

WebParrot introduction and walk-thru.

WebParrot acts as a caching proxy to allow for repeatable client testing. This tutorial will get you started using WebParrot.

Installation:

WebParrot requires nodejs version 0.6.6 or above.

Install nodejs v. 0.6.6 or above <http://nodejs.org/#download>
on the command line: 'npm install WebParrot'

Running:

To run WebParrot type: 'node <location of WebParrot.js>'.

If nodejs isn't in your path then you will have to run the node executable from wherever you installed it.

WebParrot has several optional command line arguments, use the argument -h to show more information about these or view the readme.

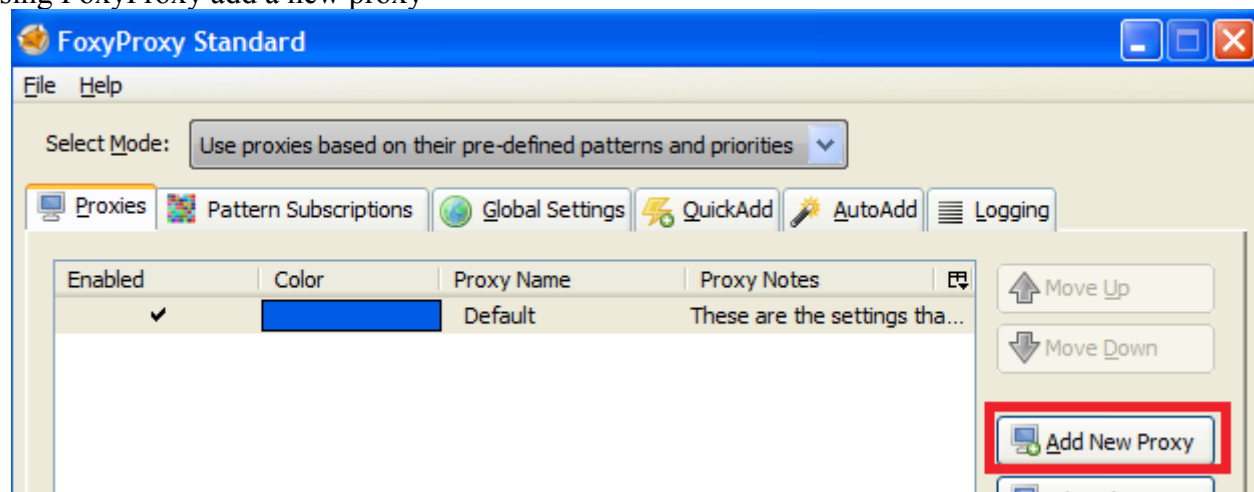
Using:

To direct your traffic through WebParrot set it as a http proxy in your browser. Once you have done so then it will start caching any traffic passing through it.

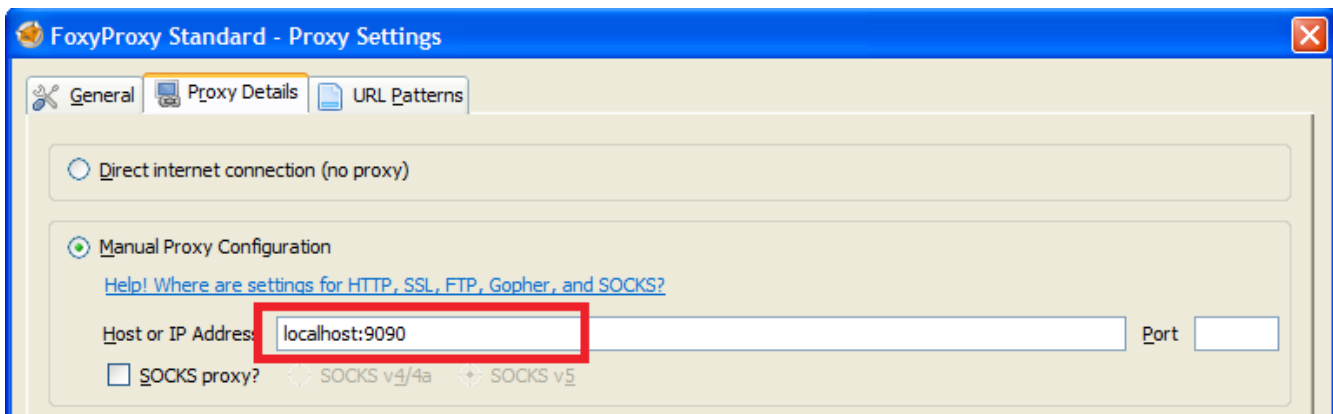
Firefox:

Several addons exist, however I suggest FoxyProxy.

