

The Greatest Invention In History

Before we get to what is the greatest invention in the history of the world, we should visit Germany in 1447. In that time, a goldsmith and printer, Johannes Gutenberg, created the Gutenberg printing press. This technology spread like wildfire throughout Europe and then on to the rest of the world. The impact of it is comparable to the invention of the alphabet and the development of writing. Prior to the printing of books on a massive scale, books were painstakingly copied. This resulted in both fewer books and also more inaccurate books, because the copying of the original changed from one version to the next. In addition, since in Europe, Latin was the language of scholars, only a small population could even read them. When books were printed, popular European vernaculars were used to communicate to a wider audience. Our next evolutionary leap was creating a medium of instant publication and a worldwide audience. This is the World Wide Web. It may be as significant a leap in the consciousness of humankind as was Albert Einstein's revolutionary reinterpretation of the Universe. Despite the brilliance of Isaac Newton's work, the new theory of the Universe changed the consciousness of humankind forever. The World Wide Web may very well be the greatest invention in history. Tim Berners-Lee has invented something that reminds one of a multifaceted diamond. When you look at each face, you discover a new reality. One face of the World Wide Web is like The Glass Bead Game. In his Nobel Prize winning novel, *Magister Ludi*, *The Glass Bead Game*, Hermann Hesse defined the nature of knowledge and intelligence in a beautiful metaphor. He described it as a game where pieces were played on a board. "The Glass Bead Game is a mode of playing with the total contents and values of our culture. All the insights, noble thoughts and works of art that the human race has produced in its creative eras, all that subsequent periods of scholarly study have reduced to concept and converted into intellectual values, the Glass Bead Game player plays like an organist on an organ." Like the Glass Bead Game, the World Wide Web ranges over the entire intellectual cosmos. Another face of the World Wide Web is like the marketplace of Ancient Athens. Here democracy evolved in its purest state. People talked to each other, shared information, challenged points-of-view, and understood each other. This informal gathering of thinkers birthed one of the most significant early cultures of the Western World. Because there are so many contributors to the World Wide Web, neither governments nor corporations nor media organizations have much control over it. Blogging, especially, has evolved to a place where absolute candor is possible. In addition, writers are free to wax eloquent in their pdf or exe files without waiting for somebody to approve the marketability of their ideas. Discussion groups for everything under the sun exist. Then there are the social networking websites, like You Tube and others, where all kinds of opinions are expressed through videos. Never in the history of humanity has it been possible for the common man or woman to speak their mind to so many people in complete freedom. Another face of the World Wide Web is like The Great Books of the Western World series. The quintessence of the value of that series has been captured by the original associate editor, the late Mortimer Adler. He said that to read them was to be involved in a great conversation because it was like "authors sitting around a table in the same room--totally oblivious to the circumstances of their own time, place and diversity of tongues--confronting each other in agreement, disagreement or otherwise differing about what they have to say on the subject. The sessions of the conference thus imagined would take many days, months, perhaps even years, for it would cover the whole range of ideas and issues that are the objects and concerns of human understanding, always and everywhere." As you surf from one website to another, from one discussion board to another, or as you communicate instantly by email, is this not like a great conversation that informs your mind and feeds your soul? Finally, another face of the World Wide Web is like A Global Brain. Philosophers from Plato to Aristotle, from Thomas Aquinas to Herbert Spencer have always considered knowledge to be a unity, where everything is potentially connectable to everything else. The human brain is a powerhouse of networks of infinite complexity, where every neuron has the potentiality to connect with every other. Similarly, knowledge itself, as described by writer James Burke, is "a gigantic and ever-growing sphere in space and time, made up of millions of interconnecting, crisscrossing pathways." Knowledge has never been so linked together as it is now on the World Wide Web. The World Wide Web is growing organically, like a great shout of unity across the world. Perhaps each day, we who use it, are reinventing the freedom of speech that once existed in ancient Athens, a freedom which will lead to a whole new world of creativity for everyone.

About the Author

Saleem Rana would love to share his inspiring ideas His book *Never Ever Give Up* tells you how. It is offered at no cost as a way to help YOU succeed. [The Empowered Soul](#)

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