

Become an Efficient Researcher: Top Twenty Firefox Add-ons that Make Firefox the Researcher's Browser of Choice

Firefox was introduced in 2004 as a free [open-source](#) replacement for Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Firefox offered improved security and introduced [tabbed browsing](#), an integrated spell checker, and a download manager. Today, Firefox is the second-most popular browser, with almost twenty percent of the browser market share. The popularity of Firefox continues to grow primarily because of its speed, ease of use, and the availability of free "add-ons" which allow users to add additional features to customize the Firefox browser.



As the amount of scholarly material available on the web increases, so does the need to an efficient means to find, sort, organize and cite the material. Below are twenty of the best tools available on Firefox that researchers can choose from to build a customized, highly efficient research tool.

Part I: Find What You Are Looking For.

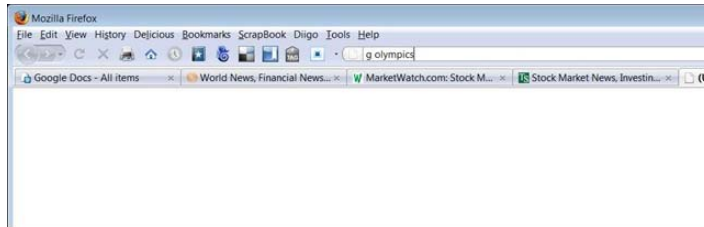
1. Use Firefox Quicksearch

Setting up a quicksearch allows you to run searches from the address bar using very simple customized search commands instead of visiting a search engine or installing a toolbar to run searches.

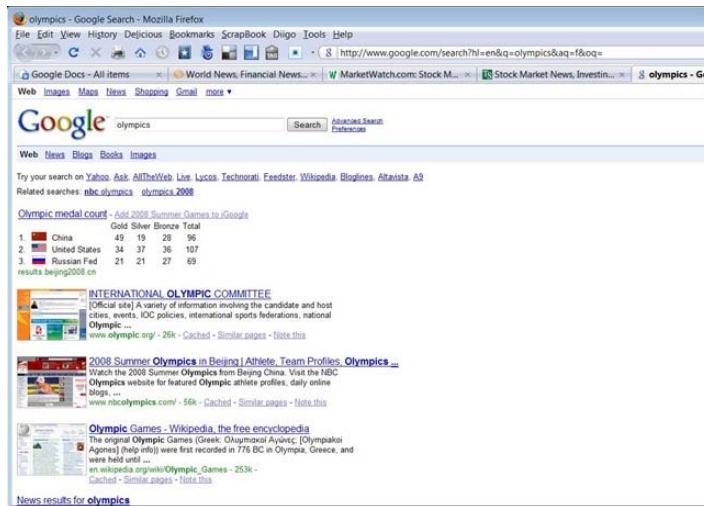
For example, I've set up a quicksearch for Google, so that all I have to do to run a Google search is go to the address bar and type in "g searchterm" and hit enter.

Example:

Typing in "g olympics" and hitting enter



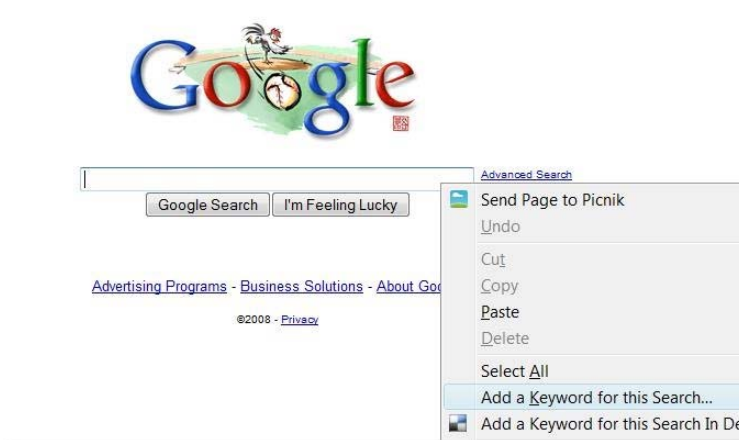
results in:



Adding thumbnails next to your Google results is covered later in the story. You can skip directly to it by going to Tip #12.

