Early Chronology and Documents (1991-1994)

1991

September: SLAC Physicist Paul Kunz brings word of the World Wide Web's existence to SLAC on his return from a meeting with Tim Berners-Lee at CERN.

December 12: (Thursday)

The first WWW server at SLAC (and first server outside of Europe) is successfully installed.

The first pages served by the SLAC Web server include:

```
SPIRES   INDEX    A1 V         43         12          1 12/12/91 15:59:13
SPIRES   HTML     A1 V         74          9          1 12/09/91 17:20:32
DEFAULT  HTML     A1 V         81         13          1 12/06/91 21:15:48
BINLIST  HTML     A1 V         73         13          1 12/06/91 21:11:53
BINLIST  INDEX    A1 F         80          8          1 12/06/91 21:00:22
```

See pages in Stanford Web Archive Portal (SWAP).

December 13: (Friday)

Tim Berners-Lee email of Friday 13 December 1991 to the lists www-interest@cernvax.cern.ch and www-talk@cernvax.cern.ch, (with a Cc: to Paul Kunz, at pfkeb@kaon.slac.stanford.edu) announces: "There is an experimental W3 server for the SPIRES High energy Physics preprint database, thanks to Terry Hung, Paul Kunz and Louise Addis of SLAC."

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1992

January: Tim Berners-Lee presents a live demonstration of the Web at a High Energy Physics computing workshop in southern France. Connecting to the SLAC SPIRES Web page is the "grand finale" of the demo. (Tim did not tell Paul Kunz, who was in attendance, in advance that he was going to demonstrate the link to SPIRES.) Physicists return to their home institutions and tell their colleagues about the Web ... and about the SPIRES connection.

February: An Ad Hoc web support group, the WWW Wizards is convened by Louise Addis. The 'volunteers' are Louise Addis, Mark Barnett, George Crane, Tony Johnson, Bebo White, and Joan Winters. The group is advised by Paul Kunz and starts work immediately to explore possible uses for the WWW at SLAC.

July: WWW Wizard, Tony Johnson, a physicist with the SLAC-SLD experiment, creates the first central SLAC "front page", named slac.html.

Fall: Tony Johnson releases the MidasWWW browser. Based on Motif/X, MidasWWW allows viewing of PostScript files on the Web from Unix and VMS, and even handles compressed PostScript.

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1993

February: *A new X browser called Mosaic is released by The National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA). It has many of the features of MidasWWW and the support of a large organization. With the availability and widespread adoption of Mosaic, Web use starts to gain momentum...*

The SLAC Library acquires a NeXT computer and a 1.3 gigabyte disk and starts to take the 'next' step by converting the TeX DVI files to PostScript using the DVIPS program on Unix. The files are then compressed and stored on a SLAC WWW server. Figures are requested by e-mail from authors, faxed to our NextFAX, converted to Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) format and posted with the basic text on the SLAC PostScript server (preprint.slac.stanford.edu).

SPIRES-HEP can now be searched using the MidasWWW browser on an X-terminal and the genuine full-text complete with equations -- and often figures -- can be displayed or printed by anyone in the world with a web browser.

June: The full text service on SPIRES-HEP is made public

August: SPIRES-HEP is receiving about 38,000 queries/month. Of these, 15,000 are thru WWW.

November: Joan Winters installs the first "official" SLAC home page with links to web pages developed by her and by others across the laboratory.

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1994

Additional features are added to the SPIRES-HEP service thru WWW. It is now possible to see who has cited any of an author's papers and to go directly to the full-text of the citing paper on the "e-print archives," initiated in 1991 as a bulletin board for unpublished physics papers by Paul Ginsparg. Ginsparg, at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), starts to link to the SLAC PostScript server in order to supply .ps.Z files as well as the TeX source. Others start setting up shadow servers to have the PostScript versions closer at hand. (Networks are the limiting factor: not everyone has fast enough connections yet to make PostScript viewing feasible)

May: IHEP in Beijing China becomes the first Chinese institution to have a fully operational world-wide Internet connection, when a dedicated link with SLAC ( ) is initiated.

Use of WWW explodes to the world beyond physics...

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For more about the history of the early Web, see:

- Stanford University Libraries press release, October 2014, announcing launch of Stanford Wayback Archive with SLAC's first pages
- SLAC's press release October 29, 2014
- SUL October 2014 video tour of SLAC's first U.S. website
- CBS Channel 5 news story (video) on SLAC's first U.S. website
- W3C. "A Little History of the World Wide Web."
- History of the Internet
- Berners-Lee, Tim. Weaving the Web. Harper Collins, 1999.
- Berners-Lee, Tim, et al. World Wide Web: An Information infrastructure for high- energy physics. January 1992. Published in Conference Proceedings, 2nd International Workshop on Software Engineering, Artificial Intelligence and Expert Systems for High-energy and Nuclear Physics (AIHENP 92)
- Donszelmann, M. World Wide Web in high-energy physics xperiments: A Status report. *Int. J. Mod. Phys.* C5 (1994) 755-764
- Gillies, James and Robert Cailliau How the Web Was Born: The Story of the World Wide Web. Oxford University Press, 2000.
- ...and the Publications and Papers portion of this exhibit.

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