

New Opera Web browser offers more tab options

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(AP) -- Web browsers from the Norwegian company Opera Software ASA have been better known for their innovation than their usage.

For instance, they sported the ability to open multiple tabs in a single window long before that became standard practice. Now a new version available as a "beta" test lets you work with those tabs more easily.

A resizable tab bar in [Opera](#) 10 lets you stretch the row of tabs at the top so that mini, "thumbnail" versions of your open pages appear inside. That way, you can choose which tab to switch to based on the appearance of the Web page, not just its name.

Thumbnails aren't new to browsers. [Microsoft](#) Corp.'s [Internet Explorer](#)

offers them, as do previous versions of Opera. But Opera 10 lets you see those thumbnails up top while you continue to browse a Web site normally in the larger space below. IE lets you do one or the other.

Opera 10 retains the Speed Dial feature, which displays thumbnails of your favorite sites, not just your open ones - similar to what's available on [Google](#) Inc.'s Chrome and Apple Inc.'s Safari browsers. You simply click on any thumbnail to load the full site.

The new version is more customizable: Instead of just nine Speed Dial sites, you can choose four to 25.

The new Opera browser also has built-in compression technology that can help improve browsing speeds, particularly for those with dial-up Internet access. Such technology is commonly offered by Internet service providers, but not by browsers.

It's not clear whether any of these features will significantly improve Opera's market share, which is tiny compared with market leader Internet Explorer and the increasingly popular Firefox. Unlike IE, though, Opera has versions for Mac and [Linux](#) computers as well.

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