

# A Decade in Search

## 2000

- On March 10, the dot-com bubble peaks as the NASDAQ index hits its all time high of 5,048, followed over the next weeks by massive sell-offs of tech stocks. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dot-com\\_bubble](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dot-com_bubble)
- While search directories and engines such as Lycos, Altavista and Excite ruled the 90s, the dot-com bubble wipes these smaller engines off the map. Who stays in the game for the rest of the decade? Google, Yahoo, Microsoft, Ask and AOL. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_search\\_engine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_search_engine)
- After its initial launch in 1998, Google rises to prominence, launching its AdWords platform for advertisers and selling keywords for a flat CPM. <http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/pressrelease39.html>
- Google becomes the default worldwide search engine for Yahoo. <http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/pressrelease25.html>

## 2001

- Yahoo survives the dot-com bust, but on September 26 the stock price falls to \$4.06 – a far cry from the all-time high of \$118.75 on January 3, 2000. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahoo!>
- On October 8, Goto.com, Inc. renames itself Overture Services, Inc. GoTo's chief operating officer Jaynie Studenmund explains, "We also felt it was a sophisticated enough name, in case our products expand."<sup>[1]</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahoo!\\_Search\\_Marketing#cite\\_note-3](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahoo!_Search_Marketing#cite_note-3)
- What were the top searches for 2001? According to [Google](#): Nostradamus, CNN and The World Trade Center. <http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist/yearend.html>

## 2002

- In February, Google re-launches AdWords in favor of a new pricing model: cost-per-click, with an auction that factors in bid price *and* click-through rate. First position is no longer granted to the highest bidder, an innovation that takes Yahoo and Microsoft four years to adopt. Small businesses and online entrepreneurs find the platform easy to use, measurable and profitable. And entrepreneurial individuals are elated by the prospect of making money in their PJs. <http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/select.html>

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## 2002 CONTINUED

- In May, AOL announces a partnership with Google to deliver search-related ads, giving Google an early leg-up over Yahoo and Microsoft. In 2005, Google would go on to invest \$1 billion in AOL to continue their advertising partnership and acquire a five percent stake in the company. <http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/aol.html> and [http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/twaol\\_expanded.html](http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/twaol_expanded.html)
- What were the top searches for 2002? According to Google: Spiderman, Shakira and Winter Olympics. <http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist/yearend.html>

## 2003

- Yahoo acquires Overture in their first attempt to break away from Google search. <http://docs.yahoo.com/docs/pr/release1102.html>
- Google launches content-targeted advertising, AdSense. The service allows millions of sites to profit from ads matched to their content. <http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/advertising.html>
- What were the top searches for 2003? According to Google: Britney Spears (the Madonna kiss!), Harry Potter and the Matrix. <http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist/yearend.html>

## 2004

- Yahoo drops Google search and launches its own search engine. The platform sells keywords using a straight auction model, and competitor bids are visible in the user interface. Bid jamming continues through 2007, until Yahoo finally incorporates quality scoring into the platform. [http://news.cnet.com/2100-1024\\_3-5160710.html](http://news.cnet.com/2100-1024_3-5160710.html)  
<http://blog.searchenginewatch.com/070123-192338>
- In January, a search for *miserable failure* on Google brings up the official George W. Bush biography on the White House's website, drawing mass attention to a practice known as "Google bombing." [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google\\_bomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_bomb)
- In August, Google's IPO opens at \$85 a share – a pittance compared to the near \$600 a share it is now trading for. People worldwide kick themselves for not having a crystal ball. <http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/ipo.html>  
<http://www.google.com/finance?client=ob&q=NASDAQ:GOOG>

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## 2004 CONTINUED

- In February, a sophomore at Harvard named Mark Zuckerberg launches thefacebook. By September 2006, Facebook (yes, the name changed) opens up to everyone 13 and older with a valid email address. By 2009, there's no hiding embarrassing photos from your mom or boss.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>
- Chris Anderson coins the term "the long tail" in *Wired* magazine to describe the strategy of collectively selling a large amount of unique items in small quantities. His book, *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More*, elaborates on the concept, discussing the "unlimited shelf space" <sup>[2]</sup> of the Internet. Since 2004, it's been conservatively estimated that "long tail" has been used at least one hundred million times by industry executives, often to begin and end the same sentence. [http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html?pg=1&topic=tail&topic\\_set=](http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/12.10/tail.html?pg=1&topic=tail&topic_set=)
- What were the top searches for 2004? According to Google: Train-wreck female celebrities: Britney Spears (the 55 hour marriage!), Paris Hilton and Christina Aguilera.  
<http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist/yearend.html>