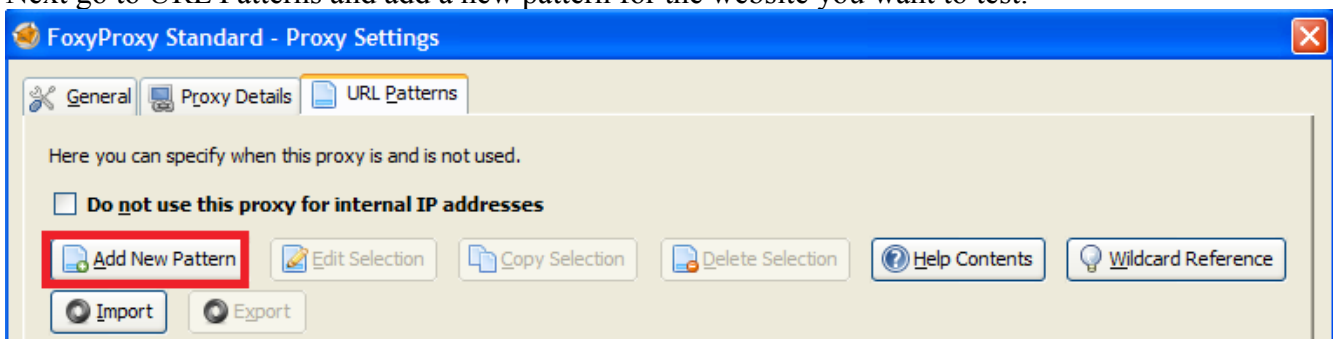
Using FoxyProxy add a new proxy



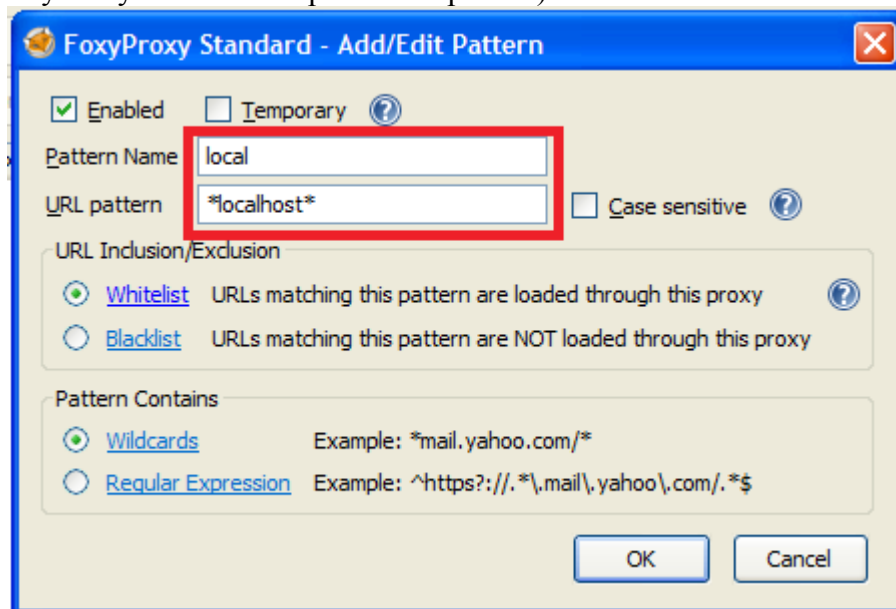
Using the manual proxy configuration, enter the hostname or ip of the machine you are running WebParrot on (likely localhost) and enter the port it will use for proxy traffic (default 9090).