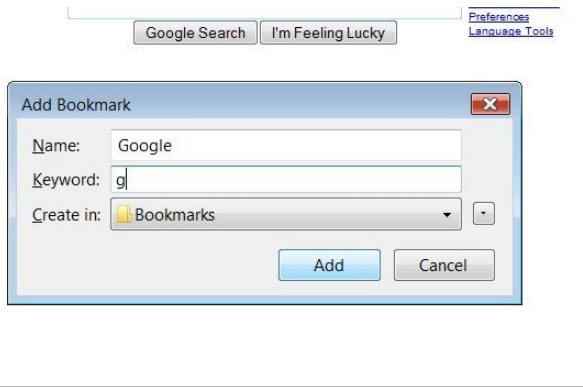
Creating a QuickSearch is as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. Visit any webpage that has a search field that you commonly use. (For example, go to <http://google.com>)
2. Right click on the search field. Choose **Add a Keyword for this Search...**



3. The Add Bookmark dialog will appear. Give the bookmark a name, e.g. "Google" and create a keyword e.g. "g" and click "Add." The Keyword is going to be the command you use to run the search so keep it short and make sure it is something that is intuitive to you.

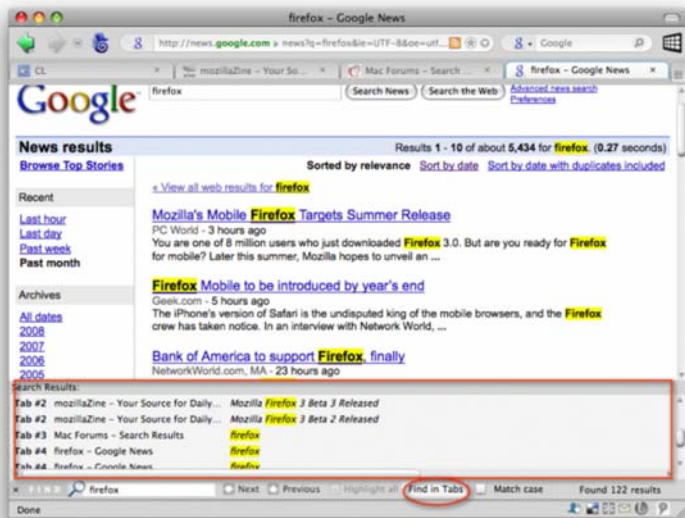




Now to run a quicksearch, all you have to do is go to your address bar and type in the keyword and search term to run a quicksearch. If you set up the Google Quicksearch described above, try typing in "g olympics" in the address and then hit enter to see your results.

2. Find in Tabs

With the advent of tabbed browsing came the need to be able to sort quickly through open pages. The Find in Tabs extensions allows users to search multiple open tabs at once. It displays all occurrences of the search terms from your open webpages in a display pane that also highlights the search results in context, making sifting through search results a breeze.



3. Resurrect Pages

Resurrect Pages allows researchers to bring webpages back after they have shed their ethereal coils. When a webpage is not longer available, either because the content changed or the website no longer exists, Resurrect Pages searches caches and archives that mirrored the content while it was available, so that in many cases you can still retrieve the information you were looking for. Resurrect Pages searches the best caches including Google, MSN, and Yahoo Caches, CoraICDN, the Internet Archive.



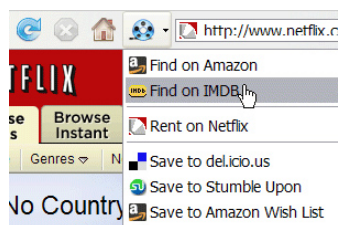
4. BugMeNot

BugMeNot allows users to bypass registration at many free websites. This is a great way to skip registering for news websites merely to read archived articles.



