

Why You Should Be Using Microsoft Edge

Internet Explorer, rightly or wrongly, had come to represent everything that was wrong with both Microsoft and the wider browser market. It was riddled with security vulnerabilities, it had a complete lack of support for extensions, and it was slow.

Microsoft released Microsoft Edge— distributing it with its new Windows 10 upgrade. It marked a complete break from the Internet Explorer brand name, killing off a 20-year-old family history in the process.

Internet Explorer is still available for compatibility purposes – but you need to move on. Here’s ten reasons you should start using Microsoft Edge right now.

1) Speed

Speed is one of the most important aspects to consider when you’re deciding which browser should become your default choice. Chrome used to be the undisputed king, but a series of new features and endless extensions has seen it lose its advantage.

Edge is now the fastest browser on the market, running 112 percent faster than Chrome. Another independent test found that Chrome was still slightly faster than Edge when it came to “real-world” loading of pages, but as soon as a couple of extensions were installed Edge became the number one.

2) Annotate Pages

Microsoft Edge becomes the first browser that natively allows you to add notes to webpages that you’re viewing.

This brings a host of benefits for a wide range of users. For example, people who love to cook can make tweaks and amendments to recipes and then either print them or share them with friends, while designers who need to provide feedback on the layout of a site will now find the process a lot more straightforward.

It should be noted, this works a lot better if you have a touchscreen computer and pen.

To activate the feature just click on the pen and paper icon in the top right-hand corner. Once you finished making your amendments you can either save it as a bookmark, share it via OneNote, or save it to your reading list.

3) Reading List

This isn't an entirely new feature; a reading list was including in Windows 8. It was underused, however, and very few people knew where to find it and how to operate it.

In Microsoft Edge, the feature has been moved front and center. Of course, you've been able to get a similar service using apps and add-ons for a long time, but the fact this is now a native feature is pleasing.

Adding an item to the list is simple – just click the favorite icon in the toolbar and choose to add it to your reading list rather than to a bookmarks (favorites) folder.

4) Reading Mode

Connected to the reading list is the reading mode. Like the reading list, other browsers have offered plug-ins or settings tweaks that mimic a reading mode for a long time, but it's now finally a native feature in Microsoft's offering.

The idea behind the feature is to declutter an article by removing advertising and sidebars, and thus providing you with an experience that's more akin to reading a newspaper.

Accessing the function is simple and fast – just open the page you want to read and click the small book icon in the top right-hand corner. Click it again to exit reading mode.

5) Improved Security

Browsers are notoriously insecure programs, and Internet Explorer was one of the worst offenders. Microsoft has now taken huge strides towards addressing these concerns.

They did this in multiple ways. Perhaps most importantly, Edge is now an app rather than a system program. It means the process model has fundamentally changed, with both the outer manager process and the assorted content processes now living within their own sandboxes.

6) Clutter Free

One of the criticisms most often directed at Internet Explorer was its unnecessary complexity. The “Internet Options” page had barely evolved since the late 1990s, and the settings were scattered throughout the program in a seemingly chaotic way.

That’s all gone with Edge, whose designers have taken a highly minimalistic approach. The basic page is as bare as possible, lots of superfluous options have been removed completely, and anything that was deemed necessary but non-essential has been hidden away in **Menu > Settings > Advanced Settings**.

The result is a clean and polished experience that’s very different from what you’d experience on an extension-packed alternative.

7) Customizable Start Page

What do people use for their homepages these days? What options are there? Microsoft tries to answer this with its Edge Start Page.

First you’ll be asked to choose your language, and thereafter you can personalize the exact content you want to see, all the way from the types of news that interest you through to which sports teams you support or which athletes you want to follow.

The page pulls content from a range of sources to provide variety, and the news is all designed to be country-specific.

8) Cortana

Cortana has made giant leaps in the personal assistant space, and it is now a highly capable alternative to Google Now and Siri.

Once you’ve enabled Cortana to work in Edge from the advanced settings menu, it’ll offer you all kinds of benefits. For example, if you view a restaurant’s webpage it’ll pop up and offer directions and opening times; if you’re reading an article and you’re not sure about the context of a word or phrase you can right-click it to ask Cortana for more information; and if you’re looking for company reviews you’ll be provided with Yelp results.

9) Coding Support

Microsoft has clearly designed the Edge browser for the long-term. For example, ActiveX, Browser Helper Objects (BHOs), VBScript, JavaScript, and Vector Markup Language are all out, while JavaScript and Scalable Vector Graphics are in.

10) Extensions

The bad – there are no extensions at the moment. The good – they're coming. The even better – they will use the same JavaScript and HTML standard code used by Chrome and Firefox, meaning extensions programmed for either of those browsers would only require minimal coding to work in Edge as well.