



# Mozilla Firefox—Making Peace With the Library’s Browser

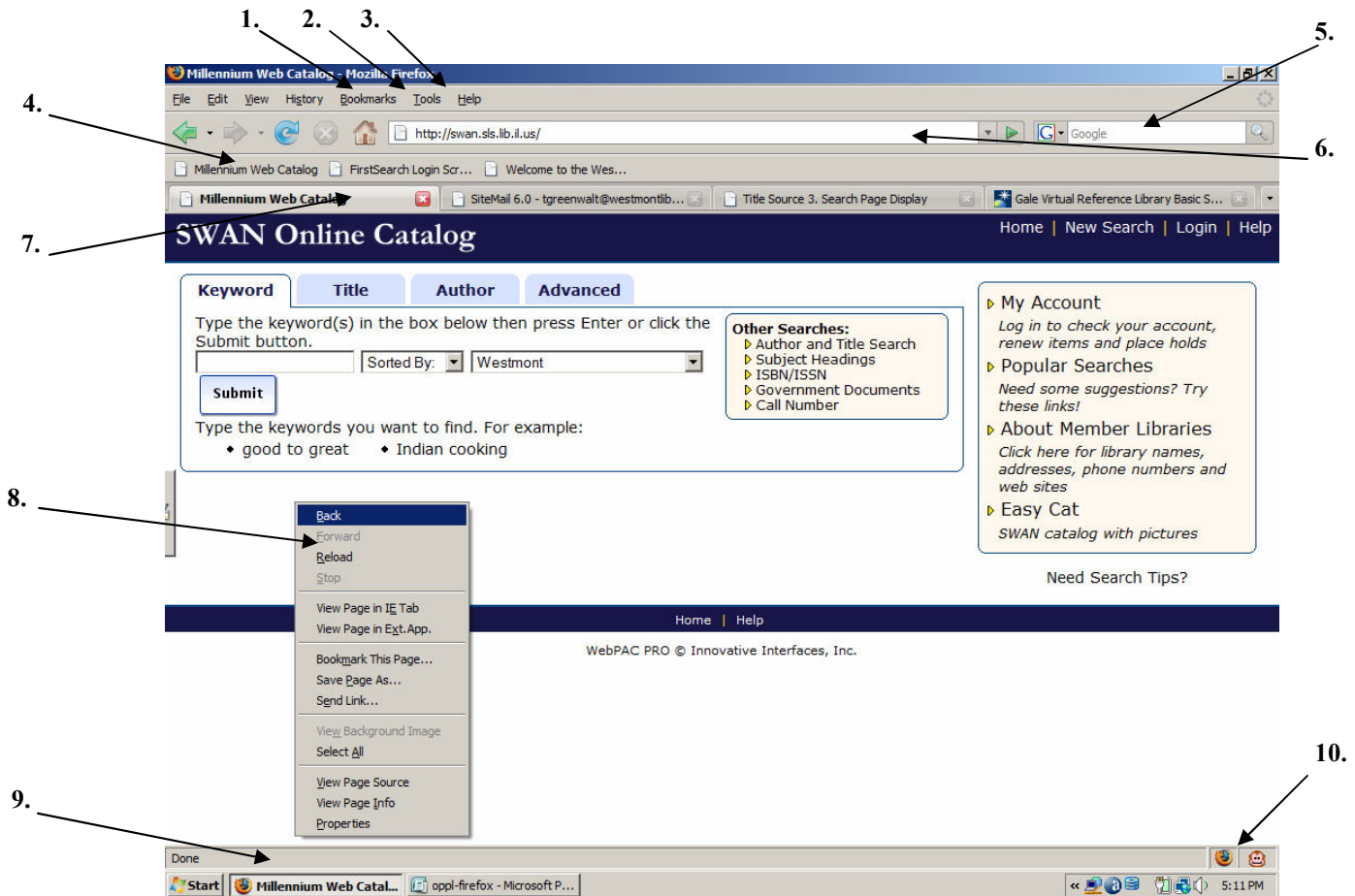
Presented at the Orland Park Public Library

Staff In-Service, August 3rd, 2007

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This handout is meant to provide a basic overview of the certain key features of Mozilla Firefox. While the browser was designed to be fairly intuitive, some of the browser’s most useful features can be easy to overlook. The image below comes from a typical Firefox session at the library.

## Browser Window Components:



- Bookmarks:** Under this tab, you can bookmark your favorite pages, and sort them into relevant groupings. You can also import links that you’ve compiled from other browsers.
- Tools:** Monitors your extensions (see next page), enables you to clear out private data, and configure other browser settings.
- Help:** Use this tab if you’re not sure a particular browser feature has updated. It also has a useful section covering the transition from Internet Explorer.
- Bookmarks Toolbar:** Add your most frequently visited pages to this toolbar for 1-click access at any time.
- Search Bar:** Instead of entering the address for Google (or Amazon, or IMDB, or Wikipedia), you can now search directly from this search window. Use the pull-down menu to change your search options, and click “Manage Search Engines” to add more of your favorites. (See the next page for more info.)
- Address Bar/Security Indicator:** I point this area out to draw your attention to the security indicator, which will appear on the right side of the Address Bar. If you need to visit a secure site, be sure to check for the “lock” icon to be safe.
- Tabs:** One of the key features of Firefox (among other browsers), tabs enable you to have multiple web pages open in one browser window. You can sort these open pages by dragging the tabs, or close individual tabs by clicking on its corresponding “X.”
- Right-Click Menu:** Like many other applications, right-clicking on a page activates a context-sensitive menu. In Firefox, this can allow you to cut-and-paste images or text, open new pages, add a page to your bookmarks folder, or activate certain browser extensions.
- Status Bar:** Indicates if a page has loaded properly, or if a certain web feature is not working properly.
- Extension Status:** Certain extensions (such as Greasemonkey, IE Tab, or CoolIris Previews) can be turned on or off. These icons in the bottom left corner of the browser indicate their status.

