

# Internet turns 40 with birthday bash

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In this undated image provided by Computer Scientists, scientist Leonard Kleinrock poses with the first Interface Message Processor. "The Internet is a democratizing element; everyone has an equivalent voice," Kleinrock said. "There is no way back at this point. We can't turn it off. The Internet Age is here."

Technology and media stars, pundits and entrepreneurs joined the Internet's father to celebrate the 40th anniversary of his culture-changing child.

"It's the 40th year since the infant Internet first spoke," said University of California, Los Angeles, professor Leonard Kleinrock, who headed the team that first linked computers online in 1969.

Kleinrock led an anniversary event at the UCLA campus that blended reminiscence of the Internet's past with debate about its future.

"There is going to be an ongoing controversy about where we have been and where we are going," said Arianna Huffington, co-founder of the popular news and blog website that bears her name.

"It is not just about the Internet; it is about our times. We are going to need desperately to tap into the better angels of our nature and make our lives not just about ourselves but about our communities and our world."

Huffington was on hand to discuss the power the Internet gives to grass roots organizers on a panel with Kleinrock and Social Brain Foundation director Isaac Mao.

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Kleinrock never imagined Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube that day four decades ago when his team gave birth to what is now taken for granted as the Internet.

"The net is penetrating every aspect of our lives," Kleinrock said to a room of about 200 people and an equal number watching online.

On October 29, 1969, Kleinrock led a team that got a computer at UCLA to "talk" to one at a research institute.

Kleinrock was driven by a certainty that computers were destined to speak to each other and that the resulting network should be as simple to use as telephones.

US telecom colossus AT&T ran lines connecting the computers for ARPANET, a project backed with money from a research arm of the US military's Advanced Research Projects Agency.

ARPANET grew into what is known today as the Internet.

"It feels to me like the alumni meeting of the framers of the US Constitution," Electronic Frontier Foundation co-founder John Perry Barlow said as he addressed the gathering.

"There are a lot of people in this room who are honest to god uncles and aunts of the Internet. What you did is conceivably the most important technological event since the capture of fire."

Barlow, whose nonprofit legal organization fights for online freedom, maintained that Internet access is on the verge of becoming an inalienable human right.

"The reality today is that the Internet is like a new life; it is organic," said Regina Dugan, director of what became DARPA when "Defense" was added to the agency's name.

"It is inherently beautiful. It challenges us all to think about ourselves, about others, about ethics, and about the future."

To test the power of the Internet, DARPA will release 10 "very large balloons" in the continental US and then pay 40,000 dollars to the first person or team to pinpoint their locations using online tools or networking.

The balloons will be afloat for two days and visible only during daylight hours.

"Individuals can make information go viral," Dugan said. "Then it was an Internet challenge, today it is a network challenge."

The competition will be tracked on wildly popular microblogging service

Twitter, according to DARPA.

Kleinrock, who is now 75, sees the Internet spreading into everything.

"The next step is to move it into the real world," Kleinrock said. "The Internet will be present everywhere. I will walk into a room and it will know I am there. It will talk back to me."

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