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Microsoft Windows Media Closes the Gap on Competition

Media Metrix Studies Show WindowsMedia.com Grew More Than 900 Percent in 1999 And Top Two Digital Media Players Nearly Equal in Consumer Usage

LAS VEGAS -- Jan. 6, 2000 -- Microsoft Corp today announced unprecedented demand and usage for Windows Media™ Player and WindowsMedia.com, the Microsoft® guide to audio and video on the Internet.

According to Media Metrix Inc., the leader in Internet audience measurement, WindowsMedia.com leapt forward in its number of unique visitors - up 909 percent from January through October 1999, marking its position as by far the fastest-growing Web site for digital audio and video content on the Internet.* WindowsMedia.com attracted 3.9 million unique visitors in November 1999, reinforcing the strong demand for audio and video in the Windows Media format.

In addition, the Media Metrix Soft Usage report ending September 1999 found that Windows Media Player was used by 14.3 percent of home PC users.** By comparison, RealNetworks Inc.'s RealPlayer was used by 16.8 percent, demonstrating that Microsoft continues to narrow the gap with the competition in consumer usage. This Media Metrix report is consistent with a recent independent study from PC Data Inc., which showed Windows Media Player as the fastest-growing digital media player available, with a 34 percent usage increase month over month (September to October), compared to 5.3 percent growth from its nearest competitor.

"Consumers continue to demonstrate tremendous demand for high-quality media streamed or downloaded from the Internet, and more and more

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are choosing Windows Media," said Dave Fester, director of marketing, Streaming Media Division at Microsoft. "This momentum reflects Microsoft's commitment to delivering the best digital media experience for consumers and the industry."

One factor in the dramatic surge in consumer traffic to WindowsMedia.com is attributed to the extensive selection of top-quality digital audio and video entertainment from thousands of content partners worldwide. WindowsMedia.com provides consumers with their favorite music, from radio stations around the world to new album releases from today's top artists. In addition, WindowsMedia.com delivers high-quality music videos, live concerts and events, as well as a new Broadband Guide that directs users to content optimized specifically for high-speed access.

About WindowsMedia.com

WindowsMedia.com (<http://windowsmedia.com/>), part of the MSN™ network of Internet services, is among the fastest-growing major audio and video guides on the Internet. WindowsMedia.com provides access to localized audio and video content users worldwide, including major music and video events and entertainment from more than 1,000 content providers.

About Windows Media

Windows Media is the leading digital media platform, providing consumers, content providers, solution providers, software developers and corporations with unmatched audio and video quality. Windows Media Technologies, which includes Windows Media Player, Windows Media Services, Windows Media Tools and the Windows Media SDK is available for free*** download at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/>. Windows Media Player is the fastest-growing media player. More than 50 million copies have been downloaded to date - growing by more than one every second.

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software for personal and business computing. The company offers a wide

range of products and services designed to empower people through great software - any time, any place and on any device.

*Audio and video guide category defined by Microsoft. It includes WindowsMedia.com, Real.com, other RealNetworks sites, Broadcast.com, Broadcast.com sites and MP3.com.

** Analysis by Media Metrix including usage of all versions of Windows Media Player.

***Connect-time charges may apply.

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