

# Meet top 10 Web Billionaires

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Forbes recently released its annual list of 34 innovators who made their billions through the Internet. Incidentally, the 2008 list also includes three Indians: Indiabulls' Sameer Gehlaut, Party gaming founder Anurag Dikshit and co-owner of Indian job site Naukri.Com, Kavitar Ram Shriram.

Here is a profile of the top 10 billionaires who made their fortune from the Web.

## 1) **Sergey Brin** and (2) **Larry Page, Google**

Topping the Web billionaires list are the Google duo Sergey Brin and Larry Page with a net worth of \$18.7 billion and \$18.6 billion respectively.

Brin, the president and head of Google's technology division, started Google along with Page in 1998 out of a friend's garage. Moscow-born Brin received a Bachelor of Science degree with honours in mathematics and computer sciences from the University of Maryland.

He is currently on leave from the Ph.D. programme in computer science at Stanford University, where he received his master's degree. Brin continues to share responsibility for day-to-day operations along with Page and Schmidt.

Larry Page is Google's founding CEO and grew the company to be the behemoth it is today. In 2001, he moved into his role as president, products. Son of a computer science professor at Michigan State University, Page's love for computers began at age six. He earned a Bachelor of Science in engineering from the University of Michigan.

Despite getting Eric Schmidt (chief executive of Google) on board, Page is still credited with being intensely involved in company's affairs. He is said to go through CV of every employee before the person is hired at Google even today.

## 3) **Jeffrey Bezos, Amazon**

Jeffrey Preston Bezos, founder, president, CEO and chairman of Amazon.com has a net worth of \$8.2 billion.

Inspired by the amazing power of Internet, Bezos created a business model that leveraged Internet's ability to deliver huge amount of information efficiently. In 1994 he founded Amazon.com, an online bookshop. Amazon tried to compete with brick and mortar shops on three counts: lower prices, authoritative selection and a wealth of product information.

In 1997, Amazon went Public, and expanded from selling books to an online retailer with a vast portfolio of goods. Bezos started his career with Fitel, a start-up that was building a network to conduct international trade. The Princeton University graduate later went on to work as a financial analyst for DE Shaw & Co before founding Amazon in 1994.

In 2004, he founded a human spaceflight startup called Blue Origin. Bezos also has a personal investment company called Bezos Expeditions. He was named Person of the Year by Time magazine in 1999.

Though Amazon as a company may not inspire the awe, it did during its heydays, Bezos still has his name intact among the most venerable tech honchos.

#### 4) **Pierre Omidyar, eBay**

Father of online auction, Pierre Omidyar founded eBay. Ranked at no. 4 in the Web billionaires list, Omidyar's net worth is \$7.7 billion.

French-born computer programmer, Pierre developed fascination for computers in high school and graduated from Tufts University in 1988 with a degree in Computer Science. After graduation he worked for Claris, a subsidiary of Apple Computer, developing software for the Macintosh.

In 1991, he co-founded Ink Development Corp with three friends. The company included an Internet shopping segment and was later renamed eShop Inc. In 1996, eShop was sold to Microsoft.

Intrigued by the technical problem of establishing an online venue for direct person-to-person auction of collectible items, he created a simple prototype on his personal Web page, and launched an online service called Auction Web in 1995. The revenue soon started pouring, with business expanding by word of mouth. In 1997, Omidyar changed the company's name to eBay.

#### 5) **Eric Schmidt, Google**

Chief executive of Google Eric Emerson Schmidt ranks at no. 5 with a net worth of \$6.6 billion. Schmidt joined Google from Novell, where he led the company's strategic planning, management and technology development as chairman and CEO.

Prior to his appointment at Novell, Schmidt was chief technology officer and corporate executive officer at Sun Microsystems Inc, where he led the development of Java, Sun's platform-independent programming technology, and defined Sun's Internet software strategy.

Before joining Sun in 1983, he was a member of the research staff at the Computer Science Lab at Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), and also held positions at Bell Laboratories and Zilog. He is generally acknowledged as the one who catapulted Google from being a promising tech company to a universal 'God of Internet'. Schmidt has a degree in electrical engineering from Princeton University, and a Master's and PhD in computer science from the University of California, Berkeley.

