



Discover better web browsing with Firefox

See the internet in a new light with the very best browser computing has to offer.



IF YOU'RE new to Linux and more familiar with Windows, your web browsing up until now will probably have been done with Microsoft's *Internet Explorer*. While this was once cutting-edge technology, it has failed to keep pace with the emerging standards and technologies of the world wide web.

The authors of *Firefox*, on the other hand, are very much committed to conforming to the latest

available standards, and incorporating new technologies such as CSS2, proper support for PNG graphics, SVG and many other standards. The actual technologies won't really matter to most people, but the end result is that *Firefox* delivers a fast, trouble-free and great-looking web experience.

Those authors, developers working together as the non-profit Mozilla Foundation, claim that nearly 100 million people use *Firefox*, and it is one of the

most downloaded applications ever. *Firefox* is a true open-source success story, and it has made its mark because it's a wonderful tool, not just because it's an open-source alternative to *Explorer*.

One of its greatest attractions is its reputation as a secure browser. The Mozilla Foundation has drawn on lessons learned from previous browsers to protect

FIREFOX AT A GLANCE

The navigation buttons are clear and self-explanatory.

This bookmarks bar can hold useful shortcuts.

The Sidebar. Here it's displaying a history of pages visited.

The status bar will display important messages.

The menu bar has a refreshingly limited set of options.

The URL bar. Just type a web address in here.

Live bookmarks can be made from some sites.

This is the throbber – it spins when the browser is downloading information.

Easy to customise, the search bar can even check your spelling.

Switch between tabs using the keyboard or by clicking on the titles.

Many extensions will show an icon here. This is the Gmail Notifier.

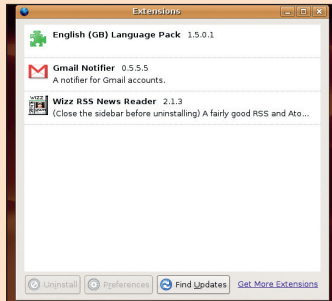


HOWTO... ADD EXTENSIONS

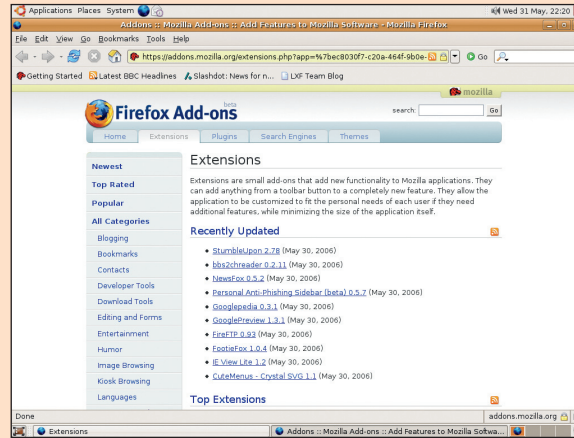
Although the *Firefox* philosophy is that things should be simple, a lot of time and effort has gone into creating an easy-to-use system of adding features with extra download packages for a slightly more sophisticated online browsing experience.

These feature enhancements are called extensions, and they have a central, searchable repository. Extensions can bring *Firefox* more in tune with your needs, or add useful features – there are extensions for managing your Gmail account, displaying the local

weather, blocking annoying adverts, or even dynamically changing the style of the displayed web pages. The system may change in future versions of *Firefox*, but for now getting hold of extensions is easy – follow these simple steps:



1 From the Tools menu, select **Extensions**. This will open the **Extensions** window, which at this stage will be empty. At the bottom of this window is a link called **Get More Extensions**. Click on this...



2 ... and the main browser page will now change to display the extensions site (if not, it may display an update message – *Firefox* may insist your version is up to date before proceeding). This lists loads of possible extensions, covering all sorts of extra things you can make *Firefox* do. Click on one for more details.



3 Click on the **Download** button to download and install the extension. That's all there is to it. Most extensions require you to quit out of *Firefox* and start again, but then you'll be able to use the new features. See the **Hottest Extensions** box on page 20 for a list.

