

Facebook beats Google in US for first time: tracker

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Facebook's homepage finished the week ending March 13 as the most visited site in the country, according to industry tracker Hitwise.

The "important milestone," as described by Hitwise director of research Heather Dougherty, came as [Facebook](#) enjoyed a massive 185 percent increase in visits in the same period, compared to the same week in 2009.

By comparison, visits to search engine home Google.com increased only nine percent in the same time -- although the tracker does not include Google property sites such as the popular Gmail email service, [YouTube](http://YouTube.com) and Google Maps.

Taken together, Facebook.com and Google.com amounted to 14 percent of the entire US Internet visits last week, Dougherty said.

Google has been positioning challenges in recent months to Facebook and the micro-blogging site [Twitter](http://Twitter.com) by adding the social-networking feature Buzz to its Gmail service.

In what could signal an escalating battle between Facebook and Google, the leading social-networking service celebrated its sixth birthday earlier this year with changes including a new message inbox that echoes Gmail's format.

Facebook boasts some 400 million users while Gmail had 176 million unique visitors in December, according to tracking firm comScore.

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