

# What Is That?

There are times when the sarcastic question “Would you like me to draw you a picture?” deserves an affirmative response—especially when the discussion becomes technical and complicated. The engineers who build computers work from visuals (schematics), and the programmers draw pictures (flowcharts) of how their instructions are supposed to chase around the circuitry.

In the spirit of a picture is worth a thousand acronyms, Barrett Lyon and his Opte Project have mapped the entire Internet. For those who would like

to know what the Internet looks like, the “project was created to make a visual representation of a space that is very much one-dimensional, a metaphysical universe.” Go to [www.opte.org](http://www.opte.org) to see how it was done. Opte, incidentally, isn’t an acronym—it’s from the Latin word “opti” meaning optical.

The Opte map is nice enough to hang on a bulletin board. Or you can get a T-shirt with the map in grayscale so the next time some wise guy asks, “Want me to draw you a picture?” you can tell him, “Thanks, I already have one.” ■