

Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.5

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Heresy though it may be, I have always preferred Microsoft's attempt to control the internet - Internet Explorer [half of our readers have now passed out - Darren]. I like it for its stability (now that's a first for a Microsoft product), but most of all I like it for its nifty features. Netscape users - haven't you ever wanted to have an index of pages you've been too in previous days? Well, Internet Explorer's History feature keeps track of your visits for around 20 days back. Do you get tired of having to type out lengthy web addresses over and over again? Well, Internet Explorer will recognize pages you have been to as you start to type them out in the URL field, and complete them for you. Find your screen too small for Navigator's clunky interface? Well, Internet Explorer's is no less clunky, but at least the navigation buttons are smaller. Annoyed with having to spend ages downloading a movie, only to have your ISP connection go down on you? Well, Internet Explorer will just pick up where you left off with your download. There are many more innovative (another first for a Microsoft product then) features in Internet Explorer waiting for you to find. Trust me, you'll wonder how you ever lived without them.

So, what's new in this version?

Don't expect any revolutionary new features if you're moving to Internet Explorer 4.5 from version 4.0. The emphasis in this release is squarely on tweaks, which make web browsing much more pleasant. One of the things which is immediately noticeable is a new button in the navigation section of each window - the AutoFill command. This lets you automatically fill out a form with your details, such as name, address, state, e-mail address, phone number, etc. It works incredibly well and is a real timesaver. Likewise

you can tell Internet Explorer words you often use in filling out forms (like your Hotmail username and password), and it will complete them when you start them. This has been a real godsend to me, meaning I can access my HotMail account far easier. AutoComplete was one of the few nice features in Word.

Another new feature is Internet Explorer's ability to show you an accurate print preview of a page, so you know whether it will fit an A4 sheet. If it won't, you can get Internet Explorer to scale it to fit your page. This will come in handy to a lot of people. Netscape Navigator has lost its speed advantage with this version of Explorer too. And, as always, Explorer will render HTML more accurately than Navigator.

Just plain better

So, to conclude, in my humble opinion, this version of Internet Explorer is just plain better than what Netscape is offering. It may mean using a product from the Evil Empire, but it's worth it. We should recognize the good products Microsoft makes, and congratulate them for it.

Rating: 9.5 out of 10

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