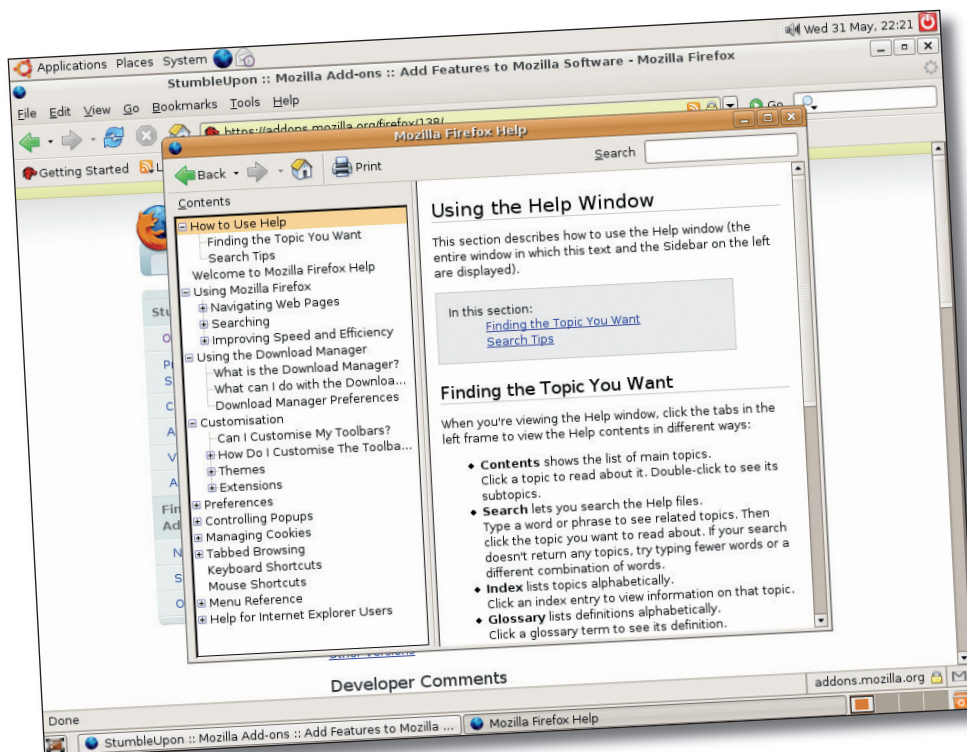
Firefox from so-called 'phishing' emails, viruses and so on. There is also little danger of pop-up ads or secretive adware appearing on your system if you use *Firefox*.

There are many more cool technologies, but sometimes it's just *Firefox*'s simple understanding of how people want to use web browsers that makes

the difference. Take the Find system for example. You know the situation – following a Google web search you go to a likely-looking site, only to find that the main page contains 50,000 words of text and you have no idea where the particular bit you are looking for that was found in the Google search might be. With *Firefox*, you can hit Ctrl+F or choose

"Sometimes it's *Firefox*'s simple understanding of how people want to use browsers that makes the difference."

Find from the menu, and instead of a box popping up and obscuring the screen while asking for your search term, *Firefox* will just take up a line of the display at the bottom. Start typing in the search term and the browser will automatically start zipping



Firefox has more useful documentation than you might think! Press **F1** at any time for online help.

SHORTCUTS!

Save time in *Firefox* by using these keypresses for common tasks:

Tool	Shortcut
Open a new tab.....	Ctrl+T
Open a new window.....	Ctrl+N
Jump to web search.....	Ctrl+K
Bookmark page.....	Ctrl+D
Find text on page.....	Ctrl+F
Help.....	F1



→ through the page finding parts of the text that match – it's just so easy and intuitive!

To run *Firefox*, you can either select it from the Applications menu under Internet > Firefox Web Browser, or more simply just click on the globe icon in the toolbar at the top of your desktop. The browser will start and in a few seconds you will see the default starting screen.

