

The Top Five Web Browsers

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Abstract

The top five web browsers of today are Internet Explorer, Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari, and Opera. Internet Explorer 8 is now faster, easier, and safer, can keep up with things that you want, see any site, recover from crashes, surf with privacy, and makes it easy to make it your own. In 2001 Microsoft tried to shut out alternative browsers. Firefox's top features are private browsing, password manager, awesome bar, super speed, anti-phishing and anti-malware, session restore, one-click bookmarking, easy customization, tabs, and personas. In 2009 Firefox assisted Europe's attack on Microsoft. Google chrome is fast, simple, secure, and has many features. In 2008 a technology commentator from NPR Mario Armstrong tried it out. Also in 2008 Google tried to chip away at Microsoft Corp.'s software dominance by challenging IE with Google Chrome. Safari is the first browser to deliver "real" internet mobile device, support HTML5 audio and video tags, and CSS3 animations. It can render pages on the iPhone and iPod touch. The Safari interface is simple and handles RSS feeds well. Opera 10.5 has private browsing, is faster with a JavaScript engine, supports HTML5 and CSS3, and is available for Windows in 42 different languages. Opera's features include, new widgets for desktop, fast browsing, Opera unite, automated crash reporting, and Opera link.

The Top Five Web Browsers

In 1991 the World Wide Web browser was released it was the first graphical web browser and What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWG) HTML editor. It was developed by Tim Bernes lee, the inventor of the web. In 1993 mosaic is credited with making the internet useful to the public. Internet explorer (IE) and Firefox still use the graphical user interface (GUI) characteristics of Mosaic, such as the top-oriented actions bar that provides basic browsing functions. Then in 1994 Marc Andreessen made Netscape, which was the first commercial web browser. In 1995 there was a browser war because Microsoft released IE. In 1996 Telenor, the largest Norwegian telecommunications company, offers Opera to the public. In 1998 Netscape started the open source Mozilla project to make the next generation of communicator. Netscape's browser was losing power due to IE, so they decided to release the source code of communicator in the hopes of becoming a popular open source project. In 2002 IE usage reaches domination with a 95 percent share, and the first browser war ends. In 2003 Apple Safari was released. It had a solid layout engine called a WebKit. In 2004 Firefox 1.0 was released and the "second browser war" started. In 2006 five years after IE6 Microsoft released a version of 7 of the browser. It adopted some features from its open source competition (Firefox) like tabbed browsing and anti-phishing protection. In 2008 Google Chrome launches its own web browser, which is light weight, fast, and stable compared to the early releases of other browsers (Gube, 2009).

The most used web browsers are IE, Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari, and Opera. IE is still very dominant over the other four web browsers (Su, 2010). Here are some statistics of web browser usage for the month of April this year: IE (8), 16.2 percent; IE (7), 9.3 percent; IE (6), 7.9 percent; Firefox, 46.4 percent; Google Chrome, 13.6 percent; Safari, 3.7 percent; and Opera, 2.2 percent (w3schools.com, 2010).

Internet Explorer

Many may think why is IE 8 so great? According to Microsoft.com it's faster, easier, and safer, can keep up with things that you want, see any site, recover from crashes, surf with privacy, and makes it easy to make it your own. Surfing the web with IE 8 is now quicker due to performance techniques that reduce how long it takes people to do a task, such as a more structured address bar. It's easier because you don't have to open up a new window to find information, like the location of a restaurant, by using accelerators. It's safer because there is a SmartScreen filter, which makes it so users are protected against software that can limit your privacy and reveal your identity. It keeps up with stuff that people want such as their news, stock quotes, and entertainment by the usage of Web Slices. It can see any site with ease with the compatibility view button, all the user has to do is click on it. It can recover from crashes quickly because the new tab isolation and crash recovery features, which cause your browser session to be more stable if it messes up. It lets people surf with privacy because the InPrivate browsing gives you the option to prevent browsing history, cookies, usernames and passwords from being retained by the browser. Lastly you can make the browser yours by customizing it and choosing from a collection of IE 8 add-ons from IE add-ons gallery (Microsoft.com, 2010).

Microsoft which is the maker of IE shut out alternative browsers in 2001. Microsoft's premiere Web portal, MSN.com, denied entry to millions of people who use different browsers software such as Opera and told them to get Microsoft's products instead. This led to many complaints from Opera that Microsoft Corp. was abusing its status as the Internet's leading browser. This caused Microsoft to give in and say they would support other browsers. Browser products affected from this included Opera, Mozilla, and Amaya, said Kevin Reichard, editorial manager for Internet.com's BrowserWatchsite (New York (AP), 2001).

