

Be More Productive with Firefox



Tech Talks By William Hicks

November 28, 2007

University of North Texas Libraries,
Digital Projects

Firefox

1. Why use it?
 - a. Pretty good at rendering what the developer intended. IE not so good. See: <http://www.webstandards.org/files/acid2/test.html> and <http://acid2.wikispaces.com/>
 - b. The Selling Pitch:
 - i. Tabbed Browsing (1 window, multiple pages, vs IEs multiple windows)
 - ii. Integrated/Customizable Search Engines in the browser
 - iii. Session Restoration
 - iv. Smart handling of RSS
 - v. Built in security models not available in IE
 1. open source, yada yada
 2. Pop-up blockers, configurable new “external” window/tab behaviors
 3. Phishing protection
 4. Spyware protection via download manager
 - vi. Add-ons Galore
2. What we’ll do
 - a. Talk profiles
 - b. Fly through basic features/GUI layout/menus/icons/blah for orientation
 - i. Search Plugins
 - ii. Fun with tabs
 - c. Talk about “about: config”
 - d. Themes, userChrome.css and userContent.css
 - e. Favorite Extensions (lightning talks)

Profiles

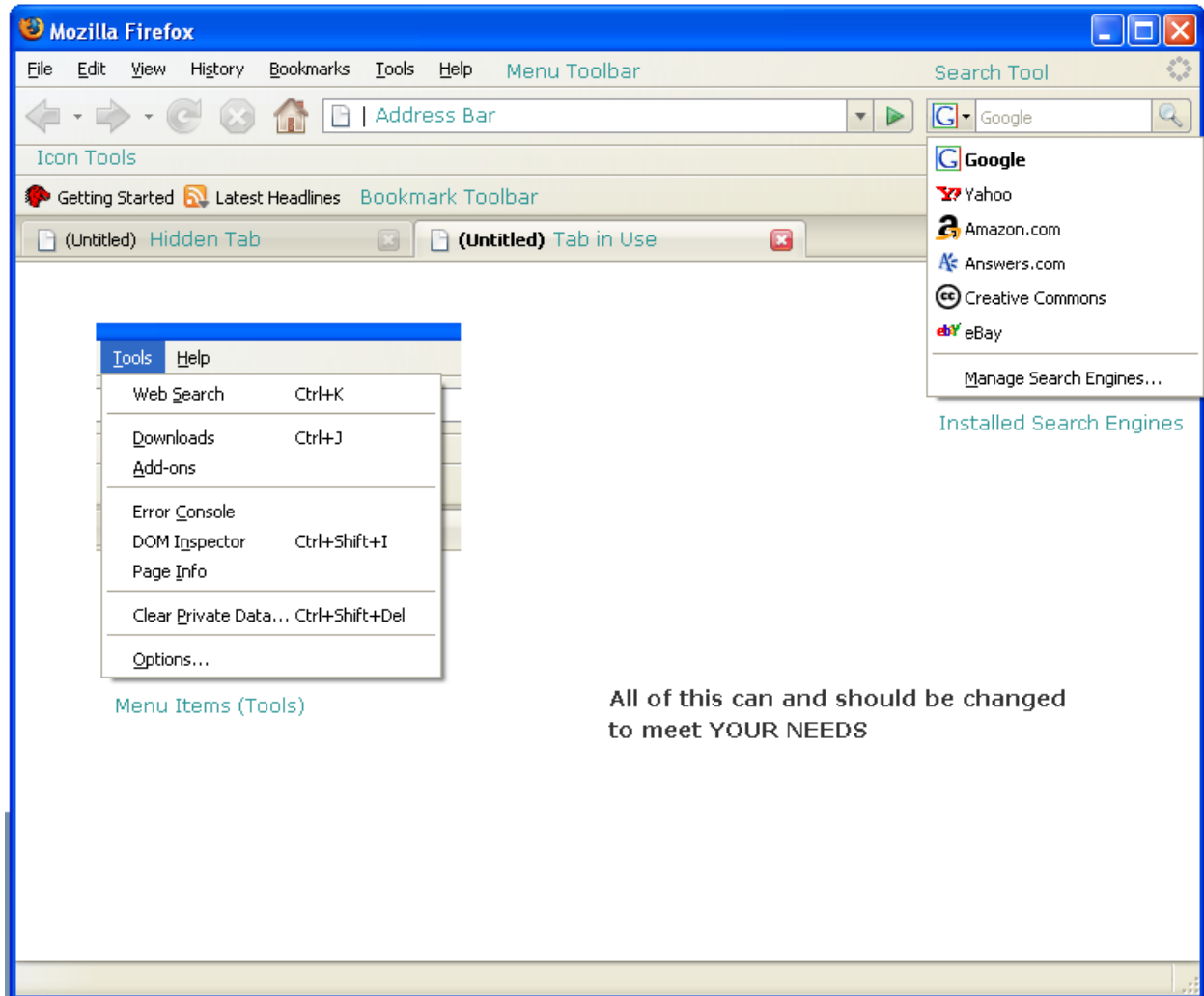
- Profiles hold all of your customizations, and other “enhancements” to Firefox.
- You might never really need to use more than one
- But it might be a good idea if:
 1. You are developing for Firefox, itself
 2. You are installing lots of add-ons and are fearful that one might break
 3. You browsing needs change depending on the “hat” you are wearing.
 - 9-12 and 1-6 I am a reference librarian
I need 32 search engines, and 4 extension
 - 12-1 I blog
I need 4 search engines, and 18 extensions
 4. You share a computer and user account at home with a spouse or child and want to maintain different add-ons/settings/etc

