

# Microsoft releases near-final Internet Explorer 9 version

February 10 2011

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(AP) -- Microsoft Corp. released a near-final version of Internet Explorer 9 on Thursday, saying the updates make the Web browser even better at tapping into a computer's powerful processors to help multimedia-laden websites load and run faster.

IE9 is a free download that works Windows Vista and Windows 7 computers. It's not compatible with Windows XP.

With [IE9](#), [Microsoft](#) followed the visual lead of Google Inc.'s Chrome browser. IE9 has far fewer buttons, icons and toolbars filling the screen, leaving more room for the contents of Web pages. It mimics some features in Windows 7, the newest PC [operating software](#) from

Microsoft, in that it lets people "pin" individual websites to the taskbar at the bottom of the PC screen to make permanent one-click shortcuts.

Based on feedback from the [beta version](#), which Microsoft said was used by 25 million people, the software will let people add a new row of tabs to the bar at the top of the browser window. It will also pop up fewer notifications.

The new browser is much more than an aesthetic overhaul. IE9 can take advantage of multicore microprocessors to crunch website code faster. It also uses the PC's [graphics processing unit](#) - the same chips that make the images in elaborate video games run smoothly - to make movie clips and other visuals load and play faster.

Microsoft said Thursday that it has improved several aspects of the browser that make it run faster than the beta that was released in September. It fine-tuned the engine for rendering JavaScript, a widely used Web programming language, so pages load faster. IE9 now also decides on the fly when to tap into the graphics processor for more speed.

Competitors including Google and Mozilla, maker of the Firefox browser, are also working on similar technical upgrades to their software. This new crop of browsers will be competing with "apps," small programs for smart phones, tablets and other devices that deliver the some of the same content as websites but in a way that's easier to navigate on smaller screens.

**More information:** Microsoft's IE download site:  
<http://www.beautyoftheweb.com>

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Citation: Microsoft releases near-final Internet Explorer 9 version (2011, February 10) retrieved 18 April 2024 from

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