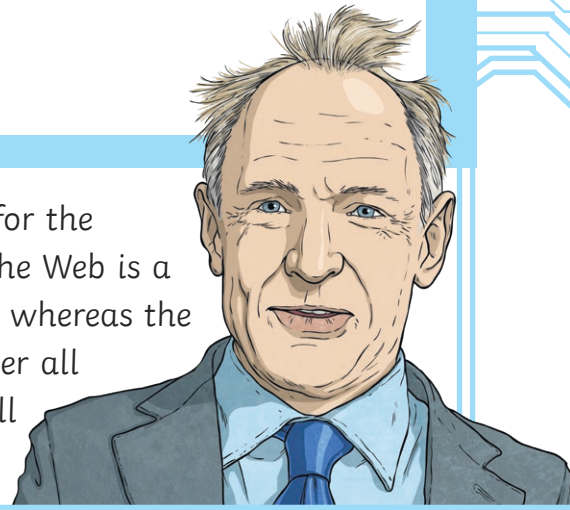# Sir Tim Berners-Lee

Sir Tim Berners-Lee is a British computer scientist, renowned for the invention of the World Wide Web (also known as 'the Web'). The Web is a file system of websites that you access while on the Internet - whereas the Internet is a vast network of computers connected to each other all around the world. The acronym for World Wide Web is why all websites contain 'www'.

Early Life

Tim was born in London in 1955. From an early age he was surrounded by technology; both his parents were accomplished computer scientists.

The Invention of the World Wide Web

Together, his mother and father worked on the Ferranti Mark 1, the world's first commercially available computer. You could say that computer science was in his blood! As a young child, Tim was a keen trainspotter; he learnt all about electronics from his model railway.

Having completed his education at the Emanuel School in south-west London, Tim went on to secure a place at Queen's College, Oxford. In 1976, he graduated with a first class degree in physics.

After university, Tim began a varied career at a range of technology companies. In June 1980, he began working for a company called CERN (the European Organisation for Nuclear Research).

Over the next few years, Tim would leave and return to CERN multiple times, in a variety of different roles. While working at CERN as an independent software engineer, Tim developed a system using 'hypertext' - text that can be clicked to take the user to another webpage, document or area within the current document - to make sharing information quicker and more convenient. The system was called ENQUIRE and was a precursor to the Web that we know and use today.

By the time Tim was putting in place the elements to create the Web, the Internet already existed. It had been created years earlier, with the very first prototype going online in the late 1960s. It was a rudimentary system and was a purely text-based collection of organised files. In 1984, Tim recognised the potential of joining the 'Internet' with his idea of a hypertext-based information management system. He began working on the idea and later, in 1989, published his project plan: 'Information Management: A Proposal'. His objective was to create a globally accessible information sharing system, using the platform of the Internet. Tim called the system the 'World Wide Web'.

He even designed the first web browser (a web browser allows you to access the Internet, including search engines and other web pages), so that people could access his ingenious new innovation.

The first website - info.cern.ch. - was built by Tim at CERN and published on the Internet in August 1991. As the Web was still in its very early stages, this first site acted both as the web server (a program or computer that runs a website) and the web site: the information that users see.

This pioneering site contained information about Tim's World Wide Web project; the idea was to explain hypertext to people visiting the site so that they could build webpages of their own.

Tim's creation took flight quickly. In 1992, there were 50 computers around the world acting as servers for the Web; by 1994, there were over 2 million people using the Web, a figure that was growing by 150,000 each month!

The Web Today

Since its conception, the explosive combination of the Internet and Tim's World Wide Web has gone from strength to strength. There are an estimated 5.16 billion active Internet users around the world, accessing more than 1.8 billion websites. Today, the use of the Web has become so widespread that we can hardly imagine life without it. As the popularity of his invention grew, Tim began to feel the weight of responsibility for the contents of the Web and its use. In 1994, he established W3C (the World Wide Web Consortium) to set Web standards and improve the quality and function of the Web. W3C agreed that the use of the Web should not be readily available without legal restrictions. The following year, Microsoft - a global technology giant - released the first version of their web browser, which was called Internet Explorer.

Awards and Accolades

Throughout his career, Tim has received a range of awards and acknowledgments for his outstanding achievements including:

1999 - World Technology Award for Communication Technology

2006 - President's Medal, the Institute of Physics

2011 - The Mikhail Gorbachev Award

Tim was even recognised for his prodigious accomplishments by Queen Elizabeth II; he was awarded a knighthood in 2004, which means he is now known as Sir Tim Berners-Lee.