



Internet Explorer 10 Comes to Windows 7

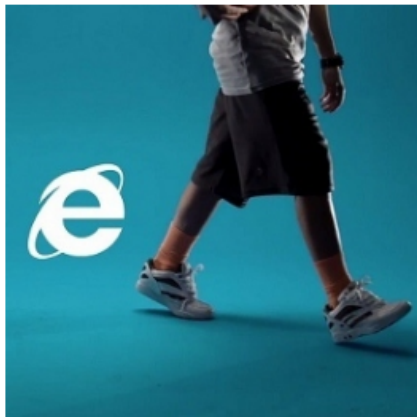


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7 Comments



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Windows 7 was a poor stepchild for a while when it came to Microsoft's latest Web browser, Internet Explorer 10. The new browser was available with Windows 8 at that new operating system's launch, and later became available as an optional preview update for users of IE9 under Windows 7. That is no longer the case, with today's official launch of IE10 for Windows 7.

Internet Explorer 10 brings far greater support for HTML5 Web standards, faster performance, and leading privacy protection for Web surfers.

Of course it's understandable that Microsoft's browser team would be focused on the company's newest OS, but it wasn't likely they'd keep the Windows 7 user base of more than 700 million waiting for too long. On Friday, PCMag spoke with Microsoft's Ryan Gavin, general manager for Windows Internet Explorer, and Rob Mauceri, group program manager, for some insight into the strategy behind the IE10 launch. Mauceri noted that Windows 7 is still a modern OS, no doubt referring to its support for DirectX 11, which is required for the browser's graphics hardware acceleration speed-ups.

Speaking of speed, Gavin told me that "the performance improvement from IE9 to IE10 is substantial, in fact, IE10 is about 20 percent faster for real world sites than its predecessor." He had already noted that in real-world Web speed studies, IE9 was already the leader (for more, see [By the Numbers: the Fastest Browser](#)). "We feel really great about that progress, and our leadership in hardware acceleration is really only accelerating."

In HTML5 support the percentage improvement from IE9 to IE10 is even more impressive: the newer browser adds 60 percent more HTML5 capabilities. "Developers can take advantage of these capabilities and build increasingly rich websites," said Gavin, "but just as importantly, [there's a] confidence level that they have knowing that they can write it once and it's really going to work across all modern browsers."

Indeed, according to the (not quite authoritative but nevertheless informative) HTML5Test.com site, out of a possible 500, IE10's score jumps to 320 from IE9's 138, which was still a far better showing than IE8's 42. For comparison, [Maxthon](#) leads this test with 464 points, followed by Chrome's 448, Opera with 419, and Firefox with 393.

The final point Gavin wanted to make concerned privacy: Along with Maxthon, IE10 is the only browser to have Do Not Track enabled by default (much to the chagrin of the Web advertising industry). Microsoft's browser will also include a very powerful privacy feature introduced in IE9—Tracking Protection. This feature blocks interaction with sites on tracking protection lists to which users can subscribe. In a similar move, it recently came to light that Firefox, starting with version 22, would block third-party tracking cookies by default. The Internet Explorer and Firefox moves are based on expressed user desire, while Google has too much self-interest as the largest purveyor of Web ads to include similar features in Chrome.

One thing IE9 users who are upgrading to version 10 won't notice is a new interface: they will be greeted by the same, trim browser interface, with only the smallest of tweaks. Mauceri told us that the browser now includes integrated spell-checking and auto-correct. You can also close multiple tabs in rapid succession by repeatedly clicking the mouse on each tab's X.

To promote the browser, Microsoft will launch a new ad campaign called "Explore Touch," which will use the talents of composer/singer Blake Lewis. As the title suggests, the commercials will highlight touch capabilities in IE10 when used with a touch tablet or touch-capable monitor. A new demo site, www.exploretouch.ie, is also being launched to demonstrate touch input, with interactive versions of the commercial's music. IE10 was one of the first browsers to support HTML5 Touch Events. A behind-the-scenes video shows how the commercial was made in Lewis's words.

Though IE has lost ground in recent years to upstarts like Firefox and Chrome, browser watchers may be surprised to learn that from Dec. 2012 to Jan. 2013, IE's piece of the usage pie has actually risen while Chrome's has slipped some, according to Web-monitoring site NetMarketShare. According to the site, Internet Explorer sat at 55.14 percent at the end of January, with Firefox at 19.94 percent, Chrome at 17.48 percent, and Safari at 5.24 percent.

The IE10 update will start rolling out automatically to current IE9 users today, but it could take months before every copy is updated. Users of the Preview of IE10 for Windows 7 will be first in line, and you can upgrade on demand by browsing to www.beautyoftheweb.com. The browser is being released in 95 languages worldwide. For a flavor of Microsoft's new browser, watch the video below, and then read PCMag's full [review of Internet Explorer 10](#).