Vivaldi: You Owe It to Yourself to Examine This New Browser

Vivaldi isn't like any other browser. The developers are not trying to make it simple in an effort to appeal to every user. They are introducing features and customizations that browsers today don't have.

That focus is very important. Vivaldi should adapt to you. It shouldn't feel like a browser for everyone. Because it isn't. You can customize it to suit you and make it personal. The moment you download and install this new browser, you will be prompted to start customizing it to your tastes immediately.

Download Vivaldi 1.0 (this is a hyperlink)

This is a browser for tinkerers, and those not satisfied with the limited experiences you find on any other unmodified web browser. The Settings menu contains more buttons than you'd find on any browser, and while to some it will be overkill, the sheer volume of configurable options means there's very little recourse for someone who complains that things aren't set up as they like.

One excellent example of the extent to which items are configurable is having the ability to change the way tabs are laid out when Vivaldi is maximized: either snug at the top of the screen or with a gap of a few pixels, so you can easily grab the status bar. The wealth of customization options show this software is concerned about the user experience.

The real meat of Vivaldi comes from its arsenal of productivity features. By far the best is the ability to stack tabs on top of one another. This is achieved by dragging one tab to another, at which point Vivaldi will combine them. You can cycle between them by clicking on a slither of a button at the top of the tab.

You can also automatically combine tabs from one domain into a single stack, so you don't end up with tens of tabs open while you're researching a subject. You can hover your cursor over the stack and get a preview of the tabs currently in that stack, and then click on the tab you want.

Better still is the addition of a side bar, which lets you pop out web pages – called Web Panels. This is handy for checking emails and news websites.

There are other smaller touches that make Vivaldi a joy. For instance, the loading bar provides details of the size of the page you're trying to load as well as the number of elements it's loading.

Another is the simple way Vivaldi handles downloads in the sidebar, letting you pause and retry downloads quickly and easily. The ability to rewind to the start of the domain you're navigating is also brilliant: if you go down a rabbit hole on the site you're on, for example, simply hit the rewind button to go back to the homepage or the page on which you entered the site.

It handles history searching in the address bar better than Google Chrome and it feels faster than Firefox; it is always incredibly easy to find a page simply by typing a keyword from the page title.

It's not all there, though. Performance does sometimes feel a little sluggish with so many things going on at once; reviewers have occasionally had to close everything and start again as the browser chugged to a halt while trying to write an email with five seconds of keyboard lag.

Verdict

Vivaldi is a superb browser for power users. However, it may take time to get your head around it and you may never use all of its features.