A brief history of the Modern (Business) Internet

Beaming is 20. A lot has happened in the world in the time in which we've been around, especially in the tech and internet space, so we decided to commemorate that in this report. We highlight around 100 significant events in the tech and internet business landscape since the start of 2004.

Our research dipped into decades of knowledge from people in our team, as well as media reports and the new wave of Generative AI tools currently transforming the world of work. All of the images in this report were created using DALL·E 3. Oh, and we focused on business, well, because that's our bag! Enjoy.

2004

Beaming Begins

25 June 2004: Launched in a Hastings garden shed during the broadband rush of the early noughties, Beaming filled a gap in the market for high-quality connectivity and communications products, combined with excellent customer service. 20 years later, Beaming is a thriving ISP serving thousands of businesses across the UK with internet and managed services.

Podcasting is Born

13 August 2004: Podcasting is believed to have begun with Daily Source Code, a pioneering production from former MTV video jockey and internet entrepreneur Adam Curry. Daily Source Code covered tech trends, internet culture and music, and played a significant role in popularising podcasting as a way of distributing audio content.

Google Becomes a Public Company

19 August 2004: Google went public with a market capitalisation of $23bn, making it one of the world's most valuable tech companies in 2004. Since then, it's evolved into a $2.15tn conglomerate called Alphabet with a portfolio that includes cloud computing, streaming, autonomous vehicles, and life sciences. Google still accounts for over 90% of online searches.

Web 2.0 Gets Coined

5 October 2004: The term "Web 2.0" was coined during a brainstorming session by Tim O'Reilly, the founder of publishing company O'Reilly Media, to describe a new wave of web-based technologies and applications that were emerging at the time. The concept aimed to describe the transition of the web from static pages to a more dynamic and interactive platform.

Boston Globe Reveals IoT

25 October 2004: The term' Internet of Things' (IoT) was coined in the 1990s. However, it became popular in 2004 when the media started to take an interest in the concept. On 25 October, the Boston Globe reported on a warehouse equipped with an IoT mesh network featuring 600 wireless radio microchips. There are approximately 17bn connected IoT devices worldwide now.

BBC Reports Soaring Broadband

27 December 2004: ADSL 'broadband' allowing faster data transmission over copper telephone lines surged during 2004, with hundreds of millions of new connections worldwide. At year-end, the BBC reported the number of UK people accessing the internet via broadband had overtaken dial-up. Researchers Point Topic said it was one of the fastest-growing technologies ever.

2005

Amazon Introduces Prime

2 February 2005: Amazon introduced Prime, its first membership program offering 'all-you-can-eat' express shipping for a flat fee. Prime revolutionised e-commerce, setting expectations that others in the industry have struggled to achieve, and has been a cornerstone of Amazon's continued success. Today, there are over 200m Amazon Prime subscribers worldwide.

Yahoo Buys Flickr

20 March 2005: Yahoo's acquisition of Flickr, a pioneer of online photo sharing, underscored the growing importance of user-generated content on the internet. In subsequent years, it faced increased competition from other photo-sharing platforms, particularly Instagram. In 2018, Flickr was sold to SmugMug and still caters to serious photographers.

Citizen Journalism Goes Mainstream

7 July 2005: When London experienced a series of suicide bomb attacks in 2005, eyewitnesses used their mobile phones and digital cameras to capture photos, videos, and firsthand accounts of the events. The London bombings were one of the first major moments for citizen journalism, where members of the public shared news and information via social media platforms.

Rupert Murdoch Buys MySpace

19 July 2005: At its peak, MySpace was the dominant social network, with millions of users worldwide and playing a significant role in shaping online culture. When Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation purchased it for $580m, MySpace initially remained a dominant player in the social media landscape. However, it struggled when confronted with Facebook and was sold for $35m in 2011.

eBay Acquires Skype

12 September 2005: eBay's purchase of voice and video over internet specialist Skype for approximately $2.6bn was seen as a strategic move to strengthen its position in the e-commerce market. While the integration between eBay and Skype did not achieve significant traction, eBay more than made its initial purchase price back when offloading it later.

