

Erwise

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Erwise is an early discontinued [web browser](#), and the first that was available for the [X Window System](#).^{[3][4]}

Released in April 1992, the browser was written for [Unix](#) computers running [X](#) and used the [W3 common access library](#).^[5] Erwise was the combined master's project of four [Finnish](#) students at the [Helsinki University of Technology](#)^[6] (now merged into [Aalto University](#)): Kim Nyberg, Teemu Rantanen, Kati Suominen and Kari Sydänmaanlakka.^{[1][2][7]} The group decided to make a web browser at the suggestion of [Robert Cailliau](#), who was visiting the university,^[8] and were supervised by [Ari Lemmke](#).

The development of Erwise halted after the students graduated and went on to other projects.^[2] [Tim Berners-Lee](#), the creator of the [World Wide Web](#), travelled to Finland to encourage the group to continue with the project. However, none of the project members could afford to continue with the project without proper funding.^[2]

The name *Erwise* originates from *otherwise* and the name of the project group, *OHT*.^{[8][9][10]}

Development [\[edit \]](#)

For the web to be popularized, [Tim Berners-Lee](#) knew that what people wanted was a [GUI-based browser](#) – one that could target multiple [operating systems](#), and most importantly, be easy to use for the technologically challenged. At the time, [personal computers](#) were also confusing to some people that were not experienced with [technology](#).

History [\[edit \]](#)

Erwise



Screenshot of the browser

Developers	Kim Nyberg, Teemu Rantanen, Kati Suominen, Kari Sydänmaanlakka ^[1]
Release	0.1 / 15 April 1992; 34 years ago
Final release	0.1 / 25 April 1994; 32 years ago
Written in	C
Platform	Unix (Sun-4 , ^[2] NeXT/CubX , ^[2] DEC ^[2] Ultrix) using Motif ^[1]
Available in	English
Type	Web browser
License	Public Domain
Website	www.w3.org/History/19921103-hypertext/hypertext/Erwise/Review.html
Repository	none ✎

In the early 1990s, the Internet was still largely confined to academics and technicians, navigated via arcane command-line tools or very rudimentary clients, which kept the Web out of reach for most users.^[11]

The four Helsinki students behind Erwise - Kim Nyberg, Teemu Rantanen, Kati Suominen and Kari Sydänmaanlakka - set out to break down these barriers by embedding hypertext in a graphical, point-and-click interface. Their vision was to simplify access and offer a visually engaging browsing experience for non-experts.

- Extremely pre-documented (in Finnish).^[9]
- Serious coding started around March 1992.^[9]
- Alpha release available by anonymous FTP from info.cern.ch—binaries only (sun4 works, decstation too, display requires [Motif](#)) as of 15 April 1992.^[9]
- The source code released on the www-talk mailing list in August 1992.^{[9][12]}

Characteristics [\[edit \]](#)

The following are significant characteristics of the browser:

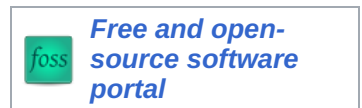
- It used a multi-font text.^[2]
- The links of Erwise browser were underlined. To visit the links you had to **double click** on the links.^[2]
- Erwise could execute multiple window operation, though the optional single window mode was also available.
- Erwise could open local files.^[2]
- Erwise had little English documentation.
- Some of the buttons were for features that were not implemented.
- Tim Berners-Lee would have continued with the works of Erwise.^[3] He could not do so because Erwise's code was documented in the Finnish language.^[13]

Criticism [\[edit \]](#)

Erwise crashed on some versions of [Unix](#), which Berners-Lee attributed to poor Motif implementations.^{[2][14]}

See also [\[edit \]](#)

- [ViolaWWW](#)



References [\[edit \]](#)

- ↑ ^{***a b c***} Henrik Frystyk Nielsen (26 October 1999). "World Wide Web People – "Erwise" team" . World Wide Web Consortium. Retrieved 15 June 2010.
- ↑ ^{***a b c d e f g h i j***} Tim Berners-Lee (29 April 1992). "Comparison with ViolaWWW" . World Wide Web Consortium. Retrieved 15 June 2010.
- ↑ ^{***a b***} Holwerda, Thom (3 March 2009). "The World's First Graphical Browser: Erwise" . OSNews. Retrieved 15 June 2010.
- ↑ ^{***a***} "Cern Authentication" .

- ## Sources [\[edit \]](#)

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