Shelley's Internet Timeline

1957	The launch of Sputnik prompts the Dept. of Defense into creating the Advanced Research Projects Agency, to make sure the US stays on the cutting edge of defense technology, instead of being cut by it. Later the ARPA becomes known as DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency).
1962	Paul Baran of RAND (a government agency) proposes the concept of packet switching for network security. Each message sent across a network would be broken into packets, and each packet would have the information about the originating and destination computers embedded in it. This would allow for retransmission of the whole message if any packet was lost.
1968	The ARPANET is built, connecting the first four computers to be on the Internet: UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, Stanford Research Institute and the University of Utah. The network crashes on the 'G' of LOGON in the first attempt to connect, setting the tone for computer usage for the next forty years.
1972	The first e-mail program is developed by Ray Tomlinson of BBN, the company awarded the contract for building ARPANET. The scientists first using the ARPANET show very human tendencies, by using the system to communicate by e-mail. By 1973, e-mail accounts for 75% of all traffic.
1973	Vinton Cerf (Stanford) and Bob Kahn (DARPA) begin work on TCP/IP, the protocol designed to allow diverse computers to connect with each other across the network.
1973-76	Ethernet is developed, allowing for high speed data transmission across coaxial cable. This is an important step in the development of local area networks.
1974	The term 'Internet' is coined by Bob and Vint (see above) in a paper on TCP/IP. Vint becomes famous for his drawing of gateway architecture on the back of an envelope at a hotel in San Francisco.
1975	The first actual ARPANET mailing list is created, with a science fiction list, SF-Lovers, being the most popular in the early days. Not surprising, given the users were themselves turning science fiction into science fact.
1976	Queen Elizabeth II sends an e-mail message.
1979	USENET (the decentralized news group network) is created by Steve Bellovin, a graduate student at University of North Carolina, and programmers Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis. Also, this year the concept of adding emotion back into dry emails is suggested, through the use of characters like ;-). Though the concept is 'flamed' at first, 'emoticons' begin to show up in more messages.
1981	In the early 80's the National Science Foundation becomes more involved in the Internet through development of the CSNET, allowing science and education sites without access to ARPANET to connect to each other.

1984	The Domain Name System is introduced, meaning users no longer need to know the exact path to a computer, or remember an IP address. The number of Internet hosts breaks 1,000.
mid-80's	NSFNET's high-speed access creates an explosion of connections, particularly from university-based sites.
1987	Number of hosts breaks 10,000.
1989	Number of hosts breaks 100,000, redefining the phrase, 'exponential growth'. In Switzerland, Tim Berners-Lee at CERN proposes 'hypertext', a way of embedding connections to computer files in plain text, as a way to efficiently transmit information to members of the physics research community. This work forms the basis of Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), the underpinnings of the World Wide Web.
1990	The original ARPANET is brought down by the Defense Dept., in favor of NSFNET. Tim Berners-Lee's boss, Mike Sendall, gives approval for Tim to purchase a NeXT cube and pursue his hypertext information sharing project.
1991	Gopher, a text-based tool for information searching, is developed at the University of Minnesota, named after its mascot. Gopher is widely used at university and research sites, joining the FTP and Telnet protocols for connecting via the Internet. The first release of the text-based browser tool, called the World Wide Web, is made on a limited basis at CERN.
1992	Veronica, a search tool for Gopher, is released. The World Wide Web is generally released, and available by FTP. The number of hosts breaks 1,000,000.
1993	The White House comes online at www.whitehouse.gov. Marc Andreesen, NCSA and the University of Illinois develop the first browser with a graphical user interface, called Mosaic. The number of hosts doubles, to over 2,000,000.
1994	The first Internet radio is broadcast. Pizza Hut offers pizza ordering on its Web page.
1995	The NSFNET reverts back to a research network. Public traffic is now carried through a variety of interconnected networks. Dial-up services such as America Online and CompuServe offer internet access to the public. The Vatican comes online. Thousands in Minneapolis-St. Paul lose Net access after transients start a bonfire under a bridge at the Univ. of Minnesota, causing fiber-optic cables to melt.
1996	Java and search engines are considered the Internet tools of the year. Among the restrictions placed on Internet users is China's requirement that users and ISPs register with the police.
1998	Technologies of the year include E-Commerce, E-Auctions, and portals.
1999	A forged Web page made to look like a Bloomberg financial news story raises shares of a small technology company by 31%.
Present	By 2001, the number of Internet hosts is over 100 million. Web pages are estimated at over 19 billion.

Information for this summary comes from multiple sources, including Hobbes' Internet Timeline, The History of the Internet by Dave Kristula, The Electronic Frontier Foundation, The Internet Society (ISOC) and The Web Navigator, by Paul Gilster. Any errors, omissions, attempts at humor and commentary are strictly my own.

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