2006

Amazon Gets Into Web Services

14 March 2006: The launch of AWS in 2006 marked the beginning of a transformative era in cloud computing, redefining how many startups, enterprises, and developers approached their computing needs. While AWS wasn't the first cloud computing platform, it transformed the landscape and remains the dominant player. Revenues are expected to top $100bn in 2024.

Google Provides Productivity Apps

28 August 2006: Originally known as Google Apps for Your Domain, Google Workspace offered a cloud-based alternative to traditional office productivity software, with subscription pricing, easy collaboration and no need for on-premises infrastructure and maintenance. Today, over 6m businesses use Google Workspace for productivity and communication.

Google Gets YouTube

13 November 2006: When it acquired video-sharing platform YouTube for $1.65bn, Google gained a massive user base and solidified its position in the online video space. YouTube complemented services like Google Search and Google Ads and provided new opportunities for growth and monetisation. YouTube reportedly generated $31.5bn in advertising revenues in 2023.

2007

Netflix Starts Streaming

16 January 2007: While Netflix was founded as a DVD rental service, its shift to online streaming revolutionised the entertainment industry, disrupting traditional TV networks and movie studios and paving the way for subscription-based streaming platforms. Netflix now has 270 million subscribers and more than 500 million total users.

Apple Launches iPhone

29 June 2007: When Apple's founder, Steve Jobs, introduced the first iPhone, he said the event would make history. He was right. The iPhone was the first true smartphone, revolutionising mobile communication and computing and moving most web usage to mobiles. More than 2.2bn have been sold, making Apple one of the world's most profitable companies.

BBC Introduces iPlayer

25 December 2007: BBC iPlayer was one of the first major on-demand streaming services from a traditional broadcaster, initially providing catch-up TV and radio services for BBC programmes. Since its launch, it has evolved to offer live streaming, on-demand content, and exclusive programming. It has helped make streaming a primary source of entertainment.

2008

Yahoo Releases Hadoop

1 January 2008: Yahoo's release of Hadoop as an open-source project transformed it from an internal project to a global force. Hadoop, a framework for storing and processing large datasets, revolutionised how organisations handle big data, enabling scalable, cost-effective processing of massive datasets across clusters of commodity hardware.

App Store Opens for Business

10 July 2008: Apple's App Store introduced a centralised platform for distributing mobile apps, enabling developers to reach a global audience. Before it, they were distributed through various channels, often requiring manual installation and updates. Developers had to negotiate deals with carriers or device manufacturers to get their apps pre-installed.

Bill Gates Steps Back From Microsoft

31 July 2008: Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft and one of the most influential figures in computing history, stepped away from day-to-day activities at the company to focus on health and education philanthropy at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Gates shaped the personal computing era at Microsoft and helped build one of the world's most valuable companies.

Airbnb Starts in San Francisco

11 August 2008: Airbnb was started by its founders as a way to rent out air mattresses in their San Francisco apartment. It evolved into the most significant player in the global accommodation market: a global platform for short-term lodging and home-sharing with 4m hosts and 7m global listings. At the time of writing, Airbnb was worth $93bn.

Large Hadron Collider Goes Live

10 September 2008: The Large Hadron Collider, a 17-mile particle accelerator located at the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Switzerland, was the biggest machine the world had seen. It required a global network of computing centres and storage facilities to handle the data volumes produced during experiments studying the nature of matter and the universe.

HTC Provides First Android Phone

23 September 2008: It took a team to rival the iPhone. That team was led by Google, which unveiled the Android mobile operating system in 2007. A year later, HTC launched the first Android device. Android is used by smartphone manufacturers globally, making devices more affordable and accessible. Today, there are 3.9 billion active Android smartphone users.

SpaceX Reaches Space

28 September 2008: SpaceX's Falcon 1 achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first privately developed, fully liquid-fueled launch vehicle to go into orbit around the Earth. SpaceX changed space transportation by developing reusable rockets, reducing the cost of launching payloads into space and making exploration and satellite deployment more accessible.

Barack Obama Wins Internet Election

4 November 2008: The internet played a significant role in Obama's election as US President, described in some quarters as' the election won by the internet'. Obama's campaign leveraged social media platforms such as Facebook to reach and engage with voters, particularly young and tech-savvy demographics, and pioneered online fundraising techniques.

