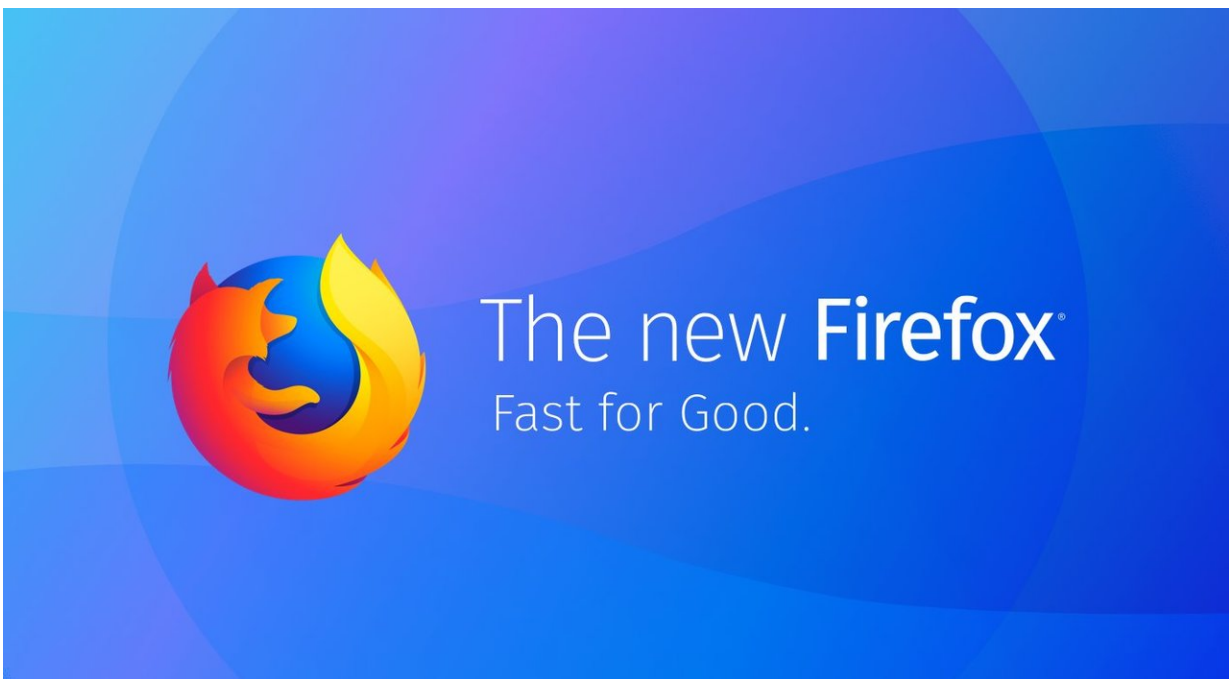# Firefox Quantum is browser overhaul and tryouts hail speed

November 16 2017, by Nancy Owano

Credit: Mozilla

(Tech Xplore)—Firefox Quantum is here, one year in the making, and the focal point of all things Mozilla in tech-watching sites this week.

November 14 marked the launch of the new stable browser. "It's by far the biggest update we've had since we launched Firefox 1.0 in 2004," Mozilla's Mark Mayo, senior vice president, Firefox, blogged.

Better, faster page loading that uses less computer memory is the key take-home about the update.

Tech writers largely registered on the same note, and said this was an overhaul of the browser.

The overhaul changed or added over 11 million lines of code. In a blog titled "The New Firefox: By the Numbers," the blog ran through some numbers: 75,342 files changed; 4,888,199 lines were added, 6,886,199 lines were changed.

Bugs related to performance and responsiveness were fixed; so were software bugs related to the user experience.

Outside Mozilla, the dominant compliment was over speed. *ExtremeTech* said it delivers faster performance and lower RAM usage. "Our own initial tests on Quantum confirm that it *feels* snappier," said Joel [Hruska](#).

"From our initial testing, we can confirm that the browser is indeed blazing fast," said *Firstpost*.

Some interesting facts:

Everything was built new, from the ground up, said Hruska. That includes the user interface and the underlying browser engine Servo.

Quantum CSS is only a part of Servo, but is key to the speed that you'll experience with Quantum, said *Firstpost*. "A CSS engine essentially processes the data required to [render](#) a web page on your screen. Once processed, it pushes the pixels to your screen. Various browsers use various rendering engines."

While other sites highlighted speed, Shannon Liao in *The Verge* said,

"The biggest selling point of Quantum versus Chrome is the smaller RAM usage—something Google has been repeatedly critiqued for over the years."

She walked readers through her exploration. "As you open more tabs in Quantum, it takes up less memory than opening up multiple tabs in Chrome. On my Asus laptop with an Intel Core i5, it runs six processes for 20 open tabs, while Google Chrome runs 21 processes for 14 tabs. Note that after opening the 10th tab, Quantum begins to show a squiggly loading sign on new tabs."

With the numerous compliments coming its way, could the browser work its way up to competitive ranks with rival browsers, namely Chrome? That is a question that many are asking, as it has been clear that Mozilla's browser market share was hardly enviable.

Mozilla Firefox was at one time the go-to alternate browser for those who preferred to avoid the dubious joys that Internet Explorer had to offer, said *Firstpost*.

As for a default search engine, *CrazyEngineers* reported that "This Quantum version will use Google as its default search engine in the US and for rest of the world, except for China and Russia where the local giants Baidu and Yandex are used."

Google will become their default search provider in the US, Canada, Hong Kong and Taiwan, said Denelle Dixon, Mozilla's chief legal and business officer, on launch day, in a blog post.

Beyond Mozilla and Firefox fans, how will the new Firefox change the browser market share? Phillip Tracy in *The Daily Dot*: "I'm a longtime Chrome user. I've always put Mozilla on my devices as a backup should I run into problems, but it's never done enough to convince me to leave the

speed and clean design of the internet's most popular browser."

The new Firefox impressed Tracy to the point that "I'd say Firefox now looks as good or better than Chrome. It even correctly scaled content on the 3,200 x 1,800 display of my XPS 13, a task no web browser has perfected yet."

More information: blog.mozilla.org/blog/2017/11/ … ing-firefox-quantum/
blog.mozilla.org/firefox/the-n … efox-by-the-numbers/

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