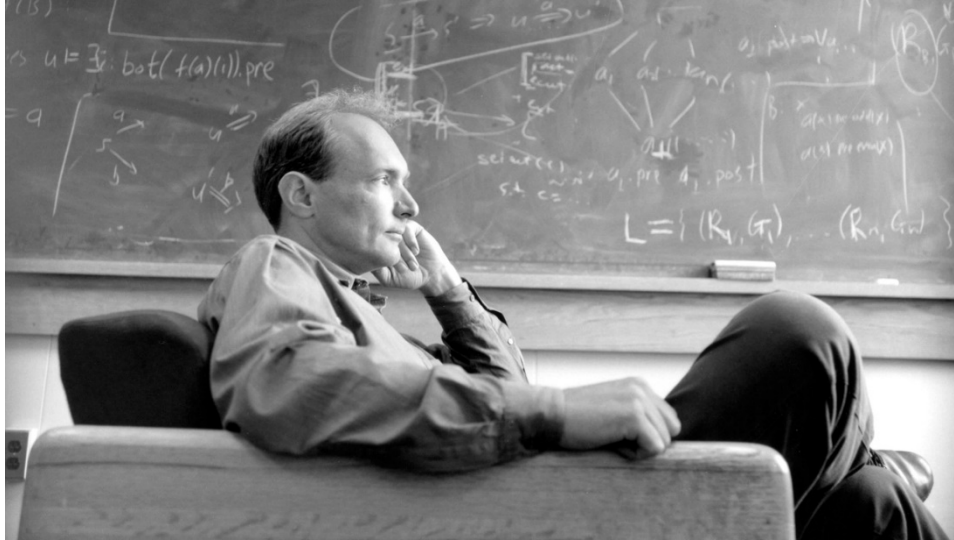


This Changed Everything

Sir Tim Berners-Lee to Auction the Source Code for the World Wide Web as an NFT

The Original Files, Straight from their Creator, to be Offered by Sotheby's



LONDON, 15 June 2021 – In 1989, British Computer Scientist Sir Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web in a moment that changed the world forever. This month, Sotheby's will be auctioning the source code for the World Wide Web, Sir Tim Berners-Lee's original time stamped files, signed by him, as an NFT in what will be Sotheby's first digital-born artefact to come to auction. The NFT will be offered in a standalone online auction titled 'This Changed Everything'. It is the first historical artefact relating to this landmark moment ever to be sold, offered directly by Sir Tim Berners-Lee himself, giving people the opportunity to reflect with Sir Tim on the bare bones of the architecture of the web's creation. The sale will open from 23 – 30 June, with bidding starting at \$1,000. The sale will benefit initiatives that Sir Tim and Lady Berners-Lee support.

The NFT – completely unique on the Ethereum blockchain – is composed of four elements; the original time-stamped files containing the source code written by Sir Tim; an animated visualization of the code; a letter written by Sir Tim reflecting on the code and the process of creating it ; as well as a digital "poster" of the full code created by Sir Tim from the original files using Python including a graphic of his physical signature; all digitally signed. The files referenced by the NFT contain code with approximately 9,555 lines, whose contents include implementations of the three languages and protocols invented by Sir Tim that remain fundamental to the World Wide Web today; HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol), and URIs (Uniform Resource Identifiers), as well as original HTML documents that instructed early web users on how to use the application.

“Three decades ago, I created something which, with the subsequent help of a huge number of collaborators across the world, has been a powerful tool for humanity. For me, the best bit about the web has been the spirit of collaboration. While I do not make predictions about the future, I sincerely hope its use, knowledge and potential will remain open and available to us all to continue to innovate, create and initiate the next technological transformation, that we cannot yet imagine. NFTs, be they artworks or a digital artefact like this, are the latest playful creations in this realm, and the most appropriate means of ownership that exists. They are the ideal way to package the origins behind the web.”