2009

Satoshi Nakamoto Mines First Bitcoin

3 January 2009: The first block of the Bitcoin network was mined by Satoshi Nakamoto, an individual (or group) who remains anonymous. Bitcoin sparked a global movement around cryptocurrency and blockchain technology, with the potential to change how we approach finance, record-keeping and commerce. An estimated 1bn people around the world use cryptocurrencies now.

Birth of Whatsapp

4 January 2009: WhatsApp's smartphone messaging app was designed to be a convenient, cost-effective, secure alternative to traditional SMS messaging. It has become one of the world's most popular messaging platforms globally. WhatsApp was acquired by Facebook for $19bn in 2014 and is predicted to reach 3.14bn users by 2025.

US Government Relinquishes Internet Oversight

30 September 2009: The IANA transition, when ICANN – the body coordinating the assignment of domain names and IP addresses – stopped operating under contract with the US Department of Commerce, was seen as a historic milestone in the evolution of internet governance, effectively removing US government oversight of the internet.

Fitbit Tracker Launches

1 October 2009: The Fitbit Tracker release marked a significant breakthrough in wearable technology. One of the first devices specifically designed for fitness tracking purposes, it combined these capabilities with user-friendly design, wireless connectivity, and social features, allowing users to share with their friends. Today, Fitbit has 128m registered users.

2010

Sun Sets with Oracle Acquisition

27 January 2010: When Sun settled on its $7.4bn sale to Oracle, it ended an era for a company whose hardware, software, and networking technology laid many of the internet's foundations. Sun developed Java, a programming language for building web applications and services, and several other important technologies and standards that underpin the modern internet.

Microsoft Launches Azure

1 February 2010: Microsoft Azure accelerated the adoption of cloud computing among businesses, providing the tools and infrastructure - including computing, storage, databases, networking, and AI - they needed to migrate their operations to the cloud. 95% of Fortune 500 companies use Microsoft Azure products and cloud services.

Apple Releases iPad

31 July 2008: Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft and one of the most influential figures in computing history, stepped away from day-to-day activities at the company to focus on health and education philanthropy at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Gates shaped the personal computing era at Microsoft and helped build one of the world's most valuable companies.

Uber Starts Transport Revolution

5 May 2010: Uber marked a big shift in tech and transportation, introducing a new way to connect passengers with drivers through a mobile app. Since then, Uber has expanded globally. It was valued at $75bn in one of the biggest tech IPOs ever, has 137m monthly active users across its ride-hailing and food-ordering services, and generated $37bn in 2023.

Large Hadron Collider Goes Live

10 September 2008: The Large Hadron Collider, a 17-mile particle accelerator located at the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Switzerland, was the biggest machine the world had seen. It required a global network of computing centres and storage facilities to handle the data volumes produced during experiments studying the nature of matter and the universe.

Responsive Web Design Introduced

25 May 2010: Ethan Marcotte's seminal article "Responsive Web Design" was published. This article is widely credited with introducing and popularising the concept of responsive web design, an approach aimed to make web pages render well on a variety of devices and screen sizes, which has since become a cornerstone of modern web development practices.

Ocado Delivers Strong IPO

21 July 2010: Ocado, the online grocery retailer and technology provider, raised £200m in a noteworthy IPO showcasing the potential of e-commerce in the grocery sector, its ability to disrupt traditional retail, and Ocado's innovative tech platform for automated warehouses and delivery logistics. Ocado reached 1m customers and achieved revenues of £2.8bn in 2023.

Go for DeepMind

23 September 2010: DeepMind is a research lab that has made major advancements in machine learning and AI, as well as advanced applications in areas such as medical diagnosis and autonomous driving. Its development of AlphaGo, an AI capable of beating human champions in the complex game of Go, garnered international attention. Google acquired it for £400m.

2011

WeChat 'Superapp' Launches in China

21 January 2011: WeChat, launched by Chinese tech company Tencent in 2011, is far more than just a messaging app. It is the original 'Superapp', a platform offering messaging, social networking, mobile payments, shopping, and more, all within the same app. WeChat has over 1.5bn monthly active users and is an indispensable part of daily life for people in China.