Profile Data is stored in:

<C:\Documents and Settings\USERNAME\Application Data\Mozilla\Firefox\Profiles>

- Within this folder will be one more like XXXXXXXX.default
- Create New profiles with the profile manager
 1. Windows:Start > Run > firefox –profilemanager
 2. Create Profile... Next > GIVE IT A NAME
 3. You may wish to untick “Don’t Ask at startup” if you will be choosing between several
 4. Highlight one and start firefox.
- Multiple Shortcuts
 1. Create 2 shortcuts to firefox
 2. Right click 1, and select properties
 3. Target: append –p profileName to the target
 4. Rename the shortcut to remind yourself what it does differently

Lay of the land



Helpful Beginner Tips

1. Set up Basic interface options with **Tools > Options**
2. Toolbars: Add/Remove Icons/Text
3. Working with Search Engines
4. Bookmarks, History, Bookmarklets, etc
5. Fun with tabs
6. Text Fun and Keyboard Shortcuts

Tools > Options

Honestly, just read these settings. Most are sensible, but you may want to do a few things different.

Main Tab

1. Set Multiple Home Pages: Use | as a separator
<http://www.unt.edu>|<http://www.google.com>
2. Save Files To: (set this folder, or ALWAYS ASK!!!)

Tabs:

- Usually change only if you really want to open new windows instead of tabs

Add/Remove Icons/Text

1. Right Click on the menu or address toolbar
 2. Drag and Drop
 3. Change size of icons, add or remove text descriptions
- Let's make it compact by:
 - Moving the address and Search Bar up to the menu toolbar
 - Adding separators and icons for Tabs and Windows
 - Make small icons
 - We'll have to come back for some stuff later

Working with Search Engines

- Manage Search Engines:
 - Is eBay or other defaults really helpful to you? No? Get rid of them
 - Get More:
 - <http://mycroft.mozdev.org/install.html>
 - Build Your Own:
 - Sherlock Standard (Older)
hand code a text file, not that hard
<http://mycroft.mozdev.org/deepdocs/deepdocs.html>
validate that it meets standards:
<http://www.mindzilla.com/auditform.php>
 - OpenSearch (Newer)
online generator, hosting, share with the world/Distribute
<http://mycroft.mozdev.org/submitos.html>
or write your own XML!
http://developer.mozilla.org/en/docs/Creating_OpenSearch_plugins_for_Firefox
 - Roll Your Own “meta-search” with Rollyo
 - **EASY**
 - Free web application/Site
 - Uses the Rollyo indexer so you’ll just have to deal with that
 - <http://www.rollyo.com/firefoxsearch.html>
 - Use the OpenSearchFox Extension
 - Our First Extension Yeah!
 - <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/3698>
 - Install Now – Wait – Install --Restart
 - Go to a Website with a search engine.
 - Right Click on the text input field
 - Add OpenSearch plugin

