Web browsers - Firefox

A Web Browser is a program that enables the user to view web pages.

Mozilla Firefox is a free, open-source, cross-platform web browser coordinated by Mozilla Corporation. Firefox is a successor to the Netscape Navigator web browser, which was the dominant browser before Microsoft came up with Internet Explorer.

In simple words, Firefox is a fast, flexible and secure web browser that helped revolutionize the way people browse the web.
Browser Interface

As mentioned before, Firefox is simple. It has a very simple, concise, attractive and efficient look and design of its interface. The following table and snapshot show you the structure of Firefox browser interface:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pointer</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Firefox Button</td>
<td>Contains all the menu items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tab strip</td>
<td>Shows the tabs above the location bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Location Bar</td>
<td>Text box for typing the URL of a web page. It is sometimes referred to as the Address Bar or the Awesome Bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bookmark Star (or button)</td>
<td>Enables you to remove, name, move, or tag a bookmark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Search Box</td>
<td>Text box for typing a search term, with a menu of search engines to select from.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Simplified Reload/Stop Button</td>
<td>Located inside the awesome bar to stop loading pages or reload pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Browse Buttons</td>
<td>Used when browsing the web. These include Back, Forward, and Home buttons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tabbed Browsing

Tabbed browsing enables you to open multiple websites in a single browser window. You can open web pages in new tabs, and quickly switch between them by clicking the tabs you want to view. Tabbed browsing is extremely useful in a variety of situations, such as:

- Potentially reducing the number of items displayed on the taskbar.
- Eliminating the need to repeatedly use the “back” button.
- If you are reading a webpage and would like to click a link without losing your place, or you are doing an online shopping and you want to compare between two products, you can open the link or the second product in a second tab. This way you can keep both pages available and switch easily between them.

Moreover, Firefox gives more options with the Tabbed Browsing rather than merely to open the links in new tabs. It allows you to organize the tabs (changing their order) by moving them, grouping them and pinning them.

Making a new tab

- **Using the New Tab button (+)** – Click the New Tab button (+) on the right side of the last tab, to open a new tab.
- **Using the keyboard shortcut** – It’s Ctrl + T.
- **Using the Home menu** – Click the “Firefox” button, then go to “New Tab” option and click on “New tab”.

![Tabbed Browsing Example]
Closing and restoring tabs

You can close a tab two ways:

- **By clicking the “Close” button at end of the tab, on the right.**

- By using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl + W to close the current tab.

If you accidentally closed one of your tabs and want to bring it back, you can do so in two ways:

- Click the Home button (also known as the Firefox button), go to the History menu, then mouse over “Recently Closed Tabs”. You can select the tab you want to restore.
Search bar

The Search Bar is one of the features that I love most. It is a text bar located in the top right corner in the navigation toolbar of the Firefox window. It can be used to query, or search, the most popular search engines (including Google, Yahoo and even Wikipedia) directly. The search results will be displayed directly in your Firefox browser. By default, Firefox includes the following 7 search engines: Google, Yahoo, Bing, Amazon, eBay, Twitter and Wikipedia. The active search engine is identified by name inside the search bar, and with an icon to the left of the name.

How to change the search engine?

To change the active search engine:

- Click the down arrow next to the search engine’s icon.
- Select a new search engine from the 7 search engines.

Also, you can add other search engines such as YouTube by selecting “Manage Search Engine”, and then selecting “Get more search engines”.
How to bookmark a web page?

There are many ways to create a bookmark.

**Using the Bookmark Star:** You can use the bookmark star inside the location bar to bookmark a web page. Simply click the star once to place the bookmark automatically under the Unsorted Bookmarks list/folder. Click the star twice to open the Edit Bookmark dialog where you can specify the name of the webpage, the destination saved folder and to tag it.
• **Using the Keyboard Shortcut:** You can also bookmark a page using the keyboard shortcut: Ctrl + D. The “Edit Bookmarks” dialog box will open.

![Image of Firefox bookmarks manager]

**How to remove a bookmark?**

Open the Bookmarks manager by clicking the Firefox button. From here you can organize your bookmarks into folders and delete bookmarks you no longer need.
Firefox Sync

One of the latest improvements and new features in Firefox is “Firefox Sync”. This essential feature helps users to synchronize their bookmarks across computers or smart phones with Android, meaning you’ll have access to your bookmarks everywhere.

