



# The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

## Final Copy of Case Study

**Status:**

Laureate

**Year:**

2013

**Organization Name:**

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)

**Organization URL:**

[www.w3.org](http://www.w3.org)

**Project Name:**

W3C: Leading the Web to Its Full Potential

**Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:**

Innovation

**Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)**

Tim Berners-Lee conceived of the World Wide Web as a universal platform for communications available to anyone, anywhere, on any device. He pursued his vision in 1989 by tackling a practical problem where he worked at Geneva, Switzerland's CERN laboratory. How could he connect, collaborate and share with colleagues who all were dispersed and using different computer systems? His invention--the early Web--was born and quickly gained traction as an open, free, decentralized platform for connecting people to information and to each other. Anyone can write Web software without needing permission. And core technologies are available at no cost, royalty-free. In the early 1990s, however, the leading Web browsers were starting to diverge in which features they

supported, raising concerns the Web might split into mini-webs. In response, Berners-Lee founded in 1994 the non-profit World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), an international community where member organizations, a full-time staff, and the public work together to develop Web standards. The Consortium championed One Web and has continued to shape it to become a robust application development environment. Today, the Web's rich media, greater interactivity, and increased interoperability across mobile devices are transforming the way we live, work, learn, and play. The inherent openness of the Web has fostered widespread innovation and even the creation of entirely new industries. Yet there are still challenges to overcome and much to do. Led by Director Berners-Lee and CEO Jeffrey Jaffe, W3C continues to lead the Web to its full potential.

**When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)**

W3C is leading the standardization of the latest iteration of Web technology, referred to as "the Open Web Platform for application development." It's a full-fledged Web programming environment powered in part by HTML5, a collection of technologies that transform static Web pages into dynamic Web applications. This Open Web Platform offers: \*a rich set of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for access to device capabilities such as geo-location information, gyroscopes, near-field communications (NFC), cameras, as well as user data such as calendar or address book information; \*sophisticated user interfaces consisting of audio and video, vector images, sophisticated graphics and animations, high-quality typography, and more; \*support for a wide variety of input and output modes such as touch screens, keyboards, voice, and vibrations; \*tools to meet network and communications demands including for real-time, peer-to-peer communications; \*solutions to address diverse social requirements for privacy, security, multilingual content, and accessibility; and \*the development of Semantic Web technology to describe and link vast volumes, variety and velocity of data on the Web, enabling new discoveries and insights. The next dramatic leap in Web capabilities is happening now. W3C is at the forefront of this innovation. The results will dramatically alter our lives and affect generations to come.

**Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)**

The Web is never finished. Indeed, one of the challenges of designing Web technology is that it must accommodate constant change. New and old software must co-exist. Devices that didn't exist when the Web was conceived want to connect to the Web and with other devices old and new. The Web must scale as

more and more people seek access. It must be available on devices with small screens, large screens, touch screens, and no screens. As new Web technology standards like HTML5 disrupt the status quo, transformation of work, home, and mobile has never been greater. And yet, the Web continues to work. Thanks to standards, and thanks to the long-term vision of its inventor. Today's Open Web Platform is a large collection of technologies, all at different levels of maturity and deployment. The boundaries of the term are ever-shifting. In six months, some technology will have been standardized and widely deployed, others discontinued due to lack of market adoption, and others will emerge as new ideas. Despite this ongoing flux, W3C is in the middle of a significant period: the standardization of HTML5, which W3C expects to complete in 2014.

**Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)**

W3C is generating unprecedented social and economic benefits for everyone, everywhere. W3C's "Web Accessibility Initiative" helps ensure that people with disabilities have access to the Web, enabling people in some cases to access information that would have been nearly impossible to obtain otherwise at reasonable cost or in a timely fashion. In 2011, Berners-Lee said "Access to the Web is now a human right. It's possible to live without the Web. It's not possible to live without water. But if you've got water, then the difference (in quality of life) between somebody who is connected to the Web and is part of the information society, and someone who (is not connected to the Web), is growing bigger and bigger." Other organizations frequently speak about W3C's economic development impact. Consider these testimonials related to W3C's December 17, 2012 announcement defining HTML5 and Canvas 2D specifications.  
<http://www.w3.org/2012/12/html5-cr> "The work done by W3C helps avoid fragmentation while stimulating innovation and creating new opportunities for developers. This can lead to exciting new experiences for consumers across a range of mobile devices. As a contributing member to W3C Working Groups, steward of [webplatform.org](http://webplatform.org), and leading participant in open source development, Intel enthusiastically supports the publication of the complete definition, and we look forward to our continued contributions." --Intel Corporation Open Source Technology Center (U.S.) "For the past few years, HTML5 has been central in the development of Tomo-Digi solutions for next-generation TV in Asian countries. The new candidate recommendations will accelerate the deployment of HTML5 in broadcasting and among TV devices, and revolutionize the media market with the power of the Open Web Platform." -- Tomo-Digi Corporation (Japan)

A gold medal with a ribbon is visible in the top left corner. The medal features a classical architectural design and the word "HONORS" is partially visible. A large, light green laurel wreath graphic is positioned on the right side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom.

**Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)**

The short answer is "Yes" to all! As Berners-Lee said in 2009, "The Web is a platform, like a piece of paper. It does not determine what you will do with it. It challenges your imagination." Ultimately, that is what makes the Web so powerful and so inspiring: it lowers the barriers for reaching other people to almost nothing (at least in parts of the world where people have Internet access). That is why, in a mere 25 years, the Web has enabled such powerful tools as search engines, social networking, access to video and audio anywhere, online retail, and so much more. The Web is transforming our industries, and our very lives--now, and for many years to come. Berners-Lee tweeted "This is for Everyone" during the opening ceremonies of the 2012 London Olympics. That sentiment goes beyond merely reading from the Web, and extends to the ability we all have to contribute to it.

**If there are any other details that the judges should know about this project, please note them here. (In 300 words or less.)**

Congratulations to the Computerworld Honors Program for achieving its 25th anniversary year. W3C is proud to be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2014, 25 years after the Web's invention.