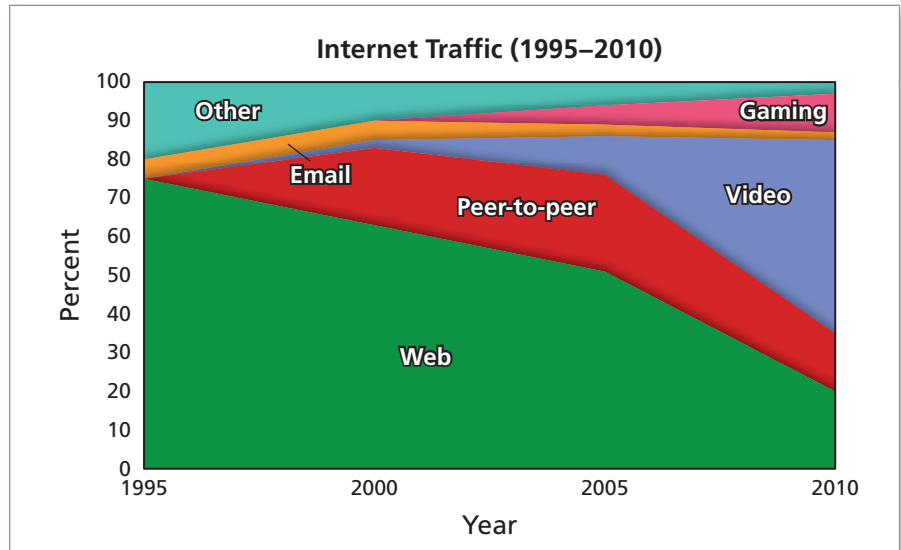




According to a report by Sandvine Network Demographics, streaming videos from Netflix represent 29.7% of peak downstream traffic for North American fixed access networks. This makes Netflix the single largest source of peak downstream traffic for these networks.

EXAMPLE 2 Interpreting a Stacked Area Graph

A household began using the Internet in 1995. The stacked area graph shows the composition of Internet traffic for the household from 1995 to 2010. Suppose you see this graph online. What comments can you make about the graph?



SOLUTION

Here are some comments.

COMMENT:

What does the vertical axis represent? Time? Bits? Users?

This is a good question. The answer is “bits.”

Here are some other comments.

COMMENT:

In the graph, the term Web does not mean Internet. It means HTML data. Someone looking at the graph may be misled and assume that the term Web is referring to the Internet.

COMMENT:

One minute of streaming video is about 2 MB. This is about 100 times the size of a typical e-mail and about 10 times the size of a typical web page. So, you would have to send 100 e-mails or visit 10 web pages to use the same amount of bandwidth as a single minute of streaming video.

This graph illustrates that you must be careful with how you present data. Information design is a powerful tool. When it is used incorrectly, the results can be very misleading.



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From the graph, can you conclude that the household’s Web usage, in total bits downloaded, declined from 1995 to 2010? Explain.