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Fascinating Number: Google Is Now 40% Of The Internet

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Opinion

⏱ **This article is more than 6 years old.**

It's obviously fairly difficult to work out exactly how much of the internet and the traffic across it any one company is responsible for. We can't just look at who is paying for traffic as there are so many people with their own fibre infrastructures and thus that traffic doesn't come out into the open marketplace. We also cannot just tot up the basic services on offer for there's a large amount of traffic that's nothing at all to do with our behaviour as consumers. In the case of Google , as an example, we've no idea how much of the traffic is of their robots actually scouring the web for example.

But sometime we do get to have a good look at the real levels of traffic. And from one of those such looks we can now, reasonably safely, claim that Google is in fact 40% of all the internet's traffic. For yesterday afternoon, around the close of play for the working day California time, the entirety of Google's services went offline. Only for a few minutes but offline they all went. Which led to this graph being registered by GoSquared, a real time analytics company:

That's a 40% drop as all of those services go offline and then a 50% bounce as they come back on and everyone is able to catch up with what they were doing.

Quite what happened to knock Google out entirely isn't known as yet. It's something we may or may not find out too. But my favourite suggestions are here. One is that someone typed "Google" into Google which, as everyone knows, will break the internet (this makes more sense if you watch UK TV). The other is that the GooglePlex finally achieved sentience yesterday afternoon. My own rather weaker one is that the the computers decided to join the Friday afternoon beer bash for the first time.

Actually, there are two impressive and fascinating numbers here. The first is that Google does seem to be, in all its manifestations and forms, 40% of all internet traffic. The other is that while going down in its entirety wasn't a particularly great advertisement for the firm, bringing it all back up in only 11 minutes was a great advertisement for them. After all, screw ups and mistakes happen it's how quickly and effectively one cleans up afterwards that is the real test.

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Update: Google has been in touch:

> "To clarify, that 11 minutes was came from the posting times of each of the updates on the Dashboard, which is different than the actual incident time. The dashboard clearly states "Between 15:51 and 15:52 PDT, 50% to 70% of requests to Google received errors; service was mostly restored one minute later, and entirely restored after 4 minutes.""

So far they've been unwilling to explain quite why it all happened....

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I'm a Fellow at the Adam Smith Institute in London, a writer here and there on this and that and strangely, one of the global experts on the metal scandium, one of the... **Read More**