Google and Yahoo remain on the top of the U.S. web search market

At present day Google Inc. holds the leading position on the U.S. Web search market. With the gain of 0.4 percent reached in December, its share of the market has increased to 47.4 percent. Yahoo Inc. follows Google in second position.

Saddam's co-defendant decapitated while being hanged

Saddam Hussein's half brother and former chief of the Iraqi secret police, Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, along with the former chief judge of the revolutionary court, Awad Hamad al-Bandar were hanged today in Baghdad at approximately 3:00 a.m. local time for their role in the 1982 killing of 148 Shiite Muslims in the village of Dujail. Ibrahim al-Tikriti's head got separated from his body during the execution.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Lieutenant-General Dan Halutz, the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army, resigns while inquiries into the performance of the Israel Defence Forces in the action against Hezbollah continue.
- Bomb attacks at Mustansiriya University in Baghdad kill at least 70 people with over 100 people killed in Baghdad as a whole.
- The world's first genetically modified chickens have been bred by scientists in Edinburgh. The birds supposedly lay eggs that can help fight cancer.

Top Stories

- String of church fires in Greenville, NC cause concern

Numerous city, state, and federal agencies are involved in the investigation of a recent string of church fires this past weekend in the city of Greenville, North Carolina, U.S.A.

- Bollywood stars Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan engaged

Indian actors Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai confirmed that they were engaged in Mumbai last night, ending months of media speculation about the relationship between the two. The wedding is reportedly scheduled to be held at the Hyatt around March this year.

Featured story

- Orange County Sheriff's Office still investigating into Tigger hit

Investigation is still underway by the Orange County Sheriff's Office into the hit Tigger unleashed on a tourist at Walt Disney World on January 6.

The status of Walt Disney World's separate investigation is unknown.

Evidence from the fire scenes have been sent to the state crime lab for analysis.

A US$10,000 reward is being offered for information leading to an arrest of the perpetrators of this crime.

The Walt Disney Company (Canada) Ltd. has not replied to Wikinews' multiple requests for comment. The Monaco family has not talked to the press since an exclusive CBS The Early Show appearance a week ago Monday. They had originally talked to a FOX News affiliated channel.

Two Sundays prior, video broke internationally of Disney employee Michael J. Fedelem as Tigger, hitting teen Jerry Monaco Jr. in the head. The New Hampshire tourist and his father both claim the hit was unprovoked. They claimed Jerry Jr. needed medical attention.
and prescription medicine that
night. In contrast, most Internet
pundits critical of the video have
suggested that the hit was
relatively weak. Fedelem himself
claims the swat was indeed
provoked, after the Monaco Jr was
pulling on his costume, trying to
suffocate him.

The Teamsters Union Local 385
website appears to suggest that
not all character cast members are
unionized. Fedelem is known to be
unionized, as he is mentioned on
the website regarding a separate
matter.

Wikinews will continue to follow
this story as it develops.

Hit becomes punchline
Tim MacDonald of The News and
Tribune joked that, "in addition to
her Majority Whip", new US
Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi
"might want to consider hiring the
DisneyWorld employee in the
Tigger costume to keep her
Democrats in line."

Meanwhile, a British columnist
riffed on how Tigger let the boy off
lightly. Brian Reade commented
"most Brits feel that, simply on the
grounds he's called Junior, it's a
shame the guy in the Tigger
costume wasn't called Charles
Manson."

A columnist suggested that "Tigger
does more parenting before 9 a.m.
than some parents do their entire
lives", in an article advocating
discipline. Doug Powers continued
that, "if the boy was taken to the
hospital for that, Lord help him if
he's ever in a pillow fight. The poor
lad would be in traction for a
month."

Bravitude climbing fast on
Google
You won't find the word
"Bravitude" in any French
dictionary yet. Bravitude is a
neologism used by Ségolène Royal,
the French socialist presidential
candidate. She said it during a
visit to the Great Wall of China,
and the term caused a media buzz
in France. It also provoked ironic
reactions from Nicolas Sarkozy,
who has been nominated Sunday
by President Chirac's party UMP as
their candidate for the presidency.
According to Royal's entourage, it
was meant to express something
more than just simple bravery (in
French: bravoure), a kind of
fullness of bravery.

