Discussion comments

Thunderbird e-mail client

Spelling checker

There was a query about setting up the spelling checker to default to British English. Although we did not find the complete answer at the time, the questioner has since solved it.

Under Edit → Preferences (or main menu → Preferences → Preferences), → Composition tab, and then the Spelling tab, you can change the global preferences for the language used. This is also the place to download more languages if necessary.

Note that this is a global setting. There is no provision to set different default languages for different accounts or e-mail addresses. If you use several languages, then you just have to take one as default and remember to change the spelling check each time you write a message in another language by using the drop-down list by the Spelling icon in the toolbar of the Write window.

Message Filters

Thunderbird provides filters for you to process messages before yu ready them. They can be used to separate incoming mail into different local folders depending on various criteria; or to delete known spam; or to forward to another address; or tag it for later convenience; or several other things.

To set up a filter, use Tools → Message filters. Then you can set the account from the top dropdown list. To create a new filter, hit New on the right.

The next dialog asks for the name of the filter – to remind you of what it does. This can be anything you like.

Select whether you want all of the criteria to apply, or just any one of them. Then fill in the choices, most of which are obvious.

The drop down labelled Subject provides a number of attributes you can select. The common ones will probably be for Subject or From, but there are others.

The last entry in the list allows you to Customise it by selecting some other attribute. To see the possible attributes for a message, select one of the messages you wish to filter, and then either use View → Message Source, or hit Ctrl-U. This will bring up a text representation of the message. The beginning of the message will contain a number of lines that have the form:

```
Keyword: value
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The keywords (what precedes a colon) are the attributes you can set your filter on, the text after the colon is the value you can look for in your filter.

Back in the new filter dialog, the central box lets you set how you want to match the text value. The most common case will be to ask for the value to contain some text.

The right hand text box is where to type the text you want to match.

Firefox version 70

Tracker blocking

Firefox has added a number of privacy features into the main body of the browser, instead of through add-ons. Version 70 has just been released in the Mint repositories and should have arrived in the last update.

So far as I can tell, Firefox has incorporated Privacy Badger into the main product and will block scripts it knows are tracking you. The options on what to block are in Menu → Preferences → Privacy and Security. Check they are what you want.

If you are having trouble looking at a site, then there is now a little shield icon to the left of the URL bar. Hovering over that tells you whether any trackers have been blocked. Clicking on it tells you more and gives the list of trackers. There is also there an option to turn off tracking for that site. You can manage the exceptions from the Preferences, Privacy tab, so you do not have to keep turning it off for a site you frequently visit.

Password generation and Firefox account

Firefox, from version 70, can generate strong passwords for you when creating them for a site. Just right click in the password field, and let it fill it in with a new random key.

Of course, you want to be able to save and keep all these, which it will do with all the other passwords. You can protect all of them with a single master password under the Privacy and Security tab of the Preferences page.

If you have several devices, and you travel a lot, it is worthwhile considering a Firefox account. This will let them keep all your devices synchronised. The first item in the three-line menu list enables you to set up an account with them, or to synchronise to an existing account.

Once you have an account, synchronisation happens automatically whenever you start up Firefox.

They claim that they cannot read any of the data you are storing with them, and I see no reason to doubt that claim. All the encryption is done on your devices.

Announcement

Their announcement is here: https://www.mozilla.org/en-GB/firefox/privacy/products/