Palestine online: cyber Intifada and the construction of a virtual community 2001-2005
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Table 1: Timetable Palestinian Internet

One decade of Groundbreaking Developments

1996 15/11/96 (Palestinian Independence Day): investors Telecom sector receive monopoly licence;  
First Palestinian ISPs (PalTel, Palestine Online, etc.) begin to offer internet connection;  
First Internet Cafe (IC) experiment; costs were 10-15 NIS per hour;  
Palestinian ICT initiative applies for .PS domain name at ICANN;

1997 Palestinian Telecom sector begin to operate; start of PaTel;  
First Palestinian website (Birzeit University) and first Homepages in Palestinian Diaspora;  
First Online Radio programme OutLoad (by the BZU team).

1999 First Arab Interface Website started by Maktoob;  
Increase of ICs, prices drop to 7-8 NIS an hour;  
Total (i.e. home plus Internet cafe access) Internet access rate estimated at: 3%.  
(Start final phase Peace Negotiations/Camp David)

2000 mIRC chat programme becomes popular in Internet Cafes;  
Arab email and chat programmes popularize;  
Amman-Net website offers radio programmes via Jordan/Palestinian frequency;  
ICANN appoints .PS domain name to Palestine.  
(Intifada breaks out on September 29; Palestine endure extreme social-economic/territorial transformation)

2001 Costumers use webcam and microphone during MSN/Messenger/and Chat sessions;  
ICs price-war in the cities, prices drop further to 4 NIS an hour;  
Total (i.e. home plus Internet cafe access) Internet access rate estimated at: 6%.

2002 Successful Palestinian PR campaigns through websites such as Electronic Intifada, Palestine Monitor;  
Hamas’ Palestine-Info develops into a successful Palestinian website.  
(Re-occupation of West Bank/ closure of Gaza; extreme isolation Palestinian society)

2004 PalTel introduces direct internet connection service, bypassing all ISPs;  
Total (i.e. home plus Internet cafe access) Internet access rate estimated at: 20%.

2005 Google enables Arab search tools;  
(R)Evolution of websites: from Homepages to Blogs;  
RSS-feeds outdo classic hyperlink reference;  
Hamas’ Palestine-info becomes important source/reference;  
PalTel penetration rate for direct (home) internet connection reaches: 11%  
(Hamas joins elections overthrows Fatah; historic political shift in power balance)

2006 YouTube and other multimedia video/music programmes also popularize in Arab World;  
PalTel penetration rate direct (home) internet connection grows to: 18%;  
Intensive online involvement Palestinian political movements via internet forums;  
Total (i.e. home plus Internet cafe access) Internet access rate estimated at: 30%.