

# Merit - A History of Shaping the Internet

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**1966** Michigan State University, University of Michigan, and Wayne State University form the Michigan Educational Research Information Triad Inc. (MERIT)

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**1969** The National Science Foundation (NSF) awards funds, matched by the Michigan State Legislature, to initiate the MERIT project.

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**1971** Merit successfully networks mainframe computers at MSU, U-M, WSU

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**1978** Western Michigan University becomes the fourth Member of Merit, expanding the network beyond the triad.

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**1987** MERIT, along with IBM, MCI & Michigan Strategic Fund, wins \$39 million award to manage the NSFNet, the catalyst for the commercial Internet.

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**1996** U.S. higher education institutions create Internet2, Merit becomes an affiliate member of Internet2.

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**2004** Merit & ORION (Ontario Research Innovation Optical Network) sign historic agreement to connect the USA and Canada borders

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**2010** Merit receives two federal grants to construct 2,287 miles of fiber infrastructure as part of the REACH-3MC project

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**2014** Merit completes REACH-3MC, expanding fiber backbone by 59% and connecting 143 new community anchor institutions

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**2022** NTIA awards MSU/Merit \$10.5 million for MOON-Light Grant Project Proposal

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**2022** Merit awarded a \$2.99 million Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant to support construction of 70 miles of middle-mile fiber optic infrastructure in the Upper Peninsula.

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