IBM Watson Wins Jeopardy!

4 January 2009: WhatsApp's smartphone messaging app was designed to be a convenient, cost-effective, secure alternative to traditional SMS messaging. It has become one of the world's most popular messaging platforms globally. WhatsApp was acquired by Facebook for $19bn in 2014 and is predicted to reach 3.14bn users by 2025.

WeWork Opens First Space

6 April 2011: WeWork's Manhattan office was the first of more than 700 co-working spaces where it hoped people and companies would come together and do their best work. Valued in 2019 at $47bn, WeWork - which positioned itself as a tech platform - suffered a spectacular collapse. It struggled through the pandemic after a failed IPO and filed for bankruptcy in 2023.

European Union Adopts Net Neutrality Rules

19 April 2011: The principle that ISPs should treat all internet data equally gained prominence in the early 2000s. The EU's rules prohibit ISPs from blocking or discriminating against lawful internet traffic but do allow reasonable traffic management practices - such as managing congestion or mitigating security threats - to ensure efficient network operation.

Zoom Founded

21 April 2011: The video conferencing platform Zoom was founded in 2011 but rose to prominence in the early days of the pandemic, when daily meeting participants skyrocketed from 10m to over 300m, and the platform became essential for remote work, virtual meetings, and collaboration. Today, Zoom has more than 200k enterprise customers and 350m daily meeting participants.

LinkedIn Goes Public

19 May 2011: LinkedIn achieved a valuation of $4.25bn when it went public in 2011, validating the concept of social networking for professionals and demonstrating that there was significant value in creating a platform for networking, job hunting, and professional development. LinkedIn has more than 1bn members and over 67m registered companies today.

Justin Timberlake buys MySpace

11 June 2011: After Rupert Murdoch, there was Justin Timberlake. Specific Media Group and Justin Timberlake jointly purchased MySpace for approximately $35m, seeing the potential for a hub for artists, musicians and other content creators to connect with fans and promote their work. They sold MySpace for $87m to publisher Time Inc. in 2016.

Introduction of 'Li-Fi'

15 July 2011: Professor Harald Haas introduced the concept of Li-Fi, short for Light Fidelity, during his TEDGlobal 2011 talk in Edinburgh. Li-Fi utilises visible light, ultraviolet, and infrared spectrums for data transmission, and has garnered significant interest as a potential alternative to traditional Wi-Fi (which relies on radio waves).

HP Acquires Autonomy

3 October 2011: HP's $11bn acquisition of Autonomy, a company specialising in enterprise information management, was intended to bolster its software business but ultimately led to controversy. HP went on to sue Autonomy's founder and former CFO, alleging they had 'artificially inflated Autonomy's reported revenues, revenue growth and gross margins'.

Microsoft Buys Skype

13 October 2011: Microsoft's $8.5bn acquisition of Skype, a company known for its voice and video calling services, marked its entry into the cloud telephony market. Skype changed how people communicated over long distances, offering free or low-cost voice and video calls over the internet and inspiring functionality offered by many leading communication tools today.

2012

Raspberry Pi Launched

29 February 2012: The Raspberry Pi is a low-cost, credit card-sized computer designed to promote computer science education and experimentation. Its affordability, versatility, and community-driven ecosystem have made it a go-to platform for learning, experimentation, and innovation in computing and electronics. More than 57m have been sold since launch.

Facebook Scores Biggest IPO in Tech History

18 May 2012: When Facebook went public, it did so with the biggest tech IPO in history, raising $16bn at a $104bn valuation. Facebook has connected billions of people worldwide and has become one of the world's most dominant social media and online advertising players. Now trading as Meta, it has a market capitalisation of around $1.2tn.

EE Launches First 4G Mobile Services

30 October 2012: EE, the network operator formed from the merger of T-Mobile and Orange, was the first UK operator to offer 4G when it launched services in 11 major cities. Customers in these cities were the first to experience the significantly faster mobile internet speeds 4G enables, transforming their mobile internet usage for activities such as video streaming, online gaming, and real-time navigation.