5. BlueOrganizer

BlueOrganizer creates "smart menus" and "smartlinks" based on the page you are visiting to offer helpful features that aid in research. For instance, it recognizes book names, movies, individuals, and songs to find more information about those items quickly and effortlessly.



... iPod mini. iTunes 4 logo. Autosync your iPod
 Enjoy Books on your iPod. Books on iPod mini.
www.apple.com/ipodmini/ - 23k - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)
[\[More results from www.apple.com \]](#)

[iPodlounge | All Things iPod](#)
 All Things iPod. Your source for ne
 forums, tips & tricks, downloads an
www.ipodlounge.com/ - 101k - 23k

13. Cooliris (Formerly PicLens)

Cooliris is to image and video searches what the iPhone is to phones. Cooliris offers an amazing interface that allows you to sort very quickly through hundreds of images and supports sites including Google Image Search, Youtube, Flickr, and Picasa. It is hard to imagine an interface that beats coverflow on Macs and iPhones, but the Cooliris interface does.

Check out the demo:

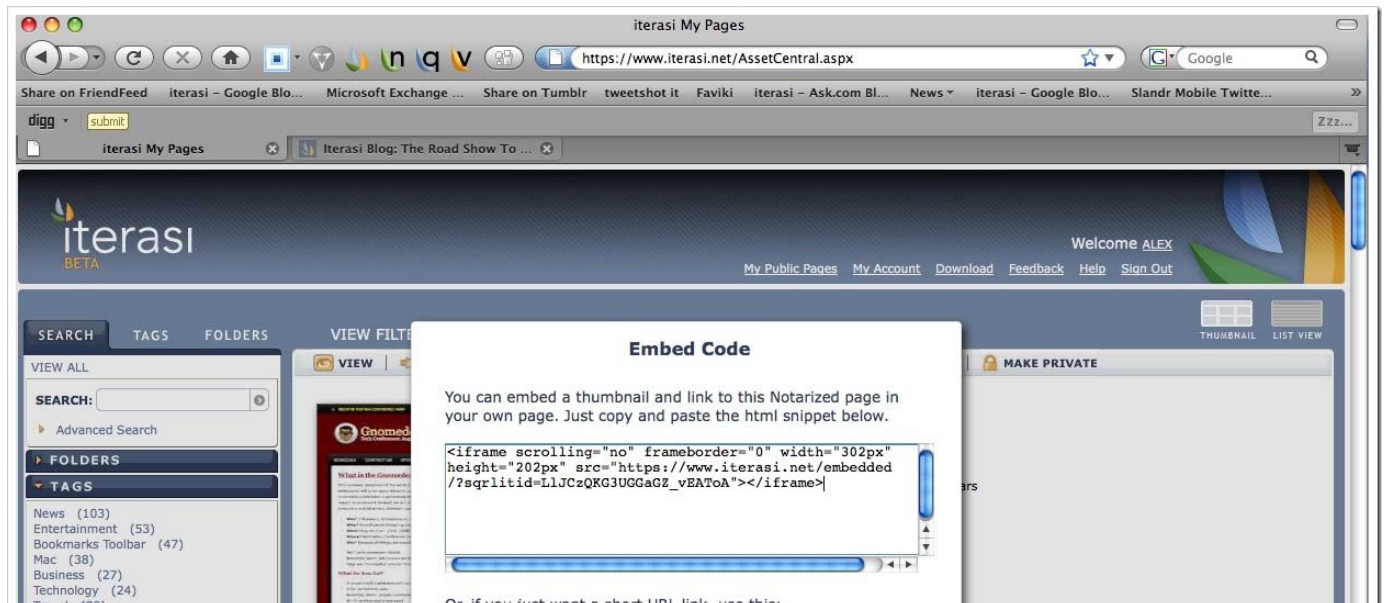


The interface is so good, that in response to user requests, Cooliris has even come out with a [PowerPoint plugin and instructions for users of Keynote](#) to add Cooliris functionality to desktop presentations.

Part II: Save, Organize, Annotate, and Cite Your Search Results.

