

Firefox: a Better Browser

Technology Support Services strongly recommends the Firefox web browser, which is more secure than Internet Explorer (IE), and also has some nice additional features. This handout is based on Firefox version 3.5.2. If you have an older version (see Help – About Mozilla Firefox), you can update it by going to <http://www.mozilla.com>.

Note: You may occasionally find some web sites that have been programmed to work only in IE. When you run into a site that doesn't work properly in Firefox (if it looks strange or its features don't work), you can switch to IE just for that site, then go back to Firefox. In short, only use Internet Explorer when you have to.

Firefox is a web browser only and does not include an e-mail program. If you need a separate e-mail program, we recommend Mozilla Thunderbird. For more information, see the handout *Installing & Configuring Thunderbird for SNC E-Mail*, available at <http://www.snc.edu/techsupport>.

Search box

Firefox has a search box on the right-hand side of the toolbar that allows you to do a web search by typing directly into that box (see picture below). To add search engines, click on the search engine logo (usually “G” for Google) and choose Manage Search Engines. The “Get more search engines...” link takes you to a site where you can browse a list of search engines to add.

Location bar

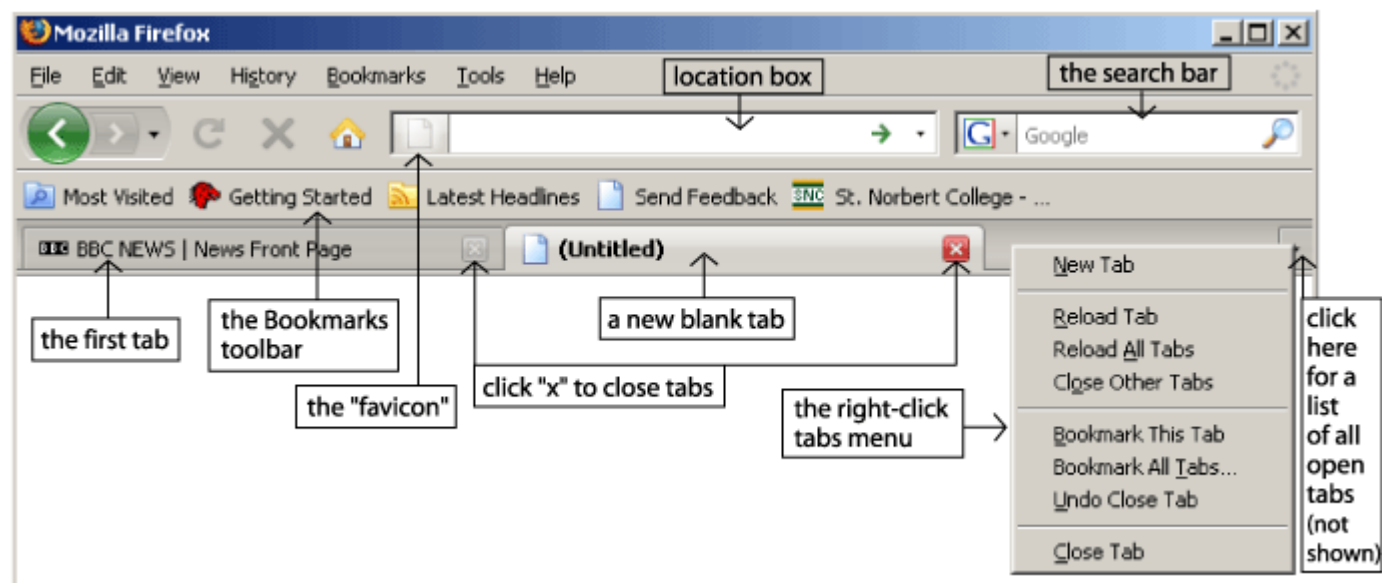
When you type a term into the location bar, the auto-complete function lists matching sites from your browsing history, sites you've bookmarked, and your tags. The location bar adapts to your preferences over time.