2013

Launch of the Google Glass Explorer Program

15 April 2013: When Google launched the Glass Explorer program, developers and enthusiasts could buy a prototype device resembling a pair of eyeglasses, with a display for viewing information and an integral camera. Google stopped making the prototypes in 2015 after facing privacy and social acceptance challenges. However, its legacy still influences other augmented reality projects.

Snowden Leaks Stories of Internet Surveillance

6 June 2013: The Guardian and the Washington Post publish stories based on information from Edward Snowden, a former CIA contractor, detailing internet and phone surveillance by US intelligence. The leaks sparked debates about civil liberties and led to increased scrutiny of online privacy practices. Snowden, who fled the US, was eventually granted asylum in Russia.

Slack Starts

14 August 2013: Slack originated as an internal tool within the gaming company Tiny Speck, which couldn't find a team collaboration tool that met its needs. Tiny Speck recognised the potential of the tool it built and released it as a standalone product. Slack changed how millions of people collaborate and work together, and it now has around 32m active users daily.

2014

Just Eat IPO

3 April 2014: The IPO of Just Eat in 2014, which raised £360m at a valuation of around £1.5bn, demonstrated the strength of the UK's burgeoning tech startup scene and highlighted the growing demand for online food delivery services. Just Eat merged with Amsterdam-based Takeaway.com in 2020 and the combined entity achieved revenues totalling €26.4bn in 2023.

Ethereum Co-Founder Coins "Web 3.0"

17 April 2014: Gavin Wood, who went on to co-found Ethereum, published a seminal blog post on "Web 3.0", the next generation of the internet. The idea of Web 3.0, which incorporates concepts such as decentralisation, blockchain technologies, and token-based economics, gained significant interest in 2021 from cryptocurrency enthusiasts, large technology companies, and venture capital firms.

Bitcoin Exchange Mt. Gox Forced Into Bankruptcy

24 April 2014: Mt. Gox, once the world's largest Bitcoin exchange, filed for bankruptcy in the Tokyo District Court after discovering that it had 'lost' 850k bitcoins (worth over $450m at the time) due to a hacking incident. The hack of Mt. Gox, which once accounted for over 70% of all Bitcoin transactions, raised major concerns about the security of digital asset exchanges.

Nokia Acquired by Microsoft

25 April 2014: Nokia's decline from dominating the mobile phone market to being acquired by Microsoft is a significant chapter in tech history. Nokia was the world's largest mobile phone manufacturer at its peak, reaching 40% of the market. It failed to adapt to the smartphone era and lost ground to rivals such as Apple and Samsung.

Alibaba's Record-Breaking IPO

19 September 2014: Alibaba's record-breaking IPO was a historic event in the world of e-commerce, raising $21.8bn, the largest-ever US IPO at the time. Alibaba was the largest provider of e-commerce services in China, with 279m active buyers and 8.5m sellers on its three main sites. In 2022, Alibaba accounted for almost a quarter of the global e-commerce market.

Hackers Breach Sony

24 November 2014: The breach of Sony Pictures Entertainment by hackers was one of the largest and most damaging in history, resulting in the theft and release of vast amounts of sensitive information. The attack, which disrupted Sony's operations and caused significant financial and reputational damage, was blamed on state-sponsored hackers in North Korea.

2015

Apple Sells Watches

24 April 2015: The Apple Watch represented a significant step forward in the integration of wearable technology into everyday life. It seamlessly connected with the iPhone, enabling users to access information, notifications, and apps directly from their wrists, and allowed the introduction of more advanced health and fitness tracking capabilities. Hundreds of millions have been sold since launch.

Ethereum Launch Allows Complex Blockchain

30 July 2015: The launch of the blockchain platform Ethereum expanded the capabilities of blockchain beyond simple transactions like those in Bitcoin. Ethereum introduced smart contracts, enabling businesses to build decentralised platforms, issue tokens, and execute complex, self-executing agreements. Ethereum's value is second only to Bitcoin in the cryptocurrency world.

Scientists See Ripples in Fabric of Spacetime

14 September 2015: When scientists first observed ripples in the fabric of spacetime called gravitational waves, generated by the collision of black holes 1.3bn years ago, they confirmed a prediction in Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. Enabling scientists to identify the event required data analytics, machine learning, and high-performance computing advances.

