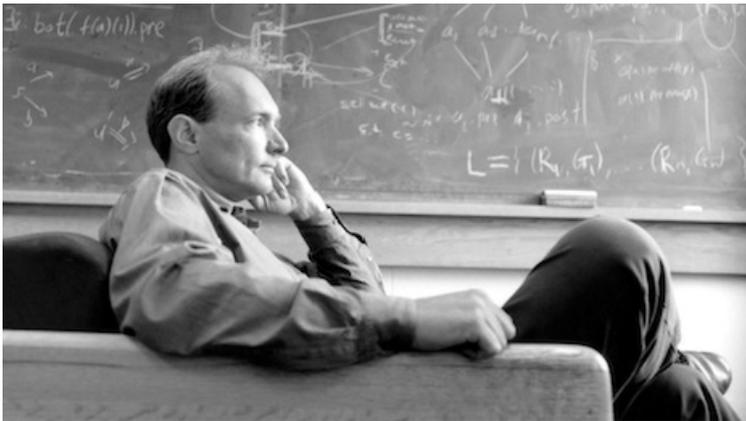


SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

Sotheby's auctions World Wide Web code as NFT

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Sir Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web in 1989. Image credit: Sotheby's

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Auction house Sotheby's is auctioning the first historical artifact relating to the landmark moment when the World Wide Web was born, offering people the opportunity to look at the Web's original code.

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In 1989, British computer scientist Sir Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web, a moment that would change the world forever. "This Changed Everything" is a one-of-one non-fungible token (NFT) including pivotal, timestamped documentation of the internet's creation by Mr. Berners-Lee, and will benefit initiatives supported by the computer scientist and his wife.

"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," said Mr. Berners-Lee in a statement. "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," he said. "NFTs, be they artworks or a digital artifact like this, are the latest playful creations in this realm, and the most appropriate means of ownership that exists."

This Changed Everything

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 device, a computer designed by Steve Jobs between the time he was forced out of Apple in 1985 and rejoined in 1997.

Three decades later, there are more than 1.7 billion Web sites being accessed by 4.6 billion people around the world, with children learning HTML in school to make their own webpages.

The NFT is composed of four elements: the original time-stamped files containing the source code written by Sir Tim, a moving visualization of the nearly 10,000 lines of code, a letter written by Mr. Berners-Lee reflecting on the

code and the process of creating it and a digital "poster" of the full code created by Mr. Berners-Lee from the original files using Python.

The internet changed when Sir Tim created the World Wide Web

The lines of code referenced by the NFT include implementations of the three languages and protocols invented by Mr. Berners-Lee that remain fundamental to the World Wide Web today; hypertext markup language (HTML), hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) and uniform resource identifiers (URIs) and original HTML documents that instructed early web users on how to use the application.

On June 25, Sotheby's opened a commemorative NFT lot in celebration of the 25th anniversary of rapper and entrepreneur Shawn Jay-Z Carter's "Reasonable Doubt" album.

Jay-Z commissioned artist Derrick Adams to create a one-of-one animated digital artwork that comments on and recontextualizes the album's cover, which will be sold by NFT in a single-lot auction. This is the first NFT-based collaboration for both the rapper and artist and the auction is the only official event authorized by Jay-Z to commemorate the album's anniversary ([see story](#)).

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