

Firefox at Critical Mass?

By *srlinuxx*

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The year 2005 was a banner year for open source Web browser Firefox, a fact underscored by recent market share numbers released by site tracker NetApplications.

The company saw the number of Firefox users inch tantalizingly close to the 10 percent figure (9.57 percent, to be exact) in December 2005, a nearly 1 percent jump from November 2005.

Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE) still dominates the browser world at roughly 85 percent of the market. But that figure is a drop from NetApplication's November 2005 statistics, which put IE at 86 percent of the market.

Mac-based Safari inched up from 2.78 percent in November 2005 to 3.07 percent the next month; Opera experienced a negligible gain from .53 percent to .55 percent in the same time frame. Netscape dropped from 1.25 percent of the market to 1.24. All other browsers collectively saw a gain from .43 percent to .53 percent.

The numbers show that, while there are a number of browsers available today for end users, it's likely going to come down to a two-horse race between IE and Firefox.

"Firefox is very close to hitting a critical mass of 10 percent, which could mean a more rapid adoption rate," Vince Vizzaccaro, NetApplications executive vice president of marketing and strategic relationships, said in a statement.

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