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[Compatibility Evolution: Internet Explorer 8 \(IE8\)](#)

Via user feedbackInternet Explorer 8
Microsoft

Starting with Beta 1, moving onward to [Beta 2](#), and now to Release Candidate, Microsoft managed to deliver an ever stronger focus on compatibility when it came down to Internet Explorer 8. IE8 compatibility stretches from websites tailored to IE6 and IE7 to content built supporting modern web standards. In this regard, Internet Explorer 8 brings to the table a new addition, compared to its precursors. The Compatibility View button is designed to make the best out of the three compatibility modes available in IE8, one adapted to modern web standards like CSS 2.1 and HTML 5, and the other two in accordance with the implementations supported by IE7 and IE6.

[Scott Dickens](#), IE program manager, revealed that the evolution of compatibility in IE8 was intimately connected with the feedback received by the company from users. "When users install Windows 7 Beta or the next IE8 update, they get a choice about opting-in to a list of sites that should be displayed in Compatibility View. Sites are on this list based on feedback from other IE8 customers: specifically, for what high-volume sites did other users click the Compatibility View button? This list updates automatically, and helps users who aren't web-savvy have a better experience with websites that aren't yet IE8-ready," Dickens added.

Internet Explorer 8 Beta 1, released at the start of March 2008, featured a prominent Compatibility View button, which required a restart of the browser in order to function. The necessity to restart IE8 was scrapped in Beta 2, with the button becoming a mere appendage of the address bar. With IE8 Release Candidate, users can either access a list of websites with compatibility issues via Windows Update, and add it to the Compatibility View Settings, or they can add their own items. Only sites present on the list will be rendered in Compatibility View mode.

"The sites on the list are based on objective criteria applied to telemetry data as well as product support channels. For example, in addition to the top sites worldwide, we determine high-volume on a market-by-market basis; the top 50 sites in one region of the world might be very low on the world-wide list of top sites, but are important to include for those customers. The data we collect from IE8 beta users is the top level domain of the website and whether the user chose Compatibility View while visiting that site (please see the IE8 Privacy Policy for more information). We will regularly revisit the need to offer this list to users at all," Dickens said.

Internet Explorer 8 (IE8) Beta 2 is available for download [here](#).