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internet *n.* Short for **internet**work. A set of computer networks that may be dissimilar and are joined together by means of gateways that handle data transfer and conversion of messages from the sending networks' protocols to those of the receiving network.

Internet *n.* The worldwide collection of networks and gateways that use the TCP/IP suite of protocols to communicate with one another. At the heart of the Internet is a backbone of high-speed data communication lines between major nodes or host computers, consisting of thousands of commercial, government, educational, and other computer systems, that route data and messages. One or more Internet nodes can go off line without endangering the Internet as a whole or causing communications on the Internet to stop, because no single computer or network controls it. The genesis of the Internet was a decentralized network called ARPANET created by the U.S. Department of Defense in 1969 to facilitate communications in the event of a nuclear attack. Eventually other networks, including BITNET, Usenet, UUCP, and NSFnet, were connected to ARPANET. Currently the Internet offers a range of services to users, such as FTP, e-mail, the World Wide Web, Usenet news, Gopher, IRC, telnet, and others. *Also called:* the Net. *See also* BITNET, FTP[1] (definition 1), Gopher, IRC, NSFnet, telnet[1], Usenet, UUCP, World Wide Web.

Internet2 *n.* A computer-network development project launched in 1996 by a collaborative group of 120 universities under the auspices of the University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development (UCAID). The consortium is now being led by over 190 universities working with industry and government. The goal of Internet2, whose high-speed, fiberoptic backbone was brought on line in early 1999, is the development of advanced Internet technologies and applications for use in research and education at the university level. Though not open for public use, Internet2 and the technologies and applications developed by its members are intended to eventually benefit users of the commercial Internet as well. Some of the new technologies Internet2 and its members are developing and testing include IPv6, multicasting, and quality of service (QoS). Internet2 and the Next Generation Internet