



## **World wide web: the science experiment that became a cultural phenomenon**

**Video transcript: clip from *The Virtual Revolution*, Episode 1, first broadcast on BBC Two on 30 Jan 2010**

*ALEKS KROTOSKI:*

We talk about the web and the internet as if they're the same thing, but they're not.

The web is simply the links – information and webpages – delivered to us over the infrastructure known as the internet.

The roots of the internet can be traced back to early 1960s America, when military and university mainframe computers were hooked together via the telephone system.

Email was born in 1965 and common standards began to allow files to be transferred between networks.

But getting to information was still extremely difficult. Users had to know exactly where it was stored and how to tell their computer to find it, in effect by phoning up another computer.

The web as we experience it today – where anyone can access almost anything – just didn't exist.

*TIM BERNERS-LEE:*

I know that you'd love me to say that, "Well, I got it all wired up and then there was a big switch and we threw the switch and the lights dimmed for a moment.

But then there was this incredible high-pitched whine and that was the web taking off. All across the world people starting to log on and type in hypertext, and we could feel if the power of all these links spreading across the planet.

And we just had to hold on tight. And then the calls came in from the BBC and the New York Times and The Economist about what it was that was happening to the world as the stock market sort of took this incredible uptake.

And then we turned it off.

No, it was, uh... It started off in a very small way.

*ALEKS KROTOSKI:*

Berners-Lee's system has become the universal means of connecting all computer content.

His critical breakthrough was to marry an existing idea called hypertext – a way of linking between documents – to the infrastructure and protocols of the internet.

To do this, he assigned documents a unique address – or URL.

These were the first web pages...

*Footage of workers courtesy of CERN.*