Tabbed Browsing

Firefox allows you to have more than one web site open at a time in the same Firefox window, on different tabs. This is a very useful and convenient feature, but it may be difficult to appreciate until you actually try it.

By default, Firefox will hide the tabs when you only have one web site open, so you won't see them until you open a second one. To get another tab, go to File – New Tab or press CTRL+T. This will give you a new, blank “Untitled” tab, on which you can go to another web site while leaving the original web site open on the first tab. Then you just click once on the tabs to switch between them. To close a tab, click the “x” on the right side of that tab. Also, if you right-click on or next to the tabs, you will have more options, such as New Tab and Close Tab. You can also right-click on any link in any web page and choose Open Link in New Tab.

Note: When you close Firefox, it will ask if you want to save the currently open tabs for next time.



Groups of tabs

Firefox also allows you to bookmark entire groups of tabs, and even to use a group of tabs as your home page (so that in effect you would have multiple home pages). To bookmark a group of tabs:

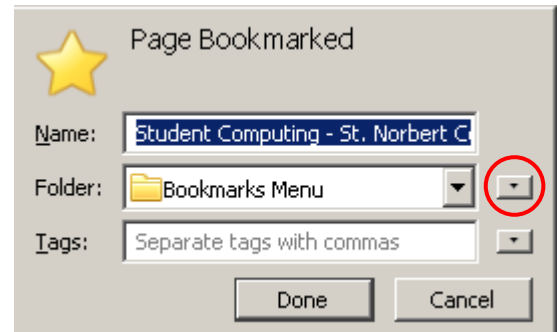
1. Open each of the tabs in Firefox just as you would like them bookmarked (with no other tabs open).
2. From the Bookmarks menu, choose Bookmark All Tabs.
3. In the box that comes up, name the folder, choose where to store it, and click OK.

If you want to use a group of tabs as your home page, you can, but beware of one thing: Every time you click “Home,” Firefox will open another whole set of those same tabs. If you want to use this feature, then you may also want to learn to avoid the Home button. To set a group of tabs as your home page:

1. Open each of the tabs in Firefox just as you would like them bookmarked (with no other tabs open).
2. From the Tools menu, choose Options.
3. In the Main category under “Home Page,” click the Use Current Pages button, then click OK.

