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One great benefit of the Web is that it allows us to move information online that now resides in paper form. Several states in America are using the Web in a profound way. You can apply for various permits or submit applications for business licences. Some states are putting up listings of jobsnot just state government jobs, but all the jobs available in the state. I believe, over time, that all the information that governments print, and all those paper forms they now have, will be moved on to the Internet. Electronic commerce notches up month-by-month too. It is difficult to measure, because a lot of electronic commerce involves existing buyers and sellers who are simply moving paperbased transactions to the Web. That is not new business. Microsoft, for example, purchases millions of dollars of PCs online instead of by paper. However, that is not a fundamental change. it has just improved the efficiency of an existing process. The biggest impact has occurred where electronic commerce matches buyers and sellers who would not previously have found each other. When you go to a book site and find an obscure book that you never would have found in a physical bookstore, that is a new type of commerce. Today, about half of all PCs are still not connected to the Web. Getting communications costs down and making all the software simpler will bring in those people. And that, in turn, will move us closer to the critical mass that will make the Web lifestyle everyone's lifestyle.

One element that people underestimate is the degree to which the hardware and software will improve. Just take one aspect: screen technology. I do my e-mail on a 20-inch liquid crystal display (LCD) monitor. It is not available at a reasonable price yet, but in two years it will be. In ten years, a 20-inch LCD with much higher resolution will be commonplace. The boundary between a television set and a PC will be blurred because even the set-top box that you connect up to your cable or satellite will have a processor more powerful than what we have today in the most expensive PC. This will, in effect, make your television a computer. Interaction with the Web also will improve, making it much easier for people to be involved. Today the keywords we use to search the Web often return to too many articles to sort through, many of them out of context. If you want to learn about the fastest computer chip available, you might end up getting responses instead about potato chips being delivered in fast trucks. In the future, we shall be either speaking or typing sentences into the computer. If you ask about the speed of chips, the result will be about computers, not potatoes. Speech recognition also means that you will be able to call in on a phone and ask if you have any new messages, or check on a flight, or check on the weather. To predict that it will take over ten years for these changes to happen is probably pessimistic. We usually overestimate what we can do in two years and underestimate what we can do in ten. The Web will be as much a way of life as the car by 2008. Probably before. 1. Electronic commerce becomes a new type of commerce when_____. [A] paperbased transactions are moved on to the Web [B] the efficiency

of the existing process is improved by Internet [C] new buyers and sellers find each other on the Internet [D] a book site offers the books several bookstores have altogether 2. The use of computer will be as common as the use of cars when_____. [A] governments begin to move administration on-line [B] electronic commerce causes a fundamental change [C] computer and communication become simpler and cheaper [D] the boundary between the computer and the TV disappears 3. What is the current problem with the Web according to the passage? [A] Too much information. [B] Lack of response. [C] Ineffective interaction. [D] Slowness of speed. 4. The example of potato chips is used to illustrate_____. [A] the defect of computers at the present stage of development [B] the similarity between a computer chip and a potato chip [C] the richness of information available on the web [D] the irrelevant responses the web sometimes offers 5. The passage is mainly trying to show that_____. [A] the web is becoming a way of conveying information [B] the web will bring about a new way of life [C] electronic commerce develops with the Internet [D] interaction with the Web will become easier   1.C 2.C 3.C 4.D 5.B 100Test