- Rename if desired, give icon if generic
- **NOTE:** This is only for you, you can't really share these with anyone

Bookmarks, History, Bookmarklets, etc

Bookmarks: I don't use much, if your used to it in IE great. Anyone want to profess their beauty?

- Toolbar if you just gotta have it
- Organizer if you just gotta have lots (searchable)

History: Go back in time

- Show in Sidebar
- Searchable
- Sortable

Bookmarklets: Little Javascript snippets that sit on the bookmark toolbar and give helpful functions

- Form Text Area Resizer:
<http://www.themaninblue.com/experiment/FormTextResizer/>
- LibraryThing GoogleBook Search:
<http://www.librarything.com/blog/2007/09/google-book-search-on-librarything.php>

Fun with Tabs

- Right Click options **are helpful!**
 - Undo Close tab is brilliant.
- Mouse Wheel/Middle Click to Close a tab
 - Helpful if we disable the X for space later

Text Fun and Keyboard Shortcuts

- Right Click Fun
 - Initially, few options. More extensions will mean more options.
Install: <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/68>
Install: <http://www.library.unt.edu/research-tools/web-tools/firefox-toolbar>
- Draggable Text
- Caret Browsing: (insert movable cursor in the text) F7
- Favorite Keyboard Goodies
 - Full Screen Mode: **F11**
 - Switch Between Tabs: **CTRL-TAB**
 - Search for text on a page: **CTRL-F or /**

All the keyboard goodness you will ever need:

Command	Firefox
Add Bookmark	Ctrl / Cmd+D
Back	Backspace ¹ Alt+<- Win/Linux Ctrl / Cmd+[Mac/Linux Cmd+<- Mac
Bookmarks	Ctrl / Cmd+B Ctrl+I Win
Caret Browsing	F7
Close Tab	Ctrl / Cmd+W Ctrl / Cmd+F4
Close Window	Ctrl / Cmd+Shift+W Alt / Option+F4
Complete .com Address ²	Ctrl / Cmd+Enter / Return
Complete .net Address ²	Shift+Enter / Return
Complete .org Address ²	Ctrl / Cmd+Shift+Enter / Return

Command	Firefox
Copy	Ctrl/Cmd+C
Cut	Ctrl/Cmd+X
Decrease Text Size	Ctrl/Cmd+-
Delete	Del
Delete Individual Form Auto-Complete Entry	Shift+Del
DOM Inspector	Ctrl+Shift+I Win/Linux
Downloads	Ctrl+J Win Ctrl+Y Linux Cmd+J Mac
Find Again	Ctrl/Cmd+G F3
Find As You Type Link	'
Find As You Type Text	/
Find Previous	Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+G Shift+F3
Find in This Page	Ctrl/Cmd+F
Forward	Shift+Backspace ¹ Alt/Option+-> Win/Linux Ctrl/Cmd+] Mac/Linux Cmd+-> Mac
Go Down One Line	Down
Go Up One Line	Up
Go Down One Page	PageDown
Go Up One Page	PageUp
Go to Bottom of Page	End
Go to Top of Page	Home

Command	Firefox
Full Screen	F11 Win/Linux
Help	F1 Win/Linux
History	Ctrl/Cmd+H
Home Page	Alt/Option+Home
Increase Text Size	Ctrl/Cmd++
Move to Next Frame	F6
Move to Previous Frame	Shift+F6
New Mail Message ³	Ctrl/Cmd+M
New Tab	Ctrl/Cmd+T
Next Tab	Ctrl+Tab Win/Linux Cmd+Opt+Tab Mac Ctrl/Cmd+PageDown
New Window	Ctrl/Cmd+N
Open File	Ctrl/Cmd+O
Open Link	Enter/Return
Open Link in New Tab	Ctrl/Cmd+Enter/Return
Open Link in New Window	Shift+Enter/Return
Open Address in New Tab ²	Alt/Option+Enter/Return
Page Info	Ctrl+I Linux Cmd+I Mac
Page Source	Ctrl/Cmd+U
Paste	Ctrl/Cmd+V
Previous Tab	Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+Tab Ctrl/Cmd+PageUp

