

Top 50 UK online brands: Tesco and BT oust dotcom darlings

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Emma Barnett

Companies which have a presence in the real world, such as Tesco and BT, have become the UK's most popular brands online, replacing the dotcom wonders of the early noughties, new research has shown.

The list of the top 50 UK web brands, which has been compiled by Nielsen and UKOM, shows that dotcom brands which were the most popular in 2004, such as Freeserve (formerly a UK Internet Service Provider), Lycos (search engine and web portal) and Kelkoo (price comparison site), have all dropped out of the top 50 list and been replaced by more traditional brands such as Tesco or Marks and Spencer.

However, a web-only brand, Google, has topped the list which shows the company websites that had the most UK visitors in January 2011, compared to January 2004.

But the rest of the top 10 is mostly made up of brands which have a real-world presence, such as Amazon and eBay, whose respective businesses rely upon people buying and sending goods offline.

A Nielsen spokesman said: "The online world is increasingly reflecting the offline world, with the web's 50 most-popular brands consisting more than ever of businesses established in the 'real world' and sites serving the interaction between 'real people'...35 of the web's top 50 brands are accounted for by social media and traditional businesses, up from 19 in 2004."

UKOM general manager James Smythe added: "Over the last seven years, we see two broad developments: first, huge growth in the use of sites built on social content, where we mostly find contributions from people we trust; and second, websites with a high-street or 'real-world' presence translating the

strength of their offline brands into online audiences.”

“In January 2004, only one web brand among the Top 50 - Friends Reunited – was powered by social media. Now there are 10, including sites like YouTube, Wikipedia and Tripadvisor [and Facebook].

“Meanwhile, seven years ago, only 18 of the top 50 sites had an established offline presence, such as Argos and the BBC; this has now increased to 25. The web has always made it easier for people to feed their fundamental desire to socialise, but the critical element of trust in social online environments has now become mainstream. Likewise, traditional brands have successfully harnessed the trust and confidence consumers have had with their established businesses offline, by migrating them to their sites on the web.”

In January 2004, only nine media companies featured in the top 50 list, and now that number has risen to 16 and includes the likes of Sky, ITV and The Telegraph.

However, while the profile of the businesses accounting for most of the top 50 most popular brands has changed, the top 10 has remained largely stable in the last few years, with seven brands having all remained in the top 10. There are: MSN, Microsoft, Google, Yahoo, BBC, eBay and Amazon. The three new entrants are Facebook, YouTube and Wikipedia.

Google has held the top spot since 2006, attracting more than 35 million unique UK users every month. In Jan 2004, the number one position was held by MSN with less than half Google’s current number of monthly visitors (17 million). Today, a site with this level of users would barely make the Top 10, such has been the growth in online traffic.

The top 20 are below:

Rank	January 2011	January 2004
1	Google	MSN
2	MSN/Windows Live/Bing	Microsoft
3	Facebook	Google
4	Yahoo!	Yahoo!
5	BBC	BBC
6	Microsoft	eBay
7	Amazon	Freeserve
8	YouTube	Amazon
9	eBay	AOL
10	Wikipedia	Ask Jeeves

11	Apple	Real
12	Ask Search Network	BT Openworld
13	Argos	Apple
14	Associated Newspapers	Kelkoo
15	Sky Portal	Multimap.com
16	Blogger	Tiscali
17	Tesco	Tesco
18	AOL Media Network	Lycos Network
19	Paypal	NTL World

20 Glam Media Macromedia
