

# **The World Without the World Wide Web**

The Internet has become the most common media of interacting with the rest of the world. Also known as the World Wide Web, it is a network of computers connected together from all over the world, allowing users to share and transmit information. The Internet has positively changed the face of modern day communication and commerce. It has evolved to become one of the most important inventions in mankind's history.

The Internet is all about simple and speedy communication. It connects people from all over the world. According to Global Internet Trends Report (2002), on Internet access and penetration, almost 10% of the world's population had access to the Internet at the end of May 2002. This represented a global Internet audience of 580.78 million people, up from 407.1 million in December 2000. The report forecasts that the number of worldwide Internet users will reach 1 billion by 2005. The report also says the actual number of Internet users is far greater than the above number due to sharing.

The Internet offers its users information at the click of a button. Just a few years ago, people would have to work days or months to find the needed information. They would have had to employ a variety of methods to find the relevant information. For example, they would have to look in reference books, go to libraries, write letters to organizations or governments etc. Sometimes, this would take months to complete. The current situation is very different. Obtaining information is much more of an instantaneous experience. By typing a few words into the search engines, a plethora

of information is made available to the user.

Most companies, universities and government agencies maintain up-to-date web sites that provide information to users about their products and services. Simply by visiting the relevant web sites, people can find all the needed information.

In the area of education and learning, the Internet has dramatically increased the accessibility of a wide variety of quality educational resources for learners of all ages. Children benefit from individually tailored instruction, accessible at school or home, that provides instant feedback through linked diagnostic assessments. Adults are taking advantage of lifelong learning through their companies or on their own as hundreds of new sources for professional and personal development have emerged online.

Businesses and other agencies have flourished through e-business. E-business is the act of selling or buying online. The Internet is forcing businesses to re-invent themselves. Businesses have created web sites to attract consumers who are looking for a easy, hassle-free way to buy goods and services. Customers have become empowered with unprecedented choice and convenience. In addition, many businesses co-operate with each other to bring enhanced products and services to the customers. The Internet has helped businesses reduce operating costs, therefore lowering the buying prices for the consumers. Both businesses and consumers benefit. I, for instance, rely heavily on the Internet for my daily activities and needs. When I am looking for any information or to buy something, the Internet is usually my first point of contact or search.

The Internet empowers users through faster, cheaper and simpler communication amongst people, companies, and governments. Through the web, people can talk or use other services to communicate 24 hours a day. Users have the ability to instantaneously send emails or large files of information containing all type of data like text, audio, and video to other users - anywhere in the world.

The Internet has significantly enhanced communication between the residents of a country and its government. Through the web, governments can pass information to the general public. They reach thousands of people instantly. Information such as, voting instructions, driving rules, processes for selecting governments etc. is made available to the general public. Not only does the government benefit from this, so do the people. They can voice their opinions and talk out to the government and their community. Essentially, the Internet has become the world's biggest platform to share knowledge and resources.

The World Wide Web has not only benefitted at the local level but also globally. The web is a major contributor to globalization of cultures. Users have the opportunity of communicating to people from other cultures. Diverse cultures are being learned and accepted, thanks to the ease offered by Internet. People can translate and learn languages, research about other countries, and view forms of media to get more educated.

I traveled to India this summer. The Internet played a major role in the whole process. My father and I together researched all the airlines, their time-tables, and fares. Then, we bought our tickets online. We did extensive research on places of interest to visit and the hotels to stay in. We

downloaded all relevant maps from the web. We emailed to all concerned people like friends and tour operators of our arrival. While in India, we kept in touch with friends, family and the rest of the world through the Internet. We kept emailing our trip photos via the web. Other than the tickets, everything else was free.

The saving of time resulting from the convenient availability of information and resources has given additional time to people that can be used for other recreational purposes or with family members. This has enhanced the quality of life for all users.

The Internet has given the world whole new ways of interacting, conducting business, sharing information; which was previously not possible. The funny thing is that, to find more advantages of the Internet, you know what I did? I just searched the World Wide Web.