

Operating the Internet

In the chapter titled "Operating the Internet," the process of accessing and retrieving documents from the early internet is detailed through the usage of tools like telnet and FTP (File Transfer Protocol) on a BSD (Berkeley Software Distribution) system. The narrative begins with a user deciding to locate and download a document named NETINFO:NUG.DOC, which stands for The Users Guide to the ARPAnet, using telnet to access sri-nic.arpa. This is followed by an illustration of how to conduct an anonymous FTP session to actually retrieve the document.

The FTP process is described step by step: connecting to the FTP server at sri-nic.arpa, logging in as an anonymous user by providing 'myname' as a sort of password, initiating the download of NETINFO:NUG.DOC, and successfully completing the transfer of 157675 bytes in approximately 450 seconds. This sequence showcases the early internet's user experience, characterized by text-based commands and relatively simple user-server interactions.

After obtaining NETINFO:NUG.DOC, the text suggests another document, NETINFO:WHAT-THE-NIC-DOES.TXT, as another valuable resource for new users, emphasizing the richness of information accessible through these means. Further, it addresses how users can communicate with the Network Information Center (NIC) for assistance, document requests, or to report problems through various email addresses specific to different inquiries, such as general user assistance, user registration and WHOIS updates, hostnames and domain changes, computer operations, and comments on NIC publications and services.

Lastly, the chapter acknowledges those without network access, suggesting alternative means to obtain documents, indirectly highlighting the period's limitations and the dependency on electronic mail and online connectivity for information exchange. This narrative encapsulates the nascent stages of internet operation,

emphasizing the technical procedures and community support structures in place to navigate the ARPAnet, the precursor to the modern internet.