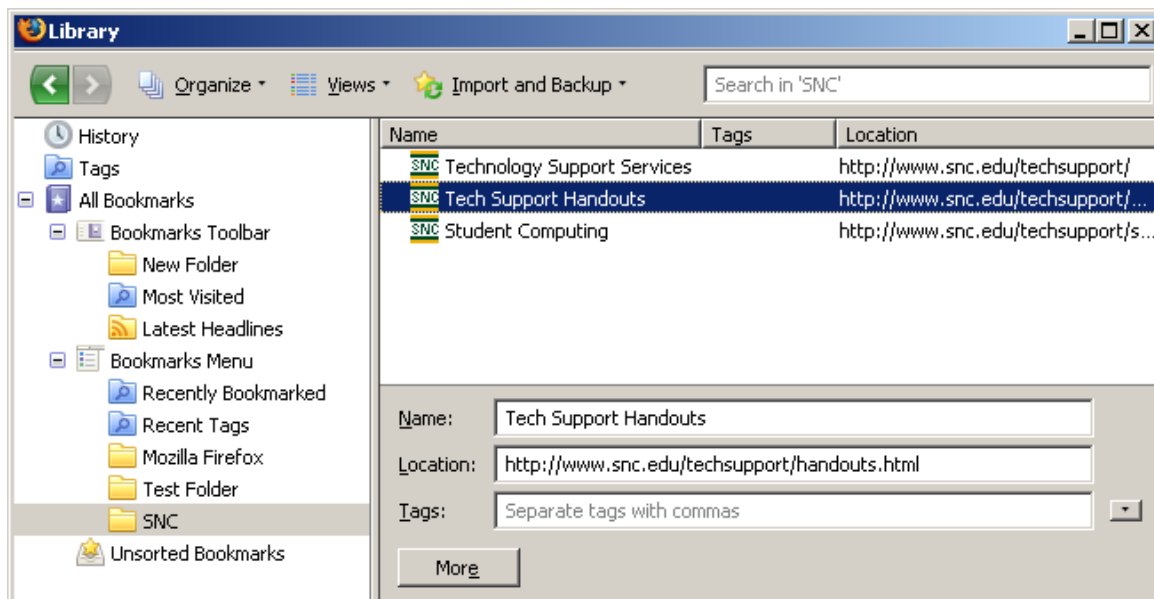
Bookmarks

To access your bookmarks, just click on the Bookmarks menu and scroll through the list. To have your bookmarks open in a separate pane on the left-hand side of the browser window, go to View ► Sidebar ► Bookmarks. To bookmark a page, double-click the star ☆ on the right side of the address box (if the star is yellow, the page is already bookmarked), or go to the Bookmarks menu and choose Bookmark This Page. In the bookmark window (pictured at right), click the small arrow button (circled in picture) to see a list of all of your bookmark folders.



Editing & arranging bookmarks: the Library

In Firefox 3, your bookmarks, tags, and history are kept in a single collection called the “Library.” You can still organize your bookmarks into folders to make it easier to find what you need, and you can also label them with keywords, called “tags.” To arrange or edit your bookmarks and tags, go to the Bookmarks menu and choose Organize Bookmarks. The “Library window” will open (shown below). The left-hand pane lists your History, Tags, and Bookmarks. When you click on a folder in the left-hand pane, its contents are displayed in the right-hand pane. Clicking on a plus sign will expand the folder; clicking on a minus sign will collapse it.



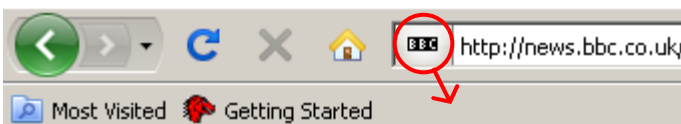
- To create a folder, first click on the folder inside of which you want the new folder, then click the Organize button and choose New Folder. Give the folder a name and click Add.
- To delete a bookmark or folder, right-click on it and choose Delete.
- To move a bookmark or folder into another folder, click & drag it to the desired folder; when that folder is dark, release the mouse button to drop it in.
- To sort bookmarks, either drag & drop them, or choose one of the sort options on the Views menu.

- To change the name or location of a bookmark, or to add tags, click on the bookmark in the right-hand pane and fill in the appropriate boxes below.
- To “tag” a site, use the Tags box. For example, if you tag cnn.com and nytimes.com with a “news” tag, when you type “news” into the address bar, both sites would be shown as results. Sites can have multiple tags.

The Bookmarks Toolbar

The Bookmarks Toolbar is the bar between the navigation toolbar (where the Back & Forward buttons are) and the tabs. If it’s not displayed, go to View ► Toolbars ► Bookmarks Toolbar. This feature enables you to quickly access your most frequently-used web sites. The Bookmarks Toolbar is really just a special folder in your bookmarks called “Bookmarks Toolbar.” Any bookmarks you put in that folder will automatically appear on your toolbar. You can also add sub-folders to your Bookmarks Toolbar to create drop-down lists of bookmarks.

To add a site to the Bookmarks Toolbar, go to that page, then drag the “favicon” in the address bar to the toolbar (shown in the picture at right). To remove an item from the toolbar, right-click on it and choose Delete. To rearrange the items on the toolbar, drag them to the left or right.



Security

You can click on a site’s “favicon” (see picture on pg. 1) for a brief security/identity overview, then click the More Information button for details such as how many times you’ve visited the site and if your password is saved.

Anti-spyware/anti-phishing

Firefox tries to protect you from viruses and spyware by displaying a warning if you visit a site that’s on their list of fraudulent sites. Make sure you have these features enabled under Tools – Options – Security. However, since it’s impossible to have a complete list of all bad sites, this is not foolproof and you should not rely on it for protection. As always, keep your guard up!

