Internet usage. (While many people now use 'web' and 'net' as meaning the same thing, in fact, the web is a significant part on the Internet, but they are not synonymous.)

In the 1990s, the Internet was something that remained very much a workplace experience. Laptops were bulky and heavy, and most homes did not have their own computer. Many people had email accounts, though, courtesy of providers such as Hotmail, AOL and Yahoo and the number of people using email increased almost eight-fold from 55 million in 1997 to 400 million in 1999. In the early 2000s things changed very quickly over a period of about five years, due to the increased number of home computers, high speed internet connections and the development of social media such as Facebook. This was quickly followed by the developing technology of mobile phones which meant that people could take the Internet with them wherever they went. New technologies allowed people to engage much more actively with the Internet – they were no longer passive users, but interactive users.

Did you know?

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, You Tube, Reddit and Wikipedia all depend on users to provide and upload content – something that was the stuff of science fiction only 30 years ago. Globally, there are now more than 4 billion Internet users; every day 4 million blog posts are published on the Internet, 500 million Tweets are sent and there are more than 5 billion Google searches. And this just fifty years after that first *LOGIN* was sent from one university computer to another.

So next time you look something up online or order an article of clothing from a website, remember that not so long ago you would have had to leaf through your encyclopedia or take a bus to the shops in town.

If you would like to use the Internet in your lesson, then we have provided you with two activities at B1 level; see the **Teacher's Notes**.

Did you know?

Teacher's notes

Before the Internet (Level B1 and above, 15+ mins)

- On the board write *1989* and *2019*. Tell students they are going to think about how the Internet has changed our lives in the last 30 years. (Explain that in 1989 Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web.)
- Remind students of the *used to* tense (regular past action that has finished). In 1989 people *used to* go to the travel agent to buy airline tickets. Now they buy them online.
- In pairs ask students to think of five or more ways that life is different now we have the Internet. (Think of: watching films; reading books and newspapers; keeping in touch with friends; Skype and telephones; buying clothes and groceries; ordering meal deliveries; sharing family photographs and so on)
- Allow five to ten minutes.
- Ask each pair to share their examples – try to encourage *used to* past.

English on the Internet (Level B1 and above, 15+ minutes).

- Make a copy of the worksheet **English on the Internet**, one for each student.
- Explain that you are going to give your students a text about learning English on the Internet.
- Give a copy of the worksheet **English on the Internet** to each student.
- Tell students to first complete the Internet vocabulary exercise (1).
- Check answers together. Key: 1c, 2d, 3a, 4e, 5b.
- Tell students to read the text (2) and then fill in the spaces with the words in the box.
- Help with unknown vocabulary.
- Check answers together in class (3).
- **Key:** ① email, ② podcast, ③ subscribe, ④ online, ⑤ homepage, ⑥ search engine, ⑦ app, ⑧ download. (You do not need *upload*.)
- In pairs, students discuss the additional questions (4).
- For homework, ask students to choose one of the ways to learn English on the Internet and report back to the class in a future lesson.

English on the Internet

(1) Vocabulary: Match the English word with the German word.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 upload | a <input type="checkbox"/> <i>abonnieren</i> |
| 2 download | b <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Suchmaschine</i> |
| 3 subscribe | c <input type="checkbox"/> <i>hochladen</i> |
| 4 homepage | d <input type="checkbox"/> <i>herunterladen</i> |
| 5 search engine | e <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Startseite</i> |

(2) Complete the text using the words in the box. There is one word that you do not need.

app	download	email	homepage	online	podcast
	search engine	subscribe	upload		

Hi Alex

I thought I'd send you an ① _____ and tell you about an amazing ② _____ I heard the other day. It will really help you to learn English. It's called *6 Minute English* from the BBC. You can either ③ _____ to *6 Minute English* or you can listen to it ④ _____. It has lots of really interesting topics such as veganism, the London skyline, women's football and the environment. - Another good website is the *British Council*. Go to their ⑤ _____ and then click on *Learn English*. There are lots of activities and exercises you can do: listening, speaking, reading and writing. If you type in "Learning English" in your ⑥ _____ you will see a lot of websites for learning English. Ernst Klett Sprachen has an ⑦ _____ called *Klett-Augmented* that you can ⑧ _____ onto your phone or tablet. Learning English is so easy these days!

Hope to see you soon

Jess

(3) Check your answers with your partner.

(4) Would you like to find out more about these ways of learning? Why? Why not?