

# Five Internet firsts

**No technology has evolved so much in so little time as the Internet.** We not only shop, bank, work, and meet people online, but we share what we are doing at any given moment with such sites as Facebook and Twitter. So how did all this begin?



## I The first Internet café

**A café with full Internet access (sometimes called a Cybercafé) was designed in early 1994 by Ivan Pope.** He was asked to develop an Internet event for an arts weekend in London. Pope created a café with Internet access from the tables.

Inspired by this, the first commercial Internet café, called Cyberia, was opened later that year in central London. It quickly became the fashionable place to be seen.

Internet cafés soon extended across the world under a variety of names, for example, the Binary Café in Canada, CompuCafé in Finland, PCBang in South Korea, and the @Café in New York.

Cafés have always been places to exchange information, chat to friends, read newspapers, and play games. Internet cafés were a natural evolution of this. **Now, people can connect to the Internet in any café using their own laptops and iPhones.** There is less need for the Internet café.





# Search

## 2 The first search engine

For many people, using search engines has become a routine part of their lives. But how did they begin?

**In 1989 a young computer scientist from Barbados, Alan Emtage,** was studying at Montreal's McGill University in Canada. He **built a single, easily searchable database** for students to access information. This created a lot of interest and Alan was joined by two colleagues, Mike Parker and Bill Heelan, who helped develop the system. They called it 'Archie'. Why was it named Archie? Simply the word 'archive' without the 'v'.

Emtage found himself at the heart of an Internet revolution. It didn't take long for search engines to become big business. Many more followed such as Excite in 1993, created by six Stanford University students, Yahoo in 1994, and Lycos also in 1994. With 60 million documents this was the largest of its time until Google was launched in 1997. **Google now has 620 million visitors every day.**





### 3 The first blog

The first ever blogger may never be identified, but the most likely candidate is an **American journalist, Justin Hall**. He **began blogging in 1994** (before the word 'blog' existed) with a website called 'Justin's Links from the Underground'. At first his website just gave rather boring information about the Internet. But soon his main topic became his personal life. He wrote openly about his relationships, his passions, his plans and fears. More and more readers were attracted to his site, fascinated by his daily blogs. They began to share their lives with his.

**The word 'blog'** wasn't used until 1997. It is short for 'WebLog' (web log), a name invented by Jorn Barger in December of that year. Now the number of active bloggers is estimated to be about 100 million worldwide, and Justin Hall has been named 'the founding father of personal blogging' by the New York Times.





## 4 The first virus

**What exactly are computer viruses?** They are simply computer programs that replicate themselves again and again. This ability was predicted as early as 1949 by a German mathematician, John von Neumann. It is generally believed that the very first was a virus called Creeper. It was detected on ARPANET (the forerunner of the Internet) in the early 1970s. It was written by an engineer called Bob Thomas from Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1971. However, the Creeper was not a bad virus, it did not damage computers. When a machine was infected a message simply appeared on the screen saying 'I'm the Creeper, catch me if you can!' More damaging viruses appeared in the 1980s with the spread of personal computers.

**In 1986, Brain was the first virus to infect PCs;** in 1991, Michelangelo was the first to make international news; in 2000, Love Letter broke hearts by sending emails saying 'I love you' to tens of millions of computers, and in 2007, Storm Worm spread with a message saying '230 dead as storm batters Europe!'





## 5 The first social networking site

**In the 1990s** more and more homes had Internet access. People could connect easily with each other. Would they also like to reconnect with old friends? **In 1995 Classmates.com, the first social networking site**, began life in the basement of Randy Conrads, a Boeing employee in the US. It was immediately popular. People loved exchanging life stories with old schoolmates and school romances were reignited. In one year this led to 100 marriages.

The idea was copied in many countries, including Friends Reunited in the UK. In 2003 the business networking site LinkedIn began. This has over 60 million members. In the same year and with three times that number is MySpace. **However, one name leads all other global social networking sites, Facebook.**

**Created in 2004 by students** at Harvard University, it went worldwide in 2006 and has more than 750 million users. There has even been a film, *The Social Network*, made about it.

It seems people love talking about themselves. On the micro-blogging site, Twitter, users inform their followers about tiny details of their lives: 'I'm having honey with my toast this morning!'