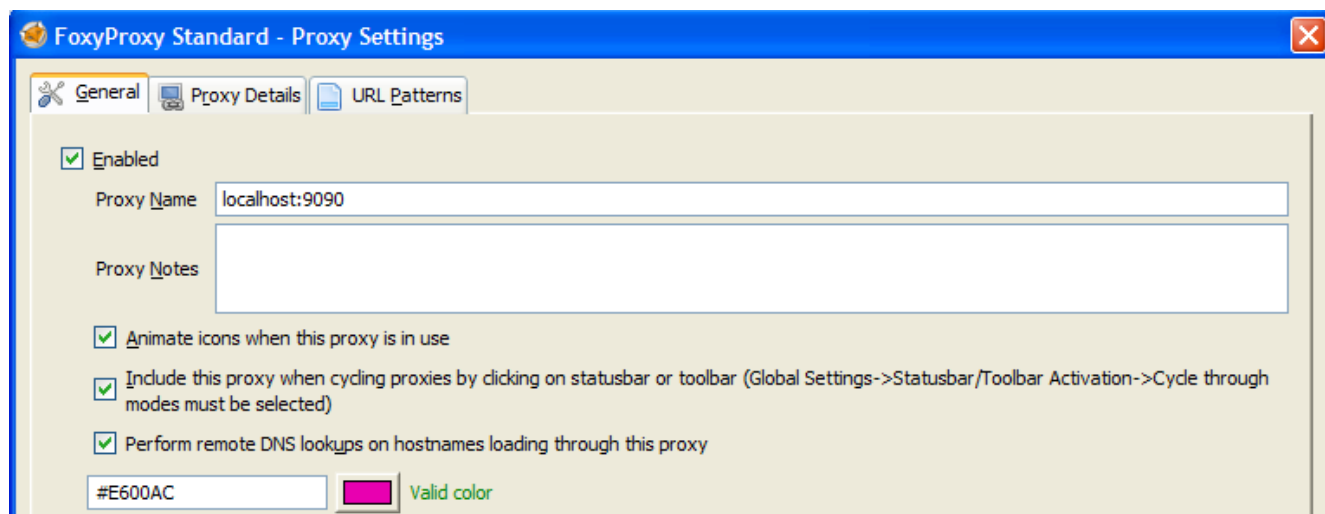
Next go to URL Patterns and add a new pattern for the website you want to test.



I suggest adding a wildcard to the front of any patterns you input (your address bar will not display the http:// part, but FoxyProxy will see it as part of the pattern). Make sure it's set to white list and enabled.



Set it to a new color so you can see when your direct connection is being use (the icon will be blue) and when WebParrot is being used.



You're ready to go!

To verify success enter localhost:9090/demo into the address bar, the page should display 'Passed through proxy'.

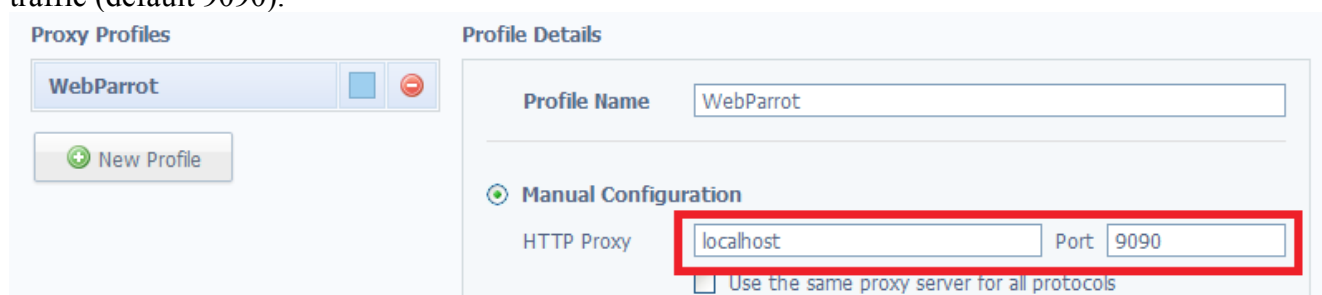
If it instead says 'NOT passed through proxy' then your proxy configuration is incorrect.

Chrome:

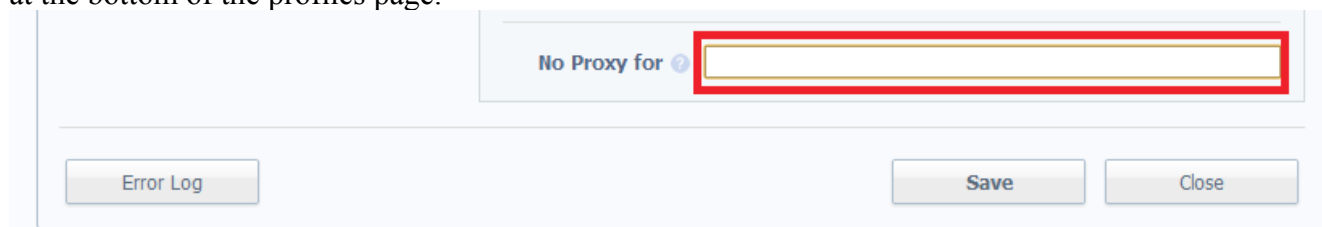
Several extensions exist, I suggest 'Switchy sharp'

(<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/dpplabbmogkhghncfbfdeecokoeofdjegm>)

Using Proxy Switchy add a new profile, set it to manual configuration and enter the hostname or ip of the machine you're running WebParrot on (likely localhost) and enter the port it will use for proxy traffic (default 9090).

