

**In This Issue**

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**1. You and Your Browser****What exactly is a browser anyway?**

Let's start with what it's not. A browser is not Google, not a search engine, not AOL, and not broadband. A browser is software that you use to see and hear what's available on the World Wide Web. (You can use a browser for other things, too, but let's stay with their more common uses for now.) Browsers take you to websites and webpages where you can read and send email, see images and movies, and listen to music. You can also download and upload files using your browser. Your browser allows you to navigate to information resources that are organized as URL's (Uniform Resource Locators) or web addresses. The major web browsers are Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari, Google Chrome, and Opera.

**Why do I need a browser to connect to the Internet? Why can't my computer just do it?**

You need a browser to connect to the Internet because browsing is only one of many things that a computer can do. A browser is software that directs your computer to the Internet, interprets your requests, and translates them into the language used by all of the computers on World Wide Web. Your computer is simply hardware -- machine that will follow instructions. Software supplies the instructions.

**OK, so just HOW does my browser connect to the Internet?**

Strictly speaking, it's your computer and its operating system that connect to the Internet, either by a wired or a wireless connection, such as Ethernet, Cable Internet or DSL (Digital Subscriber Line), or by Wi-Fi or wireless broadband. Your browser communicates with the operating system, and the operating system communicates with the Internet.

**Why is there such a choice of browsers? What's the difference?**

A browser, like all software, is a product, produced and marketed by people who want you to use it. Objective: To gain market share. It is estimated that 1.7 billion people are using the Internet worldwide in 2009. If you make a better browser, the world will beat a path to your website and download it, and your customer base could number in the hundreds of millions quickly. Anatomically speaking, all web browsers are about the same. They differ from one another in their "look and feel"—when, where, and how you click to make something happen. It's largely a matter of taste. All of the major browsers can use plug-in's and add-on's, like Flash Player for movies and Acrobat Reader for opening PDF files.

### **My computer came with a browser on it. Why would I want another one?**

Microsoft includes Internet Explorer with Windows for the same reason that Apple includes Safari in OS X--so you will use it and they can command a greater share of the market. Web browsing is what most people do on a computer most of the time, and competition among browser makers is stiff. Back in 1990's the Mozilla Foundation produced the earliest browser, called "Mosaic," and later "Netscape." Today, Firefox is considered by some to be faster and more secure than Internet Explorer and Safari, while Google's Chrome and the Opera browser are attempts to provide a new look and feel for the browsing experience.

### **What exactly do people mean when they talk about web-based malware?**

Malware is a catch-all term for thousands of varieties of computer viruses and worms. While viruses and worms are not new -- we have all heard about computers getting infected by email and email attachments -- websites emerged in 2009 as the primary vehicle for spreading of malware. Browsers create a two-way communications channel between your computer and a website. If the site is infected or "dirty," malware may enter your computer without warning in a matter of seconds. That's web-based malware.

### **Why isn't my anti-virus or anti-spyware program enough to protect my computer from web-based malware?**

There are two reasons. Anti-virus and anti-spyware work pretty much like vaccines. Just as no single vaccine can protect you against every strain of flu, no security program can protect your computer against every kind of malware. And just as new strains of flu emerge season after season, so too new kinds of computer viruses -- as well as variants of old ones -- crop up on a daily basis. Even if you have effective security software, the Bad Guys are always cooking up ways to beat it, like tricking you into downloading malware voluntarily by browsing to a dirty website or clicking on a rigged link that promises you something you want and delivers something else you don't want.