Command	Firefox
Print	Ctrl/Cmd+P
Redo	Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+Z Ctrl+Y Win/Linux
Reload	F5 Ctrl/Cmd+R
Reload (override cache)	Ctrl/Cmd+F5 Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+R
Restore Text Size	Ctrl/Cmd+0
Save Page As	Ctrl/Cmd+S
Save Link Target As	Alt/Option+Enter/Return
Select All	Ctrl/Cmd+A
Select Location Bar	Ctrl/Cmd+L Alt+D Win/Linux
Select Next Auto-Complete entry in text field	Down
Select Previous Auto-Complete entry in text field	Up
Select Next Search Engine in Search Bar	Ctrl/Cmd+Down
Select Previous Search Engine in Search Bar	Ctrl/Cmd+Up
Select Tab [1 to 9]	Ctrl+[1 to 9] Win Alt+[1 to 9] Linux Cmd+[1 to 9] Mac
Stop	Esc
Toggle Checkbox	Spacebar
Undo	Ctrl/Cmd+Z
Web Search	Ctrl/Cmd+K Ctrl+J Linux

About “about: config”

Welcome to scary land. Type about:config into the browser

What is this?

Publicly available user settings that can be tweaked by you for which there is no pretty user interface yet. **It is not user friendly.** Buyers beware. Make sure you have a secondary profile handy if you are going to go hog wild

You can search/limit the list using the top “Filter” option

Lets see a few at work:

- Filter: hideGoButton > Double Click to toggle to **True**.
- Look at a page with text: Double click a word. Notice the trailing space is selected too.
layout.word_select.eat_space_to_next_word > Toggle to **False**
- Things having to do with Tabs
 - Want to open searches in a new tab/Keep your existing page?
browser.search.openintab > Toggle to **True**
 - Want to get rid/modify the Close buttons on Tabs?
browser.tabs.closeButtons > 1 = Default, 2 = Show None, 3= Show a single X at right
- Enable Spell Check for regular inputs as well as the default text areas
layout.spellcheckDefault > Change to 2
- Make a page load faster:
 - Right click on the page and select New > Integer
 - Add: nglayout.initialpaint.delay
 - Value: Any number less than 250
 - This is a millisecond value, Firefox defaults to ¼ of a second
- Change what is searched in the address bar

- Default is Google “I’m Feeling Lucky”
- Keyword.URL
<http://iii.library.unt.edu/search/X?SEARCH=>
http://www.worldcatlibraries.org/search?qt=worldcat_org&q=
- Configure Preferences of Extensions
 - Dictionary Search Defaults to tfd.com ([http://www.tfd.com/\\$](http://www.tfd.com/$))
 - Change To: [http://search.eb.com/search?query=\\$](http://search.eb.com/search?query=$)
 - This is actually a bad example because there are configurable preferences for this extension, but for some there might not be

Find descriptions of all these at: <http://kb.mozillazine.org/Category:Preferences>

Themes, userContent.css, userChrome.css

Themes:

Boring: <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/browse/type:2>

Nerdy:

C:\Documents and Settings\USERNAME\Application Data\Mozilla\Firefox\Profiles\GIBBERISH.profileName\chrome

Two Example CSS Files exist by default that need to be renamed to:

userChrome

For styles that affect the appearance of the Firefox chrome. That includes the toolbars, scrollbars, dialog boxes, menu bars, context menus, and other stuff that Firefox drapes around the displayed page. Since these styles are written using Mozilla's XUL tag set, userChrome.css provides styling for all Firefox XUL content.

userContent

For styles that affect the appearance of CSS-styled pages that appear in a normal browser window. These styles work on HTML, XHTML, MathML, and CSS-styled generic XML documents.

