

# Web Browser & Operating Systems Trends

June 2010

By:  
**Anne Louise Currie**  
Web Quality Assurance Specialist



VAULT Solutions Inc.  
55 Yonge Street  
Suite 1210  
Toronto, ON  
M5E 1J4  
416.361.9944

[vaultsolutions.com](http://vaultsolutions.com)

# Operating Systems & Web Browser Trends<sup>1</sup>

June 2010

## Operating Systems

### Summary

The Windows operating system is still, by far, the most popular operating system with approximately 87% of the market. Mac and Linux come in a distant second and third respectively. However, Windows' share of the operating system market was trending down slightly for most of 2009. With the launch of Windows 7 in October 2009, that is no longer the case. To date in 2010, there has not been a significant shift in the relative market shares of Windows/Mac/Linux, however Windows 7 has been gaining market share and Apple continues to generate both attention and sales for their iPhone and newly launched iPad.

### Windows

#### Windows 7, Vista, and Windows XP

With the launch of Microsoft's Windows 7 in October 2009, there have been significant shifts in usage between the 3 major Windows operating systems. In September 2009 the usage of Windows top three operating systems broke out as follows: Windows XP 66%, Windows Vista 20%, and Windows 7 (in beta) 2%.

Windows 7 has met with a generally positive response due to better memory management and security as well as an improved interface, including new graphical features and a new taskbar that competes with the Mac OSX dock. Windows 7 share is rising quickly with the power of the Microsoft brand and marketing behind it. Not surprisingly, Windows 7 has made inroads in the existing Windows market.

So far in 2010, Windows XP, with approximately 57% market share overall is still the top Windows operating system. However, Windows 7, at 14% , is gaining on Windows XP and poised to overtake Windows Vista which is currently down to about 16%

### Mac OS X

Current estimates are that approximately 6.5% of PC users have Macs. While this still represents a much smaller market share compared to the one held by Microsoft Windows, Mac use is definitely a significant market force and has been trending up for the past few years.

Apple's newest version of its operating system, Mac OS X Snow Leopard, was released worldwide in August 2009 just ahead of the launch of Windows 7, prompting numerous comparisons between the 2 new operating systems. Unlike Windows 7 which included extensive changes to the user interface to respond to criticism of the Vista OS, Snow Leopard, made minimal changes to the GUI of its predecessor, Leopard, but instead concentrated on technology improvements, notably to implement 64-bit computing.

Apple's iPad debuted in the US on April 3, 2010 and in Canada on May 28 of this year. It has generated a huge buzz and not a little controversy. It reached sales of 2 million in less than 60 days. (Source: [QMI Agency, Canoe Technology](#)) While that is not currently enough to have a significant impact on the overall Mac vs. Windows operating system market share in the short term, the iPad is poised for growth in the next few years.

## Mobile Devices

With worldwide mobile subscribers expected to exceed 5 billion in 2010, a significant proportion of the world's population now owns a mobile device of some sort. (Source: [dotMobi](#)) Strong growth in smart phone sales, and providing a richer mobile web experience will continue to drive changes in how users interact with their mobile phones.

Watch for continued growth in this area, particularly with both iPhone and Blackberry heavily promoting downloadable web apps, which offer not only games, and entertainment, but also mobile tools for business users.

A powerful new player in this area is Android, an operating system for mobile devices owned by Google. Apple's iPhone and Google's Android are competing head to head in the smartphone market. In May of 2010, Google introduced Android 2.2, and the official release date for Apple's new 4G iPhone is set for June 24, 2010.

## Netbooks

The popularity of Netbooks has continued to grow over the past few years. With a smaller price tag and 'essentials-only' computing power, netbooks of all types appeal to price conscious users in a challenging economic climate.

Prior to the iPad, Apple did not have an offering competing in the netbook market. With the introduction of the iPad, the idea of a netbook tablet has captured the public imagination and a number of other manufacturers are said to be working on competing netbook tablet PCs.

## Trends to Watch

- Windows 7 market share growth
- Smart phones: Blackberry vs. iPhone vs. Android
- iPad and other tablet netbooks

# Browser Usage

## Summary

Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser (IE) is still the most widely used browser, representing approximately 47% of the market. Firefox and Safari have overall remained relatively stable in the past 6 months, while Google's new browser, Chrome, backed by Google's marketing power, has continued to make big inroads into the browser market.

