

GreaseMonkey Article

Intro

What is GreaseMonkey?

GreaseMonkey is a Firefox browser add-on that allows you to write or use Javascripts that alter the web pages you visit. You can use it to make a web site more readable or more usable. You can fix web site display bugs that the site owner can't be bothered to fix themselves.

You can even automatically retrieve data from other sites to make two sites more interconnected. In short it will let you have some control of the sites you visit.

Greasemonkey by itself does none of these things. In fact, after you install it, you won't notice any change at all... until you start installing what are called 'user scripts'. A user script is just a chunk of Javascript code, with some additional information that tells Greasemonkey where and when it should be run. Each user script can target a specific page, a specific site, or a group of sites. A user script can do anything you can do in Javascript. In fact, it can do even more than that, because Greasemonkey provides special functions that are only available to user scripts.

MUGOO Browser Survey

Most club members use Safari but a significant number also use Firefox mostly on the Mac and some also on Windows. GreaseMonkey works with the **FireFox** browser but there is also a Safari program called **CreamMonkey** that has similar capabilities. Javascripts written for GreaseMonkey are not 100% compatible with CreamMonkey because Safari's JavaScript implementation is not completely compatible with Firefox's and `GM_registerMenuCommand` is not available in CreamMonkey. Many scripts, however, will work in CreamMonkey with little or no modification.

Creammonkey for Safari

Here is the [creammonkey download site](#).

To Install

1. Please open the disk image and copy "Creammonkey" folder to `~/Library/InputManagers/`.
2. Relaunch your Safari.
3. If the installation is successful, you'll see ":)" which is the creammonkey menu on the Safari menubar!

You are now ready to load a userscript into creammonkey. Open a userscript in a Safari browser window by clicking on its link. An "Install this script?" dialog box will open and click ok to install. The installed userscript will now be shown in the creammonkey menu.

Greasemonkey for Firefox

This article focusses on using greasemonkey since it is the most tested and reliable way to use javascripts to automatically modify web sites. Here is the [greasemonkey download site](#).

When using the Firefox browser clicking the install now button installs greasemonkey.

Open a userscript in the Firefox browser by clicking on its link. An "Install this script?" dialogue box will open and click ok to install. The installed userscript will now be shown in the greasemonkey menu. You can also specify if the userscript should run on all sites or just on specified sites.

Gmail users?

Not many people in MUGOO use Gmail yet. Gmail is one of the web applications that GreaseMonkey can be used to modify. Changes that can be made to add keyboard shortcuts and add features like [Gmail macros](#) to operate and automate Gmail from the keyboard. To make it easy to remember the keyboard shortcuts one key combination activates a translucent overlay that is displayed to show the other keys and their functions.

What is GreaseMonkey good for?

GreaseMonkey lets you customize the web to your preferences using Javascript programs that you either write or obtain from other sources. You don't have to be a programmer since many ready to use Javascripts are available online at sites like [userscripts.org](#).

[LifeHacker had a top 10 article on GreaseMonkey userscripts](#) that included functions like the following:

- [Textareabackup](#) (so you don't ever accidentally lose information typed into web forms)
- [TextareaResize](#) (Make that text box bigger or smaller as you type from the keyboard using Ctrl+Enter to make it taller, Ctrl-Shift-Enter to make it shorter, and Ctrl+Space to make it wider.)
- [Flickr Camera Image](#) (Camera shoppers who want to see what a model can do (and what its form factor's like) should install this script, which adds a photo of the camera used to take a photo on Flickr and a link to Amazon or Google for pricing and availability information).
- [Greased Lightbox](#) (zoom to the full size image of a photo on a site)
- [Auto inline MP3 player](#) (Automatically add a streaming Flash MP3 player to any links to an MP3 file on any web site for instant listening.)

Bookmarklets

Bookmarklets are similar to userscripts except they are usually manually activated by clicking a link as compared to GreaseMonkey scripts which are automatically executed when visiting specified web sites. [Bookmarklet download sites](#) are another source of Javascripts that can also be run through GreaseMonkey.

GreaseMonkey Hacks book.

Mark Pilgrim has written a [GreaseMonkey hacks book](#) which has over 100 useful user scripts. The scripts are also available online so you don't have to type them in. The book include really lots of Hacks by different contributors, like:

- how to Make Pop-up Titles Prettier,
- Keeping Track of Secure Site Passwords,

- Add Keyboard Shortcuts to Google Search Results,
- Add Saved Searches to Gmail,
- Make Google More Accessible for Low-Vision Users,
- Bypass Annoying Site Registrations,
- Syndicate Encrypted Content,
- Compare Book Prices and
- Trace XMLHttpRequest Activity.

Mark also has written an online article about GreaseMonkey called [Dive Into GreaseMonkey](#).

Jon Udell on rewriting the enriched web

There is a [screencast on Jon's site](#) about how greasemonkey userscripts can help you rewrite the web to your bidding in the style you prefer.

You might get an error message about a Javascript

To troubleshoot userscripts you can disable them temporarily or permanently within greasemonkey or if you want to go in depth you can debug them using the [firebug firefox debugger](#) addon.

Questions or comments?

If you have any questions or comments you can contact me at mugoo@glensharp.com