

California Computer Care


News,
Views,
Tips and
Cool Techniques
for CCC Members


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We
speak
Geek,
so you
don't
have to.

Web Browsers

Your window to the
World Wide Web

Just as you need a Word Processor to write on your Mac. You need software to view web pages on the internet. Without web browser software, web pages would look like *this*  *Not a pretty sight!*

When web page designers design web pages, they do so with computer language like you see to the right. All of these cryptic codes, numbers and words must have a translator to make them understandable to every day folks like us. Web browser software provides translation, and the end result is *this*  *Still not a pretty site, but understandable.*

Of course, there is a complication. Just as two translators will translate a book into another language with subtle differences, web code translation is also subject to interpretation. An international standards board (W3C) sets forth rules for web page design and translation that all designers and web browser software should follow. Naturally, they don't.

Our old buddies at Microsoft do not believe in standards (unless they own them). Microsoft's products do not conform to the international standards. This means that Microsoft web creation software makes web sites that only Microsoft web browsers interpret with 100% accuracy. While web sites created with software from non-Microsoft sources have to be specially designed with allowances for the Microsoft way.

If that were not so, you could visit web sites with any web browser and not have to be concerned about compatibility. Alas, this is not the way of the internet world.

The reality of internet life means that for compatibility with web designs and security, you need at least three web browsers (four, if you are an America Online member). Fortunately, there are many web browser options from which to choose.

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 3.2 Final/EN">
<HTML><HEAD><TITLE>California Computer Care/<
TITLE><META NAME="GENERATOR" CON-
TENT="Freeway Pro 3.5.15"></HEAD><BODY TOPMAR-
GIN=0 LEFTMARGIN=0 MARGINHEIGHT=0 MARGIN-
WIDTH=0 BGCOLOR="#ffffff"><CENTER><TABLE
BORDER=0 CELLSPACING=0 CELLPADDING=0
WIDTH=726><TR VALIGN=TOP><TD ROWSPAN=3></
TD><TD ROWSPAN=3><IMG SRC="Resources/
web2000p1b.jpeg" BORDER=0 WIDTH=609 HEIGHT=461
ALT="" USEMAP="#map1"></TD><TD COLSPAN=2></
TD><TD HEIGHT=45></TD></TR><TR VA
et cetera for many, many more lines of type!
```



You need one that is fully W3C compliant. Your main web browser should fully adhere to the international web standards.

This will assure that you are compatible with the majority of web sites. Apple's *Safari* web browser (comes with Mac OS X), fits the bill. So do Mozilla's *Firefox* and Omni Group's *OmniWeb*. The *Big Three* browsers are very feature rich. They all block pop-up advertising windows and feature tabs and autofill for more efficient browsing. Mozilla also makes *Camino*. *Camino* isn't as fully featured as *Firefox*, but it is very Mac-like and easy to use.

Apple has made *Safari* mandatory by placing the default browser setting in *Safari's* preferences. Thus, you can use any other browser as your main browser, but you must keep *Safari* available to set that preference.



Apple Safari



Mozilla Firefox



Omni Group
OmniWeb



Mozilla Camino

You need one that is Microsoft capable.

Due to Microsoft's non-compliance, many web sites use special coding that isn't found in the W3C standards. To be compatible with these rogue sites you must have Microsoft's *Internet Explorer*. *Internet Explorer* is feature poor, but essential for many banking and financial sites (as well as Microsoft's own). *Mozilla Firefox* is mostly



Microsoft Internet Explorer



Mozilla Firefox

capable of working with Microsoft corrupted web sites, but there are times when only *Internet Explorer* will do.

And, one that is Netscape compatible.

Netscape Navigator was the first popular web browser. This was the exciting *Wild West* of the internet (*ah, nostalgia*) long before W3C's international standards and *Internet Explorer*. Some ancient web sites exist that use the old Netscape standards. Mozilla is the technological parent of *Netscape Navigator*, so Mozilla-based browsers (*Firefox, Camino, Mozilla*) work here, including the venerable, *Netscape Browser* itself.



Mozilla Firefox



Mozilla Camino



Netscape Browser

A note about Internet Explorer: Over two years ago, Microsoft announced that it will no longer be updating *Internet Explorer*. Since then it has been stuck at version 5.2.3 for Mac OS X and version 5.1.7 for Mac OS 9. Because *Internet Explorer* has been stagnating, it is slowly becoming less and less compatible with many web sites. It will not be long before it will be necessary to give up on *Internet Explorer*. But, Microsoft compatibility will continue to be important, so it is wise to use and support *Firefox* development as that is our only current hope to keep up with Microsoft's continued web site corruption.

Where to get web browsers. *Safari* is included with Mac OS X. The others are also free for Mac OS X and available at these web addresses:

Firefox: <http://www.mozilla.org>

OmniWeb: <http://www.omnigroup.com>

Camino: <http://www.caminobrowser.org>

Netscape: <http://browser.netscape.com>

Internet Explorer: <http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/10902>

Not in this article, but worth trying:

Opera: <http://www.opera.com/download>

Shiira: <http://hmdt-web.net/shiira/en>

Mozilla: <http://www.mozilla.org/products/mozilla1.x/>

A note for America Online members. AOL's software has a built-in web browser. However, it is a very poor browser. *AOL 5* uses an obsolete version of *Internet Explorer*. *AOL X* uses a somewhat crippled version of the Mac OS X *Netscape Browser*. Fortunately, you do not have to use the built-in AOL web browser and can instead use any of the browsers mentioned in this newsletter.

October Tip

What about Mac OS 9? Sad to say, but browser pickings for Mac OS 9 are slim and none. There is a *Netscape Browser* for Mac OS 9, but it is out of date and dreadfully buggy. There is the *iCab* browser, but it has been in a state of perpetual construction for years and still far from reliable. The only real choice is *Internet Explorer 5.1.7*, but it also is becoming outdated and will soon be unusable. Changing internet standards (especially security standards) have passed Mac OS 9 by. If internet access is important to you, it is time to make the transition to Mac OS X. See the September, 2005 *CCC News* for more information about whether you need to upgrade.

<http://www.calcompcare.com/news.html>

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