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The internet and its applications

Innovation in internet applications, which include online banking, e-mail, online gaming etc, has shot up by more than 500 per cent since 2000 (see chart), fuelled by fast downloads and bigger data transfer capacities. Japan and the US dominate, with Microsoft, IBM and NEC seeking most patents.

Most inventions concern business models, such as online shopping, auctions, e-procurement, advertising and virtual communities. The patent applications, below, show the pace of development:

1991 A home banking system using a remote terminal connected to a central computer by telephone was described by Online Resources & Communications

1992 Hewlett-Packard came up with a conference system for a network of workstations

1994 Motorola invented an electronic greeting card communication system

1998 A device to integrate global financial services, giving customers access, was invented by Citibank

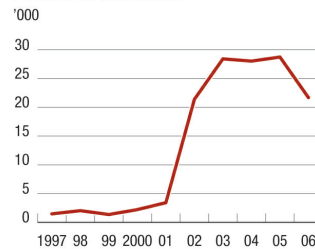
2002 Microsoft listed a method of updating games and chat rooms in a virtual world environment

2003 A Sony invention set out to provide video-based music services to match a user's mood and taste, based on an information-matching and response system

2005 A money-laundering detector that monitors customer transaction patterns was described by Japan Future Information Technology and Systems

2006 A system for locating free parking places by mobile communication devices was outlined by four private inventors

Number of inventions '000



Source: Thomson Scientific (scientific.Thomson.com)

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