Some neologisms need months,
often years, to reach an acceptable
level of recognition to get included
in a conventional dictionary. This is
often based on the usage in
newspapers etc. Bravitude on
Google had only, the day before its
first occurrence on French TV, a
mere 110 hits.

Bravitude was then already used
since 2005 on some blogs and by
fans of a quite unknown role-
playing game. On Tuesday last
week, bravitude could be found in
200,000 different pages and in
less than one week, had reached
the one million mark. This
neologism is this Tuesday in a slow
decline process around 900,000
hits on Google, probably due to
those web sites who hide their
oldest pages while Google robots
scan them.

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December, its share of the market
has increased to 47.4 percent.
Yahoo Inc. follows Google in
second position - as stated by a
Monday survey, it has also ranked
higher.

According to comScore Networks
Inc., a firm dealing with Web
Audience measurement, Microsoft
Corp. is in third place. However, its
share decreased 0.5 percent to
10.5 percent of Web searches
performed by American users. The
slight decline has also been
suffered by Ask.com's share - it
diminished by 0.1 percent to reach
5.4 percent.

The United States has been named
by the comScore Networks Inc. the
largest Internet market in the
world. Google's share of the U.S.
Web search market has
continuously grown during the
recent period of over a year. As for
Yahoo, its share of the market
became 0.3 percent higher, having
reached 28.5 percent in December
compared to November, as marked
by the survey.

U.S. Web users carried 6.7 billion
searches in December - that
means from November the overall
number of searches increased by 1
percent. Since December, 2005 the
number of U.S. Web searches has
become 30 percent higher - 3.2
billion searches were conducted by
web users on Google sites and 1.9
billion searches on Yahoo.

New Zealand's threatened
species list updated
The publication titled New Zealand
Threat Classification System list
was updated today and replaces
the first edition done in October,
2002.

In the new publication the New
Zealand Department of
Conservation updates the
classification of 5,819 plants and
animals native to New Zealand.
Around half of those 5,819 plants
and animals are listed as
threatened and the rest require more data to determine if they are threatened. 44 of those have had a significant change in their status, this is mainly thought to be because of more data available on their species.

The new list will be used to help the threatened plants and animals in the future and prioritise which are the most in danger.

Honourable Chris Carter, minister of conservation, said: "While New Zealand has shown the world that we are world leaders in habitat restoration and pest eradication, we must not become complacent. Human-induced threats and the introduction of predators and pests continue to plague our native species."

The list is used by many people who want to help conserve New Zealand's wildlife, and help reduce the risk of extinction to any of New Zealand's native species of animals and plants.

Hon Carter said: "This list is an important tool used to guide the Department of Conservation and other organisations which focus on species conservation."

**Hydrofoil collides with cargo ship near Sicily**

A hydrofoil and a cargo ship have entered into collision this evening, at around 18:15 Italian local time (17:15 UTC) near the harbor of Messina, Sicily, Italy.

The hydrofoil, named "Segesta jet", was doing a regular passenger service from Reggio Calabria to Messina, carrying 151 passengers and 6 crew members.

The cargo ship is reported to be the "Susan Borchard", registered in Antigua and Barbuda.

The number of people dead or injured is not currently established, but during the night the number of fatalities rose to 4.

**Today in History**

1893 - The Citizens' Committee of Public Safety led by Lorrin A. Thurston overthrew the government of Queen Liliʻuokalani of the Kingdom of Hawaii.

1929 - Popeye the Sailor, a cartoon character created by E. C. Segar, first appeared in newspaper comic strips.

1946 - The United Nations Security Council held its first meeting at Church House in London.

1977 - Convicted murderer Gary Gilmore was executed by a firing squad in Utah, ending a four-year moratorium on the death penalty in the United States.

1995 - The Great Hanshin Earthquake struck near Kobe, Japan, killing over 6,000 people and causing over ten trillion yen in damage.

**Quote of the Day**

To me, literature is a calling, even a kind of salvation. It connects me with an enterprise that is over 2,000 years old. What do we have from the past? Art and thought. That's what lasts. That's what continues to feed people and give them an idea of something better. A better state of one's feelings or simply the idea of a silence in one's self that allows one to think or to feel. Which to me is the same.

~ Susan Sontag

**Word of the Day**

catharsis; n

1. A release of emotional tension after an overwhelming vicarious experience.