

Web pioneers win inaugural \$1.5 mn engineering prize

March 18 2013

Five engineers who helped create the Internet were on Monday awarded a \$1.5 million prize which British organisers hope will come to be seen as equivalent to a Nobel prize for engineering.

Robert Kahn, Vinton Cerf and Marc Andreessen of the United States will share the first ever £1 million (1.2 million euro) [Queen Elizabeth Prize](#) for Engineering with Louis Pouzin of France and Tim Berners-Lee of Britain.

"The emergence of the Internet and the web involved many teams of people all over the world," said Alec Broers, chair of the judging panel.

"However, these five visionary engineers, never before honoured together as a group, led the key developments that shaped the Internet and web as a coherent system and brought them into public use."

Britain's [Queen Elizabeth II](#), who gives her name to the prize, will present the award to the winners in a formal ceremony in London in June.

Organisers said Kahn, Cerf and Pouzin had made "seminal" contributions to the design and protocols that make up the fundamental architecture of the Internet.

Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web, the information-sharing system built on top of the Internet which allows us to use it in the way

we do today.

Andreessen, meanwhile, created the first widely-used [web](#) browser, Mosaic.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates was among those who pushed for the inaugural prize to be granted to Internet pioneers.

"It would be difficult to point to any significant human endeavour that has not been touched profoundly through the invention and deployment of the Internet," he said.

"We are living today in only the beginning of the transformations that will come through this enabling technology."

Around a third of the world's population use the Internet today, according to UN figures.

The Queen Elizabeth Prize was created last year in a bid to boost the industry's profile and give greater recognition to the revolutionary impact it has on people's lives.

"Engineers are often the unsung heroes whose innovations have made phenomenal contributions to society," said the award's director Anji Hunter.

"We need more skilled engineers to solve the world's most pressing problems, which requires not only excellent education and inspirational role models, but more attention focused on highlighting the wonders of modern engineering, wherever they may be," she added.

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Citation: Web pioneers win inaugural \$1.5 mn engineering prize (2013, March 18) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-03-web-inaugural-mn-prize.html>

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