



## The first computer to connect Mexico and Latin America to the Internet

[On October 12, 1988](#), the Monterrey campus of Tec de Monterrey [made the first connection to the Internet in Mexico and Latin America through a MicroVAX II computer](#), using the address 131.178.1.1 and the name mnetv1.mty.itesm.mx.

*“We used the Microvax machine to as a bridge between the Internet or THENET (Texas Higher Education Network) and the campus network”* explained **David Treviño**, Computer Services Director for Monterrey campus at the time, to **CONECTA**.

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**David Treviño** was part of the Monterrey campus IT team in charge of making the first connection to the Internet in Mexico, together with **Ramiro Flores, Daniel Trujillo, and Hugo García**.

This console, **71 cm long by 62 cm high and 26 cm wide**, was a [minicomputer](#) that was used as a **router**, a **name server**, and an **email server**.

La Microvax, la primera computadora que conectó a México con Internet.

*“It used a special protocol called TCP/IP with some special software. TCP/IP is the*

*language of the Internet,” explained David.*

The machine was operated by an administrator through a **console** called a **green terminal**, which was connected via a **serial port**. It communicated with other machines through **telnet or FTP**, as what we call the World Wide Web today didn't yet exist.

Users didn't interact with the [MicroVAX II](#), they just used its services.

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*“It also had services like DNS (Domain Name System) for name conversion, to translate an address like [www.itesm.mx](#) into an IP address,” he said.*

Since 1986, the Tec had also been connected to **BITNET through a network with the University of Texas at Austin** via an IBM mainframe.

*“There was a conversion from BITNET to Internet that went through the [MicroVAX](#),” explained Treviño.*



## THE CONNECTION

The link was made via a **dedicated cable that ran from the University of Texas at San Antonio to the Tec.**

*“That 9,600-kilobit link was connected to one of the ports on the [MicroVAX](#) machine. An Ethernet cable ran from another port to the campus network,”* explained David.

This machine allowed information to flow from the local network to the Internet.

*“We could join the Internet that quickly because we had our local network. Our entire network was connected to the Internet.”*

*“What’s more, we had a satellite network at the time, so the whole Tec System was also connected to the Internet,”* he concluded.



## THE CHALLENGES OF THE TIME

**Daniel Trujillo**, then-Director of Telecommunications and Networks, explained the challenges they faced to install the [MicroVAX II](#).

*“This was 30 years ago. Equipment could only be imported by universities for academic purposes. We’re talking about a time when importing a computer was practically impossible,”* he said to CONECTA.

He explained that he had to travel to the United States and Mexico City to request **international telephone lines**, which at the time were extremely hard to obtain.

*“I had to go to the University of Texas at San Antonio to get a notarized permit, which had to be validated by the Mexican Consulate so that the Ministry of Communications and Transport would give us a permit for an international private line.”*

*“Many physical barriers had to be broken too. It wasn’t easy,”* he recalled.

**Hugo García**, network administrator for Monterrey campus, **agreed** that the private lines were the **biggest hurdle**, because they had **very low capacity and were expensive**.

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He explained that **several lines were used** so as to **aggregate their capacity** for email and file transfer services, as well as the ability to connect remotely to another computer in another place.

García said he's **content** with this **achievement**.

*"We were lucky to have the support of the Tec authorities to be able to make this first connection, which was going to happen one way or another."*

*"None of us could predict how it would change our lives (...). We did it because it was a way of being able to join in and gain access to what was happening in the academic world around technology without thinking about the consequences,"* he concluded.

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