

Facebook top publisher of display ads: comScore

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Online tracking firm comScore said Facebook delivered 176.3 billion display ads to US users in the first three months of the year, a 16.2 percent market share, more than double its 7.5 percent share of a year ago.

Long-time display ad leader Yahoo! was next, delivering 131.5 billion display ads in the quarter, a 12.1 percent market share, followed by

Microsoft sites with 60.2 billion ad impressions, or 5.5 percent, comScore said.

Display advertising includes banner ads, sponsorship and rich media ads and is distinct from the search-related advertising format dominated by Google.

According to comScore, US Internet users received a record 1.1 trillion display ads in the first quarter, up 15 percent over a year ago, while total US display ad spending reached an estimated 2.7 billion dollars.

But while Facebook may be running more display ads than anyone else, Yahoo! is estimated to be making significantly more money because ad rates on social media sites tend to be lower.

Facebook has eclipsed MySpace in recent years to become the world's top social network with more than 400 million users.

MySpace parent Fox, which is owned by News Corp., slipped from second place to fourth in the rankings in the quarter, according to comScore, serving 53.8 billion display ads for a 4.9 percent market share, down from 11.6 percent a year ago.

AOL was next with 32.1 billion display ads, a 2.9 percent market share, followed by Google with 25.8 billion display ads for a 2.4 percent share.

ComScore senior vice president Jeff Hackett said the figures show the online display ad market is reviving.

"Following a severe ad recession that began in late 2008 and continued through the first three quarters of 2009, we've been seeing a strong resurgence in the online display ad market," Hackett said.

"This pickup in activity should bode well for the online advertising industry as we move forward in 2010," he said.

According to the Interactive Advertising Bureau and PricewaterhouseCoopers, Internet advertising revenue in the United States hit 5.9 billion dollars in the first quarter of the year, up 7.5 percent over the same period a year ago.

The IAB and PwC said Thursday that the revenue figure was the highest ever recorded for a first-quarter although it was lower than the 6.3 billion dollars notched up in the fourth quarter of last year.

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