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Exploring Internet Browsers: Beyond the Big Blue E

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Exploring Internet Browsers

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Browser features

Most browsers offer similar features which can be helpful for research and reading. Some of the more useful modern browser tools include:

Reopen tabs when restarting the browser

Most browsers now include a feature that remembers the last internet sites users visited. Safari and Internet Explorer feature menu choices that will reopen tabs from the last browser session. In Chrome, open a new tab when the browser starts and click the "last used" links at the bottom of the screen to return to the last tabs open. Firefox users can choose to save all tabs when exiting the program; those tabs will reopen when Firefox starts again.

Spell-check

Except for Internet Explorer, browsers automatically spell-check what users type into most online forms.

Add-ons

All of the browsers described in this handout feature "add-ons" (sometimes called "extensions"). Add-ons are specialized tools which are installed directly into the browser. Typical add-ons include tools for news, weather, and stock market updates, tools for organizing research, and tools for minimizing ads and other website noise.

Browsers

Note to Mac Users: Except for Internet Explorer, the browsers listed in this handout are available for the Mac. You will generally see the same features on both Macs and PCs. Note that some browser add-ons may be limited to just PCs or just Macs.

Internet Explorer
60% Browser market share

Pros: Almost all websites are optimized for Internet Explorer; all features of Webmail work in Internet Explorer.

Cons: Can pose security risks; interface is not easy to figure out; PC only.

Great Add-On: Diigo (https://www.diigo.com) is an add-on toolbar for Internet Explorer which allows users to bookmark and annotate websites and share lists of bookmarks and annotations. This add-on is also available for Firefox.

Firefox
http://www.mozilla.com/firefox
30% Browser market share

Pros: Works with almost all websites; features many add-ons; remembers every site users visit. To find a previously visited site, go to the URL address box and start typing the name of the page.

Cons: Can be prone to crashes; cannot display all features in Webmail.

Great Add-On: Zotero (http://www.zotero.org/) in an add-on which and save links to and notes about websites, articles, online reports, and more. Use Zotero to create bibliographies from saved research. Supports Bluebook.

Google Chrome
http://www.google.com/chrome
8% Browser market share

Pros: Simple interface – one box serves as the URL address box and the search box; fewer crashes.

Cons: Many sites will not work properly with Chrome; cannot display all features in Webmail; does not display certain PDFs (this will improve soon).

Great Add-On: TooManyTabs is an extension which displays and searches all of open tabs in Chrome. It is useful if you have many tabs open and cannot locate a specific site. This add-on is also available for Firefox.

Apple Safari
http://www.apple.com/safari/
5% Browser market share

Pros: When reading an article, click the "Reader" icon in the address bar to read just the article and remove ads and other annoyances.

Cons: Slower than other browsers; cannot use all of the features of Webmail.

Great Add-On: 1-Click Weather (https://extensions.apple.com/) is a Safari extension which displays the current temperature next to the Safari URL address bar.

Find reviews of these and more browsers at http://internet-browser-review.toptenreviews.com/.