Brave (web browser)

Brave is a free and open-source web browser developed by Brave Software, Inc. based on the Chromium web browser. The browser blocks ads and website trackers, and provides a way for users to send cryptocurrency contributions in the form of Basic Attention Tokens to websites and content creators.

As of 2019, Brave has been released for Windows, macOS, Linux, Android, and iOS. The current version features five search engines by default, including their partner, DuckDuckGo.[3]

Contents

Brave	
Developer(s)	Brave Software, Inc.[1]
Stable release(s)	
Android: 1.5.7 Desktop: 1.4.95 / 25 February 2020	
Preview release(s)	
Beta: 1.5.104 Dev: 1.6.54 Nightly: 1.7.29 / 29 February 2020	
Repository	https://github.com/brave/brave-browser
Written in	C, JavaScript, C++
Engines	Blink, V8, (WebKit on iOS)
Operating system	Windows
	macOS
	Linux
	Android
	iOS
Type	Web browser
License	**Browser:** MPL 2.0
	Privacy Badger: GPLv3
	HTTPS Everywhere: GPLv2 [2]
Website	brave.com (https://brave.com)

History

Brave is developed by Brave Software, which was founded on 28 May 2015 by CEO Brendan Eich (creator of Javascript and former CEO of Mozilla Corporation) and CTO Brian Bondy.[4] On 20 January 2016, Brave Software launched the first version of Brave with an ad-blocking feature, and announced plans for a privacy-respecting ad feature and a revenue sharing program.[5]

In June 2018, Brave released a pay-to-surf test version of the browser. This version of Brave was preloaded with approximately 250 ads, and sent a detailed log of the user's browsing activity to Brave for the short-term purpose of testing this functionality. Brave announced that expanded trials would follow.[6] Later that month, Brave added support for Tor in its desktop browser's private browsing mode.[7]

Until December 2018, Brave ran on a fork of Electron called Muon which was marketed as a "more secure fork". Nevertheless, Brave developers moved to Chromium, citing a need to ease their maintenance burden.[8] The final Muon-based version was released with the intention that it would stop working and instruct users to update as its end of life approached.[9]

In June 2019 Brave started testing a new ad-blocking rule matching algorithm, implemented in Rust, that Brave claims is on average 69 times faster than the previous implementation in C++. The new algorithm is inspired by the uBlock Origin and Ghostery algorithms.[10]

Brave launched its stable release version 1.0 on 13 November 2019 while having 8.7 million monthly active users overall.[11] At the time, it had approximately 3 million active users on a daily basis. Brave 1.0 was made available for Android, iOS, Windows 10, macOS, and Linux, and integrated "almost all of Brave's marquee features across all platforms," according to engadget.[12]

Business model

Brave uses its Basic Attention Token (BAT) to drive revenue.[13] Originally incorporated in Delaware as Hyperware Labs, Inc in 2015, the company later changed its name to Brave Software, Inc. and registered in California, where it is headquartered.[14]

By August 2016, the company had received at least US$7 million in angel investments from venture capital firms, including Peter Thiel's Founders Fund, Propel Venture Partners, Pantera Capital, Foundation Capital, and the Digital Currency Group.[15]

In November 2019, Brave launched an ad network which returns a 70 percent revenue share to users.[16]

Critical reception

In January 2016, in reaction to Brave Software's initial announcement, Sebastian Anthony of Ars Technica described Brave as a "cash-grab" and a "double dip". Anthony concluded, "Brave is an interesting idea, but generally it's rather frowned upon to stick your own ads in front of someone else's".[17] However, Ars Technica has since become a member of Brave's revenue-sharing program.[18] *TechCrunch*,[19] *Computerworld*,[20] and *Engadget*[21] termed Brave's ad replacement plans "controversial" in 2016.

In February 2016, Andy Patrizio of Network World reviewed a pre-release version of Brave. Patrizio criticized the browser's feature set as "mighty primitive," but lauded its performance: "Pages load instantly. I can't really benchmark page loads since they happen faster than I can start/stop the stopwatch".[22]

In April 2016, the CEO of the Newspaper Association of America, David Chavern, said that Brave's proposed replacement of advertising "should be viewed as illegal and deceptive by the courts, consumers, and those who value the creation of content".[23][24]

In April 2017, *TechWorld* praised Brave's "great speeds and advanced ad-tracking controls", but said that its "extension functionality is still lacking".[25]

In November 2019, CNET reviewed the newly released 1.0 version of Brave. They praised the speed, saying "Brave is hands-down the fastest browser I've used this year on any operating system, for both mobile and desktop. Memory usage by the browser is far below most others, while website loading is far faster."[26] They also said battery usage could be reduced by using the browser – "With less strain on resources comes less strain on your device's battery life as well."[26] However, they had concerns that the user base is still far below Chrome, and thus it may not be able to build out its ad system fully yet, saying – "The browser will need more users, however, to truly build out its new ad system: while 8 million people is a good start, it will still need to compete with Google Chrome's billion-plus users".[26]

A February 2020 research report published by the School of Computer Science and Statistics at Trinity College Dublin found Brave to be the most private browser: "In the first (most private) group lies Brave, in the second Chrome, Firefox and Safari, and in the third (least private) group lie Edge and Yandex."[27]

Features

Basic Attention Token

The "Basic Attention Token" (BAT) is an open-source, decentralized ad exchange platform based on Ethereum.[28]

In an initial coin offering on 31 May 2017, Brave Software sold 1,000,000,000 BAT for a total of 156,250 Ethereum (US$35M) in less than 30 seconds.[28][29] An additional 500,000,000 BAT was retained by the company, to be used to promote the adoption of the platform.[28]

In early December 2017, the company disbursed the first round of its 'user growth pool' grants: a total of 300,000 BAT was distributed to new users on a first-come first-served basis.[30][31]

Basic Attention Token logo

Brave Rewards

Since April 2019, users of the Brave browser can opt in to the Brave Rewards feature, which sends BAT micropayments to websites and content creators.[32] Site owners and creators must first register with Brave as a publisher. Users can either turn on auto-contribute, which automatically divides a specified monthly contribution in proportion to the time spent, or they can manually send a chosen amount (referred to as a tip) while visiting the site or creator.[33]

Users can choose to earn BAT by viewing advertisements which are displayed as notifications by the operating system of their computer or device. Advertising campaigns are matched with users by inference from their browsing history; this targeting is carried out locally, with no transmission of personal data outside the browser, removing the need for third-party tracking. In addition or alternatively, users can buy or sell BAT through Brave's relationship with Uphold Inc., a digital currency exchange operator.[34]

According to BATGrowth.com, a tracking site not affiliated with Brave Software, as of January 2020 over 370,000 publishers were registered. Around two-thirds of these were YouTube channels, with the others divided among websites, Twitter handles, Twitch handles, Reddit accounts, Vimeo handles and GitHub accounts.[35]

The first version of the micropayments feature, launched in 2016, was called Brave Payments and used Bitcoin.[36] Advertisements were shown in a separate browser tab.[37]

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External links

- Official website (https://brave.com) ✏️