

TELECOM CELEBRATION DAYS

1. From World Telecommunication Day (1969-1973) to World Information Society Day (2006) to World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (2006-now)

World Telecommunication Day (17 May)

World Telecommunication Day has been celebrated annually on 17 May since 1969. The date marks the anniversary of the founding of ITU on 17 May 1865, when the first International Telegraph Convention was signed in Paris. In 1973, the event was formally instituted at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Malaga-Torremolinos, Spain. Every year a topical theme is chosen and events celebrating that theme take place around the world. *(See the details in my article “The INTERNATIONAL TELEGRAPH UNION” in this chapter).*



World Information Society Day (17 May)

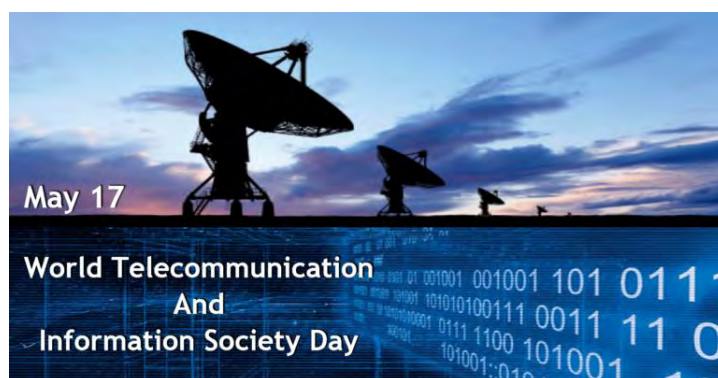
With the growth in importance of information technology alongside telecommunications - especially the Internet - it was recognised that this topic also needed to be brought to public attention. In 2005, the World Summit on the Information Society called upon the United Nations General Assembly to declare 17 May as World Information Society Day. The aim was to focus on the importance of these technologies and the wide range of related social and economic issues that had been raised by the summit. The UN General Assembly resolved in March 2006 that World Information Society Day would indeed take place every year on 17 May. The first one took place on Wednesday, 17 May 2006



World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (17 May)

In November 2006, the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Antalya, Turkey, decided to celebrate both events on 17 May as World Telecommunication and Information Society Day.

Its purpose is to help raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICT) can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide. World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, like its predecessors, focuses on a particular theme for each event.



2. Other ones

World Radio Day (13 February)

UNESCO's Executive Board recommended to its 2011 General Conference the proclamation of World Radio Day, on the basis of a wide consultation process, carried out by UNESCO earlier that year, further to a proposal from Spain. The leader of the project, the Academia Española de la Radio, received support for the proposal from diverse stakeholders, including major international broadcasters and broadcasting unions and associations. The date of 13 February, the day United Nations Radio was established in 1946, was proposed by the Director-General of UNESCO. On 14 January 2013, during its 67th Session, the United Nations General Assembly formally endorsed UNESCO's of 13 February as World Radio Day.



Morse Code Day (27 April)

April 27th is the birthday of Samuel Morse.

Morse Code Day celebrates the invention of Morse code and his version of the electric telegraph. This special event was established on this date to honour Samuel Morse, who was born on 27 April 1791.

My research did not find the creator, or the origin of Morse Code Day.



Telegraph Operator Day (24 May)

The image below is the only information that I could find. Is it only celebrated in Brazil?

On 24 May 1844, Samuel Morse sent America's first telegram over a telegraph line between Washington and Baltimore, a distance of around 40 miles.



International Internet Day (29 October)



This unofficial holiday commemorates the very first electronic message sent over a network. On 29 October 1969, a UCLA Computer Science Professor and his staff sent the message “LO” over the telephone network to be received at Stanford University. It is also known as World Internet Day or International Internet Day. The day celebrates the people who helped build the internet.

The initiative was made by the ‘Association of Internet Users’ (together with other associations) to share and extend the Information Society to all citizens. International Internet Day was first observed on 25 October 2005 in Tunisia at the Summit of the Information Society. The summit culminated by proposing the observation of the Internet Day to the United Nations. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) passed a resolution for the observance of 29 October as International Internet Day. The day celebrates the people who helped build the internet, and also aims to reflect on all the ways that it has changed our lives forever.

A bit of history.

On 12 September 1969 the University of Los Angeles (UCLA) and the University of Stanford’s Research Institute (now SRI International) succeed in connecting their computers, a physical distance of 560 km. The network to which the connection is made is called 'ARPANET'. On 28 October 1969, the moment of truth finally takes place. That day a student programmer, Charles Kline, tries to send a message from his computer terminal in Los Angeles to a terminal in Stanford, manned by Bill Duvall. He decides to stick to the simple word 'LOGIN'. Halfway through, the connection crashes and Kline doesn't get any further than "LO". However, approximately one hour later, Kline was able to successfully send the message in full. This shows how primitive the technology was back then, but the letters 'LO' would become a symbol for the birth of the internet. For the first time, two computer terminals were able to exchange communication without being physically connected.

The news goes around the world and further expansion follows very quickly. One milestone after another is written in the books. By the end of 1971 the ARPANET network already has 23 host computers. It is also the year in which the first email is sent and the sign '@' is used. After opening up the internet to commercial users, the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) was introduced in 1974 to enable communication between the various networks. Since the 1980s, Europe has also followed; the success of email ensures this. In 1984 it was decided to assign each host its own domain name.

In 1986 we saw the first virus, developed by an IT student Robert Morris. That was actually a joke that got out of hand. But the virus managed to infect about 10% of all hosts worldwide and damaged many ITC systems. Morris was sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of \$10,000

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As we have so few renowned scientists here in Belgium, allow me to add a few more words on Robert Cailliau. He was born in Tongeren, Belgium, on 26 January 1947, and in 1958 he moved with his parents to Antwerp. After secondary school he graduated from Ghent University in 1969 as MSc in electrical and mechanical engineering. In 1971 he also obtained an MSc from the University of Michigan in Computer, Information and Control Engineering.

In December 1974 he started working at CERN (Geneva) as a Fellow in the Proton Synchrotron (PS) division, working on the control system of the accelerator. In April 1987 he left the PS division to become group leader of Office Computing Systems in the Data Handling division. In 1989, Tim Berners-Lee proposed a hypertext system for access to the many forms of documentation at and related to CERN and soon was joined by Cailliau. Together they developed what soon became known as the World Wide Web.



Cailliau designed the historical logo of the WWW, organized the first International World Wide Web Conference at CERN in 1994 and helped transfer Web development from CERN to the global Web consortium in 1995. Together with Dr. James Gillies, Cailliau wrote "How the Web Was Born", the first book-length account of the origins of the World Wide Web.

The photo, taken in 2019, shows Tim Berners-Lee on the left and Robert Cailliau on the right.



See an interview with R. Cailliau in 1997: <http://www.computer.org/portal/web/computingnow/ic-cailliau>

PS: See also my related article "THE INTERNATIONAL TELEGRAPH UNION"