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Nielsen NetRatings to change the way web audiences are measured

Time spent on a site more important than page views

by Amy-Mae Elliott published on 10 July 2007

Nielsen NetRatings, a major player in internet market research has announced today that it has added both "Total Minutes" and "Total Sessions" metrics to NetView, its service that measures internet audiences.

"'Total Minutes' is the best engagement metric in this initial stage of Web 2.0 development, not only because it ensures fair measurement of Web sites using RIA and streaming media, but also of Web environments that have never been well-served by the page view, such as online gaming and internet applications", said Scott Ross, director, product marketing for the NetView service.

Although NetView has always reported average time per person and average number of sessions, the new measurements are being made more important in the overall picture and boast to give a better perspective of "engagement" across websites.

The problem is that modern Web 2.0 sites use RIA technologies like AJAX which means that content refreshes without reloading entire pages whilst video streaming messes the figures up even further.

So, if you're only measuring these kind of sites on a page view basis, their stats won't reflect the true picture of how popular the site is.

Because of this, Nielsen NetRatings are claiming that the total minutes is a fairer and more accurate way of looking at web user's behaviour as time is common denominator that does not depend on site design.

