

Google adding voice recognition to Chrome browser search

February 28 2014, by Bob Yirka



Google has posted a blog entry detailing what will be coming with the next update (over the next several weeks) of its Google Chrome web browser—one the main highlights is the implementation of voice activated, hands-free searching.

Chrome web browser users have been able to carry out Google searches using voice commands for a while by enabling the Voice Search Hotword extension—now, that extension becomes moot as all Google web users will have the option by default.

Google's [voice search](#) becomes apparent as a microphone icon appears on the far right side of the search box, with words next to it: Say "Ok Google." When a user complies, Google responds by erasing the screen and then displays a large red microphone icon along with the words "Speak Now." When words are spoken, they (or a close facsimile thereof) appear on the screen. When Google senses the user has finished their search request (by remaining silent for a moment) the spoken words are entered into the [search box](#) and the Enter command is executed, generating a page of query results.

Allowing users to use their voice instead of their fingers on a keyboard extends Google's search capabilities, bringing Apple Siri-like functionality to computers and very soon to mobile devices (for now the voice application will only work with the browser—Chrome OS will be updated at a later time.) The voice feature also allows for setting reminders in Google Now and for getting directions.

Google is making some other changes to its browser as well. Chief among them will be allowing developers to easily match image resolution to the device being used. It makes little sense for smartphone users to display very high resolution images in a tiny format, causing unnecessary delays. App developers going forward will be able to opt for a lower resolution image, without the user noticing the difference in quality.

Chrome will now also support the Web Audio API, which was likely necessary for making voice recognition work, but will mean the capability will now also be available to app makers as well, which means apps that work based on [voice commands](#) will almost certainly be coming very soon. Google also removed some seldom used Chrome API's, such as font-kerning and CSS font stretch.

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