Sir Tim Berners-Lee

“Over the past several centuries humankind has seen a succession of paradigm shifts that have brought us forward into the modern era; Galileo’s proof of Heliocentricity, Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press, and Einstein’s Theory of Relativity to name but a few, but none has had the seismic impact on our daily lives as the creation of the World Wide Web. Sir Tim’s invention created a new world, democratizing the sharing of information, creating new ways of thinking and interacting, and staying connected to one another; it is hard to imagine our world without it, and even harder to imagine where it will bring us next. This unique and singular auction will celebrate Sir Tim’s groundbreaking achievement, in which collectors will finally have the opportunity, thanks to the NFT format, to own the ultimate digitally-born artefact.”

Cassandra Hatton, VP, Global Head of Science & Popular Culture at Sotheby’s

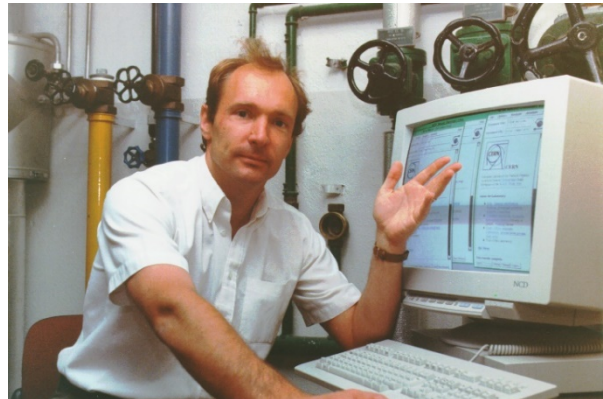
“The brainchild of one of the most important thinkers that the UK has ever produced, the web is a truly great British invention – one that has gone global in all senses of the word. As a company that itself took its first steps in London, and is now making its mark all over the world, we at Sotheby’s could not be more proud to be part of a celebration of this defining moment three decades on.”

Oliver Barker, Chairman of Sotheby’s Europe

One of the greatest innovators of the modern age, Sir Tim Berners-Lee grew up in a household of mathematicians and computer scientists – his parents working on the Ferranti Mark 1, the world's first commercially available general-purpose digital computer. Running through this upbringing was the idea that what you can do with the computers is limited only by your imagination. In his own words, Sir Tim *“picked that up and built a computer as quick as I could afford to, out of my pocket money.”* Once he had graduated from Oxford University, he was involved in a rich variety of technical projects,

during which there slowly formed the dream of a common information space in which everyone could communicate. This idea resulted in the creation of the first web browser and the first website. Sir Tim's subsequent work to ensure the free use of the World Wide Web on a global scale is one of the greatest acts of philanthropy in recent history.

The "WorldWideWeb" application, was the first hypermedia browser, allowing users to create and navigate links between files across a network of computers. It was written in the Objective C programming language, using the Interface Builder on a NeXT computer, a highly innovative computer designed by Steve Jobs during the time he was forced out of Apple in 1985 and before he rejoined in 1997. Three decades on from that one server and one website, there are over 1.7 billion websites being accessed by 4.6 billion people around the world, with children learning HTML in school to make their own webpages.



Sir Tim has been the beneficiary of many honors and awards internationally, including the prestigious Turing Prize, known as the "Nobel Prize of Computing", which he was awarded in 2017. In 2012, Sir Tim was highlighted in the Opening Ceremony of the London Olympic Games. Sitting at a desk and typing at the same kind of computer on which he created the code for the Web, he sent a message: "This is For Everyone" as the whole stadium was lit up with his words. Today, Sir Tim is CTO of [Inrupt](#) where, since 2015, he has been working on a project called Solid to bring the web closer to his original vision, when things were completely open and without centralization. This movement to "re-decentralize" the web and empower users is gaining traction as the future of the web, driving the Solid movement for everyone to be empowered by their own data, as well as many blockchain based projects.

"Why an NFT? Well, it's a natural thing to do as when you're a computer scientist and when you write code and have been for many years. It feels right to digitally sign my autograph on a completely digital artefact."

Sir Tim Berners-Lee

For more information, visit sothebys.com/WWW.

#ThisChangedEverything

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