

Microsoft's browser sees notable decline in usage

January 4 2009, By John Letzing



Microsoft Corp.'s Internet browser lost a notable number of users during the last half of 2008, according to recently published data, a trend that underscores the growing competition in a market long dominated by the software giant.

According to data from research firm Net Applications, Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser registered a 68 percent market share in December, compared to a nearly 74 percent share as recently as May.

While the decrease is relatively slight, it is nonetheless significant for a technology that has enjoyed an extended period of dominance.

Microsoft first zeroed in on browser technology in the 1990s as a means to fend off and ultimately crush upstart rival Netscape Communications Corp.

More recently, Microsoft has seen a three-pronged assault on its market dominance. That's due to the increasing use of Apple Inc.'s Mac computers using the company's Safari browser, the growing popularity of the open-source Firefox browser offered by the Mozilla Foundation and Google Inc.'s release earlier this year of its own browser, called Chrome.

Firefox captured a 21 percent market share in December, compared to 18 percent in May, according to Net Applications, while Apple's Safari captured a nearly 8 percent share in December, compared to a 6 percent share in May.

Google's Chrome, meanwhile, grew from a 0.7 percent share in October to just over 1 percent in December, according to the data.

Google released Chrome in September, touting it as a faster and more secure way to access the Web. Browsers are strategically important pieces of technology, which can be used by companies such as Google and Microsoft to foster the use of their own respective Internet services and applications.

The nonprofit Mozilla Foundation had released the latest version of Firefox in June and the browser was downloaded more than 8 million times on its first day of availability.

The Mozilla Foundation was spun off by AOL in 2003 to further develop the code for the Netscape browser as Firefox. As an open-source project, the Firefox browser is able to use input from a vast array of engineers not directly employed by Mozilla.

Net Applications cautioned that the high amount of residential use of the Web during the holidays in December may have accounted for increased usage of Firefox, Safari, Chrome and other non-Microsoft browsers. Microsoft's Internet Explorer is generally the preferred Web-browsing tool for office use.

© 2009, *MarketWatch.com Inc.*

Visit *MarketWatch* on the Web at www.marketwatch.com

Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.

Citation: Microsoft's browser sees notable decline in usage (2009, January 4) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-01-microsoft-browser-notable-decline-usage.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--