IN BOTH CASES: After editing the files you have to restart Firefox to see changes

Things to do with userChrome.css

- Hide Stuff
 - Entire Menu
 - Individual Menu Items
 - Useless Icons

Examples:

Hide Entire Menus

```
menu[Label="XXXXXX"], menu[Label="ZZZZZ"] {
    display: none !important;
}
```

Ex.

```
/* Hide the entire Help Menu */
menu[Label="Help"] { display:none !important; }
```

Hide Individual Menu Items and Separators

```
menuitem[label="New Message..."] { display: none; }
menuitem[label="New Message..."] + menuseparator { display: none; }
```

Hide Useless Icons

```
/* Eliminate the throbber and its annoying movement.*/
#throbber-box {display: none !important; }
```

```
/*Remove magnifying glass button from search box*/
.search-go-button-stack { display: none !important; }
```

Tab Tweaks

```
/* Show tab favicon only on selected tab */
tab:not([selected="true"]) .tab-icon {
  display: none !important; }

/* Make inactive tabs hardly visible */
#content tab:not([selected="true"]) {
  -moz-opacity: 0.5 !important; }
```

Other things you could do:

- add bottom borders to tabs
- Change background colors/images of the toolbars
- Change the fonts of Menu Items
- Etc.

See: http://kb.mozillazine.org/UserChrome.css_Element_Names/IDs for Names and IDs

Things to do with userContent.css

Remember: Effects the HTML of the page, not Firefox interface

```
/* Make most text on any website bigger */
```

```
html>body { font-size: 100% !important;
  line-height: normal !important;
}
```

```
/*Or make changes to only a single site, assuming you know some of the sites IDs or Classes */
```

```
@-moz-document url-prefix(http://www.library.unt.edu/) {
body {background: #000000 !important;} /*make the background black */
#visual-portal-wrapper { /*fixed width, centered */
  width:760px;
  margin:0 auto;
  background-color:#FFFFFF !important;
}
#portal-column-two { display:none; !important; } /*remove the right sidebar */
}
```

Extensions Lightning Talks

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/browse/type:1>

Addblock & Addblock +: Filter out most adds from sites

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/1865>

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/10>

Addblock Filter.G Updater: New updates for addblock

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/1136>

ColorZilla: Pick any color from the window

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/271>

CustomizeGoogle: Add some extra search options for other services, remove adds, etc.

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/743>

Greasmonkey: small scripts to do helpful things

- <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/748>
 - Pagerization: <http://userscripts.org/scripts/show/7623>

GUtil: Quick Access to Google Tools from icon

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/3755>

Link Alert: Change the cursor to have special icon depending on the target of a link

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/3199>

IE View: Open a page in Internet Explorer, configurable as to which sites/pages

<http://ieview.mozdev.org/>

Other Cool Toys

Firefox on a Flash Drive: http://portableapps.com/apps/internet/firefox_portable

Flock: Integration with Social Networking Sites, blogging apps, and other web2.0 stuff. This is “fork” of Firefox, based on the 1.5 Codebase, so soon to be slightly dated. <http://www.flock.com/>

See this Wikipedia article for differences between the two browsers:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flock_%28web_browser%29

Read Me

Through UNT Library Safari Subscription:

- *Firefox Hacks* By Nigel McFarlane
- *Firefox And Thunderbird Garage* By Chris Hofmann; Marcia Knous; John Hedtke
- *Firefox Secrets* by Cheah Chu Yeow

Also:

- <http://lifehacker.com/software/firefox/>

Searches:

- Firefox “search plugins”
- userChrome
- about:config
- extensions

The Future

Firefox 3.0 is slated for release in Q4 2007 or Q1 2008

Features:

- Passes Acid2 test
- Better SVG support
- Support a number of HTML 5 elements
- Theme integration with Operating system (Mac looks like aqua, Vista will look like Vista, etc)
- Microformat support
- Bookmarks stored in SQLite database, taggable
- Improved Download manager