#### 6) **Jeffrey Skoll, eBay**

eBay's first president and second-largest shareholder, Jeffrey Skoll has a net worth of \$3.6 billion.

He served as director of eBay from December 1996 to March 1998. An Internet pioneer, Skoll served as eBay's vice president strategic planning and analysis in February 1998, its president from August 1996 to February 1998.

One of the eBay cofounders, Skoll left the company and turned his attention to making movies and philanthropy. He was executive producer of North Country, starring Charlize Theron, and two George Clooney films, including Syriana. Skoll was also the executive producer of An Inconvenient Truth, the global-warming documentary that featured former Vice President Al Gore.

Skoll served as channel marketing manager for Knight-Ridder Information Inc, an online information services company, from July 1995 to July 1996. Prior to this, Skoll served as president of Skoll Engineering, a systems consulting firm, that he founded.

He was also the co-founder of Micros on the Move, a computer rentals company, as an adjunct to Skoll Engineering in 1990. He also serves as director at Community Foundation Silicon Valley and Ingenio Inc.

Graduating in BASC Electrical Engineering from the University of Toronto, he later pursued MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

### 7) **Shi Yuzhu, ZTgame**

Founder of China's third-largest online games company, Zhengtu, Shi Yuzhu has a net worth of \$2.8 billion.

He recently listed the company on NYSE Euronext. Almost half of his fortune comes from stakes in financial institutions China Minsheng Banking and Huaxia Bank.

Shanghai's richest resident, Yuzhu was born in Huanyuan of Anhui Province. He graduated in Mathematics from Zhejiang University in 1984 and pursued software master degree from Shenzhen University.

A few years later, he made his first million by selling his own software, and established the company Giant Group in 1991. Later in 1996, due to the over investment in Giant Building project and mismanagement, the Company fell into abyss of finance.

Yuzhu later become an expert in capital operation, and paid back to the public small investors in Giant Building project. In 2004, Yuzhu sold his production technology, assembly line and brand by 1.2 billion Yuan RMB.

### 8) **Hiroshi Mikitani, Rakuten**

Hiroshi Mikitani is the man behind online shopping mall Rakuten, one of the Japan's most popular Web destinations. With a net worth of \$2.6 billion, Mikitani is Japan's leading Internet entrepreneur.

Mikitani last year moved his company's headquarters from chic Roppongi neighborhood into cheaper bayside Tokyo. He reportedly treats employees to free meals with extra money. He also plans to launch e-commerce business in Taiwan. Mikitani is an MBA from Harvard University.

### 9) **Mark Cuban, Broadcast.com**

Next on the list is Mark Cuban, the founder of Broadcast.com, HDNet, and several other companies. With a net worth of \$2.6 billion, Cuban has also been an angel investor for several startups including SlideShare, Goowy, RedSwoosh, Box.net, Weblogs Inc and Mahalo.

Having worked as a bartender and a salesperson, Cuban started MicroSolutions in 1986, a systems integrator and software reseller. In 1990, Cuban sold MicroSolutions to CompuServe, then a subsidiary of H&R Block for \$6 million.

In 1995, he started Audionet with a fellow friend, which later became Broadcast.com in 1998. During the dotcom boom, Broadcast.com was acquired by Yahoo for \$5.9 billion in stock.

A passionate basketball fan, Cuban bought Dallas Mavericks, an NBA basketball team, from Ross Perot in 2000 for \$285 million. He also serves as a chairman of HDNet, an HDTV cable network. Cuban also plans to build his media empire.

### 10) **David Filo, Yahoo**

The tenth richest Web billionaire is David Filo with a net worth of \$2.5 billion. Co-founder of Yahoo Inc, David Filo met Yahoo CEO Jerry Yang as Stanford grad student.

A native of Moss Bluff, Louisiana, he co-created the Yahoo Internet navigational guide in April 1994 with Jerry Yang. Filo is credited of having bought 40 per cent stake in Alibaba.com for \$1 billion in 2005.

Filo serves as a key technologist, directing the technical operations behind the company's global network of Web properties. He is credited with helping build Yahoo into the world's most highly trafficked website and one of the Internet's most recognized brands.

Filo holds a BS degree in computer engineering from Tulane University and an MS degree in electrical engineering from Stanford University.