

For Immediate Release:
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MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF ALL ONLINE USERS LOG ON TO GOVERNMENT SITES, ACCORDING TO NIELSEN//NETRATINGS

The U.S. Government Ranks Among the Top Internet Parent Companies, Drawing Nearly 44.9 Million Surfers in February

NEW YORK — March 17, 2003 — Nielsen//NetRatings, the global standard for Internet audience measurement and analysis, reports that more than one-third of all Internet users visited a government site last month. In total, traffic to federal government Web sites jumped 26 percent from December 2002 to February 2003 to nearly 44.9 million surfers. Garnering more than 9 million additional unique visitors from home and work over this three-month period, government organizations are harnessing the power of the Internet to communicate with Americans.

“The U.S. federal government has built a strong presence on the Internet, and in recent months national and world events such as homeland security, Middle East issues, the shuttle tragedy and tax season have significantly increased the traffic to many of its departmental Web sites,” said Greg Bloom, senior Internet analyst, Nielsen//NetRatings.

According to Nielsen//NetRatings, the U.S. Department of the Treasury experienced 147 percent growth in traffic from December 2002 to February 2003, claiming the fastest growing U.S. government brand during this period and drawing nearly 11.8 million unique visitors. NASA garnered the second biggest increase in traffic, jumping 124 percent to more than 5.2 million surfers. Traffic to the U.S. Department of Education surged 93 percent, while both the Executive Branch and the Department of State attracted 80 percent more individuals from December to February.

“Government sites are an excellent source for information, and in most cases the resources these sites provide come free of charge,” added Bloom. “With no cost barriers, government sites provide an easy incentive for all Web users to utilize their online services and is a competitive advantage over paid or subscription-based Internet resources.”

Table 1. Top U.S. Federal Government Brands, Ranked by Percent Growth (U.S., Home and Work)

Brand	December 2002 Unique Audience (000)	February 2003 Unique Audience (000)	Percent Growth (%) 12/02-2/03
Total Unique Audience for All Federal Government Sites	35,668	44,885	26%
1. U.S. Dept. of the Treasury	4,763	11,787	147%
2. U.S. National Aeronautics & Space Administration	2,334	5,234	124%
3. U.S. Dept. of Education	2,252	4,345	93%
4. U.S. Executive Branch	1,486	2,680	80%
5. U.S. Dept. of State	1,179	2,117	80%
6. FirstGov	775	1,381	78%
7. U.S. Dept. of Labor	1,189	1,992	68%
8. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency	557	914	64%
9. U.S. Dept. of Energy	1,016	1,653	63%
10. U.S. National Archives & Records Administration	584	894	53%

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings, February 2003

Beyond the top ten fastest growing sites, several departmental brands experienced significant levels of traffic last month. In particular, the U.S. Department of Defense attracted 50 percent more visitors in February and was the second most visited government site after the Treasury Department, with nearly 8.3 million surfers. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, which oversees the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), was the third most visited brand last month with nearly 7.3 million visitors. Other notables include the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency and U.S. Department of Homeland Security, garnering 984,000 and 837,000 unique visitors, respectively.

Nielsen//NetRatings reports February 2003 data for the Top Sites by Parent Company and Top Brands. In addition, Nielsen//NetRatings reveals the Top Advertisers by Company for February 2003 along with the latest online Average Usage metrics for the month.

Nielsen//NetRatings Top 10 Web Sites by Parent Company and Top 10 Web Sites By Brand
Month of February 2003

Table 1. Top 10 Parent Companies, Combined Home & Work

Parent	Unique Audience (000)	Time Per Person (hh:mm:ss)
1. AOL Time Warner	89,898	7:06:24
2. Microsoft	89,187	2:17:02
3. Yahoo!	80,780	2:35:28
4. United States Government	44,885	0:27:19
5. Google	40,340	0:25:25
6. eBay	35,617	1:58:20
7. Amazon	35,345	0:17:24
8. RealNetworks	34,213	0:24:12
9. About-Primedia	33,512	0:14:40
10. Terra Lycos	31,967	0:20:11

