

Domain system creator honoured

The man largely responsible for developing the system which turns addresses on the web into numbers has received a prestigious award.

Paul Mockapetris, chief scientist at Nominum, has been given an ACM Sigcomm lifetime award.

He is widely credited with creating the Domain Name System (DNS) 22 years ago.

Sigcomm (Special Interest Group on Data Communication) is the Association for Computing Machinery's professional forum for computer network specialists.

First started in 1989, the awards recognise outstanding contributions to the technical development of data and computer communications.

Dr Mockapetris developed the system, which provides the address architecture of the entire web, while at the University of Southern California's Information Sciences Institute.

The Domain Name System (DNS) lies at the heart of every user experience with the internet
Jennifer Rexford, ACM Sigcomm

"It's a tremendous honour to be recognised by ACM Sigcomm and to stand alongside its other distinguished recipients," said Dr Mockapetris.

"It is especially poignant to receive this award at a time when the internet is impacting on society like never before.

"While the internet has come a long way there is still much to do in terms of making the network more useful and secure."

Essential architecture

The DNS is crucial to how the net runs because it translates web address names, such as `bbc.co.uk`, into numerical addresses that net routers can understand.

It is essential for applications from web searches and web mail to VoIP net phone calls.

"The Domain Name System (DNS) lies at the heart of every user experience with the internet," said Jennifer Rexford, chair of ACM Sigcomm.

"ACM Sigcomm is proud to recognise Dr Paul Mockapetris for his foundational work in designing and developing DNS, and for the important role he has played in the development of the internet architecture."

Dr Mockapetris also designed the first implementation of the internet's Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) used for e-mail.

He also chaired the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) from 1994 to 1996.

Previous winners of the award have included net pioneer Vint Cerf who won it in 1996 for his contribution to the web and, in particular, for developing the fundamental TCP/IP protocols.

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