## Use Extensions to make Firefox even better!

Extensions (also known as Add-ons) enable you to customize Firefox in order to make the browsing experience easier, more efficient, and more fun. These are a few that I've found particularly helpful within a library setting.



### Search Extensions

The search bar is already a standard feature on most modern Internet browsers. Many of them even allow you to pick and choose from a variety of search engines. Firefox takes things a step further by allowing you to create your own search tools. With some help (thanks to Chris Deweese—[cdeweese.blogspot.com](http://cdeweese.blogspot.com)), I've made a number of plugins for the SWAN catalog. You can install these by visiting [www.westmontlibrary.org/firefox.html](http://www.westmontlibrary.org/firefox.html).

### Context Search (<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/240>)

One way to make the search bar even more useful is to employ an add-on such as Context Search. Context Search allows you to highlight a piece of text within a webpage and search for that term by right-clicking on it. You can choose any of the search engines in your main search bar. This saves you from typing in search terms, making web searches much faster.

### IETab (<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/1419>)

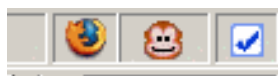
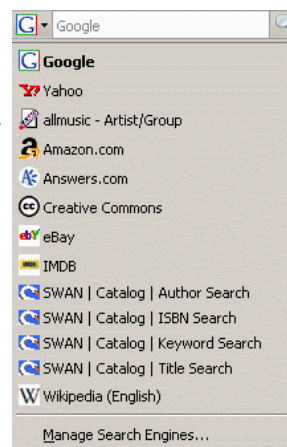
While my love for Firefox knows no bounds, the browser does have a few limitations. Every once in a while, you will encounter pages that don't render properly in Firefox, or simply won't open at all. (This is particularly true for a sites that employ a lot of ActiveX controls.) Installing IETab allows you to switch to Internet Explorer without exiting Firefox. If you run into a troublesome page, simply click on the Firefox logo in the bottom corner of the browser, and you'll switch rendering engines. (This is also helpful if you're a web designer, as it enables you to check browser compatibility with one click.)

### CoolIris Previews (<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/2207>)

CoolIris is a relatively new extension that enables you to preview a linked site without having to click over. After you've installed the add-on, a blue preview square will appear when you move your mouse over a link. Mouse over the square, and the preview window will pop up. This has proved particularly helpful when searching other library catalogs in FirstSearch. CoolIris can also be switched off by clicking the checkbox in the bottom corner of the browser screen.

### GreaseMonkey (<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/748>)

Now for the master class. GreaseMonkey doesn't perform any tasks on itself. Rather, it allows you to customize the way certain pages display through little bits of Javascript called "Linkys." Perhaps the most useful one I've found checks the SWAN catalog for items as you browse for them in Amazon.com. You can find this Linky at [www.superpatron.com/original-index.html](http://www.superpatron.com/original-index.html). Occasionally, errors do occur with GreaseMonkey, affecting the way a web page displays. If this happens, you can turn it off by clicking the monkey icon in the corner of your browser.



Plugin icons at the bottom of the browser (l. to r.):  
IETab, GreaseMonkey, CoolIris Previews

### What else is there?

This is only a taste of what's available for Firefox. New tools are constantly being created for the browser, and you may even wish to create a few yourself. If you're interested in learning more, a good place to start would be Nigel McFarlane's [Firefox Hacks](#) (O'Reilly, 2005). I will be keeping track of updates and new widgets at [www.westmontlibrary.org/firefox.html](http://www.westmontlibrary.org/firefox.html). (Please note: due to my recent job change, this site will change soon, but I will add a link as soon as the proper changes have been made.) Feel free to experiment with new add-ons, and don't hesitate to contact a "power user" (like the people mentioned in the links below). If you have any questions. In keeping with the spirit of open-source software, many of us are more than willing to share ideas.

### Suggested Reading

- Hipson, Peter D. [Firefox and Thunderbird: Beyond Browsing and Email](#). Indianapolis: Que, 2006.
- McFarlane, Nigel. [Firefox Hacks](#). Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, 2005.
- <https://addons.mozilla.org/> (browse add-ons and search plugins)
- [cdeweese.blogspot.com/2006/01/how-to-add-your-library-catalog-to.html](http://cdeweese.blogspot.com/2006/01/how-to-add-your-library-catalog-to.html) (how to make a search plugin)
- [www.mozilla.com/en-US/support/](http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/support/) (FAQs and support for the browser)
- [www.superpatron.com/original-index.html](http://www.superpatron.com/original-index.html)
- [www.westmontlibrary.org/firefox.html](http://www.westmontlibrary.org/firefox.html)