

# Google search use up 41 percent from last year

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Image: Internet search giant Google's logo. Google says it processes more than 200 million searches a day and leads the world for search engine usage with 57 percent of the current market, followed by Yahoo at 21 percent and MSN at just 9 percent.

As Google continues to expand and offer more products, its original function continues to boom. Google search-engine use in March 2006 grew 41 percent from last March's figure, according to the latest Nielson//NetRatings figures.

According to Neilson, Google search was used 2.9 billion times this past March, compared to 2.06 billion times the previous March.

Yahoo!'s search engine saw even greater increase, jumping up 47 percent to 1.33 billion searches in March 2006.

"As the recognized leaders in the search market, Google and Yahoo continue to gain ground as new features, such as instant search suggestions and video search, heighten loyalty among their users," said Michael Lanz, vice president of search industry solutions for Nielsen//NetRatings.

"To compete, other search providers must be equally innovative and build consumer trust in their search results," he added.

These numbers come on the heels of Google announcing a 60-percent rise in first-quarter profits from last year to \$592 million.

Google additionally announced that first-quarter revenue broke \$2 billion for the first time in company history, reaching \$2.25 billion.

"Google had an exceptional quarter with strong growth and profitability, from both Google properties and the network," Google CEO Eric Schmidt said in a release. "We are driving this growth through investments in our infrastructure and our people, product innovations that attract new users, and relationships with advertisers and partners around the world."

Sapna Satagopan, research associate at Jupiter Research, said Google's growing reputation as a one-stop Internet portal is helping its search engine gain market share.

"There is an inclination to go to Google because of its reputation," Satagopan told UPI.

Using Google products like Gmail and Google Maps helps brand the company and makes users loyal to the search engine, she added.

In a December 2005 research document titled "Search Loyalty is Hard to

Find," Forrester Research analysts Charlene Li and Brian Haven wrote that Google's growth would be aided by advertising the company as a comprehensive experience.

"Google should overcome its distaste for the 'portal' label and launch its first significant marketing campaign," the report said. "It should promote new services like Gmail and personalized home pages to encourage users to take control of their own experiences."

Satagopan said that while few could compete with Google and Yahoo! for general search engines, there is opportunity for vertical search engines, which focus on a specific area of knowledge, to take control of one aspect of search.

"Vertical search engines do have their opportunity to make their space there" in today's market, she said.

Li and Haven's report agreed.

"As niche players, small search providers will not be able to displace their larger brethren," it said. Instead, they should optimize specific searching abilities to provide a powerful search in one area.

"Business-focused search services, such as Kellysearch and ThomasNet, use the large search engines and still provide unique services that major search engines can't match," it added.

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