Assuming that you have the latest version of Firefox, follow these steps to setup Firefox Sync:

1. **Click on the “Firefox” button.**
2. **Click “Set Up Sync”.**
3. **Click the “Create a New Account” button in the “Firefox Sync Setup” window.**
4. **Fill out the Account Details form with your email address and chosen password.**
5. **After filling out the form with your details, you will see a “Sync Key”. Please notice the message displayed under the sync key. As shown, this key will be used each time you want to set up and add another device to the sync account. Therefore, it is recommended to save it and keep it in a safe place (such as your Dropbox account). The key will be saved as an HTML file.**
6. **By saving the sync key, the set up process is done, so click on the “Done” button to wrap up.**

Of course, syncing one device isn’t exactly useful. You’ll want to sync a few. To add another device to your sync account, open Firefox on your second device and follow these steps:

1. **Go to the “Set Up Sync” option from the “Firefox” button to start the setup process again.**
2. **Instead of clicking “Create a New Account”, click on “I Have an Account” button in the “Firefox Sync Setup” window.**
3. **You will see the “Add a Device” window and you will have three sets of codes. Leave these windows open for a while and go back to the first computer where you set up the Firefox Sync account.**
4. **In your first computer, click on the “Firefox” button.**
5. **Go to Options and click on “Options”.**
6. **Click on Sync.**
7. **Click on the “Pair a Device” link and write down the three codes that you got in the previous step.**

Don’t have access to your first computer? You still have the ability to add a device, by doing the following:

- **Click the “I don’t have the device with me” link under the three sets of codes to sign in with your Sync account. Fill out the form with your email address and password and the Sync Key (which you saved as an HTML file earlier).**

Repeat the process for other devices that you use. For instance, you can use Sync feature with Firefox installed on Android phones, or even with Firefox Home installed on the iPhone.
Options and Settings

To control the options, preferences and settings of your browser – including the tabs and content – go to the “Options” window and customize your browser as you like:

1. Click the “Firefox” button.
2. Go over to the “Options” menu and select “Options”.

![Firefox Options Window]

![Firefox Options Menu]

![Firefox Tracking Options]

Firefox will remember your browsing, download, form and search history, and keep cookies from websites you visit.

You may want to clear your recent history, or remove individual cookies.
There you will find 8 different settings panels: General; Tabs; Content; Applications; Privacy; Security; Sync and Advanced.

- **General** contains options that allow the user to:
  - Set which web pages Firefox displays at startup.
  - Set what Firefox should do when downloading files, including where you want to store downloaded files.
  - Configure add-ons including extensions, themes and plug-ins.

- **Tabs** includes options that help the user to configure the behavior of tabbed browsing features, such as:
  - Specifying how Firefox should open the new pages: in a new tab; in a current tab; or in a new window.
  - Setting when Firefox should display warning messages based on the tab behavior.
  - Deciding when Firefox should hide its tab bar.

- **Content** is a list of options related to how websites are displayed, such as:
  - Blocking pop-up windows.
  - Enabling JavaScript and Java.
  - Applications shows a list of file types and their associated applications. This allows the user to decide how Firefox should handle different types of files. For instance: PDF documents. Should they be opened in Firefox using a plug-in, or saved like any other file?

- **Privacy** is a list of options to set:
  - Whether you want Firefox to remember history or use custom settings, for instance if you will accept cookies or not.
  - When to clear your private data.
  - How to use the Location Bar.

- **Security** contains options that help the user to keep their web browsing safe by:
  - Setting Firefox to warn the user when other sites want to install add-ons.
  - Checking if the visited webpage is one of the possible attack sites or web forgeries.
  - Managing the passwords by setting Firefox to remember passwords for sites or by setting a master password to protect saved passwords and other private data.
• **Sync** was discussed earlier. It lets you set up or manage a Firefox Sync account that helps you to synchronize bookmarks across your devices.

• **Advanced** includes more options categorized under four tabs
  o **General** is a list of general browser settings such as:
    ▪ Setting spelling preferences.
    ▪ Choosing whether Firefox always checks to see if it is your default browser.
  o **Network** includes options for:
    ▪ Configuring how Firefox should connect to the Internet (most people don’t need to worry about this one).
    ▪ Increasing or decreasing the cache size.
  o **Update** includes options for setting if you want Firefox to automatically update itself and its add-ons.
  o **Encryption** lists protocol and certificate preferences.