

Network Security

Browser Security: Changing Browsers Can Make Sense



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While no Internet browser offers perfect security, changing your browser for security reasons can make sense, for example to a lesser known program. It could also make sense to use a separate browser for sensitive tasks such as online banking even though that can't provide one hundred percent protection against attacks.

» Experts warn of serious [security](#) vulnerabilities in popular Internet browsers that could be exploited by criminals, so it's a good idea to become familiar with the variety of browsers currently available.

However, no browser offers perfect security, warns Michael Roitzsch from the Institute of Computer Science at the Technical University of Dresden in Germany. "Hackers often target a higher level than the browser," he says.

For example programs such as Java, Flash, or Adobe Reader can be used as a channel for [malware](#). "Then it doesn't matter which browser is used," says Roitzsch.

Nevertheless changing browser for security reasons can make sense, for example to a lesser known program such as K-Meleon, Avant, Maxthon or FlashPeak. Their advantage: as they're not commonly used, attackers won't be looking for vulnerabilities in them.

Surfers don't need to have any worries about the limitations of these more obscure programs, Roitzsch says. "In 99 percent of cases a modern browser can accurately display any webpage."

It could also make sense to use a separate browser for sensitive tasks such as online banking even though that can't provide one hundred percent protection against attacks.

Of the major browsers, experts say Google's Chrome is the safest due to its sandbox technology which keeps web surfing separate from the rest of the [computer](#)'s operations.

Other browsers are starting to follow Chrome's lead in this regard. For example Microsoft's Internet Explorer 10 works on a similar principle but it's only available as a preview release at the moment.

Different browsers offer different advantages -- for example Opera has an integrated mail program while Firefox has numerous useful add-ons. There are speed differences between the different browsers but they're generally in the millisecond range.

"For the perceived surfing speed the quality of the Internet connection is much more important," said Roitzsch. "The differences between the browsers you notice especially with a very fast connection such as VDSL." And in terms of ease of use, today's browsers are all very similar: for example multiple tab browsing is almost universal now.

http://www.cio-today.com/news/Changing-Browsers-Can-Make-Sense/story.xhtml?story_id=010000CF1C28&full_skip=1