

Intranet, Extranet, Internet

An *intranet* is a network that is used by a single organization, such as a corporation or school, and is only accessible by authorized users. The purpose of an intranet is to share information. However, a firewall is also used to lock out unauthorized users. A *firewall* is a network security system that prevents unauthorized network access.

An *extranet* extends an intranet by providing various levels of accessibility to authorized members of the public. For example, a corporation may extend their intranet to provide access to specific information, such as their ordering system, to registered customers.

The largest and most widely accessed network is the *Internet*, a worldwide network of computers that is not controlled by any one organization. The Internet has had an undeniable impact on modern society because it allows users worldwide to communicate in a matter of seconds.

History of the Internet

The history of the Internet can be traced to an early network known as ARPANET.

ARPANET was created in the late 1960s by the Department of Defense's ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency.) ARPANET initially connected computers at the University of California Los Angeles and the Stanford Research Institute.

The Internet evolved from ARPANET and the theory of open architecture networking, meaning internetworking different networks regardless of the network technology they used.

The Internet is actually numerous networks all linked together through routers. A *router* is a device that connects different network technologies. Networks connected to routers use *TCP/IP* (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) software to communicate.

Computers on the Internet are either servers or clients. The client is sent information from a server. The client/server structure of the Internet is called *interactive* because the information accessed is a result of selections made by the user. For example, a computer with just minimal software for accessing the Internet is a client. The client user selecting options from the Internet is receiving the information from a server, a computer with additional software and files that is also connected to the Internet.