Firefox

Mozilla is a global community where people believe in the power of technology to enrich the lives of many. They're dedicated into improving the way people everywhere experience the Internet. They are an open source software project, whose code has been used for some of the Internet's newest projects. Since 1998, they've worked to make sure the Internet is made in a way that helps everyone (Mozilla.com, 2010).

The top features in Firefox are private browsing, password manager, awesome bar, super speed, anti-phishing and anti-malware, session restore, one-click bookmarking, easy customization, tabs, and personas. Private browsing lets people surf the web without leaving a trace or personal information. Password manager remembers the site passwords with pop-ups. The awesome bar finds the site you love in only a few seconds. This browser has speed by letting the user view web pages faster, which uses less computer memory. Anti-phishing and anti-malware lets many enjoy the most advanced protection against online hackers. If there is an unexpected shutdown then the sessions resort lets you go back to where you previously were. One-click bookmarking organizes Web sites quickly and easily. There is easy customization due to the numerous add-ons, which give you the choice to make the browser your own. You can do more at once by organizing the tabs. With personas users can instantly change the look of their browser with thousands of themes (Mozilla.com, 2010).

Firefox is the Web browser Dr. Chunke Su prefers to use. He said he likes the security of the website and the third party programs you can add by initialization to increase the function of the browser. He also said it is compatible to web design languages HTML and CSS (Su, 2010).

In 2009 Firefox assisted Europe's attack on Microsoft. An American software developer formed an alliance with European regulators to force Microsoft Corp. to separate its Web browser from its Windows operating system. The Mozilla Foundation, maker of the free Firefox Web browser, got permission from European Union regulators to submit arguments in the antitrust case over Microsoft's Internet Explorer. The European Commission accepted Mozilla's request to submit the comments, access case files and participate at an oral hearing, said Jonathan Todd, a spokesman for the commission in Brussels. Mozilla is the only American organization to be successful in getting some Web browser market share from Microsoft. Microsoft's IE was used by 67.5 percent of the people who surfed the Internet in January (2009), according to Net Applications, which track Web statistics. The rest are way behind (Kellner, 2009).

Google Chrome

Google Chrome is fast, simple, secure, and has many features. It is designed to be fast in many ways. It's quick to start from your desktop, loads web pages in a flash, and runs complex web applications in a timely fashion. It's simple because the window browser is streamlined, clean and easy. It includes features that are made for efficiency and user friendly. You can search and navigate from the same box, and arrange tabs however you want. The security is made to keep you safer on the web by having built-in malware and phishing protection, and auto updates to make sure the browser is up-to-date with the newest security. Some features of Google chrome are extensions, translation in the browser, and themes (Google, 2010).

Google started taking on Microsoft by making its own browser Chrome in 2008. A technology commentator from NPR Mario Armstrong tried it out for a few days and this is what

he said about it. “I’ve played around with all the browsers, and Google's Chrome stacks up really well in a couple of areas. Number one, it's easy to use, it's clean. And I'm not the ultimate test. I put it in front of my grandparents, and if they can use a piece of software, then I give it a thumbs up, typically because they don't test as many things as I do. But my estimation is that Google is well on its way. It's an open source program, and that's a key. That's important because if they can gather more developers to assist the development cycle of Google Chrome, we'll start seeing new additional add-ons that come from other people outside of Google. And I think that's empowering, and I think that will take the browser to the next level. But it still has a long way to go. Right now my favorite still happens to be Firefox,” (Montagne, 2008).

Google tries to chip away at Microsoft Corp.'s software dominance by challenging IE with Google Chrome. Chrome is available as a free download for users of windows-based operating systems. The company said it would offer versions of the browser for users of Apple Inc. and Linux operating systems. Google's biggest challenge of IE before this was supporting Firefox, which had a 20 percent market share. Many say it's too soon to tell if Chrome can make a move in reducing Microsoft's share. Microsoft said it welcomes the competition from Google (Rowland, 2008).

Safari

Safari is designed to emphasize the browsing, not the browser. It is the first browser deliver “real” internet mobile device. It can render pages on the iPhone and iPod touch just like on the computer. This is more than just a scale down mobile-version of the original. It takes advantage of the technologies built into the cell phones or iPods. The pages will actually reformat to fill the window as you turn the device on its side. This browser is very fast and lets you see results, latest news, current stocks, and whatever you want instantly. Safari allows you

to wait less and browse more. It was the first browser to support HTML5 audio and video tags. Plus it was the first to support CSS3 animations, which bring a higher level interactivity to the web and CSS Effects. WebKit created by Apple engineers, powers Safari on iPhone, iPod touch, and Safari 4 on the Mac and PC. WebKit displays graphics, renders fonts, determines page layout, and drives the interactivity of the sites you visit on a daily basis. To be safe you can turn on the private browsing. This allows the browser to stop recording the sites you visit and the software or documents you download. It also stops storing your Google searches, cookies, and the data in online forms you fill out (Apple.com, 2010).

