This project undertook a multi-scale analysis of the spatial nature of the internet, ranging from single metropolitan regions to national and international governing bodies, through the lenses of four separate but highly interrelated questions:

- First, is it possible to characterize the Internet’s development with regards to urban, regional, or national systems to better understand the spatial implications of and reasons for its growth?
- Second, to what degree does internet penetration mirror other forms of media and telecommunications penetration? Is the Internet really a “new” medium of communication or has it merely subsumed older forms? Also important are the differences between the relationship of media and internet adoption at different scales. Does prior media-density lead to the same degree of internet penetration in at the scale of a single city as at the national level?
- Third, how are the economics of the “information society” or “informational city” related to internet penetration in cities of a range of sizes? Was the spatial development of the internet driven by economic forces or the historical “chance” of being an early ARPANET or NSFNET node the more important determinant of a region’s location in the hierarchy of Internet connectivity and use?
- Finally, to what degree do institutional and political factors such as infrastructure support, local or national telecomms policies, and geopolitical borders influence the spatial structure of the internet at various scales – local, regional, national, and international?

The study found that:

- The factors influencing the spatial expression of the Internet vary considerably by region and by scale. In the United States, a distinctive hierarchy of urban places emerges, but it is one that is very different from pre-existing economic or political urban hierarchies.
• In an opposite trend, in the rest of the world the pre-existing urban hierarchy, especially as it pertains to the "global" cities with extensive economic power and reach, mirrors the development of the Internet.

• Significantly different institutional, political, cultural, and infrastructural foundations existed in the United States than in most other places, and that these factors, particularly the infrastructural and political, were far more important than generalized economic conditions for characterizing the diffusion of internet technologies.

• Media penetration correlated strongly with internet adoption at a national level, but more important than generalized "media" was the type of media, perhaps reflecting a cultural tendency to adoption. For instance, countries with a high telephone-to-television ratio tended to higher internet adoption than did those with high television-to-telephone adoption. A high telephone-to-television ratio suggests value placed on flexible, one-to-one communication rather than fixed, one-to many communication.

• The current structure of international telecommunications peering agreements represents a serious barrier to internet diffusion based on "piggybacking" technologies such as telephone modems. Peering agreements are also reinforcing a U.S.-centered structure for the Internet, as it is frequently less expensive for countries to route internet traffic through the U.S. rather than directly to its destination.