

# → **Fast Facts**

## → **U.S. Internet traffic**

In February 2004, the biggest gains in Internet traffic were driven by Valentine's Day, the Super Bowl halftime, and tax season. In the top 50 busiest Internet sites, [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) climbed 34 spots to become the 19th most popular destination in the United States. Traffic at a site called [ProOwners.com](http://ProOwners.com) grew by 420 percent, and on several wardrobe malfunction sites, traffic was boosted significantly as well. The top 5 Internet properties for February were Yahoo! Sites, with nearly 110 million unique visitors, the Time Warner Network, MSN-Microsoft Sites, eBay, and Google sites. Coming in at #8 were various Amazon sites, with 35.9 million unique visitors.

comScore Networks, Inc., "comScore Media Metrix Announces Top 50 U.S. Internet Property Rankings for February 2004," <http://www.comscore.com/press/release.asp?press=443>. March 24, 2004

## → **High school transcript changes**

Results of a new study by the National Center for Education Statistics show an increase in mean grade point average from 1990 to 2000, from 2.68 to 2.94, respectively. The number of course credits earned by all high school graduates increased as well, from an average of 23.6 in 1990 to 26.2 in 2000. Mathematics and science courses continued to prove the most difficult for high school students during the entire decade. In 2000, female high school graduates earned a higher overall mean GPA (3.05) than male high school graduates (2.83). The increase in the mean GPA of high school graduates from 1990 to 2000 was evident for all examined student and school characteristics (gender, race/ethnicity, school type, and region of the country).

Robert Perkins, et al, "The High School Transcript Study: A Decade of Change in Curricula and Achievement, 1990-2000," [nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004455](http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004455). March 25, 2004

## → **Population trends**

The world's population increased by 1.2 percent in 2002 to more than 6.2 billion, according to a newly released report by the U.S. Census Bureau. The rate of increase is about 200,000 people per day and 74 million per year, down from a high of 87 million people per year in 1989-90. The world's older population is expected to grow considerably. In 2050, there will be more than three times as many people age 65 and older as there are today. The world population is projected to reach 9.1 billion by the year 2050.

U.S. Census Bureau, "Global Population in 2002 Tops 6.2 Billion," [www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/international\\_population/001730.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/international_population/001730.html). March 22, 2004

## → **Charitable giving to higher education**

Private gifts to higher education amounted to \$23.9 billion for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2003. This represents a leveling off of a decline that began in 1988. Alumni contributions rebounded from a sharp decline in the previous year, while non-alumni individuals gave less in 2003. Harvard University raised more money (\$555.6 million) from private donors than any other university, followed by Stanford University and the University of Pennsylvania. Still, voluntary support has accounted for only about 8 percent of expenditures over each of the past five years.

The RAND Corporation, Council for Aid to Education, "VSE Press Release 2004: Charitable Giving to Higher Education Stabilizes in 2003; Gifts from Alumni Rebound After a Sharp One-Year Decline," March 11, 2004. [www.cae.org/content/display\\_press.asp?id=47](http://www.cae.org/content/display_press.asp?id=47). March 23, 2004

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