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Opera Speed Dial feature

[Fast Forward On Browsing](#)

Speed dial your web pages

October 18th and October 24th are two of the dates sentenced not to be forgotten too easily in software world. First it was IE7. Firefox followed shortly with launching their latest versions. In my office everybody was asking about Opera. Has the project stopped? Our MAC and Linux teams warned me that the new release of Opera will be introducing new elements competition will wish to have thought about them first. It took longer than I expected, but the latest Opera release launched yesterday. As soon as I found out I proceeded to downloading and testing it. As non-conventional as ever, the latest edition preserves the anterior innovations and comes with new ones. Despite the fact that there aren't many differences from the earlier version, the software has taken some measures in what concerns security, there is a Developer Tools option and the now famous Speed Dial. Nevertheless, each aspect has been minutely considered and the necessary attention was paid so that the final result would really make a difference on the web browser market. You may have heard enough about this, but Opera still remains the fastest browser out there and during our testing the its response was superior to both IE7 and Firefox. In what concerns the aspect, it seems to me that Opera looks better than ever. Its MAC looks still turn some heads and make a good impact on the end user. The default View settings of the application give a clean view of the web page as some of the toolbars are disabled. Tabbed browsing and multiple browsing sessions are features that took some time to be adopted by competitors and regarding the latter it is still missing from many similar softwares. The importing capabilities go as far as importing the favorites folder from IE, Konqueror or Netscape/Firefox. Combining the RSS feed reading with widgets and mail client applications, Opera proves to be a universal tool for keeping you connected with the world outside your network. The most impressive feature of this release is Speed Dial. It is not at all complicated and if you come to think of it, it isn't even something extraordinary. The catch here is that no one ever thought about needing such an option and how easier browsing would be with it. The principle is the same as in the phone technology. Press one key and the assigned number will be dialed. In Opera the speed dial list opens as soon as you invoke a new tab. Instead of a completely blank page you get a background filled with nine squares. Clicking on one of them will pop up the dialog for assigning a web page. To make it easier to you the frequently visited pages are displayed or you can copy/paste the URL from a different tab. Once added the web link it'll stick there until you clear that number. I know that bookmarks have the same end, but speed dial is faster and you get to preview the page in the corresponding square first. The option for previewing the web pages in the tabs at hovering the mouse over them is preserved in this version too. Form filling option is disguised under the Wand tool of the toolbar. The fields to be completed are surrounded by a contour, just to make them stand out and the user to know that the private data will be automatically typed in there. The shortcut for automatically filling the fields is Ctrl+Enter. The widget world available on Opera's website cover everything from games, clocks, radios, search tools or images to sports, weather related, mail and messaging and webcams. They can all be managed from the Widgets menu and organized in folders for the different categories available. Additionally you can create your own widget in under a minute (with the help of Opera Widgetize). And with the support for Bit Torrent, you can search the desired files and download them with Opera. Feed reading is old news in Opera, but I am going to mention it regardless. The user can add as many news feeds as s/he wants, with the possibility of setting the update rate from 5 minutes to up to one week for the slow ones. Panel toolbar initiated from View>Toolbars menu will open in the left hand part of the web

browser and contains a series of options designed to make you dependent of Opera (if you aren't already). Bookmark manager, Widget management, Contacts management, the download log, URL history, mail client and Links are all you need to feel comfortable and save the space in the taskbar. Each of the above mentioned instruments will open in the side panel for proper management and manipulation. I think the side panel is the only thing hindering the page viewing. An automatic hiding would make things much better or at least become active the moment you access one of the above mentioned tools. The mail client is an all-inclusive tool as it incorporates various options like RSS feeds, news groups accounts, separate attachments folder, etc. Multiple accounts is supported and separate management can be done. The process of creating a new e-mail account is automatic and the wizard will guide you through the necessary steps, no matter if you want to create a POP3 account, IMAP, news, Opera Web Mail or a chat account (IRC). For regular email accounts there is an option many mail clients fail to incorporate and that is the possibility of leaving the messages on the server. Additionally, a very special feature of the software is the importing function available. It permits you to import e-mails from other clients (Opera 5 and 6, Outlook Express, Thunderbird, Eudora and versions 6 and 7 of Netscape mail). The option is available in the File menu, under Import/Export. Preferences menu gives you fast access to setting up your search engines. As you probably know, Opera supports searching for information directly from the web address by entering the corresponding search engine key followed by your query. In Preferences you can play with the settings for this feature and add some more elements of your own. Wand tool has an additional talent that of automatically filling web forms with your personal information. Just type in the information in the Wand window of the Preferences menu and you are good to go. During our testing this version of Opera crashed only once, but it's a good thing the application is equipped with that session restoring function and we were able to load the exact same pages. However, the problem resides in the refresh of the browser. Whenever you go back to a page Opera will load the old cache and unless you perform a reload of the page you will be presented with old data. In the Advanced section of the Preferences menu, under Security there is another interesting feature: Fraud Protection. Enabling this little option will actually make browsing more secure as the application will alert you whenever you are entering an un-secure zone. The little question mark in the web address bar is indicating whether the page is secure or not. In the case of a certified secure domain the question mark will turn into "i", from "identified" as being safe. **The Good** Well, whenever I complete an Opera browsing session and return to my tasks, I have the feeling that everything is in slow motion. Speed is definitely an asset worthy of mentioning in this section. Fraud protection and certificate management are also one of the good things Opera puts on display. Speed Dial, despite its simplicity proves to be a very handy feature for accessing the daily links (helps in keeping the tab bar less crowded). Wand tool, Widgets, mail client, fees reader, email and bookmarks importing, mouse gestures, cookie control, password manager they are all part of the hall of fame features of Opera. **The Bad** The little crash experienced during the testing is no biggie at all as due to the session restore function the same pages could be loaded from the exact point they were interrupted. But the refresh problem persists. With each release I hoped this issue to be fixed. It seems that I have to wait a little longer for this. There is no support for URL aliases. This feature, as obscure as it may be to some users helps saving a lot of time when you are in a hurry. Roboform is still not supported by the browser, so the Wand tool will have to do. Wand is good enough for the average user but it will simply not do for an advanced one. **The Truth** I just closed the browser and there is definitely an issue as it seems that there is not enough speed around me. Opera surely sets new standards in what concerns browsing speeds, especially with the Fast Forward function residing right next to forward button. Test it while it is still hot and experience the latest release from the Norwegian developer by yourselves. If you have any questions, the help file is comprehensive enough to shelter the answer you are looking for. For reading the review for version 8.51.7712, click [here](#). *Here are some snapshots of the application in*

action: