

SCORE

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YAHOO!
ANSWERS

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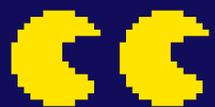
for SEO Guide

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Yahoo!Answers

SEO Guide



Y!A main page

Description

Yahoo!Answers (*further—Y!A*) is a social network for people who ask various questions on various topics and give quick answers to them. It's a unique set of thematic forums to which the rules of questions and answers are the same. Y!A is a powerful optimization tool in the hands of SEO optimizers, both beginners and advanced.

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1. Target Audience

Based on experience and analysis of questions, the following information concerning the geographical distribution of the audience of Y!A service can be supplied:

- ▶ 70% — North America
- ▶ 10% — Australia and Oceania
- ▶ 10% — UK
- ▶ 10% — other countries.

Real questions are asked only by users from North America, Australia and UK. The greatest part of users from other countries use this service for spamming.



2. The System of Earning Points on Y!A

Every user receives a certain number of reputation points for answering questions. Reputation points are used to raise the level and thus the degree of trust to the user. Only second-level users can leave an active link in the body of the comment.

- ▶ 1 point is given for visiting the service once a day.
- ▶ 2 points are given for answering a question.
- ▶ 10 points are given if your answer was voted as 'Best Answer'.
- ▶ 1 point is given every day, when you receive +1 from other users for your answers.

The best part out of this list is the 'Best Answer'. It's something that we really want to get. Other options mentioned in this list aren't so important, thus it's not necessary to visit the website everyday or try to answer every question.

There are two ways of getting 'Best Answer':

- 1 The asker chooses the best answer of all answers provided.
- 2 The Y!A service chooses the best answer. The best is the one that got the most +1 from other users.

Second-level users are more trustful than first-level users. That is, you need to earn the second level. The higher your reputation is—the more users will listen to you.

For example, if you recommend the website yoursite.com—users might visit it.

3. Types of Questions

All questions in the service are structured by category. Yet there are more popular and less popular categories. There are **three types of questions**, which have been popular for a long time. So, to which questions should we pay attention and which should be avoided?

- ▶ 70% of users are students, who ask questions related to homework. Less grateful users register on this service to ask 1 or 2 questions. They rarely give 'Best Answers'. Here's an example of a student's question:

This screenshot shows a question posted by a user named 'amanda'. The question is titled 'Open Question' and asks for the mass percent of a solute in a solution. The question text is: 'The total mass of a solution is 184.8g. The solvent mass is 125.2g. What is the mass percent of the solute?'. It was posted 47 minutes ago and has 4 days left to answer. The interface includes a 'Report Abuse' link, an 'Answer Question' button, and an action bar with 'Interesting!', 'Email', and 'Save' options.

Figure 1. Typical student-user question.

- ▶ 15% are users, interested in computer related subjects. They are very advanced in terms of using Y!A. This is a high chance (45%) of getting 'Best Answer'. Here's an example of a question on computer related topics:

This screenshot shows a question posted by a user named 'Sabeel Ahmed'. The question is titled 'Open Question' and asks for help with a locked Samsung Galaxy Note. The question text is: 'I am using samsung galaxy note it got locked and it asks for gmail username and password but I don't no it?'. It was posted 1 minute ago and has 4 days left to answer. The interface includes a 'Report Abuse' link, an 'Answer Question' button, and an action bar with 'Interesting!', 'Email', and 'Save' options.

Figure 2. Typical second-type user question.

- ▶ 15% of users regularly visit Y!A. In this case you have the maximum chance of getting 'Best Answer' for a full answer. The subject of their questions almost entirely depends on education. All questions that didn't fall under the above mentioned categories can be easily put in this section. Here's an example of such a question:

This screenshot shows a question posted by a user named 'Courtney'. The question is titled 'Open Question' and asks for advice on becoming a vegetarian. The question text is: 'I really want to become a vegetarian. I've grown up on meat my whole life thought and eat it daily. Does anyone advice on how to get started?? And I know "Stop eating meat." Duh. lol'. It was posted 38 seconds ago and has 4 days left to answer. The interface includes a 'Report Abuse' link, an 'Answer Question' button, and an action bar with 'Interesting!', 'Email', and 'Save' options.

Figure 3. Typical question of a frequent visitor.

4. Getting Started

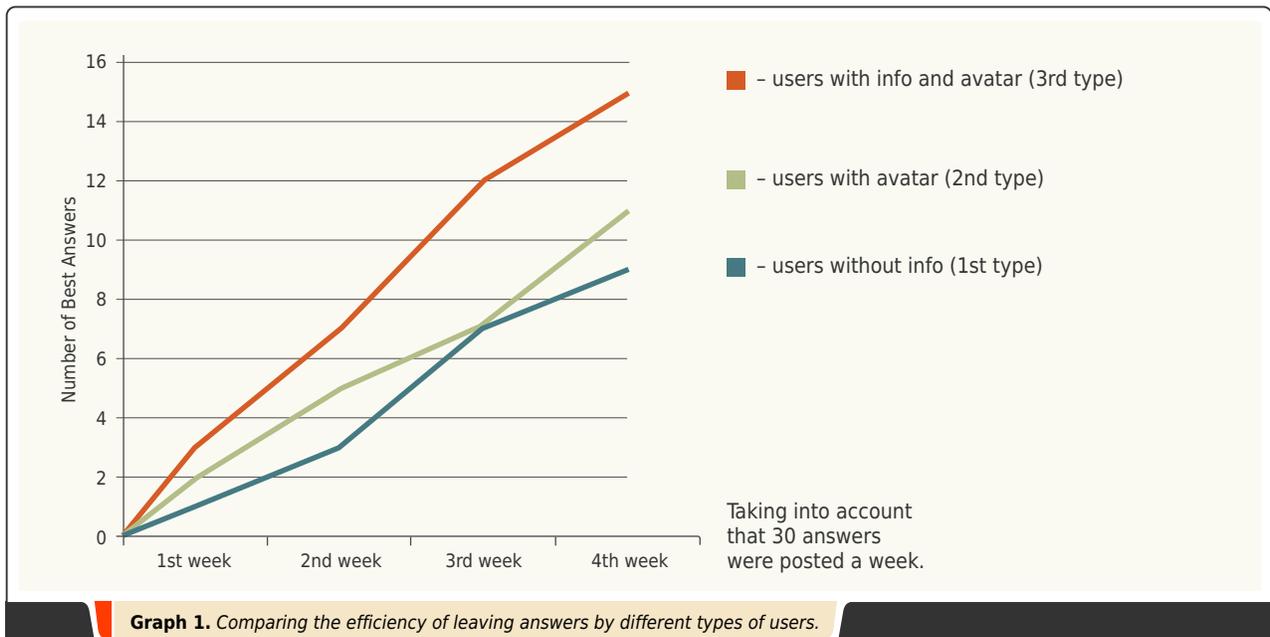
In order to leave comments we should create an account on Y!A. I won't give any details about this procedure.

I'd like you to pay attention to some points which are important:

- ▶ **Choose an avatar.** A custom, personalized avatar provides more trust from users, than a simple, default picture with a typical Yahoo!-brand exclamation mark.
- ▶ **Fill the information about yourself.** Probably, you wouldn't want to fill in all the contact information, but a minimum set of data is required.

- ▶ **Share the information about yourself** with users and they'll share some trust with you.
- ▶ **Attach your Y!A account** to the Yahoo! social network. In this case, you'll also have guaranteed trust from the administration of this service.

Below you can see a comparative graph where the number of Best Answers was set vertically, and the weeks were set horizontally. This comparison was made, taking into account that there were 30 answers posted per week.

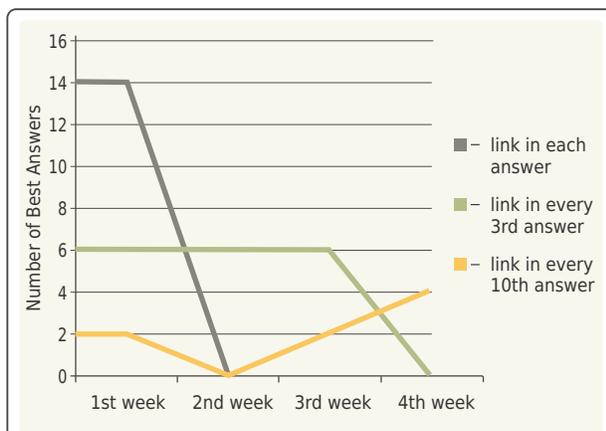


Conclusion: You need to fill in the information about yourself. You should look natural. No one should even suspect that you're some kind of spammer.

5. Answers. First Steps.

Let's move on to the answers. There are some written and unwritten rules of posting answers on the Y!A service.

- ▶ There's no need to leave a link to the promoted resource in every answer! The results are clearly illustrated in the chart below.



Graph 2. Correspondence of accounts to their life lengths.

Annotation:

Three similar trial accounts were created.

- ▶ From the first one (marked blue in the graph) answers with a link in each of them were sent. On the second day the account was banned.
- ▶ From the second (marked red in the graph) links were given in every third answer. The account has been banned on the third day.
- ▶ From the third account (marked green in the graph) the link was put in every tenth answer. The account is still active and gains popularity.

Conclusion: a link is relevant in one out of ten answers.

- ▶ Two or more exclamation/question marks at the end of the sentence (????!!!!!!) negatively affect the reputation of the account. The only exception is ?! It's not as grave as links, but also has a negative effect. In almost 60% of responses with such comments you get -1 to your reputation.
- ▶ Don't capitalize all the words. Capital letters are for the first letter of the sentence and proper names!
- ▶ Profanity, calls to racism and violence, as well as trolling are prohibited.

Remember, answers that don't benefit the asker, won't benefit you either. Making up answers completely falls into your responsibility, but they should be clearly structured:

- 1 A greeting is appropriate if the user greeted you in his question.
- 2 Introduction: often it is information about the experience which helped you deal with the situation.
- 3 The answer itself.
- 4 Wishes for a fast solving of the problem.
- 5 Links to websites from which the information was taken.

Here's an example of an answer, which has an ideal structure. It's a bit long, though, but it's fine.



Resolved Question

Can hypnotism be dangerous?

[Show me another »](#)

Vanessa

.....say if you never properly come out of a hypnotic trance?

3 month ago [Report Abuse](#)



Best Answer Chosen by Voters

Paul S

I train people to become hypnotherapists, so let me begin by dispelling some myths about hypnotism and lay down some of the facts. First and foremost hypnosis is a state of mind. It is a state of mind that everybody who sleeps and wakes up goes through. This state of mind is characterised by dominance of low frequency brain waves in the brain. It is a state of mind just as happiness, sadness, etc. are states of mind. People cannot be made to do anything that they do not want to do during the state of hypnosis. For example, a person could not be made to give their bank account password details under hypnosis. A gun will achieve this much faster and more effectively. (humour).. People who practise stage hypnosis tend to over exaggerate the influence that they are having on the subject. It is part of the show. Personally, I am not the slightest bit impressed with stage hypnotists and refuse to train anyone that has this in mind. The role of the person using hypnosis is to guide the person into the state of mind using tried and trusted techniques. Hypnosis in the hands of an ethical professional trained in therapy can be extremely useful in helping people to make enormous strides in self improvement. Hypnosis in the hands of an uneducated person are at best entertaining and at worst harmless. The person will always come out of trance when they are ready. Hypnotists will often put up warnings about not listening to their recordings while driving etc., because they are paranoid about being sued in the United States and in other litigious countries, and yet people drive along listening to trance music all the time. Many hypnotists are like scientologists, the more press they get the better. Keeps them in public focus and brings in the dollars. For me hypnosis is a wonderful tool to have when it is understood with the potential to help us to change how we communicate most importantly with ourselves and then with others. It is not a one stop shop for all solutions as portrayed by many. Dangerous.. Not at all...

3 month ago [Report Abuse](#)

100% 1Vote

273

43

Figure 4. Example of an ideal response.

6. Answering Techniques

Everything you've read until this page, was general advice on placing answers, further on we'll take a look at the technique of posting answers, which will be useful to users and lead to a rapid gain of reputation.

- ▶ First of all, remember that the website you promote covers a certain topic. And you, as a representative of this site, should take the appropriate niche in the category, available on the service. You should try to stick to one category and pass for a specialist in this field. It goes without saying that a surgeon can't provide competent advice in the field of enterprise microeconomics in a global crisis.
- ▶ The answer shouldn't be limited by such simple words as 'Yes / No'. Your answer should be the result of the analysis, intended for this question. Here's a question, for example:

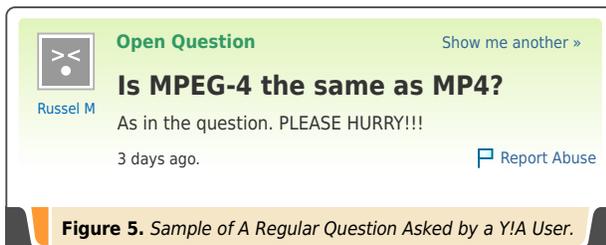


Figure 5. Sample of A Regular Question Asked by a Y!A User.

In order to get a 'Best Answer' from the asker, your answer needs something more than a plain 'Yes, it is' or 'No, it isn't'. Below you can see a screenshot with the answers to this question.

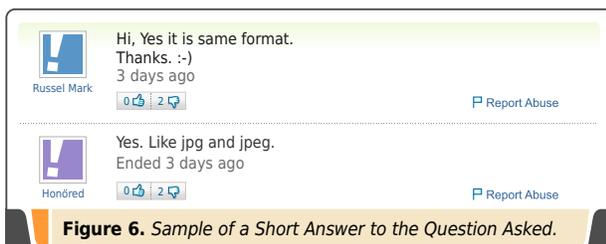


Figure 6. Sample of a Short Answer to the Question Asked.

As you can see, both answers got negative feedback from users. Below there's an example of a correct answer, which will be selected (was already selected, actually) as 'Best Answer'.

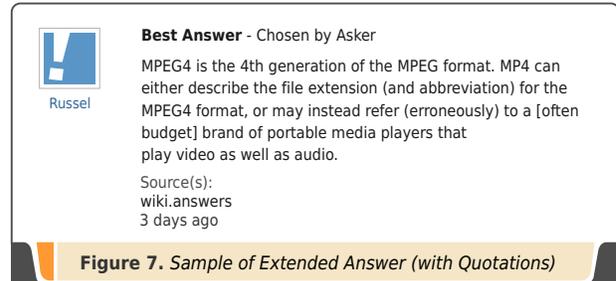


Figure 7. Sample of Extended Answer (with Quotations)

You should analyze the situation at least superficially and explain it in a format where a user will not only get an answer to his question, but also a hint to how he can find an answer himself. As it can be seen from the answer above, the question wasn't answered directly—Yes or No. Give the user the opportunity to think out the answer all by himself. A little psychology trick is all that's needed.

Here's an example of another question and an reply which was selected as the 'Best Answer'.

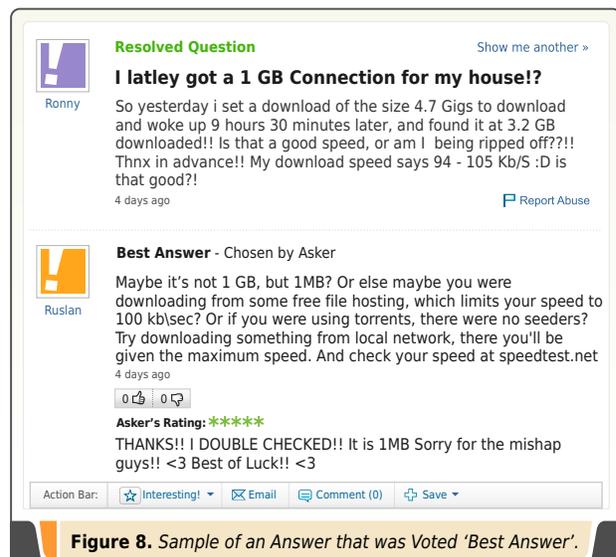


Figure 8. Sample of an Answer that was Voted 'Best Answer'.

The answer shouldn't be aggressive!

Sometimes users are - to put it mildly - not quite well informed in some issues. Your reaction can't be aggressive or offensive. Your task is to explain it to the user in very simple terms.

If possible, try to make a reference to the source of your answer. The site administration likes it when somebody quotes significant sources. And in one of ten/twelve cases, insert a link to your resource. Remember: you're an expert in this field and part of a company. By helping others, you point out which company you are from.

The answer shouldn't be complicated or long. In most cases you can fit it into three sentences. No need to write scientific treatises; people are too lazy to read them. Learn to cut down all your ideas to a minimal number of characters. Brevity is the soul of wit. For example:



Figure 9. Sample of a Short Answer Voted 'Best'

As you can see, there's a minimum of words, but a maximum of meaning.

In the next case, the answer gained +2 to the reputation, but because it's long it wasn't chosen as the best one.

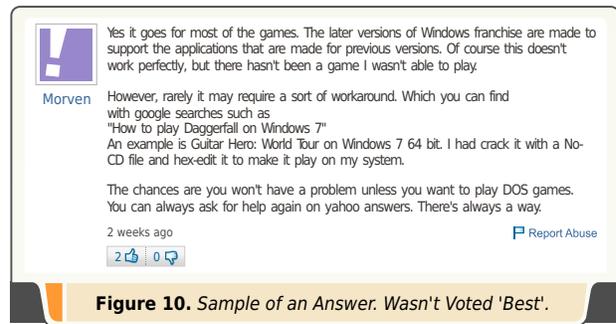


Figure 10. Sample of an Answer. Wasn't Voted 'Best'.

It's also worth considering the possibility of getting a 'Best Answer' depending on the speed of response. Sometimes, first answers have a big chance of getting a Best Answer. Partly yes, but this shouldn't be taken as a rule. Here is a diagram on answers:

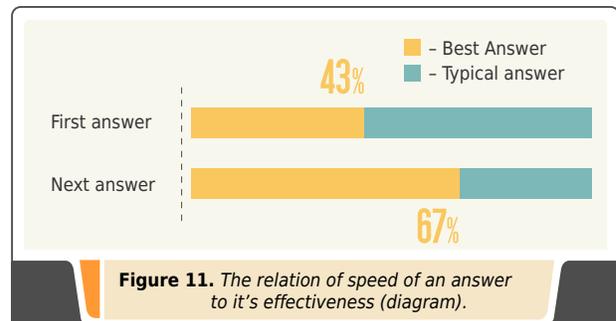


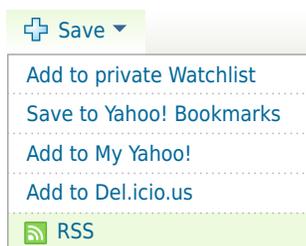
Figure 11. The relation of speed of an answer to its effectiveness (diagram).

Annotation: 100 first answers and 100 subsequent (not first) answers were posted to different questions. As it can be seen from the diagram, the first answers got a 'Best Answer' in 43% of cases, and subsequent answers in 67%. We can make a conclusion that one shouldn't hurry when answering questions. In this case, quality is more important than speed and quantity. It was also verified that only first-level users (see 'One-time users' below) choose first answers as 'Best Answers'. It's logical: someone visited the website, asked a question, got the first answer and left. He's not interested in other opinions. But other types of users, who ask questions more or less regularly, wait for other ideas on this matter; that's why regular users wait for more than one answer to choose the best one.

7. The Social Aspect

Y!A is first and foremost a social network. You shouldn't forget about it. Learn how to use its social aspect for your own purposes:

- ▶ You need to have accounts in most Yahoo! social networks.
- ▶ Accounts at [My Yahoo!](#) and [Del.icio.us](#) are desirable.
- ▶ Save your answers by clicking 'Save'.



We are particularly interested in the possibility of saving an answer in My Yahoo! By saving your answer with a link, it'll be available and visible to the My Yahoo! network.

Next, you can subscribe to Facebook from My Yahoo! and your correct answer will be seen by even more users.

- ▶ Make acquaintances inside the Yahoo!Answers network. Internet users from North America are very sociable. If you become friends with them, they'll keep track of your answers and give you +1 when possible. They also can - and in 50% of cases will - keep track of your answers through My Yahoo! which, in turn, will increase the value of your links and comments. In order to friend a user, visit his profile and click the following button:



Figure 12. Profile Menu and the 'Add Contact' Button.

After clicking it, the user will get a notification that you've added him to your contact list. If he remembers your answers and they helped him, he'll add you back.

- ▶ Complain about messages that don't meet the policy of communication on Y!A. Messages which you can complain about are described in detail on the service, so we won't stop on this matter here. The main thing is that we gain trust from the administration. If the complain helped track an inappropriate message - your account will privately be considered a reliable one and will have more trust in the future. But this action has an opposite effect - if no harmful messages were found by your complaint, you'll lose credibility. A 'Report abuse' button is available under every question:



Figure 13. 'Report Abuse' Button.

- ▶ Try to be aware of all events that excite the minds of Y!A users—be it the release of a new game or change of YouTube's appearance. If you're aware of the changes—you are competent in answers. Competence in answers brings respect from users. Innovations appear every two or three days. They can be traced using Y!A. People don't know anything about something that is new, and you're ready to help them and tell about this 'new thing'.

8. Search by Questions

Use the search function to find answers and questions most relevant to your topic. Answers are there to help you learn, and one can get answers by asking questions. You can get information from many other answers, which may come in handy later. We're interested in Advanced Search:

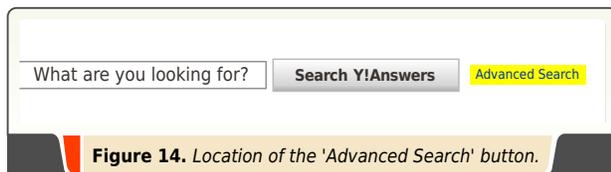


Figure 14. Location of the 'Advanced Search' button.

Here we can indicate a lot of criteria according to which we'd like to search.

For example: We need to find questions related to *web hosting*. We need the questions to be open and geographically *localized in the USA*. For this purpose we need to enter the phrase '*web hosting*' into the keyword field.

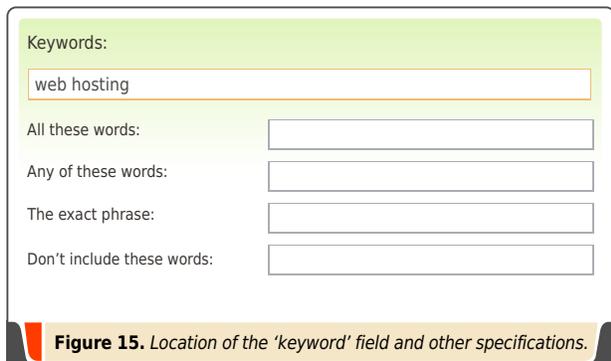


Figure 15. Location of the 'keyword' field and other specifications.

As we can see from the image, you can type in additional specifications to your request. It's quite useful for a detailed search.

In '**Keyword match in**' choose '*Questions*'. Thus, you'll be only searching for questions. In '**Location**' choose '*USA questions only*'.

In '**Category**' you can leave '*All categories*', as users often place their questions in wrong categories and by selecting a certain type of category, you can miss a good question. You can leave all the other fields as they aren't significant for the search in this case.

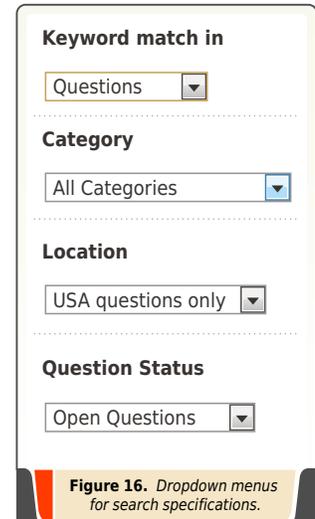


Figure 16. Dropdown menus for search specifications.

Another pleasant surprise awaits us below: it's the ability to save your search settings and send an email notification every time a question matching your search criteria is posted.

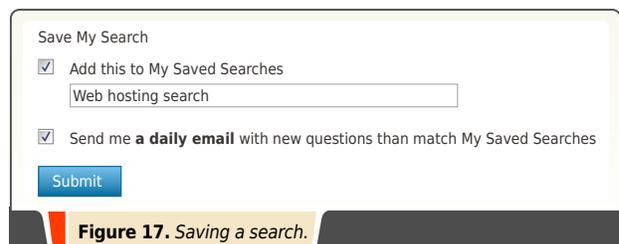


Figure 17. Saving a search.

By setting the search this way you can get about 30 questions on the subject of '*Web Hosting*'.

9. Users of Yahoo!Answers

First type users are the 'One-time' members. These are the people who register on the service to ask one question and receive an answer to it. Y!A isn't the only place where users place their answers. They are also the ones to often use the local forums. They represent approximately 63% of the audience (out of 2000 questions, 1300 were asked by such users). Often real names are put as nicknames. Their rating in rare cases will be above average. These people spend about an hour on the service.



