

# Internet Explorer still king of Web browsers

Looking over site access statistics for the 40-plus Web sites I support, I see that Internet Explorer (IE) still remains the prominent Web browser. Web site visitors used IE for more than 80 percent of the Web page hits followed by 12 percent



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using Firefox and less than half of one percent utilizing Google's Chrome browser.

Since IE comes with Microsoft Windows and has been vastly improved over the years especially with version 7, it is still the browser of choice. With many people still using IE6 they have been missing out on all the improvements of IE 7 that has been available for over a year.

Everyone can now enjoy even more performance, new features, and better compatibility with the next generation Web browser called Internet Explorer 8 (IE 8) now available at [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com).

Since many of the banking and online commerce sites still require Internet Explorer I have always been a supporter of it even though I also really like Google's Chrome Web browser. With all the new capabilities of IE 8 we are about to cover I recommend upgrading from IE 7 and especially from IE 6.

After you download IE 8 for free at [Microsoft.com](http://Microsoft.com) and install it, the initial appearance and layout is identical to IE 7. For you IE6 users, the change to IE 8 will be huge. The tabbed browsing was implemented by Microsoft into IE 7 and was

carried over into IE 8. This tabbed browsing capability is pretty much a standard feature in all Web browsers.

Safer browsing and faster access to online entities are the primary enhancements in IE 8. One of the things about IE 8 that

I really like is the domain highlighter within the URL in the address box.

In other words, when I am logged into my bank at [www.WellsFargo.com](http://www.WellsFargo.com) and the address string is really long, the [WellsFargo.com](http://www.WellsFargo.com) is bolded and highlighted so it stands out from the rest of the URL address text string. This enables me to clearly see that I am on the correct and valid Web site rather than a fake page that could steal my private information.

Another new safety feature of IE 8 is the SmartScreen filters which protects your computer from malicious and deceptive Web sites. I have had an add-on program from McAfee that worked with IE 6 and IE 7 for years now which warned me of bad Web sites that had spyware or bad cookies on them. That protection is available in IE 8 through their new SmartScreen filters by flagging the bad sites before you get into them.

This protection is essential since the majority of the malware

problems I see on computers now come from bad Web sites rather than emailed sources.

The SmartScreen protection filter comes enabled by default so there is nothing you have to do or turn on. If a site you are trying to get to triggers the SmartScreen filter, you will see a pop up with a big red warning window to save you from phishing sites and other bad stuff out there on the Web.

IE 8 has a new feature called Accelerators which help you quickly look up information based on highlighted text on a Webpage. On previous browsers when I saw a word, phrase, address or name I had to perform a copy/paste operation into another browser instance, tab, or search engine box to look it up.

Now with IE 8's Accelerators, you just highlight any text word or phrase and a small blue arrow icon will appear just to the corner of it. Click on the blue arrow and you then will have a choice of Accelerators.

For example, you can highlight an address on any Webpage, click the blue arrow, and select the "Map with Live Search" Accelerator. A new tab will start up with the map of that address showing the exact location through [Maps.Live.com](http://Maps.Live.com).

This eliminates the steps of having to start up a new tab or browsing session, going to a mapping Website, and then doing a copy/paste of address text

into the mapping address box.

Another handy Accelerator is the "Translate with Live Search" which provides an English-to-another-language translation in just seconds. You can highlight a word, phrase, sentence or even multiple paragraphs, hit the blue arrow and then the translate Accelerator, and then that English text is instantly translated word-for-word into the language of your choice.

With text selected you can also choose the "All Accelerators" to see the rest of the tools along with a link to find even more free accelerators online. After finding and installing these numerous other Accelerators you can then manage them in the order you wish them to appear.

IE's Web Slices enable the user to keep a watchful eye on other Web sites that are frequently updated like sport scores, eBay and financial sites. You will know if Web pages are Web Slice enabled when you see a small green slice appear in the corner of the page or edge of the frame.

Click on that green Web Slices icon and it will prompt you to add it to your favorites bar. After

that is done, the next time that Web item automatically updates the new icon in the favorites bar will blink to get your attention. This is quite handy when bidding [eBay.com](http://eBay.com) or monitoring stock prices during a busy trading day.

Along with all these new features and capabilities, Microsoft has also tuned up IE 8's overall speed and performance. With better memory management, script engine tweaking, faster loading and Java efficiencies, IE 8 is snappier and quicker than

IE 7 even with all that new stuff added.

Bottom line: Microsoft's Internet Explorer is still the king of the Web browsers and they have gone a long way to keep their 80 percent market share with the new IE 8.

Next week's column: Facebook and Twitter.

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