SNC sites

When visiting the SNC anti-spam server or NetStorage, you may get a warning message about the site’s security certificate. The sites are secure, but because of the way our servers are set up, Firefox gets confused. To access these sites, you need to add an exception (which is safe to do, because you already trust these sites). On the error message screen, click the “Or you can add an exception...” link. Click the Add Exception button, click the Get Certificate button, then click the Confirm Security Exception button.

Installing Firefox: Windows

1. On campus: go to Start – Network Software – Install Firefox.
Off campus: download Firefox from <http://www.mozilla.com>. Save the file on your desktop. Once the file has finished downloading, close all programs, then double-click on the downloaded file to begin the installation.
2. Follow the instructions on the screen to install the program. If you had a previous version of Firefox installed, it will be replaced by the new version.
3. If asked to make Firefox your default browser, click Yes. Proceed to the **Configuring Firefox** section below.

Installing Firefox: Mac

1. Download Firefox from <http://www.mozilla.com> and save it on your desktop.
2. Once the file has finished downloading, double-click on it to begin the installation.
3. A window with a Firefox icon will open. Drag that icon to your desktop (or preferred location on your hard drive), then double-click on it to run the program. Proceed to the **Configuring Firefox** section below.

Importing settings from other browsers

Firefox may import your bookmarks & settings during the installation. If not, you can import them manually:

1. Open Firefox and go to File – Import.
2. Choose which browser you wish to import from, and click Next.
3. Choose which items to import and click Next. When it’s done, click Finish.

Configuring Firefox

Many web browser options are a matter of personal preference, but there are some settings that we recommend for optimal security & convenience. Anything not mentioned here can be set as desired. To access the settings in Windows, go to Tools – Options. To access the settings on a Mac, go to Firefox – Preferences.

1. Content category: The “Block pop-up windows” box should be checked by default (if you wish to allow them, uncheck the box). To ensure that everything for our on-campus systems (e.g., Banner, Cascade) works correctly, add snc.edu to your Exceptions list. Click on the Exceptions button, enter **snc.edu** in the box, and click the Allow button. Click Close to return to the main Options window.
2. Privacy category:
 - a. Choose how many days to keep your browsing history.
 - b. Uncheck “Remember search and form history” and “Remember download history.”
 - c. Check “Accept cookies from sites” (many sites will not work unless you do), and choose how long to keep them from the “Keep until” drop-down box. To ensure that everything for our on-campus systems (Banner, Cascade, etc.) works correctly, you need to add “snc.edu” to your Exceptions list. Click on the Exceptions button, enter **snc.edu** in the box, and click the Allow button. Click Close.
3. Security category:
 - a. We strongly recommend checking “Warn me when sites try to install add-ons,” “Block reported attack sites,” and “Block reported web forgeries.”
 - b. Under Passwords, **do not** check “Remember passwords for sites” and “Use a master password.”
4. Advanced category: On the Update tab, under “Automatically check for updates to,” check all 3 boxes and choose either “Automatically download and install the update” or “Ask me what I want to do” to be notified that updates are available.
5. When finished changing options, click OK.

Installing the SNC Root Certificate

For convenience, we encourage you to install the root certificate into Firefox. If you do not, you’ll be asked to accept a certificate each time you visit a secure St. Norbert College web site. By installing this root certificate, you’re allowing Firefox to connect to any secure SNC site without warning you. To install the root certificate:

1. In Firefox, go to <http://netreg.snc.edu>.
2. Click “install the St. Norbert College Root Certificate” in step 1.
3. Click on “Download the St. Norbert College Root Certificate.”
4. Check the box labeled “Trust this CA to identify web sites,” then click OK.

Assistance and questions

If you have any questions or need more information, contact the Help Desk at (920) 403-HELP (4357) or helpdesk@snc.edu. The Help Desk is for St. Norbert College students and employees only.