

# **Explainer: Browsers**

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# Why we should spend time on browsers

- Everyone uses a browser at some point.
- A browser is a **general purpose** app for accessing sites on the internet. I.e., if you can do something on/with the Internet, you can do it with a browser.
- There are many browsers available. E.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox, etc. While they all perform the same primary role and have similar features...
  - How you use similar features tends to vary between browsers; i.e., their UIs differ
  - Their strengths and weaknesses vary; e.g., some browsers have stronger security & privacy capabilities than others
- Some sites host web apps (e.g., [mail.google.com](https://mail.google.com)). When you visit such sites with your browser, the web app is running “inside” your browser app. Being able to recognize when your browser is running a web app and being able to differentiate between a browser feature and a web app feature can be key to “getting things done” and solving problems you encounter.

# Common Browser UI elements

- Windows
- Tabs
- Panes
  - View / main
  - Sidebars
- Toolbar
- Address bar

# Features

- Bookmarks
- History
  - browsing
  - search
- Cache
  - Cookies
  - History: browsing & search
  - Files: images, etc
- Download
- Autofill
  - Including built-in password managers
- Private browsing (aka, incognito mode)
- “Distraction free” mode
- Tab groups
- Profiles
- Blockers: advertising, third party, tracker, fingerprint, pop-up, re-direct, scripting/cross-site scripting, ...
- Extensions
- Default system browser — hmm...default and how to change the browser the os launches when you click on a link
- Default search engine — hmm....default; how to change the search engine used by a browser
- What you see when you start your browser: i.e., pages that automatically load

# Key Terms

<b>browser</b>	
<b>site</b>	
<b>service</b>	
<b>server</b>	
<b>page</b>	
<b>home page</b>	
<b>link</b>	
<b>URL</b>	
<b>host</b>	
<b>HTTP/HTTPS</b>	
<b>HTML</b>	