

Browser Memory Utilization

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We have a large body of users who remote desktop into a small terminal services farm to run a web based intranet app.

The application was originally aimed at Internet Explorer (because of its integrated window security for automatic login), and the servers are nearing the edge of comfortability.

So while we look at expanding on the hardware side of things, we also took a look on the software side - specifically the browser (currently supporting IE7).

After doing some tests, we found some surprisingly results. Keep in mind this was by no means an exhaustive analysis, but a quick evaluation to see if any browser has a clear advantage with our intranet apps.

The Results

To our surprise, IE8 actually runs the leanest overall:



Here are some other observations/notes:

- Chrome and IE8 by default run each frame, pop-up window, and tab as a separate process (you'll see multiple .exe's running in the task manager). Most people don't know this and so it appears that the one Chrome process they look at seems like it's using incredibly low amounts of memory (but if you add it up, it's not as mindblasting).
- We configured Chrome and IE8 to run as a single process.
- Any theme, extension, add-on, toolbar, etc... to FireFox significantly increases memory usage. In the tests above, this was a FireFox running barebones.
- Chrome seems to have a significant advantage on pages that have a lot of JavaScript involved (e.g. the my.yahoo.com portal when logged in) - and IE8 did the worst.
- On the flipside with regular HTML pages that used simple JavaScript (e.g. form validation), IE8 did the best. Though Chrome was close on some of those occasions.
- Was unable to test Safari 3 and 4, they flat out didn't work on the Intranet.

The next thing that would be interesting is to go through a series of planned steps for a period of an hour and see how well they do.