Paris Agreement Boosts Climate Tech

12 December 2015: The Paris Agreement, where nearly 200 countries pledged to limit global warming, represented a historic global consensus on the need to address climate change. The agreement spurred investments in renewable energy sources, encouraged carbon pricing mechanisms, and unlocked new opportunities for investment and funding in climate tech.

2016

Release of Oculus Rift

28 March 2016: Oculus Rift was one of the first high-quality consumer virtual reality (VR) headsets to be released. It offered immersive VR experiences with high-resolution displays, precise motion tracking, and low latency, allowing users to feel fully immersed in virtual environments. Meta acquired Oculus VR, the company behind the headset, for approximately $2bn.

Britain Votes for Brexit

23 June 2016: Brexit had profound implications for the UK's tech and internet businesses. Uncertainty surrounding trade agreements and regulations impacted investment and recruitment in the tech sector. Companies faced challenges related to talent acquisition, data protection regulations, and market access, prompting some to relocate or reassess their UK operations.

SoftBank Acquires ARM Holdings

5 September 2016: Japanese conglomerate SoftBank acquired ARM Holdings, a British semiconductor and software design company whose chip designs power most of the world's smartphones and many other devices, for £24.3bn. The acquisition showed the value of British technology expertise and innovation on a global scale.

Yahoo Reveals Huge Data Breach

22 September 2016: In 2013 and 2014, Yahoo was subjected to two of the largest data breaches in internet history, although this didn't come to light until 2016. The breach compromised sensitive information, including user accounts, email addresses, and hashed passwords, and affected around 3bn customers.

Mobile Dominates Web Access

1 November 2016: StatCounter, a web analytics company, announced that mobile and tablet devices had surpassed desktops in internet usage for the first time. This transition marked a significant change in how people accessed and interacted with the internet, influencing website design, digital marketing strategies, app development, and overall user experience design.

Siemens Launches MindSphere

15 November 2016: The launch of Siemens's MindSphere platform was a significant milestone in efforts to provide cloud-based IoT solutions for industrial applications, enabling industrial companies to connect their machines and physical infrastructure to the internet, collect real-time data, and leverage advanced analytics and machine learning capabilities.

2017

Wannacry Causes Global Damage

12 May 2017: The WannaCry ransomware attack spread quickly through a vulnerability in Windows systems, encrypting files and demanding Bitcoin ransom payments. he attack crippled organisations worldwide, including the UK's National Health Service, causing widespread disruption. It also affected companies in various sectors, causing significant financial losses.

Equifax Discovers Massive Hack

29 July 2017: Equifax, a credit reporting agency, discovered a massive data breach in which hackers exploited a vulnerability in its systems to access sensitive information, including Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses, and driver's license numbers. The breach affected 140m people, making it one of the world's most significant data breaches.

2018

Tesla Hits the Road

17 March 2018: The Tesla Roadster was one of the first high-performance electric vehicles to hit the market, showing electric cars could be environmentally friendly and exciting to drive. Tesla disrupted traditional carmakers and accelerated the shift towards electrification. More than 4m Tesla cars have been produced since the company's inception.

Introduction of GDPR

25 May 2018: The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) had a significant impact on businesses, imposing strict regulations on data privacy and protection and affecting how companies collect, store, and use customer data. Many businesses had to overhaul their data management practices and ensure compliance.

AT&T Buys Time Warner

15 June 2018: AT&T's $85bn acquisition of Time Warner was a landmark deal that reshaped the media landscape by combining one of the largest telecommunications companies with a major content provider. The merger created WarnerMedia, which merged with Discovery Inc. in 2022 to create Warner Bros. Discovery, a company with estimated revenues of around $50bn.

Apple Buys Shazam

24 September 2018: Apple acquired Shazam, a British music identification service, for around $400m in 2018. Shazam's technology allows users to identify songs by listening to short audio clips, and the acquisition bolstered Apple's music streaming and discovery capabilities. The deal also showcased the value of British tech startups to global tech giants.

