

# M\$ Needs More than Tabbed Browsing for IE

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Microsoft's Internet Explorer Product Unit Manager Dean Hachamovitch recently confirmed in his weblog that Internet Explorer 7.0 would have tabbed browsing integration, a feature that's also available in Mozilla's Firefox browser. One of the many reasons Firefox has become popular is due to tabbed browsing. It was a different concept that let users open numerous windows in a single parent window. It's useful, it's popular, and it works. But I don't see how this is a major feature in need of promotion. While Hachamovitch didn't intentionally promote it himself, he did confirm it as if this is the next thing in browsers.

I am not saying that Microsoft is wrong in porting over features that have made other browsers a success, but what I really want to see in Internet Explorer is security and Microsoft's determination to continue to update Internet Explorer even if there's no "real" competition. Sure, having additional features in Internet Explorer will help tremendously, but what made Firefox a huge success is its correct code structure, a set industry standard that it follows and the foundation's rapid response when it comes to fixing security holes. Microsoft needs to do the exact same thing if it wants to gain back its lost market share.

Since Microsoft already has a dire reputation of ignoring certain security vulnerabilities and never releasing a patch in a timely manner, if at all, it needs to regain trust of its users. In today's times where security is a key to any successful product, especially that's used by millions of computer users throughout the world; Microsoft must pay attention to even the minute details when it comes to securing nine out of ten computers with Windows operating system.

In addition to that, Microsoft has a tendency to ignore products once the company has eliminated its competition. Its Internet Explorer is a fine example of that. Until Firefox came along, none of the other browsers had challenged Internet Explorer much; therefore, Microsoft never paid close attention to its security or tried to add useful features to it. They pretty much ignored it. After Firefox came along, that all changed. Not only did people start reporting more security issues with Internet Explorer, Microsoft also dedicated a team to focus on its browser. It was only after Firefox threatened Internet Explorer's market share did Microsoft made the announcement of an upcoming version that would fix a majority of such issues and would be updated to meet industry standards for browsers. This version will be the upcoming Internet Explorer 7.0.

After Microsoft has gained the trust with the browser's security, features and a promise to continually update Internet Explorer, it needs to make sure that Internet Explorer is well maintained structurally. Since Internet Explorer has been the most popular browser in the world, many webmasters practically designed their website solely for this particular browser. And since Internet Explorer was lenient on its coding style, it led web developers to be relaxed about the way they constructed websites, which resulted in numerous "broken" sites in Firefox and other browsers. Microsoft has the ability to define industry standards in a correct way, so why don't they do it?

There are numerous other things that Microsoft can do to make Internet Explorer a competitive browser functionally and feature wise. What really intrigues me is that Microsoft only seems interested in eliminating competition, and not catering to its users. Microsoft clearly has the resources to define the software industry, but they choose not to do that. I am all for the goal of eliminating competition, but they need do that with better products and continued support to their customers. Microsoft can learn a lot from Firefox and the things that have made it a success. The company will certainly need more than tabbed browsing in 7.0 to get knowledgeable users to switch back over to Internet Explorer.

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