

New Internet Browsers & Texas State University

Testing Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2), Google Chrome (Beta), and Firefox 3 – Technology Resources

Over the past few months several new internet browsers have been introduced to the world. These include [Microsoft's Internet Explorer 8 \(Beta 2\)](#), [Google's Chrome \(Beta\)](#), and [Mozilla's Firefox 3](#). Texas State's Technology Resources IT Assistance Center (itac) has extensively tested each of these new internet browsers. This white paper will present the major highlights of each browser as well as relay the testing results of how each of these browsers interact with many Texas State University websites.

Executive Summary

Each of these browsers offers a different set of functionality, security and productivity feature sets that are both attractive and useful. Microsoft Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2) works well with most Texas State websites with a few compatibility issues in the way the browser displays certain sites. Most of these display issues can be resolved using the browser's built-in "Compatibility View" feature. Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2) is also the only browser in this test group that can take advantage of BobcatMail's (Outlook Web Access) Premium view while the other browsers are forced to use the feature-light version of BobcatMail called OWA Basic.

Google Chrome (Beta) is a speed centric lightweight browser that packs a great feature set. Although Google Chrome is not supported by the Microsoft's Project Web Access or SAP Portal websites, this browser is fast and reliable for everyday web-browsing.

Mozilla Firefox 3 also packs a robust feature set that is sure to lure many basic web users. Firefox 3 works well with the SAP Portal, GATO, TRACS and other Texas State websites. However, Mozilla Firefox 3 is also not supported by Microsoft's Project Web Access.

Microsoft Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2)

Microsoft's most recent release, [Internet Explorer \(Beta 2\)](#) boasts many new security and productivity features. Out of the box this new browser seems very similar to that of Internet Explorer 7, which will come as a relief to many users who dislike major interface changes. A full listing of Internet Explorer 8's feature list can be found [here](#).

New Features – Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2)

Under the hood, Internet Explorer 8 has many new features. Below is a sampling of the major features as described in the Top Features section of the Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2) website.

"Compatibility View" allows you to display websites that were designed for older browsers. Simply press the Compatibility View button if you see display problems on a website like misaligned text, images, or text boxes. It's located next to the Refresh button on the Address Bar.

“Accelerators” let you complete your everyday browsing activities more quickly and even discover new services. Start mapping, translating, emailing, and more in just a few mouse clicks.

“Web Slices” lets you keep up with changes to the sites you care about most. Add a Web Slice and you won't have to go back to the same website again and again for updates on news, stock quotes, online auctions, weather, or even sports scores.

“InPrivate Browsing” keeps Internet Explorer 8 from adding any sites you visit to Browsing History with. Now you can shop for that special gift with confidence knowing your family won't accidentally find out.

“SmartScreen Filter” helps to protect you against deceptive and malicious websites which can compromise your data, privacy, and identity.

“Search Suggestions” allow you to search smarter with detailed suggestions from your favorite search providers and browsing history. See visual previews and get suggested content topics while you type in the enhanced Instant Search Box.

“Automatic Crash Recovery” enables each tab to run on its own via Tab isolation. If a website or add-on causes a tab to crash in Internet Explorer 8, only that tab is affected. The browser itself remains stable and other tabs remain unaffected, thereby minimizing any disruption to your browsing experience.

Website Compatibilities – Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2)

This section will cover the highlights of the Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2) browser testing conducted by itac. The purpose of these tests was to gauge how Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2) displayed many of the commonly used websites at Texas State University. Overall, Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2) performed very well when compared to its predecessor, Internet Explorer 7.

When viewing the Texas State University website (www.txstate.edu) some testers found that the Flash section of the website were incorrectly displayed or not showing. The site will prompt you to install the latest version of Flash if needed, which quickly and easily remedies the problem.

When logging into BobcatMail (Outlook Web Access) (<https://bobcatmail.txstate.edu>), Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2) performed just as its predecessor, no issues were observed. Testers were able to read, compose, and manage their Texas State e-mail without issue. Testers were also able to manage their calendars and contacts without issue.

When logging into TRACS (<https://tracs.txstate.edu>) testers experienced several minor compatibility issues. One tester experienced an incorrectly displayed transparent GIF image. This issue was remedied by using the “Compatibility View” feature described earlier. In all cases, testers experienced numerous frames within frames making the site extremely cumbersome to navigate. No other issues were observed.