### **What DOES protect my computer from malware and other threats on the Web?**

You are your first line of defense -- you need to be aware of threats posed by browsing. But don't make the mistake of thinking that you can tell which websites are clean and dirty by how they look, who appears to own or run them, how often you have visited them without incident, or based on a recommendation from a friend or co-worker. What was a safe website or webpage yesterday may have been hacked overnight and now contain malware. Remember: You browse at your own risk. Your second line of defense is good-quality security software -- including anti-virus, anti-spyware, and a two-way software firewall—and a hardware firewall. Third, use key scrambling or anti-keylogging software that encrypts your keystrokes and helps prevent Bad Guys from getting a hold of sensitive information you enter on your computer. Fourth, keep your software updated and patched. (See Updates and Patches below.) If you suspect that your computer may be infected, call the support line of the manufacturer of your security software or of your computer, your ISP (Internet Service Provider) or contact your local computer support personnel or a computer consultant.

## **What should I look for when I am shopping for the right protection against malware?**

Read reviews that compare the effectiveness, reliability, and ease-of-use of security software products. Get recommendations by calling the support line of the manufacturer of your computer or your Internet Service Provider, or by talking with your local computer support personnel or a computer consultant knowledgeable about security. Many good-quality security software suites cost less than \$100, so this is not a big budget item. Concentrate on quality, not on a \$10 or \$20 price difference. When considering freeware, keep in mind that if you have a problem, support may be hard to come by or simply non-existent.

**More information:** <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>  
<http://www.learnthenet.com/english/html/12browser.htm>  
<http://safeweb.norton.com/dirtysites>  
<http://www.pcmag.com/products/0,,tqs=1226769170B6C28F5A627C1DBAEA45495542EA9E,00.asp?action=defaultadvancedquery&cid=25442&sid=25442&gridtitle=Recent%20Product%20Reviews&googlequery=q%3D%26mt823%3D21142%26sort%3Dcho%26dir%3Ddesc&stpdinglp=1>  
<http://www.qfxsoftware.com/>

## **2. Software Patches and Updates**

Microsoft and Apple:

Windows: <http://www.microsoft.com/security/updates/bulletins/200909.aspx>

OS X: <http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1338> and  
[http://www.appleinsider.com/articles/09/09/10/apple\\_releases\\_mac\\_os\\_x\\_10\\_6\\_1\\_security\\_updates\\_more.html](http://www.appleinsider.com/articles/09/09/10/apple_releases_mac_os_x_10_6_1_security_updates_more.html)

iPhone/iPod: <http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=305744>

iPod: <http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1483>

Other software products:

Windows Acrobat Reader

<http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/product.jsp?product=10&platform=Windows>

OS X Acrobat Reader:

<http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/product.jsp?product=1&platform=Macintosh>

Adobe Flash Player:

<http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>

Firefox: <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/update/>

Safari: [http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/apple/application\\_updates/safari.html](http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/apple/application_updates/safari.html)

Opera: <http://www.opera.com/>

Google Chrome: <http://googlechromeupdate.com/updates.html>

Java: <http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp>

iTunes: <http://www.tuaw.com/2009/09/22/itunes-9-0-1-now-in-software-update/>  
<http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/>

iWork & iWork.com:  
<http://theappleblog.com/2009/09/29/iwork-09-iwork-com-updated/>

Symantec:  
<http://service1.symantec.com/SUPPORT/sharedtech.nsf/docid/2002021908382713>

Norton:  
[http://www.symantec.com/business/security\\_response/definitions/download/detail.jsp?gid=n95](http://www.symantec.com/business/security_response/definitions/download/detail.jsp?gid=n95)

McAfee: [http://www.mcafee.com/apps/downloads/security\\_updates/dat.asp](http://www.mcafee.com/apps/downloads/security_updates/dat.asp)

Kaspersky: <http://www.kaspersky.com/avupdates>

Sophos: <https://secure.sophos.com/support/updates/>

Panda: <http://www.pandasecurity.com/homeusers/downloads/clients/>

BitDefender: <http://www.bitdefender.com/site/view/Desktop-Products-Updates.html>

### 3. On the Weird Side of Browsers.....

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGyoA92ubzs>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4MwTvtYrUQ>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5535Ts-iOP0>

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