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**Will Microsoft Lose The Browser Wars?**

**By Jim Edwards**

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Until recently, software giant, Microsoft's Internet Explorer Web browser enjoyed a relatively unchallenged position as the most popular Web browser in the world.

Despite lawsuits and charges of unfair competition from the likes of Netscape and others, Microsoft dominates browser software with over 90% market share.

Microsoft's dominance of the browser market stems mainly from the simple fact that the majority of computers get delivered with Microsoft Windows as the default operating system.

Internet Explorer (IE) comes standard with all Windows software and, thus, virtually everyone automatically gets

the IE browser. By default, Microsoft owns the browser market because they catch consumers early, get them conditioned to using the IE software, and, until recently, no other software offered a compelling enough reason to switch. However, with a seemingly endless rash of security problems, consumers started looking elsewhere for alternative Web browser options.

This consumer demand may well spell the end of Microsoft's dominance in the browser marketplace.

In response to severe security vulnerabilities, several alternative Web browsers recently gained significant market share.

\*\* Opera.com \*\*

One of the original "alternative" browsers, "Opera" offers a significant number of interesting tweaks over Internet Explorer, including the ability to open more than one html page within the browser, as opposed to one page per window with IE.

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The free version of Opera carries advertising messages, but for \$39 you can turn off the advertising and unlock additional features.

\*\* Mozilla.com \*\*

Mozilla actually offers two choices for alternative Web browsing. Mozilla 1.7, the current version of the original Mozilla software, includes an email program, newsgroup reader, and even a chat feature. Mozilla also offers a newer browser called "Firefox" that has many people raving about enhanced features. Both browsers come free of charge and do not appear to carry any third party advertising.

\*\* Netscape.com \*\*

Netscape, one of the original Web browsers, still offers its browser software free, though you must do some searching on their site to find it.

Scroll to the bottom and click "Download Latest Netscape Browser."

Based on their site, Netscape seems to be in the middle of an identity crisis since they look more like Yahoo! than a software provider.

\*\* An 800 lb. Gorilla on the horizon? \*\*

Online search engine powerhouse, Google, has never shied away from taking on Microsoft.

In fact, they've done something Microsoft couldn't do, namely turn a profit with a search engine. Based on past behavior, how long do you think it will take Google to release a Web browser of their own?

Despite statements to the contrary, I believe Google will come out with their own Web browser within the next 18 months.

Look at their Hotmail.com alternative, Gmail, at <http://gmail.Google.com>.

Google gave away so much storage space they forced Hotmail to make major concessions in their free service.

Google Desktop blows away the Microsoft search utility for your PC.

Don't for a second think Google doesn't have a browser in development and a strategy to release it (for free) if they need MORE TRAFFIC to your website or affiliate links?

"Turn Words Into Traffic" reveals the secrets for driving Thousands of NEW visitors to your website or

affiliate

links... without spending a dime on advertising!

Click Here>

<http://the-easy-way.com/traffic.html>

## **The Opera alternative**

**By Jakob Jelling**

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<http://www.sitetube.com>

Security flaws have long plagued Internet Explorer (IE), the market-dominating web browser from Microsoft. IE won the early browser wars, not only because it was free and bundled with Windows, but because it had some features and capabilities that its only real competitor, Netscape, didn't have. But the behind-the-scenes programming that makes those features possible is the very coding that also leaves wide gaps in IE's defenses against viruses and malicious scripting. Among several browser alternatives for Windows users, the Opera browser stands out in functionality and integration, and is gaining a wider following as a safer surfing alternative to Internet Explorer.

To be sure, there are other browsers such as the one from Mozilla and their newest release, Firefox. There are several flavors of IE "overlays", which use the core IE programming for web page display, and thus aren't any safer than the original IE. (You should of course always use anti-virus software to protect your PC, regardless of browser. Many viruses arrive as email attachments, and opening those on a Windows-based PC will cause problems). Among non-IE browsers, it seems to be down to a two-horse race between Mozilla and Opera.

Opera, from Oslo, Norway, based Opera Software ASA, provides many popular features. An integrated email client, contact book, bookmarks with searchable notes, tabbed multiple windows, a built-in password manager, a pop-up blocker, multiple language support, saved sessions, privacy controls, built-in chat, and the ability to read RSS feeds from within Opera mail make the Opera browser a very powerful and worthwhile IE replacement candidate.

Unless you have special need for IE, such as a browser toolbar or web interaction software that you use, there is really no reason not to give Opera a try if you're worried about safe surfing. While Opera does have a paid version, you can also download a sponsored version (with ads unobtrusively placed in the browser control area), which is free.

Jakob Jelling is the founder of <http://www.sitetube.com>. Visit his website for the latest on planning, building, promoting and maintaining websites.



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