When logging into the Email Toolkit (<https://cr.txstate.edu/toolkit>), several testers using Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2) experienced missing or distorted images. When these testers performed one or

more “page refreshes,” the problem was corrected. In one isolated case, a tester was forced to use the “Compatibility View” feature described earlier to correct the image display issue.

When logging into the SAP Portal (<https://ibis.txstate.edu:50001/iri/portal>) testers experienced several major issues. Although testers were able to login to the SAP Portal without issue, accessing the “Worklist” portion of the SAP Portal did not display/function correctly. One tester was able to remedy this issue by using the “Compatibility View” feature described earlier. Testers were able to successfully conduct paycheck inquiries, record working time (save and release), and view time accounts. In all cases, users were unable to successfully log out of the SAP Portal using Internet Explorer 8 (Beta 2).

When logging into CatsWeb services (<http://catsweb.txstate.edu/catsweb/index.htm>) no issues were observed.

When logging into GATO (Texas State’s Web Content Management System) (<https://gato-edit.its.txstate.edu/>) testers experienced minor compatibility problems. When right-clicking on a page to edit it, the right-click menu appeared truncated for testers. No other issues were observed.

When logging into the Technology Resources Enterprise Project Management SharePoint website (<https://bobcatshare.txstate.edu/PWA/default.aspx>), testers were prompted to run several ActiveX installations in order to get the Project Center to display correctly. This is not considered a problem as a default installation of Internet Explorer 7 required the same installations. Once these quick installations were completed, testers did not observe any additional required installations or compatibility issues.

Google Chrome (Beta)

Google has released their inaugural internet browser, [Google Chrome \(Beta\)](#), for Windows computers. This open source internet browser was built on components from Apple’s WebKit and Mozilla’s Firefox, among others. Google markets Chrome (Beta) as a browser that combines a minimal design with sophisticated technology to make the web faster, safer, and easier. A full list of features can be found [here](#).

Features – Google Chrome (Beta)

Keeping with the minimal design that can be found on Google’s main search engine website, Google Chrome’s (Beta) interface is very basic and clean. Chrome (Beta) offers numerous productivity and security features. Below is a sampling of the major features as described by Google on their Google Chrome Features website.

“One box for everything” allows you to use the Address Bar get anywhere on the Web with one box. The address bar that sits at the top of the normal Google Chrome window simplifies your Internet experience by doubling as a search box. You can also use it to bookmark websites and stay aware about the security of a website.

“New Tab page” preloads each new tab that you open with useful information. With one click, you can get to the web resources you use most often.

“Application Shortcuts” allow you to use web apps without opening your browser. Application shortcuts can directly load your favorite online apps.

“Dynamic tabs” allow you to drag tabs out of the browser to create new windows, gather multiple tabs into one window or arrange your tabs however you wish.

“Crash control” runs each tab independently in the browser, so if one tab crashes it won't take anything else down.

“Incognito mode” allows users the ability to surf the web without the pages you visit showing up in your web history.

“Safe browsing” warns you if you're about to visit a suspected phishing, malware or otherwise unsafe website.

“Simpler downloads” allow you to see your download's status at the bottom of your current window.

Website Compatibilities – Google Chrome (Beta)

This section will cover the highlights of the Google Chrome (Beta) browser testing conducted by itac. The purpose of these tests was to gauge how Google Chrome displayed many of the commonly used websites at Texas State University.

When viewing the Texas State University website (www.txstate.edu) some testers were prompted to install a Flash plug-in. Once the plug-in is installed the page displays fine. No other issues were observed.

When logging into BobcatMail (Outlook Web Access) (<https://bobcatmail.txstate.edu>), Google Chrome (Beta) entered the OWA Basic interface, no issues were observed. OWA's Basic interface has limited functionality as only Internet Explorer users can experience OWA Premium (full functionality). Please note that OWA Basic and OWA Premium differ in how they display and offer functionality, but all OWA Basic functionality works with Google Chrome (Beta). Testers were able to read and compose Texas State e-mail without issue. Testers were also able to manage their calendars and contacts without issue. Testers could not create/edit local distribution lists within Google Chrome (Beta). No other issues were observed.

When logging into TRACS (<https://tracs.txstate.edu>) testers experienced only minor compatibility issues. Several testers reported seeing frames within frames after logging into TRACS. This made it difficult to navigate the site however, no site functionality was lost. No other issues were observed.

