# Mozilla has defeated Microsoft’s default browser protections in Windows

Mozilla has quietly made it easier to switch to Firefox on Windows recently. While Microsoft offers a method to switch default browsers on Windows 10, it’s more cumbersome than the simple one-click process to switch to Edge. This one-click process isn’t officially available for anyone other than Microsoft, and Mozilla appears to have grown tired of the situation.

In version 91 of Firefox, released on August 10th, Mozilla has reverse engineered the way Microsoft sets Edge as default in Windows 10, and enabled Firefox to quickly make itself the default. Before this change, Firefox users would be sent to the Settings part of Windows 10 to then have to select Firefox as a default browser and ignore Microsoft’s plea to keep Edge.

Mozilla’s reverse engineering means you can now set Firefox as the default from within the browser, and it does all the work in the background with no additional prompts. This circumvents Microsoft’s anti-hijacking protections that the company built into Windows 10 to ensure malware couldn’t hijack default apps. Microsoft tells us this is not supported in Windows.

*Firefox now makes it easy to switch default browsers in Windows.*

Mozilla has clearly grown tired of the more complicated way of setting up a default browser, a process that Microsoft is making even harder in Windows 11. “People should have the ability to simply and easily set defaults, but they don’t,”

says a Mozilla spokesperson in a statement to *The Verge*. “All operating systems should offer official developer support for default status so people can easily set their apps as default. Since that hasn’t happened on Windows 10 and 11, Firefox relies on other aspects of the Windows environment to give people an experience similar to what Windows provides to Edge when users choose Firefox to be their default browser.”

Mozilla has been trying to convince Microsoft to improve its default browser settings in Windows since its open letter to Microsoft in 2015. Nothing has changed, and Windows 11 is now making it even harder to switch default browsers. That appears to be the final straw, as Mozilla began implementing its changes in Firefox shortly after the Windows 11 unveiling in June.

So far, Google, Vivaldi, Opera, and other Chromium-based browsers haven’t followed Mozilla’s lead, and it’s not clear exactly how Microsoft will respond. Microsoft has some genuine security-related reasons to protect against malware with anti-hijacking, but by allowing Edge to easily switch defaults it undermines rival browser vendors that simply want a level playing field. Windows 11 makes that playing field even more complicated, and competitors aren’t happy.

https://www.theverge.com/2021/9/13/22671182/mozilla-default-browser-windows-protections-firefox