Nielsen//NetRatings
The global standard for Internet audience measurement and analysis

ONE IN THREE AMERICANS USE A SEARCH ENGINE, ACCORDING TO NIELSEN//NETRATINGS

Internet Users Turn to Search Engines for Online Shopping

NEW YORK — February 23, 2004 — Nielsen//NetRatings, the global standard for Internet audience measurement and analysis, reports that 114.5 million or 39 percent of Americans used a search engine during January 2004. The 114.5 million unique users, representing 76 percent of the active online U.S. population, each spent nearly forty minutes using search engines during the month.

Nielsen//NetRatings also reports the top five search destinations were Google, Yahoo! Search, MSN Search, AOL Search and Ask Jeeves during January 2004. Fifty-nine million users or 39 percent of active Internet users visited Google (See Table 1). Thirty percent or 46 million visitors used Yahoo! Search, while 45 million or 30 percent went to MSN Search. Rounding out the top five were AOL Search and Ask Jeeves with 23 million and 13 million unique users respectively.

"Search engines continue to be the primary tool people use to navigate the Web," said Jason Levin, analyst, Nielsen//NetRatings. "With the big search players having recently updated their search capabilities, Internet users should expect to find even better search results from the major search engines in the near future."

Table 1. Nielsen//NetRatings Top 5 Search Destinations, January 2004 (U.S., Home and Work)

Search Destinations	Unique Audience (000)	Active Reach (%)
1. Google	59,327	39.37
2. Yahoo! Search*	45,774	30.38
3. MSN Search*	44,651	29.63
4. AOL Search	23,394	15.53
5. Ask Jeeves	12,792	8.49

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings NetView, January 2004
* Note: Domain AutoSearch error pages have been removed from the rankings for MSN Search and Yahoo! Search. The sites in the above table that do not exclude Domain AutoSearch error pages consequently reflect higher audience traffic.

Online Shoppers Turning to Search Engines
Online shoppers set a trend during the 2003 holiday season by turning to search engines to find online stores.** When Nielsen//NetRatings polled holiday online shoppers asking them which search engines they used to find online stores, 36 percent replied that they had used Google (See Table 2). Twenty-five percent of respondents went to Yahoo! Search, while 14 percent visited MSN Search. Ask Jeeves and AOL Shopping round out the top five with five percent each.

"Online shoppers have turned to search engines not only to find stores but to comparison shop," said Levin. "Search engines are quickly becoming the first destination for online shoppers, and we expect that trend to continue through 2004."

Table 2. Nielsen//NetRatings Search Engines Used by Online Holiday Consumers to Find Online Stores, Ranked by Percent of Consumer Audience

Search Engine	Percentage of Consumer Audience
1. Google	36.0%
2. Yahoo! Search	25.3%
3. MSN Search	14.0%
4. Ask Jeeves	5.0%
5. AOL Shopping	4.8%

Source: Goldman Sachs, Harris Interactive Nielsen//NetRatings eSpending Report, December 2003
Question asked: "Which of the following search engines or shopping portals did you use to find online stores over the past week?"
Number of respondents = 9,517 online users

Search Engine Users Seek Relevant and Credible Results
Nielsen//NetRatings WebIntercept service surveyed Internet users asking them to rank in order of importance a series of features they thought were critical when conducting a search. The most important feature users sought was "can find relevant information" with 52 percent of respondents ranking it number one (See Table 3). "Can get credible results" at 34 percent ranked second while "get results quickly" came in third with 33 percent, followed by "has an easy to use interface" at 19 percent. "Is well known" and "has cool design" tied for fifth place at 18 percent.

"The message is loud and clear – search engine users value relevant and credible information over all else and they are choosing their search engines accordingly," continued Levin.