When logging into and using the Email Toolkit (<https://cr.txstate.edu/toolkit>), testers did not observe any issues.

When logging into the SAP Portal (<https://ibis.txstate.edu:50001/irj/portal>) testers were able to successfully log into the portal however testers were unable to perform any tasks as Google Chrome (Beta) is not a support browser.

When logging into and using CatsWeb services (<http://catsweb.txstate.edu/catsweb/index.htm>) no issues were observed.

When logging into GATO (Texas State's Web Content Management System) (<https://gato-edit.its.txstate.edu/>) testers experienced minor compatibility problems. When using the Rich Editor Paragraph section of GATO, the toolbar was not present. No other issues were observed.

When logging into the Technology Resources Enterprise Project Management SharePoint website (<https://bobcatshare.txstate.edu/PWA/default.aspx>), testers were prompted to use only Internet Explorer 6 or higher. Google Chrome (Beta) is not supported by Microsoft Project Web Access.

Mozilla Firefox 3

Mozilla's latest release of their popular internet browser, [Firefox 3](#), promises security, speed and a healthy choice of functionality features. According to the official Firefox 3 website linked above, Mozilla markets Firefox 3 as "The Browser That Has It All," stating that it has "...new features that will change the way you use the Web..." A full list of features can be found [here](#).

New Features – Mozilla Firefox 3

As the founder of tabbed browsing, Mozilla takes the next step with Firefox 3 in advancing its internet browser by implementing new security and functionality feature sets. Below is a sampling of the major features as described by Mozilla on their Firefox 3 Features website.

"Once-Click Bookmarking" offers users the ability to bookmark, search and organize Web sites quickly and easily.

"Instant Web Site ID" protects users from online scams, unsafe transactions and forgeries with simple site identity.

"Full Zoom" allows users to view any part of a Web page, up close and readable, in seconds.

"Smart Location Bar" finds the sites you love in seconds—enter a term for instant matches that make sense.

"Password Manager" remembers site passwords without ever seeing a pop-up.

Website Compatibilities – Mozilla Firefox 3

This section will cover the highlights of the Mozilla Firefox 3 browser testing conducted by itac. The purpose of these tests was to gauge how Mozilla Firefox 3 displayed many of the commonly used websites at Texas State University.

When viewing the Texas State University website (www.txstate.edu) some testers were prompted to install a Flash plug-in. Once the plug-in is installed the page displays fine. No other issues were observed.

When logging into BobcatMail (Outlook Web Access) (<https://bobcatmail.txstate.edu>), Mozilla Firefox 3 entered the OWA Basic interface, no issues were observed. OWA's Basic interface has limited functionality as only Internet Explorer users can experience OWA Premium (full functionality). Please note that OWA Basic and OWA Premium differ in how they display and offer functionality, but all OWA Basic functionality works with Mozilla Firefox 3. Testers were able to read and compose Texas State e-mail without issue. Testers were also able to manage their calendars and contacts without issue. Testers could not create/edit local distribution lists within Mozilla Firefox 3. No other issues were observed.

When logging into TRACS (<https://tracs.txstate.edu>) testers experienced only minor compatibility issues. Several testers reported seeing frames within frames after logging into TRACS. This made it difficult to navigate the site however, no site functionality was lost. No other issues were observed.

When logging into and using the Email Toolkit (<https://cr.txstate.edu/toolkit>), testers did not observe any issues.

When logging into the SAP Portal (<https://ibis.txstate.edu:50001/iri/portal>) testers were able to successfully log into the portal. The only observed issue with using Mozilla Firefox 3 to access the SAP Portal was that the "exit" link did not work after viewing your remuneration statement. No other issues were observed.

When logging into and using CatsWeb services (<http://catsweb.txstate.edu/catsweb/index.htm>) no issues were observed.

When logging into GATO (Texas State's Web Content Management System) (<https://gato-edit.its.txstate.edu/>) testers did not observe any issues.

When logging into the Technology Resources Enterprise Project Management SharePoint website (<https://bobcatshare.txstate.edu/PWA/default.aspx>), testers were prompted to use only Internet Explorer 6 or higher. Mozilla Firefox 3 is not supported by Microsoft Project Web Access.