

Power up your web browser

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We all use web browsers frequently, and we think we're really good at using them, but I've recently discovered a few features that speed up access to frequently used sites, help you extract content, and other nice stuff.

Power up bookmarks

You can create a bookmarks bar that sits right under the Toolbar at the top where the buttons for Home, Reload, etc. and the URL window is (I'm using terminology from Safari, but all of the functionality is the same in Firefox). View menu>>Show Bookmarks Bar, or toggle it on and off with Command-Shift-B.

Once you can see the bookmarks bar, now you can put your frequently used bookmarks in it. The easiest way is to create new bookmarks of these. Bookmarks menu>>Add Bookmark, or Command B. This opens a window in which you can name it (and it helps here to use very brief names: e.g. "UO" instead of "University of Oregon Home Page"). The other choice in this window is a pull-down menu which you use to choose the Bookmarks Bar as the destination for these bookmarks.

The next step, after you've made new bookmarks for your frequently used sites is to edit and order these bookmarks: Bookmarks Menu>>Show All Bookmarks, or Command-Option-B. In this window you can edit the names of the bookmarks, delete bookmarks, and change the order in which they appear. I usually delete anything that isn't used frequently, edit the names down to something very short, and put the frequently used ones in the top nine positions (you'll see why soon).

Now you get to the fun part: See the bookmarks bar? Click on any bookmark, and voila, there you go, no pull-down menus, no delay. Don't want to leave the keyboard? Command 1 takes you to the first bookmark on the left, Command 2 to the second, etc.

Pulling out text and graphics

Next time you want to pull text or graphics from a web page to drop into Word or a graphics program, try these tricks:

- Most text can be selected simply by dragging over it.

- If that doesn't work, it's actually a graphic, not text.

- After selecting text you can Edit menu>>Copy (or Command-C)

- Paste (or Command-V) into any text program such as Word, Pages, Appleworks, or Dreamweaver, or into a text box within a graphics program.

Want graphics? This can be harder. Easiest is to use Firefox, and

- File menu>> Save File As...

- Put it on the desktop or somewhere easy to find.

- The text of the page will be an html document, and all of the rest, including the graphics, will be in a folder.

- Clicking on these will probably open them in Preview.

- If not, it's easy to change settings to ensure that occurs.

You might have to open all of the graphics in the folder to find the one you want.

Another approach:

File menu>>Print...

Select Preview (or you might have to click the PDF button

Select "Open PDF in Preview"

In Preview, Tools menu>>Select Tool (or Command 3),
which gives you a selection marquee

Select the graphic you want

Open a new file in Preview (File menu>>New from Clipboard, or Command N).

This opens your selection as a separate file that can be saved as a pdf or further manipulated. This method may result in lower resolution, but not in my experience.

Air photos? Google and Microsoft have competing free air photo coverage, but right now Microsoft's is much higher resolution. Try this:

Go to maps.live.com (or make a bookmark bar for it)

Type in the address of your site and hit return.

Click on the "Aerial" tab.

Zoom in using the "+" button repeatedly.

Want to save it to another program?

Click the "Print" link in the upper right of the Live Maps screen

A new window opens with your air photo. File menu>>Print..

... and then use the same method as above to select what you want and save it as a pdf.