

Google users loyal: comScore

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A sign is displayed outside of the Google headquarters in Mountain View, California, seen here in 2008. The planned Microsoft-Yahoo! online search tie-up has promise but must overcome people's fierce loyalty to market king Google, industry tracker comScore said Friday.

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"The recently announced search partnership between Microsoft and Yahoo! certainly makes the combined entity a more formidable competitor to Google in the US search marketplace," said [comScore](#) search evangelist Eli Goodman.

"While they are still looking up at Google in terms of [market share](#), they have a real opportunity to make headway given that nearly three-quarters of all searchers conduct at least one search on these engines every

month."

The challenge for Microsoft and Yahoo! will be to make their joint search offering compelling enough to convert occasional users into habitual visitors, according to Goodman.

With their partnership announced in late July, software giant Microsoft and [Internet portal](#) Yahoo! are hoping to steal market share -- and advertising dollars -- from the company that has come to define Web search.

Under the terms of the deal, Microsoft's freshly-launched [Bing](#) search engine will handle queries at Yahoo! websites.

Google is the overwhelming leader in a Web search and advertising market which the research firm Forrester estimates will grow by 15 percent a year to more than 30 billion dollars in 2014 in the United States alone.

A comScore analysis released on Friday concludes that Google has the highest loyalty rate among US [Internet users](#), with people trusting the bulk of their online searches to the California firm.

In June 2009, Google had a 65-percent share of the core search market, compared to 28 percent for Yahoo! and Microsoft combined, according to comScore.

"Separately, [Yahoo](#) and Bing are unable to efficiently meet the inventory needs of advertisers which are attainable through [Google](#)," said Craig Macdonald, a senior vice president at marketing analysis firm Covario.

"The combination of the two platforms, however, gives advertisers the ability to reach about 30 percent of the search market in a more efficient

manner."

A search market share of 30 percent represents a "critical threshold" for many marketers when it comes to justifying spending national advertising dollars, according to Macdonald.

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