The Safari interface is simple. It has a gray bar at the top to display the Web page address and features. Bookmarks drop down in a tab, while favorites can be displayed in the menu bar. You can display a status bar at the bottom of the page, but it's off by default. The reason there is a blue bar shown in the web address field while the page is loading is to show it's in progress. At the top there is a built-in search field, which defaults to Google's search engine. One feature people will really appreciate is the way it handles Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds. Safari built the RSS reader into the browser, which allows you to bookmark a certain area for search over a range of sources to be sure you can get the latest news on any item. By default this browser will block "pop-up" windows. But if you direct your browser to a bank's Web site and need to sign-in it'll pop-up, and let you. Safari will probably command a lot of attention and deliver a strong challenge to IE and Firefox (Kellner, 2007).

Opera

Opera software developed the Opera Web browser, a high-quality, multi- platform product for a wide range of platforms, operating systems and embedded Internet products. Their vision is to deliver the best Internet experience on any device. Their goal is to earn global

leadership in the market for PC desktops and embedded products. The strategy is to make a browser that operates across devices, platforms and operating systems, which can be faster, more stable, and flexible than all its competitors (Opera.com, 2010).

The latest version of the Opera browser (Opera 10.50) adds a new design for its users including private browsing. Now a user can hide all traces of websites they have visited. Also this version is faster, with a new JavaScript engine, Carakan and a new graphics library, Vega. It also includes improved support for HTML5 and CSS3. It is currently available for Windows in 42 different languages. Mac and Linux versions will be soon released (Telecomworldwire (M2), 2010). It allows you to go through Web pages with never-before- seen speed and surfing with advanced features that make it easy to get the most from the Web. You can browse faster with new JavaScript engine and quick page loading. Search more easily by using the smart address field that features auto-completion for less typing. For safety this browser provides fraud protection, control of private data and a complete set of privacy features. Opera can integrate with the latest operating systems (Opera.com, 2010).

Opera's features include, new widgets for desktop, fast browsing, Opera unite, automated crash reporting, and Opera link. A new platform allows opera Widgets to move past the Web browser and onto the desktop. A widget is a portable piece of web-application or web application itself that can be installed and executed within any separate web page by an end user (program-ace.com, 2010). Opera Turbo uses compression technology that makes improvements in the speed of browsing over limited-bandwidth connections. Opera unite allows you to share content with friends without having to upload anything to a web site. You can stream music, show photos, share files directly from the browser. It can restart and recover all your tabs if a crash

takes place. Opera link lets you synchronize data of your choice online or among different computers or devices (Opera.com, 2010).

Future

The web will be the primary interface between the users. Everything will be moved to the web, from business, government documents, and every aspect of your life. Competition now from web browsers is so fierce because this is where the future is heading. Also Microsoft, Apple, and Google are fighting to get their web browsers on cell phones (Su, 2010).

Cross-Platform VMS software developer Exacq Technologies has released exacqVision Webserver Version 2.0 for the Exacq video management system (VMS) software. According to the company the new release has a similar look to the exacqVision client software but is accessed with a web-browser thin client. Webserver 2.0 allows users to view live surveillance video from multiple exacqVision servers. Plus it provides video searching and playback along with the ability to control analogue and network PTZ cameras. The solution is suitable for viewing live or recorded video in low bandwidth situations. The thin client operates on browsers including Firefox, Safari, Google Chrome, Internet Explorer and Opera. The service can be used on JavaScript-enabled mobile browsers and on non-JavaScript WAP mobile browsers common with most cell phones (Telecommworldwire (M2), 2010).

Overall it appears that the most used web browser is IE. It'll be very surprising when another browser over takes it. There still needs to be some research done on the reason why so many people really prefer IE. Plus these questions need to be answered: Is there really a web browser out there that is the best, or is it just people's opinions? Is the main reason people choose a certain Web browser for speed, or just because it's already installed on their computer? In all the research it seemed that all the Web browsers claimed to be faster and more secure. It

appears that speed is the number one motive for people choosing which Web browser they use. In the changing world, where so much communication and information is stored on computers, people really rely on the speed of their browsers. For now IE rules the web browser world.

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