

## **Hispanic Usage Accelerates, Half Of Users Prefer Spanish Content**

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Like the population at large, Hispanic Americans are beginning to mirror the heavy Internet usage patterns of average online users, a yearlong analysis released Wednesday by comScore Media Metrix has found.

The report is noteworthy because the growth has occurred despite a critical language barrier that still exists for many English-oriented Web publishers. The study finds that 49% of the 12.5 million U.S. Hispanic Internet users either prefer to speak Spanish only, or a mix of Spanish and English. In other words, while English-language content can and does reach a large number of Hispanics, to fully reach U.S. Hispanics online, marketers must also provide relevant Spanish-language content.

Nonetheless, the report finds that the size of the U.S. Hispanic online population has grown dramatically, as well as the amount of time and number of Web pages viewed versus a year ago. Specifically, Hispanic Internet users spent an average of 26.5 hours online in September 2003, up 24 percent versus 21.4 hours in October 2002.

Growth in content consumption was even more pronounced, with the average U.S. Hispanic user visiting 2,791 pages in September - an increase of 30 percent versus last year.

"These trends indicate that the Internet is playing an increasingly important role in Hispanics' lives," said Richard Israel, vice president of comScore Hispanic Solutions. "Many are developing online preferences and loyalties that will last well into the future. As with any major dislocation in consumer behavior, it's the nimble marketer that will benefit. Smart marketers seeking to engage Hispanics are already identifying the destinations and content with which these consumers are most engaged."

With 9.7 million unique visitors, AOL Time Warner reached 76 percent of all U.S. Hispanic Internet users in September, while Yahoo! and MSN-Microsoft had 9.6 and 9.4 million unique visitors. Terra Lycos, which publishes a large amount of content in Spanish, had 5.4 million unique visitors. Terra Lycos also has a significantly higher reach among Hispanics than in the general market, with 43 percent of the U.S. Hispanic online population visiting Terra Lycos in September compared to 34 percent of the total U.S. Internet population.

With 1.5 million unique visitors, Terra Networks is the number one Spanish-language site among Hispanic Americans. Moreover, the average amount of time spent by visitors to Terra Networks sites has grown by 50 percent in the past 12 months. At a close second, Yahoo! Spanish Language Sites garnered 1.4 million U.S. Hispanic visitors, representing growth of 14 percent in the 12-month period.

Source: MediaPost Communications