Business cyberattacks exceed one every minute

6 November 2018: Beaming has analysed cyberattacks in real-time targeting thousands by UK-based companies since the beginning of 2016 to understand their nature and origin better and help customers protect themselves. In November 2018, the average volume of internet-borne cyberattacks experienced by businesses surpassed one every minute for the first time.

2019

Start of Starlink

24 May 2019: Starlink, SpaceX's satellite internet constellation, launched its first batch of 60 satellites in 2019 with the promise of providing high-speed, low-latency internet access to remote and underserved areas worldwide. Starlink has surpassed 2m customers globally as of the latest available information.

Launch of 5G (in the UK)

30 May 2019: The rollout of 5G wireless technology promised faster speeds, lower latency, and support for a wide range of new applications, from autonomous vehicles to the Internet of Things. 5G can handle a massive number of devices simultaneously, supporting better logistics, smart factories, telemedicine, emergency response, public safety, and smart cities.

US Fines Facebook $5bn for Privacy Failings

12 July 2019: The US Federal Trade Commission approved a record $5bn fine on Facebook to settle an investigation into its privacy practices, following allegations that British political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica had accessed data of up to 87m Facebook users. In 2018, the UK Information Commissioner's Office fined Facebook £500k for its role in the scandal.

Conservatives Promise Nationwide Gigabit Internet

24 November 2019: The UK Conservative Party's General Election included pledges to cover the UK with gigabit-capable broadband services by 2025 and to spend £5bn to help cover the hardest-to-reach areas. In 2022, the target was revised to make gigabit broadband available nationwide by 2030, with 'nationwide' meaning at least 99% of premises.

2020

BT Announces Copper Network Switch-Off

11 March 2020: BT's announcement that it plans to switch off its traditional copper network was a significant milestone in efforts to transition to full-fibre broadband services. By replacing copper with fibre-optic infrastructure, BT aims to provide faster, more reliable internet connectivity to its customers, and also customers of other providers using its infrastructure.

Covid-19 Boosts Global E-Commerce

23 March 2020: The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated e-commerce growth as lockdowns and social distancing measures led to increased online shopping. Before COVID-19, global e-commerce sales totalled approximately $3.5tn in 2019. As of 2023, the global e-commerce market is estimated to be worth $6.3tr.

SolarWinds Cyberattack Discovered

8 December 2020: US software company SolarWinds suffered a cyberattack that compromised its software supply chain and distributed malicious updates to 18k organisations. It allowed attackers to infiltrate various networks, exposing vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure, government agencies, and private companies, and cost over $100bn to contain and fix.

UK E-Commerce Sales Pass £100bn in Year

12 December 2020: In 2020, UK e-commerce sales surged past £100bn for the first time, reaching a reported £105bn by year-end. Online shopping accounted for approximately 30% of total retail sales in the country that year and is projected to reach £147bn in value during 2024.

2021

Deliveroo Suffers "Worst IPO in London's History"

31 March 2021: When the food delivery company Deliveroo went public, it generated significant attention due to its status as a prominent player in the gig economy. Despite fast growth during the pandemic, the stock plunged when trading started, and one of the company's bankers told the FT it was "the worst IPO in London's history".

Facebook announces Metaverse plans

28 October 2021: As one of the largest and most influential technology companies in the world, Meta's vision for building the next iteration of the internet focused on virtual and augmented reality experiences gave endorsement and promotion of the metaverse concept to a wider audience and spurred other tech companies to focus further on this area.

2022

Beeple NFT Sells for $69m

11 March 2022: When digital artwork 'Everydays — The First 5000 Days' by Beeple sold at auction house Christie's for an astonishing $69m, it marked a significant moment in the NFT (non-fungible token) world and garnered widespread attention. NFTs certify ownership and authenticity of digital assets via the blockchain and surged in popularity during 2020 and 2021.

5 Billion People Now Online

21 April 2022: Social media management specialists Hootsuite and We Are Social, a social media agency, published a report revealing that the number of internet users had surpassed five billion for the first time. This represented some 63% of the world's total population and was an important milestone towards universal internet accessibility.