Table 2. Top 10 Brands, Combined Home & Work

Brand	Unique Audience (000)	Time Per Person (hh:mm:ss)
1. Yahoo!	80,745	2:35:32
2. Microsoft	75,228	0:31:37
3. MSN	74,270	2:12:33
4. AOL	69,721	8:29:45
5. Google	40,310	0:25:26
6. Amazon	34,518	0:15:31
7. Real	34,182	0:24:09
8. eBay	34,109	1:56:32
9. Lycos Networks	30,116	0:21:03
10. About Network	23,275	0:13:07

Example: The data indicate that 32.0 million home and work Internet users visited at least one of the Terra Lycos - owned sites or launched a Terra Lycos-owned application during the month, and each person spent, on average, a total of 20 minutes and 11 seconds at one or more of their sites or applications.

A parent company is defined as a consolidation of multiple domains and URLs owned by a single entity. A brand is defined as a consolidation of multiple domains and URLs that has a consistent collection of branded content. Reach is a measure of the unduplicated audience that visits a property. The data are expressed as the percentage of the total universe of Internet users who logged onto the Internet at least once during the reporting period.

Nielsen//NetRatings AdRelevance Top 10 Advertisers

Month of February 2003

Top advertisers, ranked by impressions, are based on data from AdRelevance, Nielsen//NetRatings' advertising research service. An impression is counted as the number of times an ad is rendered for viewing.

Top 10 Advertisers by Company

Advertiser*	Impressions (000)
1. The Estee Lauder Companies Inc	3,472,486
2. Amazon.com, Inc.	3,239,163
3. NetFlix.com, Inc.	2,765,256
4. Classmates Online, Inc.	2,595,426
5. SBC Communications, Inc.	2,348,631
6. USA Interactive	2,078,961
7. AT&T Wireless Services, Inc.	1,557,273
8. X10 Wireless Technology, Inc.	1,401,316
9. 1-800-FLOWERS.COM, Inc.	1,333,219
10. Florists' Transworld Delivery	1,314,667

*Impressions reported exclude house ads, which are ads that run on an advertiser's own Web property.

Example: An estimated 1.3 billion Florists' Transworld Delivery advertisements were rendered for viewing during the surfing period.

Nielsen//NetRatings Average Internet Usage

Month of February 2003

Data below represent activity for the average Internet user during the designated monthly period.

	Home & Work, February	Home & Work, January	% Change from January
Number of Sessions/Visits per Month	48	52	-7.7
Number of Domains Visited per Month	77	82	-6.1
Web Page Views per Month	1,331	1,444	-7.8
Web Page Views per Surfing Visit	35	35	0
Time Spent per Month	46:52:37	50:25:06	-7.0
Time Spent During Web Visit	0:33:16	0:33:24	-0.4
Duration of a Web Page viewed	0:00:57	0:00:57	0
Active Digital Media Universe	131.3 million	133.6 million	-1.8
Current Digital Media Universe Estimate	180.8 million	179.9 million	+0.5

Note: The Nielsen//NetRatings audience measurement panels represent the universe of persons with access to the Internet via personal computer either in the home, or at the workplace from a non-shared personal computer. The "active" portion of the universe previously represented persons who actively generated Web-traffic, or URLs, through a Web browser. With the launch of Digital Media Universe (DMU) measurement in October 2002, the "active" portion of the universe now represents persons who actively used a computer connected to the Internet and either generated Web-traffic, or launched and brought into focus any computer application tracked by the Nielsen//NetRatings meter, or both. The new definition of Active Internet Universe is applied consistently across all audience measurement reports. This is true whether the view includes Web traffic only, Internet applications usage only, AOL proprietary browser channels only, or the combined DMU report which includes Web traffic, AOL Proprietary browser channels and Internet applications usage in combination. The impact of this change on the size of the Active Internet Universe is currently an approximate 10 percent increase versus the previous definition based on Web-only activity.

About Nielsen//NetRatings

Nielsen//NetRatings is the global standard for digital media measurement and analysis and is the industry's premier source for online advertising intelligence with its NetView, AdRelevance, @Plan and WebRF services. Covering 70 percent of the world's Internet usage, the Nielsen//NetRatings services offer syndicated Internet and digital media

ratings reports and custom-tailored data to help companies gain valuable insight into their business. For more information, please visit www.nielsen-netratings.com.

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

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