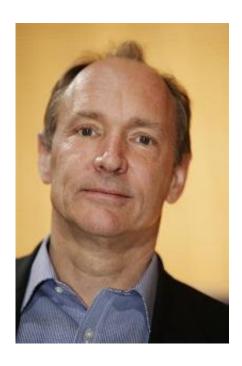# Web founder fears 'snooping' on the Internet

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Tim Berners-Lee, Inventor of the Web, poses during the 20 years celebration of the World Wide Web on March 13, 2009. Berners-Lee, one of the founders of the World Wide Web, said Friday that he was concerned about the emergence of user profiling on the Internet and "snooping."

Tim Berners-Lee, one of the founders of the World Wide Web, said Friday that he was concerned about the emergence of user profiling on the Internet and "snooping."

"The fact that when information travels across the web it isn't interfered with, snooped or molested, is very important," said Berners-Lee at an

event here to mark the 20th anniversary of the first proposal to create the web.

Berners-Lee, who is director of the [World Wide Web](#) Consortium ([W3C](#)), that guides its technological development, pointed to new systems that can automatically detail a person's online habits and build up their profile.

"That sort of snooping is really important to avoid," he added.

The British computer science professor and guru underlined that one of the biggest challenges is to ensure that information available online is used transparently for the specific purpose that its owner intended or consented to, avoiding privacy pitfalls.

"Technologies are also coming that will be able to distinguish the appropriate use of data," he explained, underlining that the [Internet](#) "is a cloud."

US computer technology giant Google on Wednesday launched a test version of a new "interest-based advertising" system for its network of websites including YouTube, the company said in a statement.

The new system is designed to record the interests of users based on the pages they view and Internet searches they conduct, offering tailor-made advertising offers to match which can then be further refined by the user.

Berners-Lee did not refer to Google directly.

A growing number of Internet firms encourage people to rely on applications offered online as services "in the cloud" instead of buying software then installing and maintaining it on their own machines.

While the trend toward cloud services is growing, some still worry about the privacy of data kept online and whether it is shrewd to rely on the Internet for access to information and applications.

There are also concerns about the degree of government surveillance of the online world and the potential for misuse.

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