

Series 4 – How Do I Access the Internet?

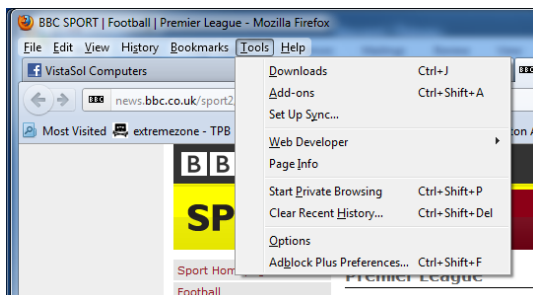
Welcome back to a series of computer related articles brought to you by VistaSol Computer Solutions. Over the coming weeks we are going to be featuring articles based on the theme of ‘How do I . . .?’

This week we’re continuing our series of articles on the subject of ‘How Do I Access the Internet’ by exploring the Mozilla Firefox browser in depth:

Part 4 – How do I get even more from Firefox?

Last week we described the functions contained within the Toolbar Menu, but deliberately excluded the ‘Tools’ menu because of its complexity. This week (and next week!) we’re going to dedicate the whole article to this particular menu item.

The Tools Menu



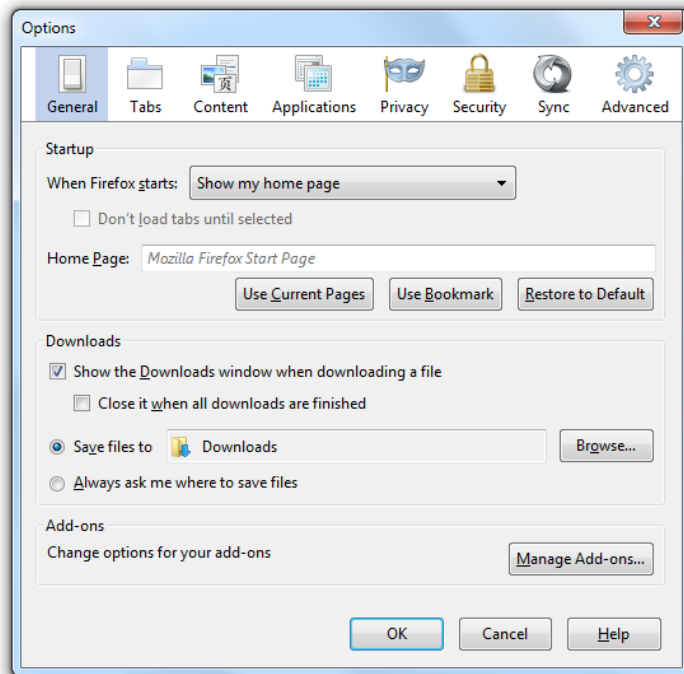
As you can see, the ‘Tools’ menu consists of the following sub-menu items:

1. Downloads
2. Add-ons
3. Set Up Sync
4. Web Developer
5. Page Info
6. Start Private Browsing
7. Clear Recent History
8. Options

I’m going to cover these in reverse order i.e. starting with the last sub menu - ‘Options’. The main reason for this is because this is the most important menu

option and the most complex, and as a result, I'll need to split this single item over the next couple of articles.

The 'Options' Sub-Menu



As you can see, the 'Options' menu contains a number icons across the top row. These are: **General**, **Tabs**, **Content**, **Applications**, **Privacy**, **Security**, **Sync** and **Advanced**.

If you click on any one of these headings you will be presented with a different range of settings to allow you to change the configuration of that particular heading group. The first of these is 'General', which can be seen in the window above.

General

The settings you can change within the 'General' heading are described below:

Startup

- **When Firefox starts:** Controls what Firefox displays when you open it. Clicking on the button reveals the following:
 - **Show my home page** - Displays the home page, which is set below.
 - **Show a blank page** - Displays a blank page, which is fastest to load.
 - **Show my windows and tabs from last time** - Restores the pages you were visiting the last time you closed Firefox.
- **Don't load tabs until selected:**
This option is disabled unless you have also set Firefox to **Show my windows and tabs from last time** (see above). When it's selected, Firefox will only load the active tab when it starts. This can make startup much faster

if you are restoring many tabs. The other open tabs will be loaded as you click on them.

- **Home page:**
Controls what page(s) Firefox displays when you click the Home icon on the Navigation toolbar. If you set **When Firefox starts** (see above) to **Show my home page**, the specified page(s) will load when Firefox starts.

Downloads

Unlike IE, Firefox displays a window showing the progress of files you are downloading. This window will also display a list of previous files you have downloaded. When the download has completed you can double click on the file in this window to install, or view this file. The settings here determine the configuration settings for this 'Downloads Window'.

- **Show the Downloads window when downloading a file:**
Controls whether Firefox will display the Downloads window when you download a file.
- **Close it when all downloads are finished:**
If you have selected **Show the Downloads window when downloading a file** (above), this setting controls whether Firefox will automatically close the Downloads window after all the files you're downloading have completed.
- **Save files to:**
If selected, Firefox will automatically save all downloads to the specified folder (such as the desktop or your downloads folder). To change which folder is used, click Browse....
- **Always ask me where to save files:**
If selected, Firefox will ask you to select a folder for every download you wish to save.

Add-ons

Click '**Manage Add-ons...**' to open the Add-ons window, which allows you to configure your extensions, themes, and plugins.

Add-ons are small applications that you can install to add bells & whistles to Firefox. For instance, you can get add-ons that compare prices, check the weather, change the look of Firefox, listen to music, or even update your Facebook profile.

What types of add-ons can I install?

There are three general types of add-ons:

- **Extensions**
Extensions add new features to Firefox or modify existing ones. There are extensions that allow you to block advertisements, download videos from websites, integrate Firefox with websites like Facebook or Twitter, and even add features from other browsers.

- **Appearance**
There are two types of Appearance add-ons: Themes, which change the look of buttons & menus, and Personas, which decorate the menu bar and tab strip with a background image.
- **Plugins**
Plugins let you add support for all kinds of Internet content. These usually include patented formats like Flash, QuickTime, and Silverlight that are used for video, audio, online games, presentations, and more. Plugins are created and distributed by other companies.

Add-ons are what set Firefox apart from other browsers and are well worth looking into in more detail. There are so many Add-ons available that I could spend the next couple of months talking about them and still only just break the ice. I would suggest that if you are interested in finding out more about Add-ons for Firefox, type 'Firefox add-ons' into the Google search engine.

That's about all I've got space for in this article, but over the coming weeks we'll investigate Firefox menus further, and discover how to get even more from your nice new shiny Browser.