

Telstra AUSTPAC and Telstra BigPond were separate networks

Yes, Telstra AUSTPAC and Telstra BigPond were entirely separate networks built on fundamentally different technologies, eras, and purposes.

Key Differences Between the Networks

Feature	Telstra AUSTPAC	Telstra BigPond
Primary Technology	X.25 Packet-Switching	Internet Protocol (IP) (via ADSL, Cable, Dial-up)
Launch Year	1982 (by Telecom Australia)	1996
Primary Purpose	Secure, point-to-point text and transactional data for business and government.	Public internet access (ISP) for retail consumers and businesses.
Common Use Cases	EFTPOS transactions, ATM banking, Australian Taxation Office (ATO) data, and remote academic terminal access.	Web browsing, consumer email (@bigpond.com), and digital multimedia streaming.

Technology and Legacy

- **AUSTPAC** was Australia's first public packet-switched data network. It relied on virtual circuits using the historic X.25 protocol, long before the modern commercial internet became mainstream. Because it was incredibly stable and secure, it remained the backbone for financial and government networks for over two decades. Telstra gradually phased it out in favor of modern, IP-based networks, officially decommissioning it in **2008**.
- **BigPond** was created explicitly to tap into the modern internet boom, functioning as Telstra's retail Internet Service Provider (ISP) brand. It delivered IP traffic to the global web rather than closed business systems. Telstra began transitioning BigPond customers directly under the primary "Telstra" brand name starting in 2013.