

The Inter-Wh

We've all been told that this Internet thing is here to stay. But is this "information superhighway" really the new wave of the future? Is this a new direction for America, or merely a passing fad? The federal government is confident enough to make recent forays into the system. Regardless, Net use is becoming more common, and if you are like me, that can be kind of intimidating. For those of you who don't have a clue as to what the Internet is, where to stop or better yet, which stop signs to heed, this article is for you. So read it, take notes and perhaps someday, you too will become one of those hackers who spend half their nights lost somewhere in cyberspace.

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Ten years ago, the Internet was primarily an extension of the U.S. Department of Defense—a link between researchers in Washington D.C. and researchers at universities such as Stanford and MIT.

Today, the Internet is an entirely different place. Home to almost anything and everything you ever wanted to talk, read or know about, the Net is no longer just a place for federally-funded researchers, computer geniuses and hackers. In fact, it's not uncommon to find everyday people like you and me using its services.

To get started, I suggest you head over to Room 197 Durham and pick up a copy of the *Vincent Account Information Sheet*. This should tell you everything you need to know about setting up an account and the basics of using the system.

The next question, of course, is "What is Vincent?" And, if you are starting out as I did, you probably don't know what it is, let alone what it can do for you.

So, here it goes. Vincent is a network of host computers that allows students to access the Internet from a variety of places around campus. The network is named for Dr. John Vincent Atanasoff, a former Iowa State physics professor who is credited with inventing the world's first electronic digital computer.

You can access Vincent and the Internet in one of two ways. The first is from a Vincent workstation which can be found in almost any public lab on campus. However, if you live in the residence halls, you might want to consider option number two. This involves paying a \$5 monthly fee and having your computer

connected to the Iowa State Network (ISN). This will allow you access to the Internet and Vincent anytime you want without having to leave home.

By having access to the Internet, you literally have the world at your fingertips. Here the sky is the limit. You can read excerpts of your favorite magazines, find out about the current space shuttle mission, cruise a library in South America for a copy of your favorite book or just simply stay in touch with old high school friends.

In my case, I most recently used the Internet to find out what users at Iowa State thought of the system they were using. I received responses from a number of users, including Kelly Evers.

As to how the Internet had affected her life, Evers said it was kind of strange.

"I have received letters, Christmas cards, photos and phone calls from people I never would have known if I had not used the Internet," Evers said. "I have made friendly acquaintances from all over the world. It is a form of communication I had never experienced before, and I think it is one that will be used more frequently in the near future."

One method of communicating on the Internet is through electronic mail, or e-mail as it is more commonly called. As you are probably well aware, e-mail, a series of programs that routes electronic messages between computers on the Internet, is sweeping the country. The best thing about it is that it's free. And if cost is not enough of an incentive to try it out, perhaps just knowing that the president and vice president of the United

An E-mail Primer

Account Registration

After picking up the account registration information sheet at Room 197 Durham, go to Room 248 Durham and register for a Vincent Account. Your account will be ready for use 24 hours after you have registered. Once your account is ready, you can send e-mail messages!

The Basics

ethos - user name
ethos@iastate.edu - address

This is one way to send a message. We suggest you send a message to yourself to see if you've gotten the hang of it. **Note:** If the computer you are working on has a direct connection to the ISN (Ethernet) or from a modem connection, begin with step one. (The Vincent modem dial-up numbers are: 1,200 bps—294-1200, 2,400 bps—294-2400 and 9,600 bps—294-9600.) From a Vincent workstation, skip steps 1-4 and do the following: put in your user name, hit tab, type in your password and hit return. Go on to step 5. **Note:** Type what appears inside the quote marks, not the quote marks!

Step One

At the "DIAL" prompt type "enet" and hit return. Wait for the words "Ringing" and "Answered" to appear on the computer screen and hit return.

Step Two

After hitting return a menu will appear. Pick #3 (Vincent1 or Vincent2) from the list and hit return.

Step Three

When the screen displays "login" type your user name. In our case, this would be *ethos*.

Step Four

After you type in your username and hit return, the computer will ask for your "password." Only you know what your password is and we won't tell you what *ethos'* is. When you get to "TERM=(vt100)" hit return.

Step Eight

At the "subject" prompt, type whatever you want the title of your message to be. (A lot of users simply type "Hi".) After you enter a subject, use the arrow key to move your cursor below the dotted line.

Step Seven

After you type the address you are sending to, you will see the prompt "cc:". This is where you enter additional address of others you want to send carbon copies of the message you will be typing. If you don't want to send your message to anyone else, hit the down arrow key.