Jack

An example of a user of this type.

His Y!A doesn't have an avatar. By default, an image with an exclamation mark serves as an avatar. 23 year old. American. Student. Not familiar with search engines. Never answers any questions on Y!A.

100 questions asked by such users have been viewed. 65 of them concerned home assignments, 15 problems with computer devices, 5 were about health care and 15 dealt with other topics. On the basis of this analysis we created the following diagram:

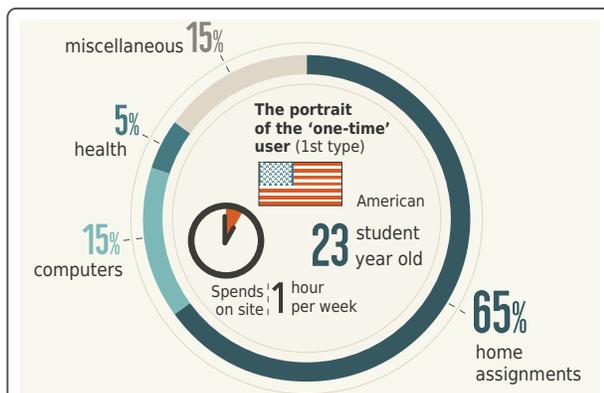


Figure 18. Typical questions of first type users.

Such users rarely put 'Best Answer', as often find the answer on other sources and don't return to Yahoo!Answers.

Second type are regular Y!A users. These people enjoy helping others even though they're not sure if they're right. These people are trying to gain reputation. As avatars they use images from the Yahoo! collection. They try to answer all questions in a row, but don't have enough information on the issue. They represent approximately 31% of all users (out of 2000 viewed questions, 600 were asked by such people). They often ask questions, and often answer others'. They rarely use their names as nicknames.



A user of this type:

Whirledpeas12

An Australian or a UK citizen. 25 year old. Familiar with the Internet and can use search engines to answer questions. Based on the questions, we can assume that most of these users are housewives. Spends about 15 hours a day on the service.

After analyzing 100 questions from these users, we can group their typical questions as follows: 30% about music, 23% about movies, 20% about games, 12% about seasonal holidays (questions about Christmas, St. Patrick's Day, New Year, etc.), 10% about sports and 5% concerning computer problems.

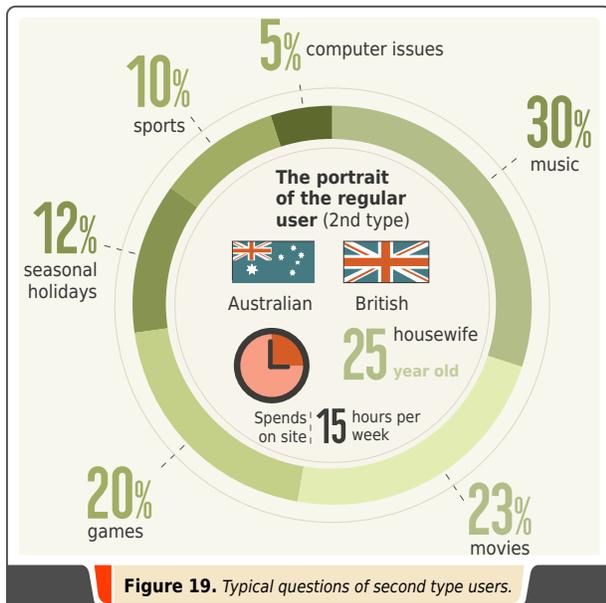


Figure 19. Typical questions of second type users.

Second-type users are interested in computers, have a good understanding of the Internet and computer hardware. They give 'Best Answer' very often.

Third type are the gurus of of Yahoo!Answers. They are people who have spent more than 3 years on this server. Their distinctive feature is the 'Top Contributor' signature below the avatar. Users of this type answer questions more often that ask them. They represent approximately 6% of the audience (out of 2000 answers viewed, only 100 users of this type).

An example of such user:



30-45 years old. American or Englishman. Educated, has a PhD. A professional in the field of programming and design, web-developer. Strong knowledge in Internet marketing. Spends about 6 hours a week on the service. Never asks questions on Y!A.

