



## Browser Competition - Game On

[Web Smart Newsletter](#) by Eric Holter, October 2006

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It's time for an update on the state of the browser again. This month, the new Internet Explorer 7 was finally released. Having defeated Netscape some years ago, Microsoft was able to rest in its victory for quite a while. But nature and economics abhor a vacuum, and the browser space was soon filled by Mozilla's open source Firefox browser. And, of course, Apple has its own popular browser, Safari.

Anticipating the release of IE7, Firefox launched it's version 2 browser, and Apple has a Safari update in the works.

The million dollar question is, will the new browsers help or hurt?

Over the years our monthly newsletters have covered the history and evolution of web browsers. We've always been quick to point out how difficult it is to build sites that function in all browsers. In an older newsletter, Browser Battles, we calculated the number of browsers we have to support. Taking into consideration the various point releases (5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.2.1, 5.5, etc.), the various platforms, and the various operating systems, there are hundreds of browser platform combinations. Any one of these browsers can have bugs or flaws that will make certain websites break. So when we hear of a new set of browsers coming out, understandably, we get afraid--very afraid.

But on a positive note, browsers have generally been improving--falling into line with web standards. The radical differences between browsers has diminished, thus making the life of a web developer much more livable. Our last newsletter on browsers, [Browser D](#)