GETTING STARTED

The controls are quite simple. This is a good thing. *Firefox* was designed primarily to be easy to use, with as few controls as possible and everything in a sensible place.

To go to a location, type the address in the URL bar at the top of the display, just as you would expect. This can also include files on your Linux system as well as websites and FTP locations.

You will notice another text area in the top right of the screen. This is a configurable search tool, which is set up to use the Google search engine by default. Type in some keywords here – 'Linux browser', say – and the main page will display all the search results from Google.

This is just one of the time-saving, easy to use features of *Firefox*. And it isn't limited to just Google either. Click on the Google icon in the search bar to reveal the list of search engines available. This includes Yahoo, Dictionary.com and Amazon.com, but you can easily add more by selecting Add Engines at the bottom of the menu and following the instructions.

TRY OUT TABS

Firefox also supports tabbed browsing. A tab is just a simple way of flipping between pages of information. With *Firefox*, you can use it to flip between web pages without losing track of all those windows you have opened (of course, you can still have multiple windows open if you like, but it isn't compulsory any more).

There are several ways to open a new tab, but probably the simplest is to open one from an existing page link. Take the search you have just done. You may be searching Google for good web browsers on Linux. It's a lot easier to open up each of the results in its own page, so that you can compare them (or at least their websites). But it's even easier if they are in tabs in the same window and you can just flick between them. Right-click on any of the links on your Google results page and choose Open Link In New Tab from the menu that will pop up (it's the second option down).

You'll now see that two tabs are created at the top of the actual page display, below the toolbar. The tabs have a tiny icon and some text on them, which represent the site logo and the title of the page. You

FIND OUT MORE

Visit these websites for *Firefox* information and chat:

www.linuxformat.co.uk

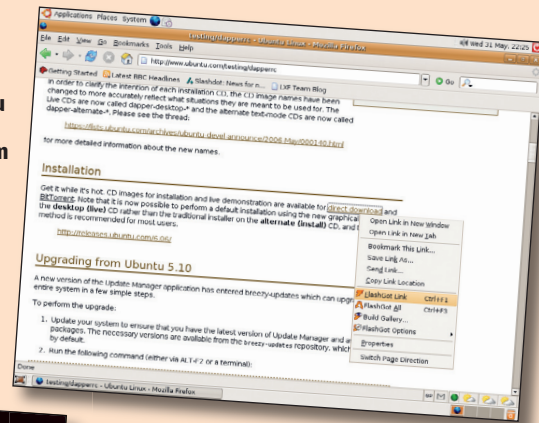
www.linuxquestions.org

www.mozilla.org

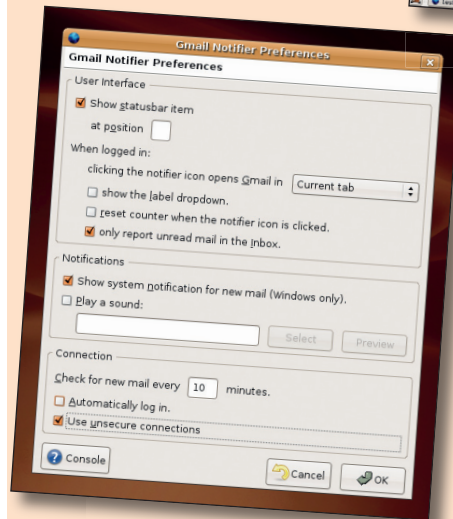
Also take a look at our Resources section on page 90.

HOTTEST EXTENSIONS

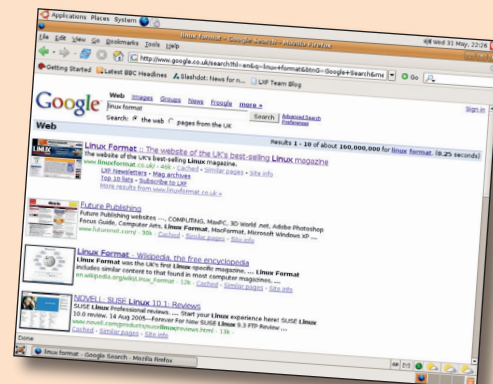
FlashGot
This extension ties in with a download manager and helps you select and download many files at once from a web or FTP site.



