

Lawrence Roberts, Who Helped Design Internet's Precursor, Dies at 81

By **Katie Hafner**

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In late 1966, a 29-year-old computer scientist drew a series of abstract figures on tracing paper and a quadrille pad. Some resembled a game of cat's cradle; others looked like heavenly constellations; still others like dress patterns.

Those curious drawings were the earliest topological maps of what we now know as the internet. The doodler, Lawrence G. Roberts, died on Dec. 26 at his home in Redwood City, Calif. He was 81.

The cause was a heart attack, said his son Pasha.

As a manager at the Pentagon's Advanced Research Projects Agency, or ARPA, Dr. Roberts designed much of the Arpanet — the internet's precursor — and oversaw its implementation in 1969.

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