Musk Buys Twitter

28 October 2022: Elon Musk purchased Twitter (now known as X) for a whopping $44bn in 2022, paying a 38% premium over the social media company's standalone valuation at the time. Many believe Musk's decision was largely politically motivated and that he wanted to ensure free speech. Others suggest there is an opportunity to create a Western WeChat-style Superapp.

ChatGPT Research Preview Launched

30 November 2022: When ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, was released as a research preview, it democratised access to powerful language AI and allowed everyday users to harness the power of AI. ChatGPT became a viral sensation, reaching an estimated 100m monthly active users within two months, making it the fastest-growing consumer application in history.

2023

Amazon Confirms Mass Layoffs

5 January 2023: Amazon's confirmation that it would cut 18k jobs was the first major layoff announcement in what became a significant retrenchment for tech companies in 2023. Tech giants like Cisco, Meta, Microsoft, Google, IBM, SAP, and Salesforce, along with smaller firms, enacted sweeping layoffs. The cause: pandemic-era hiring sprees followed by revenue declines in 2023.

US Takes Google to Trial Over Search

12 September 2023: The US Department of Justice began its antitrust trial against Google, alleging that the company maintained a search monopoly through deals making it the default on many devices. This is the largest tech antitrust case since the 1990s when Microsoft was accused of bundling Internet Explorer with Windows illegally.

2024

EU's Artificial Intelligence Act Becomes Law

13 March 2024 The EU's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act was the world's first standalone law governing AI. This landmark legislation provides a framework for regulating AI systems, including safety, security, transparency, fairness, accountability, and governance, balancing consumer rights, privacy, and innovation.

Bitcoin's Hits All-Time High

14 March 2024: Among asset classes, Bitcoin has had one of the more volatile trading histories and has undergone several rallies and crashes since it became available. The cryptocurrency, which began trading at $0.06 in July 2010, reached an all-time high of $75,830 in March 2024.

New Internet Speed Record Revealed

26 March 2024: Scientists from Aston University set a new world record by achieving a data transmission speed of 301 Terabits Per Second - 4.5m times faster than the average broadband speed. The speed, enough to download every movie made in just one minute, was achieved on a single, standard optical fibre, but with specific wavelength bands that are not yet used.

Cryptocurrency CEO Convicted of Massive Fraud

28 March 2024: Sam Bankman-Fried, former chief executive of now-bankrupt cryptocurrency exchange FTX, was convicted of fraud, conspiracy, and money laundering and sentenced to 25 years in prison for one of the largest financial crimes in crypto history. He was accused of taking $8bn from customers and using it for property, political donations and other investments.

Darktrace Sold to Thoma Bravo

26 April 2024: It was announced that US private equity firm Thoma Bravo would acquire British cybersecurity firm Darktrace for £4.3bn. Darktrace has been hailed as a UK tech darling due to its cutting-edge AI capabilities and global impact. It uses AI algorithms to identify anomalies and potential security breaches within corporate networks.

AI Startup Secures Biggest European VC Investment

7 May 2024: Driverless car company Wayve raised £837m in funding, the biggest venture investment in a European AI startup yet, to develop 'embodied AI', which impacts how machines understand and learn from human behaviour. Wayve has developed foundation models for autonomy that enable vehicles to perceive their surroundings and navigate diverse environments.

We're Beaming, a specialist internet service provider (ISP) for businesses. We've been supplying organisations across the UK with fast, reliable, and secure voice and data connectivity, as well as managed services, since 2004.

Sonia Blizzard, Managing Director of Beaming, said: "The past 20 years have been remarkable for Beaming and the internet. We've grown from a startup to an established ISP serving thousands of businesses nationwide and have seen the web transform from a nascent technology to an indispensable business tool. In that time, we've focused relentlessly on ensuring our customers stay connected, protected and competitive in our increasingly digital world."

We recognise that every organisation has its own unique requirements. That's why we take the time to understand specific needs and work closely with customers to develop a bespoke solution that ensures data is secure, applications run smoothly, and the business stays operational.

Our aim is to become a trusted advisor and we're here to answer questions and provide support whenever you encounter any problems.

If you're looking for a reliable ISP for your business, we'd love to talk.

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