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Friday, June 5, 1998 Published at 20:54 GMT 21:54 UK

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Business

Yahoo! still first portal call



Yang: Room for Yet Another Hierarchical Officious Oracle

As Microsoft and Netscape begin a battle on a new front, to change the surfing habits of the Web audience, the four-year-old pioneer of portal sites, Yahoo!, is close to hitting 100 million page views a day.

Its co-founder and Chief Yahoo!, Jerry Yang, seems cool in the face of the white heat of competition in the sector.



[Jerry Yang talks about portals and other buzz words](#)

"It feels like every year there's something new that comes up. I think the way portals are described is probably more of a convenience of trying to group all of us together," he told News online in an interview in San Francisco this week.

"People tend to think of this as a point of aggregation, where we tend to think of it as way of a building a network of different sites and different ways in which people can approach different content without having to

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go through one single point.

"I think maybe next year they'll call it something different because we've gone through a few iterations, first was search engines and now portals and who knows what will be next."

From push to portals

If "push" was the buzzword of 1997 - the delivery of content to the user through everything from e-mail to channels - the concept of developing one-stop shops of sites where Internet users will want to hang around, portals to everything you need on the Web, is the big idea of 1998.

Netscape will launch Netcenter 2.0 this month with the target of making it the fastest and number one portal by 2000. Microsoft has upgraded Start.com, offering free e-mail with it since the acquisition of Hotmail. Excite announced this week it was following Yahoo with a Chinese-language portal site.

There has also been some rapid repositioning, including the ending of a Yahoo! guide on Netscape's site and Yahoo! choosing a stripped-down search-engine from Inktomi to replace that of AltaVista, which itself is developing its portal potential with free e-mail and more content.

"We both had a great two-year relationship", says Yang about the AltaVista linkup, "Now I think the way the world is shaping up is a little bit different, they have a little bit more of a Yahoo-like strategy, whereas Inktomi is much more of a pure provider."

Yahoo! tops the charts

Whatever the future for portals, Yahoo! is currently in rude health - averaging 95 million page views a day in March and reporting a 200 per cent increase in revenues in April over the quarter of a year ago. Its statistics show it as continuing to have the largest audience of any web site or online service with more than 30 million unique

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users in March.

There are regional Yahoos in the US and international versions for Europe and Asia. My Yahoo! offers a personalised service and there are popular chat forums, business, classified and news sections.

And Jerry Yang sees Yahoo! gaining new audiences as television and radio meet the Web in a coming convergence: " As more appliances become Web-enabled, we hope we'll be able to develop programing or packaging or aggregation of content for those users on those different platforms as well," he says.

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