Step Six

After you hit return, you will see the "To:" prompt. At this prompt, type the address of the person you're sending your message to. **Note:** If you are sending a message from a computer at Iowa State to someone at Iowa State, you only need to type their username and not the whole address. If you wanted to send us a message, you would type *ethos*. Push the down arrow key once.

Step Five

At the prompt "vincent%" type "comp" and hit return. "Comp" stands for compose.

Step Nine

Type your letter.

Step Ten

When you have finished typing your letter, hold down the control key and type "xc". The computer will prompt you with the question: Save file/tmp/ethos/mail/draft?(y or n). Answer "y" to the question.

Step Eleven

After answering "y" you may be asked "Buffer draft does not end in new line. Add one? (y or n)." Answer "yes." **Note:** you must type out the word this time.

Step Twelve

After typing "yes," you will be asked "What Now?" answer "send" and hit return.

Step Thirteen

That's it, you sent it! If it worked, you should get a message that says ...at the Vincent prompt type INC. to incorporate your new mail.

Step Fourteen

Type "show" to show the message.

Step Fifteen

Type "next" to see the message that comes after the one your looking at.

Step Sixteen

Type "prev" to see the message before the one you are looking at.

Step Seventeen

Type "scan" to see a list of all your messages.

Step Nineteen

This is just a portion of what you can do on e-mail. **If all else fails,** use Easy Vincent. To do so, type "easy" at the Vincent prompt and follow the instructions.

Step Eighteen

Type "show #" to see a particular message from the scan list.

Here are some things you can experiment with:

finger - tells you if someone is logged onto the system, what their username is.

To use, type "f" followed by the address of the person you are looking for.

zwrite - sends a message to someone logged on to the system.

To use, type zwrite followed by the user name of the person you want to send your message to.

talk - allows you to talk to someone who is logged onto the system.

To use, type "talk" followed by the machine and the address of the person you want to talk to. This will give you a split screen so you can see the what you have typed and the other person's response. For example, suppose *ethos* is logged on vincent1 and you want to talk to us. To do this you would type "talk ethos@vincent1.iastate.edu."

rmm # - throws a message away.

To use, type "rmm" and the number of the message you want to throw away.



States have their own accounts is. (To learn how to send a message via e-mail, see the graphic on pages 12-13.)

"I have been using the Internet to correspond to my friends in my home country and also those who are abroad," Dora Mak said in response to my question about how students used the Net. "It saves me the time it would take to write and mail letters. But, the most important thing is that it saves us the money we would spend on international calls. I log in a few times a day to check (my) mail so we can keep in touch."

Although most college students use e-mail just as Mak does to send messages to friends at other college campuses, that is not all that it can be used for. E-mail can now be used to subscribe to magazines, obtain quotes and quipps from Jack Handy and even send your thoughts or complaints to various magazines, newspapers and television news programs. "Dateline NBC," MTV and even *ethos* can be contacted through e-mail. And don't forget, if your parents have a computer hooked to the Internet, you can quit calling them collect and still find out when the family dog dies.

Okay, so now you are probably saying to yourself, "What if none of my friends have an e-mail account?" or worse yet, "What if I have no friends?" Well, don't fret. The Internet can be used for more than sending e-mail messages. In fact, some professors have their students submit homework via e-mail, and some classes leave quizzes on the Net so students can use them to study for upcoming tests.

Darcie Jones, who responded to my informal query, said she was one of many Iowa State students who was first introduced to the Internet through a course requirement.

"Because one of my biggest interests is multicultural education, the Internet is perfect," Jones said. "On the Internet you are not only able to communicate with people at Iowa State, Iowa, and the U.S., but you can communicate (with people) from around the world. Right now, I am writing back and forth with a guy from Turkey."

Perhaps you would like to do more than communicate with other people over the Internet. Perhaps you would like to go

exploring and see for yourself all that the Net has to offer. In that case, keep reading.

One service you are sure to find useful is Gopher. Created at the University of Minnesota and named for the school mascot, this service allows you to "burrow" your way around the Net. With Gopher, you can jump between computer networks around the world. One moment you could be on a computer system in South America and one keystroke later you could find yourself somewhere in Eastern Europe. It's really that simple!

If you would rather search within the realms of the university, there is always Online ISU. Online ISU is a Gopher Server that will give you information about Iowa State such as coming events, university plans and policies and current news and notices.

However, if reading about the university's new sexual harassment policy is not to your liking, don't worry, Online ISU is just one of a large number of Gopher clients available through the Internet.

