

Internet Explorer a champ but Chrome a contender

February 2 2010



A visitor walks past the logo of internet search engine giant Google at a trade fair. Microsoft's latest version of Internet Explorer (IE) is a hit but Google's Chrome has been steadily gaining ground on the Web browsing software, according to industry figures released Tuesday.

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Chrome's share of the browser market rose from 1.62 percent in March of last year to 5.22 percent last month, according to Net Application trend data.

During the same period, Internet Explorer's piece of the Web browser market dropped from 68.46 percent to 62.12 percent, Net Application

reported.

The percentage of people using [Safari browser software](#) tailored for Apple's [Macintosh](#) computers went from 3.63 percent in March of last year to 4.53 percent in January.

"I think what Microsoft is seeing is that when people upgrade from IE 6 they don't necessarily go to IE 8," said Net Application spokesman Vince Vizzaccaro.

"They have been very vocal with trying to get people to upgrade, and people may be looking around to see what other browsers are available."

About two weeks ago, Microsoft released a patch for an IE 6 software hole through which China-based cyber spies attacked [Google](#) and other firms.

Attackers used email or some other lure to get employees of a targeted company to click on a link and visit a specially crafted website using IE.

[Malicious software](#) would then be downloaded that has the capability to essentially install 'back doors' in machines and give hackers access.

The US software giant advised people to upgrade from IE6, which is nearly a decade old.

No matter which [Web browser](#) people use, upgrading to the most current version promises to increase protection against hackers.

Net Application data from January showed that while a fifth of the world's machines still used IE 6 to explore the Internet, IE 8 took the top spot with 25.56 percent of the overall market.

"We launched just less than a year ago, so it's both humbling and thrilling to see so many people choose our product so quickly -- making it the most popular browser of choice worldwide," Brandon LeBlanc of the Windows Team wrote Tuesday in a blog post.

IE 7 and 8 browsers have together tallied more than 350 million blocks of malicious software and links to 125 million "phishing" websites devised to trick people into disclosing valuable information such as passwords.

"You may have recently heard about organizations including Google recommending that people update their browsers and move off older versions, such as the nearly decade-old IE 6," LeBlanc wrote.

"Think about what technology and the Internet were like in the year 2000 and consider how they've evolved since then. It was a different time and people's browsing needs were different. Today's Internet calls for more."

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Citation: Internet Explorer a champ but Chrome a contender (2010, February 2) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-02-internet-explorer-champ-chrome-contender.html>

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