So far, browsers for iPhone, Blackberry and other handhelds are still a small percentage of the overall browser market, but browsers like 'Opera Mini' and Google's Android browser, designed for use on mobile devices, will almost certainly continue to expand their market share in 2010.

## Internet Explorer

There are currently 3 versions of Internet Explorer in wide usage: IE6, IE7 and IE8.

IE 8, available since March 2009, continues to gain market share. At 22% of the total browser market IE8 has surpassed that of IE7 which is now down to just under 10%. Despite its age and a number of security and technical issues the IE 6 browser also continues to hold onto a respectable percentage close to equal to that of IE7. (In the last year IE7 use has declined more (as a percentage) than IE6 use has, leading to the speculation that users of IE6 may have more significant institutional barriers to change than former IE7 users.)

[NetMarketShare](#) reported in June that IE gained over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a percent in the US for the month of May across all operating systems.

Internet Explorer 9 is currently in development at Microsoft, and when it is released (no firm date yet) it will likely include improved support for HTML 5, CSS3, and be significantly faster than previous versions of IE.

## Firefox

Firefox (PC and Mac) is approximately 34% of the total browser market. The estimates for Firefox usage vary fairly significantly depending on whose statistics you trust. [W3 Schools](#) web site which has by its own admission a fairly 'tech savvy' research base, reports Firefox use at 46.4% as of April 27, 2010. For the same period, [NetMarketShare](#), a more 'corporate' research organization, reports it at 24.45% (includes Firefox 1.5 2.0, 3.0 and 3.5 & 3.6).

Both published web stats and informal, anecdotal evidence suggest that Firefox has been trending up overall over the past few years. However, the Firefox upward trend is slowing with increased competition from IE8 and Google's new Chrome browser.

## Safari

Browser market share statistics track Safari browser total market share at approximately 4.6% of the total market. Safari's relatively small market share total includes more than 10 versions of the browser including a Windows version of this primarily Mac identified browser. It is worth noting that Safari is now lagging behind Google's much newer Chrome browser in terms of popularity.

However, Safari is the web browser for Apple's rapidly growing and popular iPhone and iPad, making Safari a key browser in the smartphone and tablet PC categories.

## Chrome

An average of statistics I reviewed shows the Chrome market at about 9.5%. Chrome 4.0 has the highest percentage use to date. The latest version of Chrome is 5.0 and Chrome 6.0 for Windows, Mac and Linux is in development preview release.

## Worth Noting

### Mobile Web

While WAP based mobile web browsing has been available for years, Apple's iPhone has raised the bar on consumers' expectations for a full-featured web browsing solution that can be carried in your pocket. New BlackBerries have expanded their web surfing functionality. Mobile browsers like Opera Mini browser give consumers with non-smart phones, access to the web on their cell phones. Watch for mobile web browsing and web apps to continue their steep upward climb in popularity in the foreseeable future.

### Canadian Culture

Worldwide, iPhone and Google's Android are competing head to head as the top platform for mobile web browsing. In Canada, the iPhone is far ahead of Android. A recent article in Canadian online portal, [Canoe](#), quotes Admob statistics from earlier this year showing that the iPhone represented 80% of online activity from smartphones in Canada. Google's Android and BlackBerry were second and third accounting for 6% and 5% of smartphone web browsing activity respectively.

### Trends to Watch

- ❖ Growth of Chrome
- ❖ Mobile Web browsing
- ❖ Canada - US differences

## Sources:

[iPad Sales Reach 2 million in 59](#)

["IE6 Falls Below 5% for the First time in US and Europe" StatCounter GlobalStats](#)

[Mobile Web: latest facts and stats forecast a rosy outlook](#)

[Mobile Web Surge continues in October: Opera](#)

[Mobile Web Application Best Practices](#)

["Netbooks tap in to growing consumer demand" CBC News. June 8, 2009.](#)

[Netmarketshare](#)

[QMI Agency "iPhone leads in Canada mobile web browsing" Canoe.ca Money, April 1, 2010](#)

[OneStat](#)

[W3 Counter](#)

[W3 Schools](#)

[Webreference.com](#)

## [StatCounter Global Stats](#)

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, statistics are an average based on available online sources as of April 30, 2010, primarily [W3 Counter](#), [W3 Schools](#), and [NetMarketShare](#). All statistics should be taken as estimates of general trends. The author recommends consulting the above sources directly for more detailed information and statistics.