**The fall of Yahoo!**

What does it take for one of the most popular search engines of all time, a multi billion dollar company to sink to a point of such sheer desperation that it had to be sold at a value far lesser than what it was once worth? Well, let's delve into that shall we?

Yahoo! might not have earned the cult status that Google did, I mean, you'd never hear anyone say “Just Yahoo! it”, nonetheless, it was one of the biggest Internet companies in the world with nearly 650 million unique users visiting their website every month. Not too long ago, it overtook Google with a 79% profit on the revenue earned making it the highest among all Fortune 500 companies.

Like all the game changing companies out there Yahoo also started as a time pass experiment for two Standford University students, (It's always one of them isn't it?) Jerry Yang and David Filo. In 1994 they created a website called “Jerry and David's guide to the world wide web” which was basically a directory that listed most of the websites on the Internet. After receiving a million hits they renamed the website to “Yahoo!” just because they liked the word and later decided it stood for “Yet Another Hierarchical Officious Oracle”, you know, just so they could make sense of it. A few high profile acquisitions and skyrocketing of stocks later they realized they had struck gold. And so the glory days began.

Then what went so horribly wrong? The epilogue for the long sad story of Yahoo! is finally being written. Most people blame it's “nice guy” founders. And that doesn't sell in our cut throat world. Unlike their competitors the duo took fewer risks. They passed up the offer to buy Google in 2002 (that's right!) and again Facebook in 2006. At the time these acquisitions looked like risky uneconomical moves. That’s the whole point. Web companies need the unique power of founders to do unpopular things. Larry Page advocated for Google to buy the money-losing video sharing site YouTube in 2006; Zuckerberg made what seemed like an outrageously overpriced bet on the photo sharing application Instagram in 2012. Well, we all know how they turned out! This is how tech companies survive—the ability to take risks. After Jerry Yang took over as CEO in 2007 he was either too nice or too unwilling to take risks. He could have let go of a great deal of employees and invested that money in technology and the smart phone revolution raging at the time. Although his biggest slip in decisions was probably when he declined a major lifeline; Microsoft made a bid to purchase Yahoo! for $45 billion in 2008 in an attempt to compete with Google. The founders believed that it was worth far more than what Microsoft was offering. Considering that they eventually sold to American telecommunications company Verizon for a mere $4.8 billion(Life, huh?), it's safe to say that, that was a pretty boneheaded move. But you can't really blame them either for having faith in the company they toiled so hard to build. So the inevitable happened and Yahoo!'s financial and stock values began to decline.

In a final attempt to stop their plummet to rock bottom Yahoo! Hired Google executive Marrisa Mayer as CEO in 2012 to turn things around. After a 4 year reign she failed to do so. Experts say she could have made Yahoo! a real player in social media but decided to invest in sites like Tumblr and Flickr instead which produced no revenue, mostly because Yahoo! at this point couldn't produce an environment for startups to thrive. Many such unsuccessful moves later, everyone gave up on Mayer as well. And that's how it all ended the way it has and all we can do is mourn the loss and hope that Verizon is not too cruel. Fingers Crossed!

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