

Browsers and Search Engines

History

The history of the web browser dates back to the late 1980s, when a variety of technologies laid the foundation for the first web browser, [WorldWideWeb](#) in 1991. That browser brought together a variety of existing and new software and hardware technologies. The Netscape Navigator was released in 1994, and quickly became the world's most popular browser, accounting for 90% of all web use at its peak. Microsoft responded with its browser Internet Explorer in 1995, initiating the industry's first browser war.

By bundling Internet Explorer with Windows, Microsoft was able to use its dominance in the operating system market to take over the web browser market; Internet Explorer usage share peaked at over 95% by 2002. Netscape transformed into Mozilla and produced Firefox in 2004.

What is a Browser? See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4MwTvtYrUQ>



Current browsers

The table shows the major browsers and their percentage use in the world in May this year. Internet Explorer is still predominant but its lead has been cut by more than half. Although Chrome only started in 2008 it already has a large portion of the market.

Internet Explorer

The current version is 9 but this only supported by Windows Vista and Windows 7. In XP use version 8. Versions 6 and 7 are obsolete. Originally, with Outlook Express, it was an integral part of Windows. Since Vista, this is no longer the case and users are now free to make their own choice of browser and email program

Firefox

Current version is 13 and will work in all versions of Windows and Apple. An open source program which has spawned thousands of Add-ons see <https://addons.mozilla.org> Add-ons are created by many people using the Mozilla source code and are not always updated when the browser is. This can lead to problems.

Google Chrome

Current version is 19 and will also work in all versions of Windows and later versions of Macs. Also has many add-ons and more being developed.

Safari

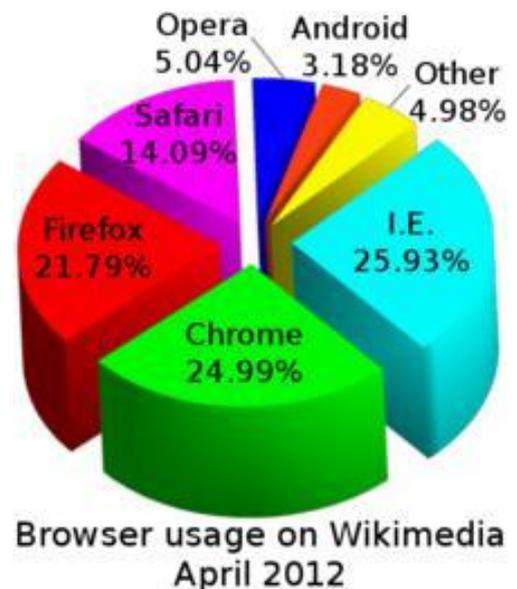
The browser developed and used by Apple but there are versions for Windows; current version 5.17.

Opera

Current version is 11.64. At 9.8MB it is the smallest browser and, as Opera Mini, is suitable for netbooks, tablets and mobile phones.

Android

This is a Linux-based operating system for mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers. It is developed by the Open Handset Alliance, led by Google, and other companies. See <http://www.android.com/>



Search engines

A program that searches documents for specified keywords and returns a list of the documents where the keywords were found. Typically, a search engine works by sending out a *spider* to fetch as many documents as possible. Another program, called an *indexer*, then reads these documents and creates an *index* based on the words contained in each document. A human-powered directory, such as the Open Directory, <http://www.dmoz.org/> depends on humans for its listings. You submit a short description to the directory for your entire site, or editors write one for sites they review. A search looks for matches only in the descriptions submitted. The first tool for searching the Internet, created in 1990, was called "Archie" more information at <http://tinyurl.com/7fuk8>

Search engines can be general such as Google, Bing, Yahoo etc. Or can be highly specialised such as <http://www.searchnz.co.nz/>. There are many more

Metasearch engines

A metasearch engine is a search tool that sends user requests to several other search engines and/or databases and aggregates the results into a single list or displays them according to their source. When to use one? See <http://www.internettutorials.net/meta-search.asp>.

Dogpile – <http://www.dogpile.com/> is a metasearch engine that fetches results from Google, Yahoo!, Bing, Ask.com, About.com and several other popular search engines, including those from audio and video content providers.

Omni bars

Most of the main search engines have address bars that can also be used for searches using the default search engine. Firefox has an add-on which allows searches of multiple search engines.

The “Deep” or “Invisible Web”

The number of sites indexed by the main search engines is comparatively small when compared with the entire internet. The figures are attention grabber; the size of the open web is 167 terabytes. The Invisible Web is estimated at 91,000 terabytes. Check this out – the Library of Congress, in 1997, was figured to have close to 3,000 terabytes!

The deep web is the realm of the specialist and deep web search engines reflect this. Info mine <http://infomine.ucr.edu/> is a US educational site; the WWW Virtual Library <http://vlib.org/> is considered to be the oldest catalogue on the web and contains a host of subjects. TechXtra, <http://www.techxtra.ac.uk/index.html> is devoted to technical subjects. The number of subjects and search engines is almost infinite. To get some idea of the number, type “deep web search engines” in your usual search engine.

QUICK TIP

Locate invisible web resources by adding the word *database* to a regular search engine query.

Bit Torrent

Bit Torrent is the global standard for delivering high-quality files over the Internet. With an installed base of over 160 million clients worldwide, Bit Torrent technology has turned conventional distribution economics on its head. The more popular a large video, audio or software file, the faster and cheaper it can be transferred with Bit Torrent. The result is a better digital entertainment experience for everyone. If you want to find a bit more about Bit Torrent, a good site is <http://tinyurl.com/6yfrm6s> It too has its search engines such as [EZTV](#) which has the latest TV programs from UK and US.