Usenets are another service of the Internet that allow groups of people interested in similar topics to hold electronic discussions. Topics for these discussions can range anywhere from the politics of the data superhighway to favorite comic books.

With more than 2,500 Usenet groups, and the number increasing daily, there is a group for nearly everyone in cyberspace (and probably a lot more than just one).

Most people become acquainted with usenets not by speaking, but rather by lurking and listening. However, after awhile, even the most timid person will find himself posing a question or even providing an answer. In a way, it's kind of like having "Oprah" or "Donahue" inside your computer.

"I know I have been able to learn a lot about my interests and hobbies through the newsgroups," Cha Ron Kim Sattler said. "I subscribe to mostly fitness newsgroups, and as a result of a thread on one the newsgroups, I suggested starting a mailing list for women cyclists. Although the list crashed, another woman has taken it over, and it should be up and running soon."

In addition to finding other people with similar interests through the Internet, one can also find love. No, your eyes are not deceiving you, I did say love. On my recent adventures through the Net, I learned of a couple who did meet this way.

And because she is a student at Iowa State and he lives in Australia, they use Internet to communicate nightly. Since first talking to each other over the Net, the two have met in person and she has accepted his promise ring.

If you think using the Internet to find your true love is rather bizarre, imagine using it for sex. Believe it or not, it is possible and it has been done. I guess one of the advantages is you won't have to worry about still being respected in the morning.

So far, it may sound like the Net is full of a bunch of sick, desperate losers. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Upon adventuring into the Net, you will find that most users are not there to be anonymous. Instead, they are there to find a sense of validation and correspond with others on this highly diverse planet we call home. In essence, it's like a tiny university of whale savers, stamp collectors or maybe even *ethos* readers. (By the end of next fall, if not sooner, we hope to have *ethos* on the Internet.)

Sarah Mahr, a freshman in design, takes full advantage of the Internet's "talk" command. While Mahr says she mainly uses the command to trade stories with a cousin at Morningside College, she has used the command to talk to students from across campus and to people in different countries.

"One time I was just sitting at the computer talking, and I got a message that someone from Sydney was waiting to talk to me," Mahr said. "My first thought was 'I don't know anyone from Sydney, Iowa.' Then, I answered the message and it turned out they were from Sydney, Australia."

Another service of the Net that many people enjoy is *zwrite*. The only drawback to this method of communication is that it is not as easy as picking up a phone and calling—everytime you want to say something, you have to type it, and send it. And, for you to send it, the person you are sending the message to has to be logged on to a computer at the same time you are logged on to yours.

This drawback, and many others, have some skeptics wondering whether the Internet is too high-tech for its own good. After all, whatever happened to hearing someone's voice over the telephone or writing personal letters by hand?

Alan Marcus of Iowa State's Center for Historical Studies of Technology is one of these skeptics. The basis for Marcus' doubts is the idea that the Internet, like computers, is not embraced by every American. (See the essay on page 30.)

"In a world where studies show that between one-third and two-thirds of the people cannot even program the clock on their VCR, how are they going to be able to use something like the Internet?" Marcus said. "We can send a message instantly over e-mail, but if nobody looks at it, then it's no good."

Perhaps Marcus is right. After all, not everyone has time to check his or her e-mail every minute of every hour, not to mention the fact that many people don't even own a computer. I suppose you could always call them and tell them you sent them a message, but then why not just give them the message over the phone?

Mahr said she saw Marcus' point but that she did not agree. "For matters like asking a question, or writing a letter, there is no reason why we should not take advantage of it," she said. "The Internet may have disadvantages in an emergency, but that isn't what most students use it for, anyway."

William Frazier, Communications and System Software assistant director said he doesn't think the Internet is a short-term fad.

And if you are like Cesar Perez-Gonzalez, that might be a good thing.

"I don't know what I would do without the Internet," Perez-Gonzalez said. "I probably would get more productive things done. But, I would probably lose contact with people—some of them really good friends."

However, Frazier said the Internet will likely become more commercialized as time rolls on. He pointed to the National Science Foundation's push to make the Internet a self-sustaining vehicle instead of a service provided by the government.

Despite its advantages and disadvantages, the Internet will most likely not disappear anytime soon. After all, it's your link to the entire planet through a computer, and the possibilities... well, I think you have the picture. So, if you haven't already, do some exploring. Who knows? Perhaps we'll meet somewhere in cyberspace.

e Dawn Bormann



All images and usenet names used in this article were obtained through the Internet.