Gmail Notifier
If you have a Gmail account (Google's own webmail service), this extension will keep an eye on your inbox, and remember your login details.



GooglePreview
This ace extension works on the Google search page. Now when you perform a search, you'll see thumbnails of the sites next to each result.



Forecastfox
A piece of string can tell you what the weather is like outside, but *Forecastfox* can predict the weather for the next few days and put nice little icons showing its results in your toolbars.



can flick between the current page and any of the other tabbed windows by clicking on the tab name, or cycle through them using the Control and Page Down keys.

To close the current tab, either use the keyboard (Ctrl+W) or click on the white-on-red cross on the right-hand end of the tab bar. If you have never used tabs before, prepare to be amazed by how much simpler browsing the web becomes!

BOOKMARKS

If you have been using *Internet Explorer* for a while, you'll have got used to saving regularly visited sites to a Favourites file. On *Firefox* and many other browsers, these details are known as Bookmarks.

To save a bookmark in *Firefox* for the page you are currently viewing, simply press Ctrl+D, as you would in *Explorer*. This saves the site's title and details to a list, and you can revisit that site by selecting its entry from the Bookmarks menu. All standard so far.

But let's go back to our example above. Let's say we have searched for Linux browsers and opened up half a dozen tabs of relevant pages from the results. If you now select Add Bookmark from the Bookmarks menu or press Ctrl+D, a requester will appear. You can fill in a name here, and choose where to save the bookmark, but there is also a checkbox at the bottom, which, if checked, will mean all the tabs on the page are saved as bookmarks.

It's easy to manage your bookmarks – reorder, copy and delete them by selecting Bookmarks > Manage Bookmarks from the menu, or perhaps more easily by choosing View > SideBar > Bookmarks. This opens up a new 'frame' on the browser window, displaying a list of your bookmarks. You can move them up and down in this list or cut, copy and paste. Clicking on a link takes you to the relevant page.

GATHERING DUST?

Keeping your web experience safe means keeping up to date with the latest versions of your software. As you'd expect, the Mozilla Foundation is active in the security community, to the point that it employs security experts to find faults with its code and offers a bounty to people who can find and fix problems.

Thankfully, the open development model means that there is little risk of a major fault reaching the release stage, but it is still important to keep up to date with latest releases.

Ubuntu makes regular software updates available automatically. *Firefox* itself will notify you of new updates by default, and it is strongly recommended that you leave this feature enabled – otherwise how will you know when you need to update? This really is a wonderful browser, and it would be a shame not to take advantage of the free features its development team are constantly creating. ●

“Use tabs to flip between web pages without losing track of all those windows you have opened.”



Visit the Mozilla homepage at www.mozilla.org for updates to *Firefox*, and keep yourself safe!

OR TRY: KONQUEROR

Firefox is by no means the only browser available for Linux. You can also use the full *Mozilla* suite, the free *Opera* browser, a host of *Mozilla* derivatives or *Konqueror*, the browser built in to KDE.

Konqueror is the alternative choice of many users because it's integrated into the KDE desktop. When you use KDE to browse directories, it's really *Konqueror* that's doing the work.



WEBSITES THAT DON'T WORK

Amazing as it may seem in this day and age, there are a number of websites that refuse access to anyone not running *Microsoft Internet Explorer*. Fortunately the number of such sites is dwindling, but in some countries important services such as online banking may be run on such restrictive sites. When quizzed on the reasons for this requirement, many banks will tell you that it's for security reasons, even though the browser in question has a long history of serious vulnerabilities. There are ways to get *Firefox* to pretend that it is a different browser, but our advice is to change your bank – and let them know why.