

Google introduces 'Chrome' Web browser

Extra! Extra! Google Rules The World!

Or at least it sometimes feels about like that in the computer world. We search for most everything on Google.com, we look at our planet through Google Earth, we draw incredible three dimensional designs with Google's SketchUp, we send e-mail free with Google's Gmail and we get directions from Google Maps.

This last week Google threw a new one out there for us to devour call "Chrome." Google Chrome is the newest Web browser to compete with Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE) and Mozilla's Firefox. Being the tech head I am, upon its release on Tuesday, Sept. 2, Chrome was immediately installed on my Vista laptop at home for testing.

The free Internet browser quickly downloaded from www.google.com, and during the installation Chrome automatically imported all of my bookmarks



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and links from IE. It only runs on Windows XP and Vista so I could not test it out on our iMac.

The complete installation ran so fast on my Vista laptop I missed most of it watching a funny E-Trade commercial with a baby talking on a cell phone — you've got to see that one.

The first thing I noticed when I initially started up Chrome was how incredibly quick it came up and then how simple and compact the application's layout was. The vast majority of the screen is dedicated to the site you are surfing to rather than consumed by the browser own control bars, buttons and menu drop downs.

What surprised me was the lack of a Google search window in the browser. Then when I started to type in a Web site URL into what is called the Chrome OmniBox the auto-complete function began which started displaying Web site suggestions, search results, and past

Web site URLs I had already visited.

This multi-function Omni-Box provides plenty of Web destinations that change with every keystroke to narrow down your choices.

Tabbed browsing is of course in Chrome like it is in IE7 and Firefox which gives you the ability to have multiple browser sessions open and active under each tab located at the top. You can even move them around in order by clicking and dragging the tab itself.

The next thing I noticed was the speed of the lookups and painting of the screen. In other words, it works really fast.

IE 7 has always been sluggish to me and Firefox drives me crazy the way it slowly displays one image or screen section at a time. Google's Chrome Web browser quickly and smoothly shows the Web site content with minimal delay.

If you have a fast ISP (Internet Service Provider) like DSL in Brenham and you start using Chrome, your surfing experience will go into hyper-drive.

In the past especially when

writing these articles, I have had numerous tabs open within IE since I need to reference and research several Web sources on a topic. Occasionally IE7 would error out and kill not just the tab and Web site I had open but also dropped out all the others.

This is because IE7 ties them all together to a single master process and when it dies they all die.

Google's Chrome spins off independent processes for each tab or Web surfing session which eliminates the single point of failure. The application architecture provides a much more stable environment and virtually eliminates total browser program deaths.

The default start up page consists of the last nine Web sites you have visited represented in a grid of nine large thumbnails. This way you can immediately pick up where you were during the last surfing session.

You can change this by clicking on the small wrench in the upper left corner of the screen and then options. From there you can enter the Web site to be your home page like in IE.

Another neat feature Chrome has is the ability to quickly create application shortcuts that go directly to your desktop, start list, or quick launch list on your taskbar. I created one of these from the Web site Site24x7.com which monitors all of my client Web sites.

me the status of my Web sites.

Finally one of the best features is the safe browsing capability. For a couple of years now I have used the McAfee SiteAdvisor as a proactive plug-in for IE7 to warn me and my clients when we are about to enter a bad Web site with spyware or any other type of malware.

Google has this protection built into Chrome and it automatically alerts you with a big red warning screen that you are about to enter a malware flagged site.

So the good news is that Chrome is quick, clean and stable, but there are some quirks about it since it is so new — beta new in fact.

First of all I could get into my primary online banking but not my secondary account. Like I said my Site24x7.com works fine but my LogMeIn.com does not. This is due to those Web sites not yet supporting the new Google Chrome browser rather than the browser not ready for the site.

That should change soon with anticipated Chrome popularity growth and general industry acceptance. GoToMyPC.com worked just fine since they have a separate downloadable applet for remote desktop control.

Keep in mind that just by using the Google Chrome browser you will be feeding even more information about yourself to the advertisers and the massive Google information vault.

searches for the Chinese communists during the Olympics last month but thought not to change the logo on Memorial Day as they do for most every other holiday.

That said, these smart little liberal pinheads wrote one heck of a cool browser and I plan to use it on a regular basis for the positive reasons I have stated in this article.

Bottom line: With the new clean and quick Web browser called Chrome, Google has added another brick in their wall of world domination.

Next week's column: Vista backups.

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