

# The battle to be the fastest fetcher on the Web

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A decade ago, Netscape and Microsoft fought the browser wars. Now it's Web War II as three well-known technology names -- Google, Yahoo and, again, Microsoft -- fight out the battle of the search engines.

The battle begins as Internet search has gone mainstream, becoming the second most popular online activity after e-mail. In January, 133 million Americans conducted 5 billion searches, according to ComScore qSearch, which measures Internet usage. The popularity of search has created a billion-dollar, highly competitive industry with rivals racing to outdo each other through more results, greater precision and new features, making it easier than ever for Web surfers to find what they're looking for.

Google, like Netscape a decade ago, came out of nowhere to become the leader in online search just a few years after its founding in 1998. Yahoo, initially known as a directory of Web sites, has edged into keyword searching as well.

Microsoft once again has come to the party late, but MSN has pumped more than \$100 million into search technology. "Search is one of Microsoft's top priorities," a Microsoft spokeswoman said.

[Details and comparisons here](#) [2].

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