

Mozilla joins Microsoft in slamming Google Chrome Frame

by David M Williams
Friday, 02 October 2009

Microsoft has found an unexpected ally in its condemnation of Chrome Frame, a plugin by Google that switches out the Internet Explorer HTML and JavaScript engines for those used by the Chrome web browser. Now Firefox maker Mozilla has spoken out.

Google's engineers working on Google Wave, the next-gen e-mail/IM/wiki/blog all-in-one replacement, had enough of Internet Explorer, they claimed.

They said Internet Explorer was just now fast enough or sufficiently compliant with HTML 5 standards. Consequently, the Googlies found they were expending a lot of effort to make Google Wave perform well in Internet Explorer.

It struck the Google team that enough was enough; all that extra work could be better spent on developing Google Wave's core features for everyone and so Chrome Frame was born — an open source plugin for Internet Explorer that effectively replaces the rendering and JavaScript engines with those used by Google's own Chrome web browser.

By installing Chrome Frame Internet Explorer users can continue using the web browser they prefer, or are constrained to use by corporate policy, but yet still experience Google Wave the same way a Chrome user would.

Tests performed by Computerworld show Internet Explorer 8 runs JavaScript 10 times faster using Chrome Frame than without it.

Yet, Microsoft slammed Chrome Frame as making Internet Explorer less secure. Chrome Frame bypasses Internet Explorer 8's enhanced security features, Microsoft said, and called Chrome Frame "a risk" that they would not recommend.

Now Mozilla has joined the fray with Mike Shaver, Vice President for Engineering, and Mozilla Foundation Chairperson Mitchell Baker both giving their views.

Mozilla's line is that Google's approach is the wrong one. Inserting another browser into Internet Explorer doesn't achieve the unification Google want but instead weakens the security and causes a messy browser soup.

Users will lose control over what used to be their browser, Baker said.