

Reflections of the Class of 1996

The Internet Comes of Age

By Pete Shannon

In the 21st Century, our lives are filled with the pleasure and convenience of modern communication: The animated e-card you received for Steven Tyler wearing a blouse to the set this morning and being a bit envious; the webcast of David Brooks drawing connections between the French and Scottish Enlightenment in social anthropology; the viral U-Tube video of that poor Miss Teen USA contestant from South Carolina blaming a shortage of maps for our geographic knowledge deficit; a podcast from NPR about education reform in inner-city Oakland; the fantasy football disappointment of Tom Brady throwing only five touchdowns against the Browns; the trove of groceries delivered to your doorstep. Who deserves credit for all of these treasures?

1996 from Franklin & Marshall College, of course, for it was us, the college community of the propelled this platform to dominance as a communication vehicle.

service Delphi opened the first public gateway to the internet; in 1993, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications developed the first browser for the world wide web, called Mosaic, functioning on multiple operating systems and introducing a graphical interface to the

the Academy Awards over the internet as By the time of our graduation, 17 percent of adults and nearly 10 percent of households in the U.S. had access to the internet. Our college campus during this time was composed of willing guinea pigs, consuming whatever technology was shoveled into the trough. And, amazingly, most of it worked and a lot of it greatly enhanced our collegiate experience. While in college, I have very fond memories of the wonders of the internet.