

newsworthy trends

Michael Jackson Tops Internet Giant's Searches For 2009



(NAPSA)—The King of Pop's untimely passing dominated searches on Yahoo! in 2009.

Millions of people visit the Internet portal every year, and the company analyzes the aggregate data to release an annual review of top searches and trends. In a year distinguished by a historic presidency, a teetering economy and shocking exits, the Yahoo! Year in Review distilled eight themes that defined 2009.

News of Jackson's sudden death—just weeks before his comeback tour “This Is It”—brought unprecedented Web traffic to the site's homepage. Within a matter of hours, searches about the singer's emergency ambulance trip to UCLA Medical Center quickly transitioned to questions, including “Is Michael Jackson dead?”

“This was the same day that [television actress] Farrah Fawcett died,” explained Vera Chan, senior editor and Web trend analyst for Yahoo!. “People were still digesting that when the reports came that Michael Jackson was in the hospital. Even in our real-time world, people barely had time to register the news before the announcement came that he was dead.”

Yahoo!'s Top 10 list had been dominated by Britney Spears for the past four years, but she dropped from her No. 1 position to No. 4, behind the book and film series “Twilight,” World Wrestling Entertainment and rising actress Megan Fox. In addition to the Top 10, the Yahoo! Year in Review also looked at the most-searched deaths, people who rose to sudden fame in 2009 and market success stories. Among the findings:

• **Farewells:** Deaths of well-known personalities often trigger searches into the circumstances of their passing, kin, upcoming

memorials and biographies. Notably, celebrities David Carradine, Farrah Fawcett and Patrick Swayze represented successive pop culture decades.

• **Sudden Fame:** As information travels at hyperspeed, the circuit of fame, fortune, downfall and redemption can be traversed in days. Among those who shot to global attention: Octuplet mother Nadya Suleman, reality-TV singer Susan Boyle and South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford.

• **No. 44:** In 2008, Barack Obama made the Top 10 list. His numbers slipped, but Obama remained the most-searched politician and, given the historic nature of his presidency, commanded his own category. “Whatever your political affiliation, Obama indisputably established many firsts and made a significant global impact in his first year in office,” said Chan.

As for what to make of the president's fall from the Top 10 list, Chan cautioned against seeing searches as a sign of popularity. “People go to the Web to get more information. They're curious, they're upset, they're celebrating—the only thing a search shows is that they're motivated.” Furthermore, not only was Obama headline news nearly every day, she said, but people also moved on from the “man to the agenda, from the campaign to the issues.”

The Yahoo! Year in Review, which launched December 1, will continue to post blogs looking at other Top 10 lists (such as politicians and athletes), as well as the story behind the biggest searches of 2009. To find out more about the Yahoo! 2009 Year In Review, go to <http://yearinreview.yahoo.com> or search for “2009 Year in Review” on yahoo.com.