



The Embassy of Italy in the US Celebrates Italian Internet Day

(April 23, 2016)

ITALIAN INTERNET DAY
AT THE EMBASSY OF ITALY IN THE UNITED STATES

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DIGITAL DIPLOMACY SERIES
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A CONVERSATION WITH
VINT CERF

MODERATED BY:
CECILIA KANG
THE NEW YORK TIMES

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:
ARMANDO VARRICCHIO
AMBASSADOR OF ITALY TO THE U.S.

MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2016 | 6PM TO 7PM
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25 APR

Matteo Renzi: "Italian Internet Day celebrates the deep meaning of the revolution that started 30 years ago, as well as our commitment to close the digital gap within the next four years. " A special celebration of the Italian Internet Day will be held at the Embassy of Italy in the US. A conversation with "the father of the Internet" Vint Cerf, Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist, Google! Moderated by: Cecilia Kang Technology Policy Reporter, The New York Times. Opening Remarks: Armando Varricchio, Ambassador of Italy to the U.S. (Apr 25 at 6pm ET)

BY MATTEO RENZI



PRIME MINISTER OF ITALY

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2016

“The day Italy discovered the Internet” is the story of a project completed by a few pioneers and ignored by everyone else for years. It is also the beginning of a new opportunity for our country. It is about the digital agenda, networks, and the sharing society.

“The day Italy discovered the Internet” was April 30, 1986. Ronald Regan had been President of the United States for six years. Just a few months prior, the President had to deal with public dismay at the explosion of the Space Shuttle two minutes after take-off. In the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbaciov’s perestroika agenda had just suffered a blow as few days earlier, on April 26, when the nuclear power plant of Chernobyl exploded, killing tens of people and creating a huge environmental disaster.

The front pages of newspapers around the globe were all reporting the news from Chernobyl, when all newsrooms in Italy had just received the most ignored press release in history. It read: “the Center of Electronic Computation of the National Research Center in Pisa established for the first time a connection with Arpanet, a network created in the United States to connect computers in universities, research centers, and military agencies.” Arpanet is the father of the Internet, and Italy was the fourth European country to be connected following Norway, the U.K., and West Germany.

There was no mention in any of the newspapers of the time. There was no video to document that moment. No pictures. At that time, smartphones and selfies were not yet available. Was the birth of the Internet in Italy the biggest news hole in the history of Italian journalism? Maybe. Anyway, it no longer matters.



April 30, 1986 made a mark in the minds and hearts of the pioneers of the Internet. They are the researchers of the National Research Center who imagined, wanted, and made the Internet come true. Among them, Stefano Trumpy, Luciano Lenzini, and Blasco Bonito, who were present in Pisa on the first day of the Internet.

On April 30, 2016, it is going to be 30 years exactly. And we shall celebrate another Internet Day. Everybody is invited to participate. The celebration will start a day earlier, Friday, April 29, to allow all the schools in Italy to participate. On that day, with Riccardo Luna and the 'digital champions', coordinated by the Ministry of the University and of Scientific Research, we are organizing events and activities to better understand the web, the opportunities that it generated, and the skills required to defend ourselves from online.

The same program will take place in all the regions of Italy, including events dedicated to civil society, the private sector, and government agencies. The goal is to strengthen the synergy between all players.

The rest is up to us, to the government. In April, we are launching the government plan for the ultra broadband. This is the first step to bring to all citizens a fast Internet connection no later than 2020.

To sum it up, Italian Internet Day celebrates the deep meaning of the revolution that started 30 years ago, as well as our commitment to close the digital gap within the next four years.

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