

HIST 216

A Long History of the Internet

From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg: A (Long) History of the Internet

Winter 2018 ❄️

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The Internet has enabled global connection on an unprecedented level. To live and innovate in a society dominated by network communications requires an understanding of from where we've come from. Yet, as Google executives Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen have noted, the "Internet is among the few things humans have built that they don't truly understand."

While the technological story of the rise of the Internet and the Web today is important – our course touches on early computing, theories of hypertext, the ARPANET, and the networking revolutions of the 1980s and 1990s – the longer human story is equally critical. How has the concept of information evolved? How has print media emerged and evolved? How have humans

communicated over time and space? How have common standards evolved, allowing people across the globe to communicate with each other?

Topics include:

- The invention and impact of the printing press;
- 19th-century communications technology (or why it turns out early fights around telephones can shed a lot of light on net neutrality!);
- The Emergence of Hypertext from Unlikely Places;
- Cold War Research Networks and the Rise of the Modern Internet;
- How the 'net developed around the world, from BBSes in Taiwan to Minitel in France; and
- Much more!