14. Iterasi

[As previously mentioned](#), Iterasi allows you to save dynamic webpages for future reference, even after the content of the original page has changed. Since I posted my review of Iterasi, Iterasi has added support for Mac OS X, and a scheduler which automatically archives webpages on a regular basis. In a conversation I had with Alex Williams, the Director of Product Marketing for Iterasi, I mentioned the availability of short permanent URLs to access the notarized pages would be a feature I thought users would really appreciate so they can more easily use Iterasi for citations in professional publications. I am happy to report that the most recent version of Iterasi offers this new feature. This is a company that is listening to what users want and responding quickly. Keep an eye on this add-on for additional features in the future.

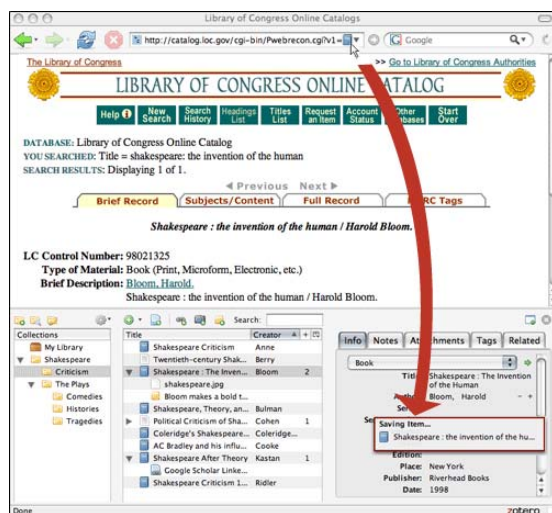




Scheduler Tool Unveiled:

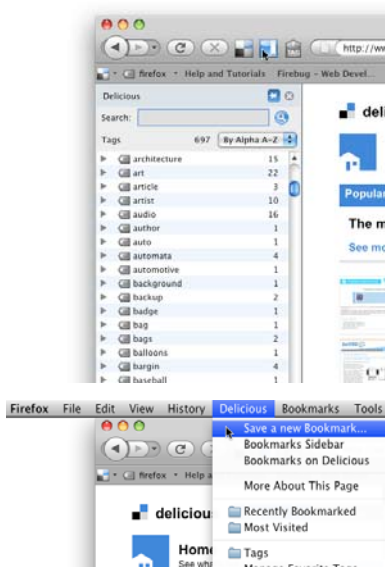
15. Zotero

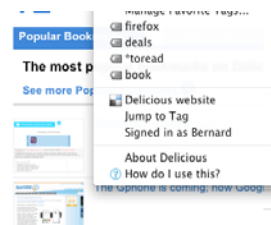
Zotero allows you to “collect, manage, cite” your research sources. What is great about Zotero is that it not only organizes saved webpages, and search results, it also allows users to add external material like files or documents to the organized structure.



16. Delicious Bookmarks

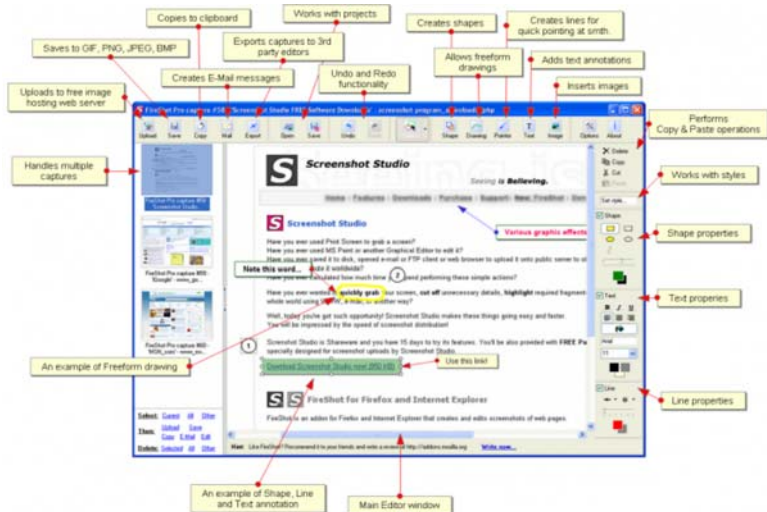
Delicious Bookmarks lets you to save bookmarks and tag the pages so you easily find them later. The bookmarks are available from any computer with access to the Internet by logging on to your Delicious account, which make it an ideal tool for users who research from more than one location. Delicious bookmarks also allow you to find the most popular pages for any tag and access your bookmarks from any computer.





