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IT Blogwatch

A Daily Digest of IT Blogs from Richi Jennings

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May 27, 2009 - 10:37 A.M.

Skyfire: a better handheld browser?

1 comment

TAGS: Blackberry, RIM, Skyfire, symbian, web browser, Windows Mobile

IT TOPICS: Emerging Technology, Internet, Mobile & Wireless, SaaS & Cloud Computing, Software

In a special *IT Blogwatch Extra*, Skyfire lights up the blogosphere. It's an alternate Web browser for Windows Mobile, Symbian, and BlackBerry. Richi Jennings discovers that, by all accounts, it's really rather good...

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Kevin C. Tofel has the details:

Hoping to take mobile web browsing to new places, Skyfire finally goes gold with the release of version 1.0. The browser has been in beta form for some time, but has impressed nonetheless. Today, anyone with a Windows Mobile (touchscreen or not) or supported Symbian S60 device can download the application for a richer Internet experience.

Richer in what way, you ask? Skyfire supports Flash 10 and Silverlight 2.0 so you can get your YouTube and Hulu on, to name just a few sites that are often taboo on handset browsers. And the Skyfire folks added a real-time activity wall recently too. With it, you can find all of your favorite RSS feeds, Twitter updates and Facebook statuses.

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Duncan Geere adds:

The release brings with it a host of improvements, such as improved navigation, zooming and interaction and a faster launch, lower power consumption, and new search functionality. Also, while the new version of the browser starts up, you can begin typing URLs or search queries into the box at the top, saving time.

... The company is operating a closed alpha for the BlackBerry platform, so that'll likely be next for release.

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Chris Nuttall gives it a whirl:

Trying the browser on a Palm Treo, I was able to watch a comedy show on Hulu.com and listen to audio from the BBC's site, along with enhanced browsing. There are easy zooms and the ability quickly to find sites through the "Superbar", which auto-suggests web sites and queries as you type.

Skyfire also has social-media elements that make it the mobile equivalent to Flock. Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as RSS feeds, can be added to the Start page, allowing real-time updates from friends and news sources.

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As did Eric Zeman:

I took the opportunity to download the S60 variant of Skyfire and installed it on a Nokia (NYSE: NOK) E71 and a Nokia N85. It is the fastest version of the browser to date. Using AT&T's 3G network, I was able to pull up Hulu.com and YouTube.com each in less than 10 seconds. On Hulu, I was able to watch a relatively interruption-free episode of "The Office" with few issues.

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The browser does start up quickly, and I like the new ability to enter a search query or URL while the browser is launching and connecting to the network. This speeds up my initial search.

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In John Herrman's words, "It's great":

Pages are ... compressed server-side, which keeps things moving quickly. As a result, pages load extremely fast. ... 1.0 is optimized such that even zoomed-out, smaller text is mostly legible, and in a welcome improvement upon the betas, instantly becomes clear when zoomed.

...
It's not quite perfect, ... but as far as Windows Mobile and Symbian browsers go, it's as close as you're going to get. Well, at least until Opera Mobile 9.7 comes out.

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What else, Anthony Ha?

Skyfire also recently launched a home page for its users that combines activity notifications from social networking sites, along with RSS feeds from news sites ... describes it as FriendFeed meets Google Reader.

...
The Mountain View, Calif. company has raised a total of \$17.8 million in venture funding.

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Richi Jennings is an independent analyst/consultant, specializing in blogging, email, and spam. A 24 year, cross-functional IT veteran, he is also an analyst at Ferris Research. You can follow him on Twitter or FriendFeed, pretend to be Richi's friend on Facebook, or just use boring old email: [contact Richi](#).

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I have used skyfire for

Submitted by **Anonymous** on **May 27, 2009 - 12:52 P.M.**

I have used skyfire for about 6 months now and love it. 1.0 is truly an amazing experience. Now off to watch some hulu...

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