

President's Corner: Leaving Internet Explorer

By Eric Moore

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In a [blog post](#) two months ago, Microsoft Windows Principal Architect Chris Jackson urged companies to leave Internet Explorer as their default browser. Although Microsoft will continue to provide updates to maintain its safety and reliability, it will not continue to extend its capability of supporting new web standards, such as streaming media and interactive content. In short, it will become less compatible with current and new web sites over time. Even now, you may know of web sites such as Yahoo!, which have posted statements saying they no longer support Internet Explorer and recommend switching to another web browser such as Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox. As far as Microsoft is concerned, if you are using Windows 10, the recommended replacement for Internet Explorer is Microsoft Edge, which was introduced with and is maintained as part of the Windows 10 operating system. Whichever browser you switch to as your default will depend on your browsing needs. The following is a brief synopsis of the major competitors and what features they offer.

[Microsoft Edge](#) is touted by Microsoft as a faster, safer web browser with a cleaner interface. It has features such as tabbed browsing, search tips from Cortana, a reading list, Grammar Tools, a dictionary, and annotation tools. As an integrated part of Windows 10, it is automatically installed as part of Windows 10 and is set as the default web browser. It is also supported on other operating systems such as iOS and Android.

[Google Chrome](#) is a popular alternative to Internet Explorer and Microsoft Edge with an interface like that of Edge. It has tabbed browsing, closely integrated support for various Google services such as Gmail and Google Docs, a search feature for any text you highlight on a web page, and the ability to synchronize your account and bookmarks with other devices running Chrome. It is available for Windows, Mac OS X, iOS, and Android.

[Mozilla Firefox](#) is another popular alternative. It has tabbed browsing, private browsing, tracking protection (for ads that follow your online activity), the ability to block ads and scripts that slow down web pages, and the ability to synchronize your account with other devices running Firefox. It is available for Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, and Android.

[Opera](#) is yet another with a smaller user base than others. It has features such as built-in ad blocking and VPN, protection from fraudulent sites and malware, a video pop-out feature, a currency converter, personal news feeds, and the ability to synchronize your bookmarks and other data with other devices running Opera. It is available for Windows, Android, iOS, Mac OS X, and Linux.

There are other web browsers available, of which some may have unique features not found in the aforementioned ones. Whichever is best for you will depend on your browsing needs. Some web sites work best with one web browser, while others are better viewed with another. Your mileage may vary, so trying the alternatives is the best way to determine which one is best for you. The convenience of most web browsers is that they are free to download and install, so trying them out is easy. Many are also supported on multiple operating systems, which is convenient if you use different operating systems. Even if you settle on one as your favorite, having a second web browser installed may come in handy for those cases where a site doesn't function as it should and you need to know if it is the browser or a problem with the website itself.

If a web browser doesn't have a feature you need, such as secure password management or ad blocking, extensions and plugins may be available. Do be aware that not all are safe to install and even if they are, they may slow the browser—especially if you install several of them at the same time. When considering whether to add an extension, you best research it on the Internet to see if it has a known track record of being safe, stable, and reliable. (In my opinion search extensions such as those for Ask and online shopping are pointless, as you can easily find what you need with a search engine such as Google or Bing. They also tend to clutter the browser window, so you see less of the content on a web page.)

If you decide to switch from one web browser to another, you needn't start over. Exporting/importing your bookmarks—and sometimes your settings, cookies, and other personalized data—is possible. The steps for exporting and importing data vary depending on the web browser. You can easily find instructions on how to do so by searching the Internet for such phrases such as *importing bookmarks from Internet Explorer to Chrome*. YouTube videos probably exist on how to do so, if you find a video demonstration is easier to follow than written instructions with pictures.

Hopefully this information is useful to you. I will present on this topic at this month's general meeting on April 13. A demonstration of each of the major browsers with a chance to compare them side-by-side will be included.