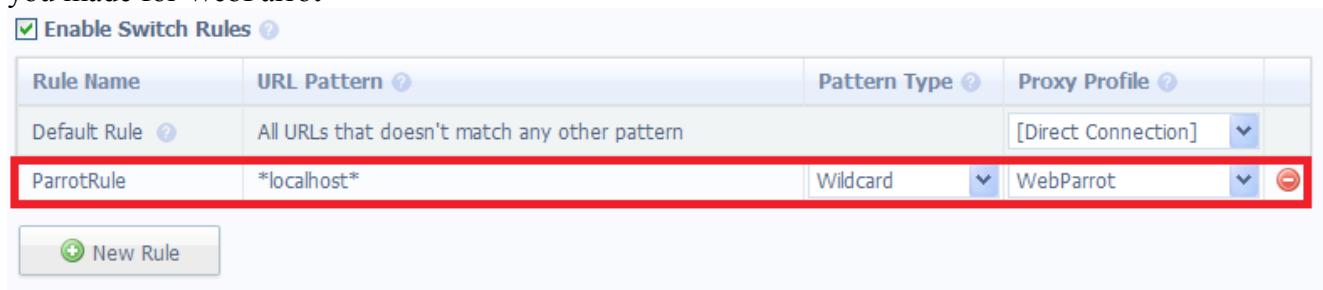


Make sure the if the site you're testing is being hosted on your machine that you empty 'No Proxy for' at the bottom of the profiles page.

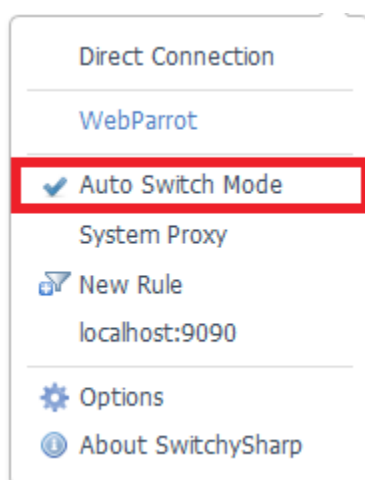


Click “Save” to save the proxy profile.

Next go to switch rules and add a name and pattern for the site to test. Set the Proxy Profile to the one you made for WebParrot



Finally set the extension to use the switch rules. Click the icon for SwitchySharp in the top right and click on 'Auto Switch Mode'.



You're ready to go!

To verify success enter localhost:9090/demo into the address bar, the page should display 'Passed through proxy'.

If it instead says 'NOT passed through proxy' then your proxy configuration is incorrect.

IE:

Why are you using IE?!

System Proxy:

I recommend against using WebParrot as your system proxy. If you really want to, then you're on your own.

Admin Page:

WebParrot also runs its own web server for administration. This page is hosted on the proxy port so enter <proxy URL>:<proxy Port>/admin (e.g. localhost:9090/admin) into your browser. Note that entering <proxy URL>:<proxy Port> (e.g. localhost:9090) without the /admin will redirect you, however your browser might interpret this as trying to access www.localhost:9090.com

Demo Page:

WebParrot has a demo page to show off its abilities. This page is hosted on the proxy port at /demo so enter <proxy URL>:<proxy Port>/demo into your browser.

Options and notes:

Modes:

Translucent: In this mode any unknown request will be sent to the server while any known request will be parroted. This is the default mode

Transparent: In this mode all requests are sent to the server and the parrot acts like a normal proxy, however all responses will be recorded.

Opaque: In this mode no requests will be sent to the server, any unknown requests will receive a blank page. Do not start the parrot in opaque mode.

Cache issues:

If you are trying to view a page you have viewed before your browser may send a cache check instead of a normal GET. If the page has not changed then the server will respond by saying that the cached page is correct. This response will be recorded by the parrot. Thus you may try to reload from the parrot only to get a cache response. To avoid this issue either clear your browser's cache before using or set the parrot to ignore that particular request (via the admin page). Also see stripping below.

Stripping:

Requests can have the part of the headers that cause these cache issues removed by adding the -strip command line argument. Doing so will remove the 'if-none-match' and 'if-modified-since' headers so the server will never respond with a cache success.

Locking and ignoring:

Requests can be set to be locked and/or ignored. Locking a request makes it so that the response will not change, even if a new response is seen. (only makes sense in transparent mode or response is set to ignored). Ignoring a request makes it so that the request is always treated as unknown. Thus in translucent mode the server will always receive the request and in opaque mode a blank page will always be delivered (thus locking is only useful in translucent mode).

Transcoders:

Transcoders allow you to modify the content sent from the cache to the client. See transcodersReadme.txt in the transcoders folder for more information.

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