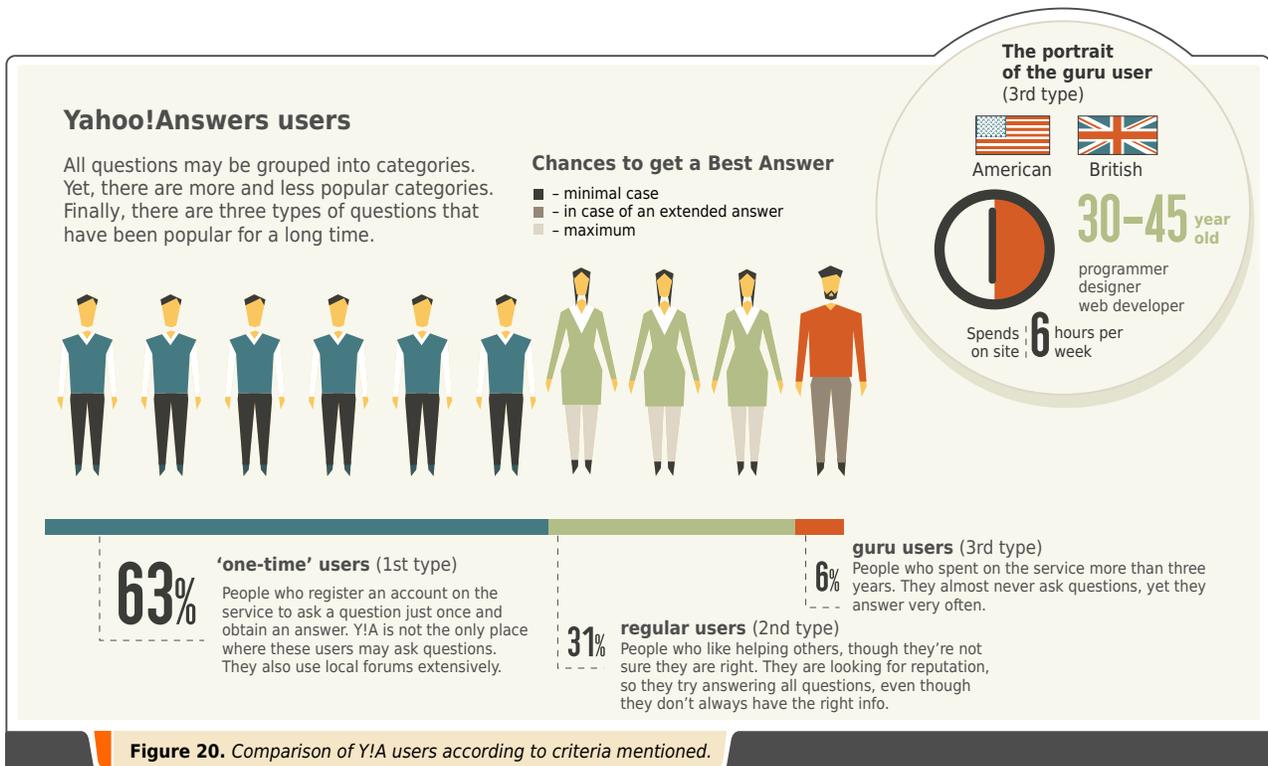


Figure 20. Comparison of Y!A users according to criteria mentioned.

10. About the Author

Ruslan Marchenko is a beginning SEO optimizer in the Ephemeral Office. Ruslan deals with creating tasks on blog commenting for employees. In this booklet he contributed to the elaboration of the main text, chart compiling, and data collection.

Anastasiya Pirogova, Andrey Losev,

Tatyana Zhuk: gathering statistics.

Ecaterina Albu: proofreading and editing.

Mary Sergeeva: cover design.

Sergey Mikhailov: layout.

Colophon

The booklet is set in [DejaVu Sans Condensed](#),
[CommonBullets](#).

Headlines are set in [League Gothic](#).

About Web Hosting Geeks

Making the right choice when it comes to choosing a webhosting is never an easy task, neither for a rookie, nor for a pro. Our concise guides revolve around the all-encompassing topic of webhosting, providing solutions and points of view that you might not think of. We strive to boldly go where few dared to venture in matters of detail and perspective. Our geek mission is to highlight these solutions and serve them to you, for whatever site you build—a tiny personal blog, an important volunteer project or a sizeable business.