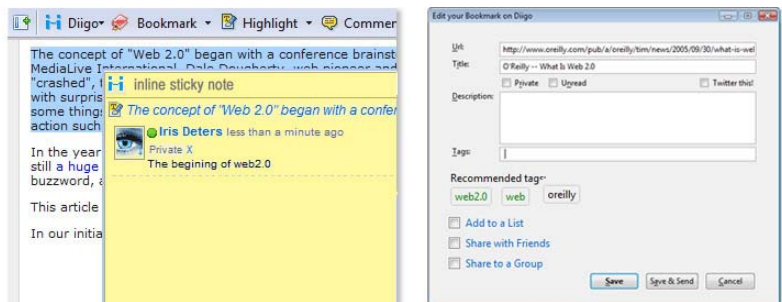
17. Fireshot

At its most basic level of functionality, Fireshot allows users to capture images of the pages they are visiting. Unlike taking a screenshot using your operating system, Fireshot can take a picture of an entire webpage, even when portions of the page are not visible on the screen. Fireshot also features a built-in editor that allows you to crop the pictures, annotate them, and save them for future reference or to share with colleagues.



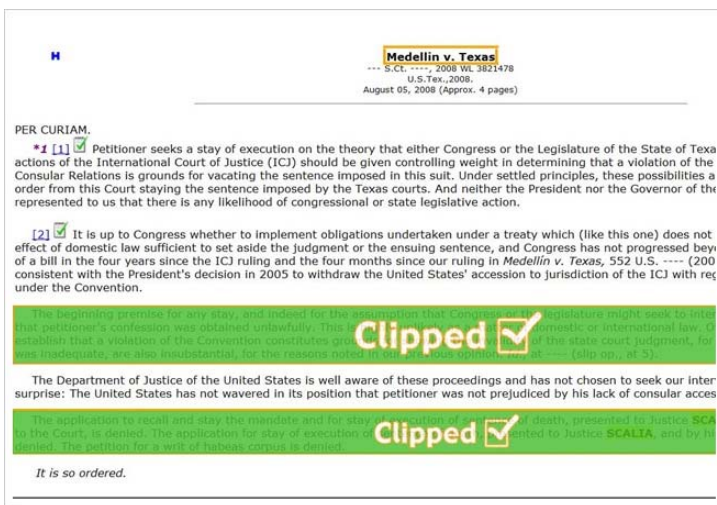
18. Diigo

Diigo allows you to highlight, annotate, and save annotated webpages for future reference. While registration is required, and it adds a toolbar to your browser, pages 2 and 3 of the registration process can be skipped and the toolbar can be hidden.



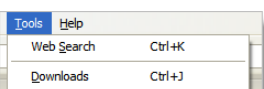
19. Clipmarks

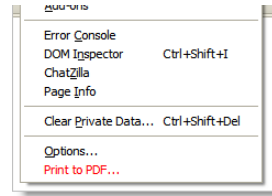
This allows you to save portions of webpages for future reference, print only the parts of pages you want, and email portions of pages to yourself or others. It is the perfect tool for printing or saving multiple non-continuous sections of a page.



20. PrintPDF

If your computer does not already have the capability of "printing" a file to PDF format, PrintPDF adds the capability to save webpages as PDF files directly from your browser.





If you have a favorite Firefox plugin or tip for researchers, or if you agree or disagree with the suggestions, leave a comment. Thanks!

★★★★★ (5 votes, average: 5 out of 5)

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