

For Immediate Release:  
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## GOOGLE ACCOUNTS FOR NEARLY HALF OF ALL WEB SEARCHES, WHILE APPROXIMATELY ONE THIRD ARE CONDUCTED ON YAHOO! AND MSN COMBINED, ACCORDING TO NIELSEN//NETRATINGS

*Image Search Vertical Grows 91 Percent Year Over Year*

**NEW YORK– March 30, 2006** – Nielsen//NetRatings, a global leader in Internet media and market research, today reported that Google continues its lead in the search share competition, garnering 48.5 percent of all searches conducted in February 2006 (see Table 1). Yahoo! drew 22.5 percent of online searches, while MSN accounted for 10.7 percent of the search market. AOL and My Way Search rounded out the top five search providers with 6.6 and 2.7 percent of searches, respectively.

Search share among these five providers has remained relatively flat since January of this year, with all providers gaining or losing less than one percentage point.

**Table 1: Top Search Providers ranked by Search Share, February 2006 (U.S.)**

Search Provider	Jan-06 Share of Searches	Feb-06 Share of Searches	Feb. Searches YOY Growth
Google Search	48.2%	48.5%	46%
Yahoo! Search	22.2%	22.5%	49%
MSN Search	11.0%	10.7%	4%
AOL Search	6.5%	6.6%	NA*
My Way Search	2.7%	2.7%	145%

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings, March 2006

\* Note: Year over year growth in searches for AOL is not available due to a methodology change.

Overall the total number of searches increased 38 percent, from 3.8 billion in February 2005 to 5.3 billion in February 2006. This growth in the total number of searches is due in large part to an increased number of searches per person, particularly in the image search and shopping search categories. In February 2005, the average Web user conducted 33.2 searches; by this February, that number had climbed to 43.1 searches, increasing 30 percent year over year (see Table 2). In contrast, the number of unique searchers increased year over year by a modest six percent.

“While the number of unique searchers in the U.S. over the past year has remained relatively stable, we see search usage intensity increasing, not only in the number of searches done per person for general Web content, but also for searches initiated specifically for photos and graphics, as well as for comparison shopping information,” said Michael Lanz, vice president, search industry solutions, Nielsen//NetRatings.

“Hoping to get more relevant results, many consumers are going to search engines and clicking on the specific category of search they are interested in, such as ‘image’ or ‘shopping,’ instead of just making a search immediately in the default ‘Web’ search bar,” he continued.

**Table 2: Growth in Searches per Searcher, February 2006 (U.S.)**

Date	Searches per Searcher
Feb-05	33.2
Feb-06	43.1
Year Over Year Growth	30%

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings, March 2006



Among search verticals, image search enjoyed the strongest year over year growth in February, increasing 91 percent. Google enjoyed the lion's share of image search, with 71.9 percent, followed by Yahoo! with 19.1 percent and Ask.com with 3.5 percent (see Table 3). MSN and AOL rounded out the top five image search providers.

"Increasing broadband penetration, which allows users to download large image files easily and efficiently, and the rising popularity of social networking sites have contributed to the increase in image searches. In the upcoming year, we can expect to see an increase in video searches as video clips become as commonplace on the Internet as still images," said Lanz.

**Table 3: Top 5 Image Search Providers ranked by Share of Searches, February 2006 (U.S.)**

Provider/Vertical	Feb-05 Share of Searches	Feb-06 Share of Searches
Total Image Searches (000)	189,249	362,299
Google Image Search	76.3%	71.9%
Yahoo! Image Search	13.9%	19.1%
Ask.com Image Search	1.5%	3.5%
MSN Image Search	2.3%	2.3%
AOL Image Search	1.0%	1.4%

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings, March 2006

#### **About Nielsen//NetRatings**

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*Editor's Note: Please source all data to Nielsen//NetRatings.*

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