

Google vs Yahoo! Battle of the Search Engines

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Google is widely recognised as the most powerful engine, offering the most extensive searching capabilities - but is this the main reason why it has stolen Yahoo!'s crown? The increasingly commercial Yahoo! is being beaten by the power and simplicity of archrival Google - but is it all about search results, or has Google just found a winning formula and stuck to it?

NOP World's flagship service, the Internet User Profile Survey (IUPS) has shown that Google is rapidly challenging its competitors as the preferred site for Internet searches. In 2000, the most visited search engine by UK Internet users was Yahoo! with 42% stating this was the site they used most often for searching. It was simple to use, categories were clearly labelled, users felt comfortable with the design and confident that results were relevant. Few would have predicted that Yahoo! would be beaten by a strange new site named Google. At that time only a small number of surfers were actually using Google - less than 1% of users.

But now just 36 months on, 38% of surfers in Britain prefer Google - a phenomenal rise, especially given that it has been achieved almost totally on the back of 'word-of-mouth' viral campaigning.

In terms of user experience, IUPS shows that there is not much difference between the two engines. 34% of users of both engines agreed they always found what they were searching for, 34% of Google users said on most occasions they found what they were looking for, compared to 37% of Yahoo! users. The respective users seem as happy as each other with the performance of their search engine of choice.

Carl Geraghty, Research Manager at NOP World Business says "By fully embracing the portal mentality, Yahoo! has lost its stranglehold on the search market, leaving Google to establish itself as the place to search online. While such diversification obviously helps digital companies like Yahoo! to make money, the success of Google proves that a simple effective web solution will deliver market share".