

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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POPULARITY OF ONLINE ENERGY RISES WITH PRICES

On the day that British Gas raises its prices by 22% and Powergen announces that its are to increase by 24%, Nielsen//NetRatings, the leading provider of Internet research, reveals how the UK online population has been flocking to energy sites throughout February as the major suppliers began announcing large price increases in response to the rising wholesale price of gas.

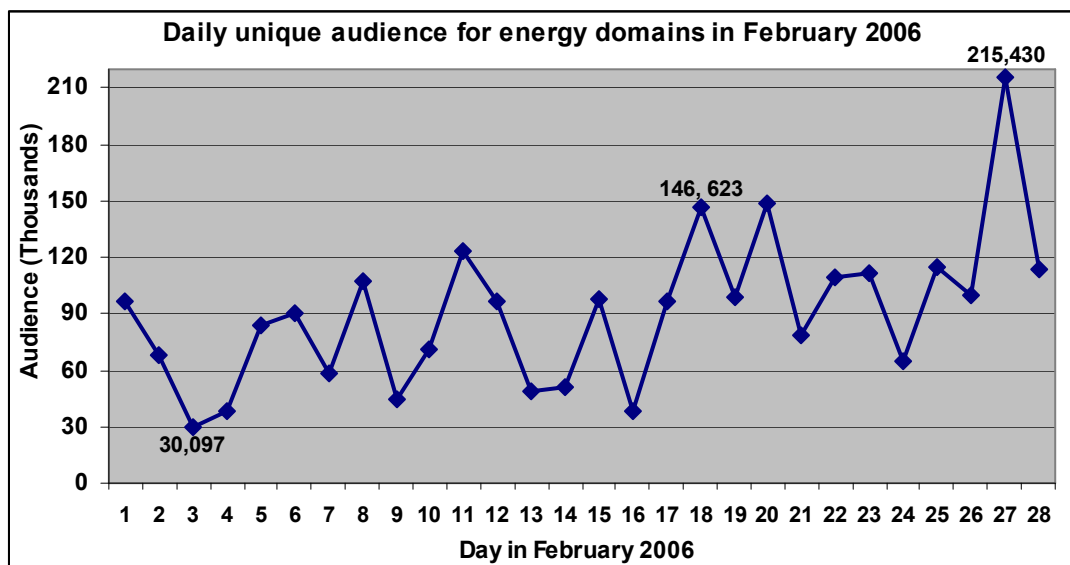
THE WARNING SIGNS

- British Gas experienced a 37% monthly growth in visitors from 437,000 in December 2005 to 597,000 in January 2006
- uSwitch experienced a 72% monthly growth in visitors across the same period (325,000 to 559,000 visitors)

Alex Burmaster, European Internet Analyst at Nielsen//NetRatings says "As concerns and publicity grew at the end of 2005 about the rising price of gas and the cost implications for consumers, online energy sites experienced a huge growth in visitors. Consumers raced online not only to find out more information from their own suppliers such as British Gas and Powergen, but also to compare prices from alternative suppliers through comparison sites such as uSwitch."

THE BRITISH GAS EFFECT

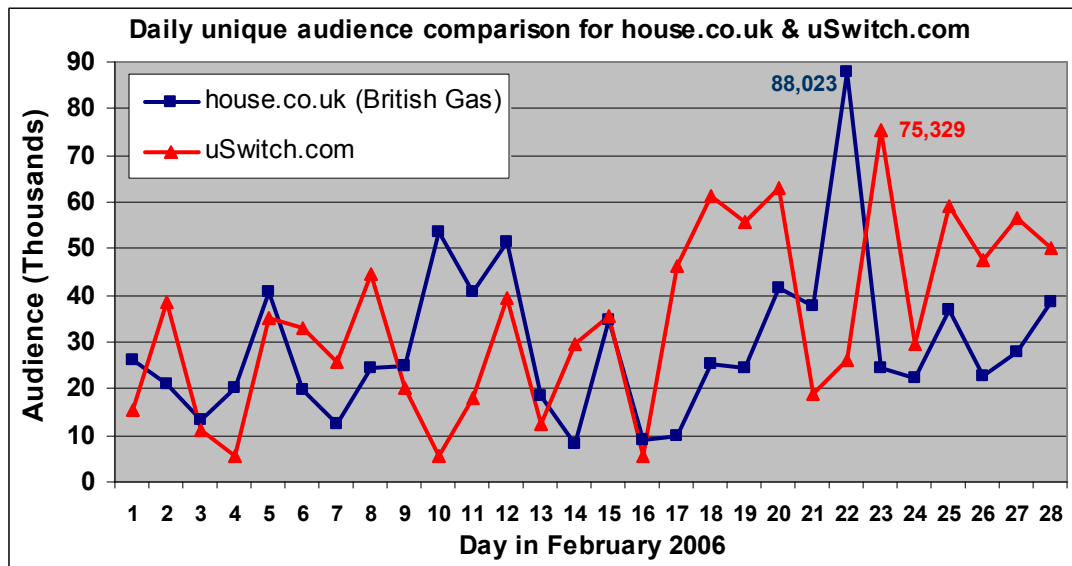
- Over 1.6 million people visited an energy website in February 2006



E.g. 215,430 people visited an energy website on the 27th February

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings UK NetView, home & work data, including Internet applications, February 2006

- The number of visitors to energy websites peaked at over 215,000 on the 27th February – the day before Powergen officially announced its price rise and two days before British Gas' increase came into effect
- The day after British Gas announced its price increase, the number of visitors to Powergen.co.uk peaked at 61,311
- Visitors to the house.co.uk domain (part of the British Gas brand) peaked at 88,023 on the 22nd February – five days after their price increase announcement
- Visitors to uSwitch.com peaked at 75,329 on the 23rd February – six days after British Gas' announced they would be increasing prices



E.g. 88,023 people visited the house.co.uk website on the 22nd February
 Source: Nielsen//NetRatings UK NetView, home & work data, including Internet applications, February 2006

“The gas price issue highlights the increasing importance of the web as an intrinsic part of life. For hundreds of thousands of people the Internet is the first port of call after an issue surfaces that could directly affect their lives.”

EDITOR'S NOTES

Please source all information to Nielsen//NetRatings.

Please note that ACNielsen and Nielsen are both separate, unrelated companies and should **NOT** be quoted when sourcing the attached data. If an abbreviated name is required then please use NetRatings

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About Nielsen//NetRatings

Nielsen//NetRatings is a global leader in Internet media and market research, providing companies with valuable insight into their businesses. Nielsen//NetRatings offers the industry's premier source of actionable Internet data and digital media research on Website usage, online advertising, consumer attitudes and competitive analysis.

For more information, please visit www.nielsen-netratings.com