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# COMPARISON BETWEEN FIREFOX 4 AND INTERNET EXPLORER 9

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**Firefox 4 is catching on in a big way with Web users. The updated browser has a number of features that make it better than Internet Explorer 9.**

## **1. A better design**

One of the major improvements to both Internet Explorer and Firefox has been better designs. Both browsers feature a slimmed-down interface that will likely appeal to more users. But Firefox 4's design is a little bit better. It looks somewhat similar to Opera 11 and delivers much better menu designs. A change to how tabs are displayed—on top by default—is also a welcome addition. One can easily go on about all the changes made to Firefox 4, but suffice it to say that its interface tops Internet Explorer 9 in usability and aesthetic appeal.

## **2. Stability**

Microsoft has said time and again that Internet Explorer 9 is the most stable browser it has released yet. And that's certainly the case. But so far, Firefox 4 seems to be a tad more stable. One of the key reasons for that is the browser's ability to continue working, even though plug-ins, like Flash, QuickTime, or Microsoft's Silverlight fails. Does that mean Firefox will never crash? Of course not, but it has proven more stable than Internet Explorer 9.

## **3. Multi-platform support**

Considering there is a growing number of Mac OS X users out there, those folks should know that Firefox 4, unlike Internet Explorer 9, supports their favored operating system. Mozilla's browser also works with Linux. Perhaps most importantly, Firefox works with Windows XP. Internet Explorer 9, on the other hand, only works with Windows Vista and Windows 7. That's a huge issue for Microsoft, considering XP still is used by the majority of PC users—about 55 percent—around the world. And it's another win for Firefox 4.

## **4. Microsoft's brand problems**

One of the biggest issues Microsoft faces right now is that it's trying to overcome its failures in past versions of Internet Explorer. There are still millions of people around the globe that don't trust that Microsoft's browser can be secure and stable. Mozilla, on the other hand, doesn't face that identity crisis. Thus it doesn't necessarily need to worry about its brand affecting its decisions when it comes to adding or removing features. If users don't trust Microsoft's ability to keep its browser secure and they're looking for other options, they should go with Firefox 4.

## **5. There's no speed advantage**

When Microsoft launched Internet Explorer 9, the company was touting the speed of its browser. Now just about everyone who tries it would agree that the new software loads Web pages extremely quickly. But so does Firefox 4. In most cases, the two browsers were evenly matched. In other cases, one bested the other, depending on the site. Overall, though, Internet Explorer 9 and Firefox 4 seem to be in a practical dead heat when it comes to page-loading times. And considering all the other advantages Firefox 4 offers, a tie shouldn't be enough for someone to opt for Internet Explorer 9.

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### **6. Security is a going concern**

Microsoft did an outstanding job bolstering the security of Internet Explorer 9. It did so by protecting users against “socially engineered attacks,” browser-focused malware attacks, and flaws on Web sites. But Internet Explorer 9 has only been in use for a limited amount of time. And so far, not enough people have downloaded it to truly determine how secure it really is. Does that mean it will be proven insecure? Not a chance. It might be one of the more secure browsers ever launched. But given Microsoft’s history with security problems, and considering the browser has yet to be fully tested by malicious hackers in the wild, waiting to see how well Microsoft secured Internet Explorer 9 might be a good idea.

### **7. Add-ons have always been Firefox’s strong suit**

According to Mozilla, Firefox 4 supports more than 200,000 add-ons. And as old-time Firefox users know quite well, add-ons have always been one of the main reasons to use the browser. In Firefox 4, the browser supports restartless add-ons, which means users don’t have to restart their browser after installing an add-on utility. Considering the sheer number of useful add-ons and the fact that Firefox 4 makes it even easier to use them, it’s easy to see why Mozilla’s latest browser is a worthy download.

### **8. Sync works beautifully**

Mozilla has added the ability for users to sync Bookmarks, Preferences, History, Passwords, and Tabs with other versions of Firefox 4 running on a person’s computers and Android devices. It’s an outstanding feature that is yet another good reason for people with multiple browser installations to use Firefox 4. It’s convenient and it works extremely well.

### **9. Standard support is a plus**

Mozilla realized that support for integral Web standards was an absolute necessity in Firefox 4 and the organization delivered in a big way. Among other features, browser has ample support for HTML5, including WebM high-definition video. As Mozilla itself points out, Firefox comes with support for “3D graphics, offline data storage, professional typography, touch screen interfaces, and the Mozilla Audio API to help create visual experiences for sound and more.” Combine all that and one will find an outstanding browsing experience in Firefox 4.

### **10. Future-proofing**

When evaluating browsers, it’s always important for Web users to determine which platform will do the best job of adapting to the constantly changing Web world. For now, it seems that Firefox 4 is that winner. Aside from the fact that it supports important Web standards and it comes with new features, Mozilla updates its browser often. That means that Firefox 4’s launch was just a starting point. And over the next several months, expect many more worthwhile updates to the platform