## 2005

- In January, Microsoft stops using search results from Yahoo and begins using their own technology. In 2006 AdCenter launches, and Microsoft rebrands MSN Search as Window Live Search (later just Live Search). At decade's end, it's a Bing World after all for Microsoft.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MSN\\_Search](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MSN_Search)
- In March, Google buys Urchin and renames the service Google Analytics. It is now a major competitor in the web analytics industry. Its biggest selling proposition? The price: free.  
<http://www.google.com/intl/en/press/pressrel/urchin.html>  
<http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2005/11/circle-of-analytics.html>
- The video sharing website YouTube launches in 2005. In 2006 Google purchases YouTube for \$1.65 billion, putting the video sharing site on the mainstream map. Google spends the next four years trying to convince advertisers that there's more to YouTube than videos of cats riding skateboards. Workplace productivity steadily declines over the rest of the decade.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube>  
[http://www.google.com/intl/en/press/pressrel/google\\_youtube.html](http://www.google.com/intl/en/press/pressrel/google_youtube.html)
- What were the top searches for 2005? Myspace, Wikipedia and iTunes. Wherefore art thou, Britney?  
<http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist/yearend.html>

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## 2006

- In July, Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary adds the word *google*:  
**Google** v. to use the Google search engine to obtain information about (as a person) on the World Wide Web  
[http://www.usatoday.com/news/offbeat/2006-07-06-new-words\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/offbeat/2006-07-06-new-words_x.htm)  
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/GOOGLE>
- In August, Google signs a three-year deal to power search on MySpace for \$900 million. By 2009 MySpace loses over 55 percent of its share of the social networking market.  
<http://www.techcrunch.com/2006/08/07/google-pegged-to-search-myspace/>
- <http://www.hitwise.com/us/press-center/press-releases/social-networking-sept-09/> “Crowd-sourcing” is coined by Jeff Howe in *Wired* magazine. It becomes a popular term for leveraging mass participation and collaboration online. <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.06/crowds.html>
- What were the top searches for 2006? According to Google: Bebo, MySpace and the World Cup. Despite international success, the social networking site Bebo never takes off in the U.S.  
<http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist/yearend.html>

## 2007

- In February, Yahoo launches their new search advertising platform, code-named Panama. The launch includes major changes: competitor bids are no longer visible and rank is determined by bid *and* quality. It appears Google was onto something in 2002.  
<http://yhoo.client.shareholder.com/press/ReleaseDetail.cfm?ReleaseID=226887>
- In March, Twitter gains industry buzz at the annual SXSW Festival, where usage tripled from 20,000 to 60,000 tweets a day. The industry marvels at this phenomenon and ponders (in 140 characters or less): Does Twitter really matter? <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter>
- In April, Google surpasses Microsoft as [the world's most-visited site](#) and purchases DoubleClick for \$3.1 billion. Not to be outdone, Microsoft buys aQuantive (parent company of Atlas, a major competitor to DoubleClick) for \$6 billion in May.  
<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/04/25/MNGELPF0DR1.DTL&feed=rss.news>  
<http://www.google.com/intl/en/press/pressrel/doubleclick.html>  
<http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/press/2007/may07/05-18advertising.mspx>

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## 2007 CONTINUED

- In May, Google launches Universal Search, replacing the traditional ten blue links with a mix of Image, News, Video and Shopping listings in a single set of results. This paves the way for Google's Real-Time Search Results in 2009. <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2007/05/universal-search-best-answer-is-still.html>
- On June 29, Apple releases the iPhone in the U.S. It is a digital game-changer, dramatically impacting user search behavior. Reportedly, by 2009 people are searching 50 times more on high-end mobile devices like the iPhone. Yes, you read that right: 50 times more. <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2007/01/09iphone.html>
- What were the top searches in 2007? According to Google: iPhone, Webkinz and TMZ (no doubt for Britney news). <http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist/yearend.html>

## 2008

- 2008, the year of the five-month long [Microsoft/Yahoo saga](http://www.cbsnews.com/2319-100_162-4072051.html): A made for TV movie complete with D.O.J. monopoly inquiries, shareholder battles and Hatfields-versus-McCoys-like feuding. [http://www.cbsnews.com/2319-100\\_162-4072051.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/2319-100_162-4072051.html)
- On February 3, after two years of speculation Microsoft makes an unsolicited offer to buy Yahoo for \$44.6 billion (\$31 a share). Eight days later, Yahoo rejects the offer, saying Microsoft undervalued its brand and assets. After two months of back-and-forth conversation, Microsoft gives Yahoo three weeks to agree on a buyout before it would take a hostile approach. Four days later, Yahoo announces it would run a limited test using Google's search engine instead of its own. Microsoft retaliates by helping the D.O.J. to block the deal. [http://www.cbsnews.com/2319-100\\_162-4072051.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/2319-100_162-4072051.html)
- On April 26 Microsoft's deadline for Yahoo to accept expires, and neither party says a word. One week later, Microsoft increases its bid to \$33 a share, but Yahoo says it will not accept less than \$37. Microsoft withdraws its offer, but chatter of other "MicroHoo" scenarios continues a few more weeks. [http://www.cbsnews.com/2319-100\\_162-4072051.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/2319-100_162-4072051.html)
- On June 12, Yahoo announces it has ended all talks with Microsoft, putting an end to the deal. [http://www.cbsnews.com/2319-100\\_162-4072051.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/2319-100_162-4072051.html)
- Cuil launches in July, promising to take on Google. The world is still waiting for the battle to begin. <http://www.cuil.com/info/blog/2008/07/28/cuil-launches-biggest-search-engine-on-the-web>



