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Michael's Jackson's death sent search engine traffic through the roof

## [Michael Jackson's Death Sends Search Engine Traffic Through the Roof](#)

*The news has brought a massive traffic spike on all three major search engines*

There is no doubt Michael's Jackson's death was a worldwide event, and the sheer number of people looking for information about the news or the pop superstar exceeded many previous records. This was apparent yesterday, as many sites and services [showed the strains](#) of the doubling or tripling in traffic. News sites were affected, Twitter [was affected](#), and even the major search engine showed signs of stress. Now, as things settled down, the teams of engineers at Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft shared some information about the spikes in traffic and what they did to handle it.

For Google, the searches began to rise at 2 p.m., then saw a massive spike at 3 p.m., before settling down at 8 p.m. In fact, the spike was so great, that Google thought it was an automated attack, so any search for the pop icon on Google News was greeted with a malware warning. "The spike in searches related to Michael Jackson was so big that Google News initially mistook it for an automated attack. As a result, for about 25 minutes yesterday, when some people searched Google News they saw a 'We're sorry' page before finding the articles they were looking for," the official [Google blog](#) said.

Yahoo! also saw a huge traffic spike and, in fact, the front-page story, "Michael Jackson rushed to hospital," saw 800,000 clicks in the first ten minutes, setting a record for the Yahoo! homepage, while the news that the pop star had passed away saw 560,000 clicks in ten minutes. Yahoo! News also set an all-time record for the company, with 16.4 million unique visitors, the highest recorded traffic since the last presidential elections in the US, which saw 15.1 million. Other Yahoo! properties, like Yahoo! Music and Flickr, also saw record traffic.

As expected, Microsoft's new search engine also experienced an increased traffic, though there is no public data available as of now. However, Microsoft engineers working on Bing noted that they had to manually adjust the search results to provide relevant information, something they do on very rare occasions for major news events, when the automated algorithm is providing less than relevant results.