Table 3. Nielsen//NetRatings Most Important Features of Search Engines

Feature	Percentage of Respondents Ranking Feature as "Most Important"
1. Can Find Relevant Information	51.8%
2. Can Get Credible Results	34.2%
3. Get Results Quickly	33.0%
4. Has an Easy to Use Interface	18.6%
5. Is Well Known	17.5%
5. Has Cool Design	17.5%

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings WebIntercept Survey, November 2003

**Note: Charles Buchwalter, vice president of client analytics, Nielsen//NetRatings and Lori Iventosch-James of Harris Interactive will present these findings in a presentation entitled "The Online Channel's Increasing Clout: Continuing Innovation and Customer Acceptance" to be delivered at the eTail 2004 Conference on February 24, 2004 at 8:30 AM PT.
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Nielsen//NetRatings reports January 2004 data for the Top Sites by Parent Company and Top Brands. In addition, Nielsen//NetRatings reveals the Top Advertisers by Company for January 2004.

Nielsen//NetRatings Top 10 Web Sites by Parent Company and Top 10 Web Sites By Brand

Month of January 2004

Table 1. Top 10 Parent Companies, Combined Home & Work

Parent	Unique Audience (000)	Time Per Person (hh:mm:ss)
1. Microsoft	108,507	2:13:32
2. Time Warner	96,696	5:37:02
3. Yahoo!	95,018	2:46:09
4. Google	59,708	0:39:22
5. eBay	58,035	1:41:51
6. United States Government	50,733	0:27:20
7. Amazon	37,928	0:20:25
8. RealNetworks	34,752	0:40:30
9. InterActiveCorp	34,726	0:22:20
10. Terra Lycos	34,362	0:09:27

Table 2. Top 10 Brands, Combined Home & Work

Brand	Unique Audience (000)	Time Per Person (hh:mm:ss)
1. MSN	94,335	1:58:43
2. Yahoo!	92,721	2:49:16
3. Microsoft	89,918	0:36:31
4. AOL	72,314	6:43:48
5. Google	59,327	0:39:15
6. eBay	56,880	1:37:40
7. Amazon	34,942	0:18:21
8. Real	34,430	0:37:44
9. Lycos Network	33,195	0:09:18
10. MapQuest	27,616	0:10:01

Example: The data indicates that 34.4 million home and work Internet users visited at least one of the Terra Lycos-owned sites or launched a Terra Lycos-owned application during the month, and each person spent, on average, a total of 9 minutes and 27 seconds at one or more of their sites or applications.

A parent company is defined as a consolidation of multiple domains and URLs owned by a single entity. A brand is defined as a consolidation of multiple domains and URLs that has a consistent collection of branded content. Reach is a measure of the unduplicated audience that visits a property. The data is expressed as the percentage of the total universe of Internet users who logged onto the Internet at least once during the reporting period.

Nielsen//NetRatings AdRelevance Top 10 Advertisers

Month of January 2004

Top advertisers, ranked by impressions, are based on data from AdRelevance, Nielsen//NetRatings' advertising research service. An impression is counted as the number of times an ad is rendered for viewing.

Top 10 Advertisers by Company

Advertiser*	Impressions (000)
1. Netflix, Inc.	3,881,738
2. Dell Computer Corporation	3,155,503
3. Weight Watchers International, Inc.	2,431,519
4. InterActiveCorp	2,112,325
5. SBC Communications, Inc.	2,108,085
6. LowerMyBills.com, Inc.	1,830,625
7. Apollo Group, Inc.	1,680,212
8. eDiets.com, Inc.	1,653,406
9. Ameritrade Holding Corporation	1,599,241
10. Ameriquest Mortgage Company	1,337,799

*Impressions reported exclude house ads, which are ads that run on an advertiser's own Web property.

Example: An estimated 1.3 billion Ameriquest Mortgage Company advertisements were rendered for viewing during the surfing period.

About Nielsen//NetRatings
Nielsen//NetRatings is the global standard for Internet audience measurement and analysis and is the industry's premier source for online advertising intelligence with its NetView, AdRelevance, @Plan, WebRF, LemonAd, MegaPanel and SiteCensus services. Covering 70 percent of the world's Internet usage, the Nielsen//NetRatings services offer syndicated Internet and digital media research reports and custom-tailored data to help companies gain valuable insight into their business. For more information, please visit www.nielsen-netratings.com.

Editor's Note: Please source all data to Nielsen//NetRatings.

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