## 2008 CONTINUED

- Yahoo starts testing Rich Ads in Search (RAIS), allowing advertisers to run an image or a video on their trademark terms. <http://www.ysmblog.com/blog/2009/02/18/your-ads-richer/>
- Digital channels prove to be a major part of the presidential election. Obama's campaign uses the Internet as a campaigning and organizing tool. Both candidates launch effective paid search campaigns, and J.Crew is recognized for its innovative search strategy, capitalizing on Michelle Obama's appearances in J.Crew clothing.  
<http://www.subliminalpixels.com/2008/11/03/barack-obama-john-mccain-2008-presidential-election-search-social-marketing-analysis/>  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/17/business/media/17crew.html>
- What were the top searches for 2008? According to Google: Obama, Facebook and AT&T.  
<http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist/yearend.html>

## 2009

- In February, [comScore reports](http://blog.comscore.com/2009/04/twitter_traffic_explodesand_no.html) that U.S. visitors to Twitter approach 4 million, representing explosive growth in excess of 1,000 percent over the prior year.  
[http://blog.comscore.com/2009/04/twitter\\_traffic\\_explodesand\\_no.html](http://blog.comscore.com/2009/04/twitter_traffic_explodesand_no.html)
- In May, Wolfram Alpha launches. As the first "knowledge engine," it computes the answer to factual queries, rather than providing a list of search results. Need answers on the go? Wolfram Alpha now has an app for that.  
<http://blog.wolframalpha.com/2009/05/15/live-from-champaign/>  
<http://blog.wolframalpha.com/2009/12/10/wolframalpha-app-on-sale-for-the-holidays/>
- On June 1, Microsoft launches Bing, their rebranded search engine. Bing's new technology focuses on user experience and four key verticals: travel, health, shopping and local businesses. With a huge media push, Microsoft sets out to change people's search behavior. "Bing" has yet to be added to the dictionary, but the engine has caused Google to take notice.  
<http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/press/2009/may09/05-28NewSearchPR.mspx>
- In late June, Microsoft and Yahoo finalize a deal in which Yahoo Search would be powered by Microsoft's Bing technology. If the D.O.J. approves the deal, it will consolidate roughly 30 percent of the search market, creating the first viable competition for Google in some time.  
[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/business/companies/yahoo\\_inc/yahoo-microsoft-deal/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/business/companies/yahoo_inc/yahoo-microsoft-deal/index.html)



## 2009 CONTINUED

- In August, Publicis agrees to buy Microsoft's Razorfish for \$530 million. Publicis also agrees to a five-year deal that stipulates it will purchase advertising through Microsoft, which may prove helpful for Bing. <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE5780ZP20090809>
- On October 27, Bing announces Real-Time Search Results. It incorporates real-time tweets and releases Bing Twitter, a vertical search engine. Google and Yahoo also adopt Real-Time Search, raising the profile of Twitter and creating new hazards and opportunities for reputation management. <http://www.bing.com/community/blogs/search/archive/2009/10/21/bing-is-bringing-twitter-search-to-you.aspx>  
<http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2009/12/relevance-meets-real-time-web.html>  
<http://www.techcrunch.com/2009/10/27/yahoo-to-launch-real-time-search-too/>
- In November, Google acquires AdMob for \$750 million, promising to bring new innovation and competition to the mobile search market. Prognosticators rejoice: 2010 may finally be the year of mobile search. <http://www.google.com/press/admob/>
- In December, Google innovates with a number of releases: Google Caffeine, Goggles, Real-Time Search, Personalized Search and Nexus-One, their upcoming Smartphone that will run the Android mobile operating system.  
<http://mashable.com/2009/08/10/google-caffeine/>  
<http://www.google.com/mobile/goggles/#landmark>  
<http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2009/12/personalized-search-for-everyone.html>  
<http://www.google.com/phone>
- How have all of these changes affected search share? According to [comScore](#), Google's November market share remains steady at 65.6 percent, but Yahoo's share continues to fall. Bing's November market share is 10.3 percent, up from 8 percent in May. <http://www.businessinsider.com/bing-crushes-yahoo-again-in-november-2009-12>
- What were the top searches for 2009? According to Google: Twitter, Michael Jackson and Facebook. <http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist/yearend.html>

And now, the [top ten searches of the decade](#) (drum roll please): Facebook, Baidu, Myspace, World Cup, Wikipedia, Britney Spears, Harry Potter, Shakira, Lord of The Rings and Barack Obama.

<http://websearch.about.com/od/enginesanddirectories/tp/top-web-searches-of-the-decade.htm>