



Smithsonian

*National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center*

## Guide to the T-Net Records

NMAH.AC.1255

Alison Oswald.

2012

Archives Center, National Museum of American History

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# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	3
Container Listing .....	4
Series 1: Correspondence, 1993 - 1996.....	4
Series 2: Financial Materials, 1989-2003.....	5
Series 3: Manufacturing Materials, 1993.....	6
Series 4: Marketing Materials, 1995 and undated.....	7
Series 5: Patent Materials, 1983 - 2003.....	8
Series 6: Photographs, circa 1980-1990s and undated.....	9
Series 7: Newspaper Clippings, 1993.....	10

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	T-Net Records
<b>Date:</b>	1983-2003
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.1255
<b>Creator:</b>	Fanning, Michael (Creator)
<b>Extent:</b>	0.05 Cubic feet (1 box)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The collection documents through correspondence, marketing materials, patent materials, photographs, and newspaper clippings, the development of T-Net, a sport that combines electronic game technology with a diamond-shaped court the length of a tennis court and "invisible" nets created by inventor Michael Fanning.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Michael Fanning on October 24, 2011.

### Related Materials

#### **Materials at the National Museum of American History**

The Division of Culture and the Arts (now Division of Cultural and Community Life) holds related artifacts. See accession 2011.0234.

### Processing Information

Processed by Alison Oswald, archivist, October 2011.

### Preferred Citation

T-Net, Inc. Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

### Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning intellectual property rights. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

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## Biographical / Historical

T-Net (standing for transparent net) was invented by Michael Fanning. Fanning's idea for the game came from hitting a tennis ball over a telephone wire. In 1993, Fanning was issued US Patent 5,259,625 for an apparatus and method for playing a court game. Fanning's company, Tnnnt ([www.tnnnt.net](http://www.tnnnt.net)), manufactures and promotes the game. The T-Net court/field is divided in two equal halves with three scoring zones on each side. Games can include up to three players per team or be played one-on-one. The objective is to land the flyer in one of your opponent's three scoring zones, and to catch the flyer to prevent the opponent from scoring. Players move freely on their side of the court but cannot cross the center line. Pole-mounted transmitting devices on each side send light beams across the court creating an electronic net (an electronic sensing beam) for each of the three scoring zones. Players must throw a light-reflective projectile (called a "flyer") through the light field and into one of the scoring zones to get a point. When the projectile passes through the beam, a beep is emitted. If the projectile lands on the ground the pole-mounted device flashes a red light and beeps to confirm a score. Players get one point for activating the middle zone, two points for the back zone and three points for setting off both zones. The first team to achieve twenty-one points wins the game. There are six games per set, three sets per match. The game can be played on a variety of surfaces--pavement, turf, composite, snow, carpet, glass, grass, sand, hardwood or over a swimming pool, and it can be played at night in low light conditions.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection documents through correspondence, marketing materials, patent materials, photographs, and newspaper clippings the development of T-Net, a sport that combines electronic game technology with a diamond-shaped court the length of a tennis court and "invisible" nets created by inventor Michael Fanning.

**Series 1, Correspondence, 1993-1996**, consists of incoming and outgoing letters. Fanning, the inventor of T-Net, corresponds with corporations and investment companies, such as Reebok, Blockbuster Entertainment, Family Dollar and Turner Sports, Inc. to solicit interest and/or financial backing in his product.

**Series 2, Financial Materials, 1989-2003**, consists of correspondence, invoices, purchase orders, Internal Revenue Service papers, and documentation for incorporating a business.

**Series 3, Manufacturing Materials, 1993**, consists of handwritten notes and sketches about materials used and lists of potential companies to consult for fabricating the product.

**Series 4, Marketing Materials, 1995 and undated**, consists of sketches and documentation describing the T-Net system for potential customers.

**Series 5, Patent Materials, 1983-2003**, consists primarily of correspondence with patent attorneys (Shefte, Pinckney & Sawyer of Charlotte, North Carolina) to patent the T-Net system. Also included are patent-related expenses incurred by Fanning and patents issued to other inventors that are similar to the T-Net system.

**Series 6, Photographs, 1980-1990s**, consists of color prints showing the T-Net system in use and laid out on a field.

**Series 7, Newspaper Clippings, 1993**, consists of one folder of photocopied newspaper clippings related to T-Net.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into seven series.

**Series 1, Correspondence, 1993-1996**

**Series 2, Financial Materials, 1989-2003**

**Series 3, Manufacturing Materials, 1993**

**Series 4, Marketing Materials, 1995 and undated**

**Series 5, Patent Materials, 1983-2003**

**Series 6, Photographs, circa 1980s-990s and undated**

**Series 7, Newspaper Clippings, 1993**

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

- Inventions -- 20th century
- Recreation
- Sports

### Types of Materials:

- Clippings
- Correspondence
- Patents
- Photographs -- 20th century

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Correspondence, 1993 - 1996

Box 1, Folder 1	<a href="#">Correspondence, undated</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	Correspondence, 1993
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1994
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence, 1995-1996

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 2: Financial Materials, 1989-2003

*Box 1, Folder 5*

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 3: Manufacturing Materials, 1993

*Box 1, Folder 6*

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*



## Series 4: Marketing Materials, 1995 and undated

Box 1, Folder 7

[General, 1995](#)

Box 1, Folder 8

T-Net tournament brackets, undated

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 5: Patent Materials, 1983 - 2003

Box 1, Folder 9	Correspondence, 1993
Box 1, Folder 10	Correspondence, 1994-2003
Box 1, Folder 11	Patent expenses, 1992-1993
Box 1, Folder 12	Other patents, 1983-1992

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 6: Photographs, circa 1980-1990s and undated

*Box 1, Folder 13*

[Image\(s\)](#)

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 7: Newspaper Clippings, 1993

*Box 1, Folder 14*

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*