Tails - Bug #9309

Use Disconnect as the default search engine

05/01/2015 05:22 AM - intrigeri

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<td>Internationalization</td>
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<td>Feature Branch</td>
<td>bugfix/9309-default-disconnect-search</td>
<td>Starter:</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Type of work</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Affected tool:</td>
<td>Browser</td>
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Description

Tor Browser 4.5 has moved to Disconnect as its default search engine. This change was ignored during the initial porting effort (#9031). Have we got good reasons not to follow Tor Browser on this one?

Associated revisions

Revision 4a6fc859 - 05/07/2015 01:50 AM - anonym

Previously these parts have been spread out in several, heavily coupled hooks and static configurations, making it very hard to get an overview of how it all actually works. Now we instead do everything in one place, and generate things programatically as much as possible, which makes supporting another locale much simpler (just adding a single line with a few pieces of needed info!). Consequently this commit also adds better localization for every locale supported by the Tor Browser (added: ar, es, fa, ko, nl, pl, ru, tr, vi and zh_CN) instead of the euro-centric (w.r.t. actually adding localization) ones we had picked before. Also, we'll get build level errors for many types of errors, so they're caught early.

This commit may seem like a gigantic, non-atomic beast, but splitting it would be hard, and it actually mostly removes stuff. Its design is simple: We have a description file that, for each supported Tor Browser locale, has the extra pieces of info needed, like the localized name of the language, the parameters needed for certain search engines etc. Then we apply them to:

- a template for the amnesia branding locale file, and put in the relevant values there so the default search engine is selected, the correct spellchecker (if installed) is pre-selected, and our homepage is localized (if supported).

- a template for each of the search engines we want to localize (currently Start Page and Disconnect.me -- we could do Google but most (all?) locales get a localized one from the iceweasel localization packages) and generate localized ones.

Also, following the Tor Browser's recent switch, we now use Disconnect.me as the default search engine, although we localize it for each supported locale.

Will-fix: #9309

05/15/2020
Merge remote-tracking branch 'origin/bugfix/9309-default-disconnect-search' into testing

Fix-committed: #9309

History

#1 - 05/02/2015 11:49 AM - anonym

The reasons they state in the comments of the blog post seem good to me, in particular for moving away from Startpage since they sometimes show a captcha.

If we do the switch, do we want to localize them like we do with Startpage? The Tor Browser uses English in all locales, apparently, and in a comment in the upstream ticket they call that a "privacy leak".

#2 - 05/02/2015 11:57 AM - intrigeri

If we do the switch, do we want to localize them like we do with Startpage? The Tor Browser uses English in all locales, apparently, and in a comment in the upstream ticket they call that a "privacy leak".

Indeed, Tor Browser (both upstream and in Tails) default to pretending the user has en_US locales, so it of course generally makes sense to default to an English-speaking search engine. However, Tor Browser and Tails situations are a bit different:

- in Tor Browser, a user who wants to use a web search engine configured in their preferred language can configure it once for all
- in Tails, a user with the same needs has to configure it every time they start Tails

So the impact of defaulting to something that's potentially very much impractical to non-English speakers is quite different.

=> Right now, I tend to think we should go on localizing the default web search engine in Tails' Tor Browser.

#3 - 05/02/2015 12:35 PM - BitingBird

I'm for localization too

#4 - 05/04/2015 02:58 AM - intrigeri

- Subject changed from Consider using the Disconnect search engine to Use Disconnect as the default search engine
- Type of work changed from Research to Code

Georg confirmed that the CAPTCHAs sometimes seen with Startpage were the major reason behind their move to Disconnect search.

#5 - 05/06/2015 03:31 PM - sajolida

Here I've got Disconnect as the first search engine option. So maybe this is fixed already...
Here I've got Disconnect as the first search engine option.

What version of Tails is this?

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1.4~rc1 - 20150503
82c1e8dc529c1882ab89a285bb71bd8a8bfc47b4

See screenshot in attachment. At least disconnect shows first and is the default if I restart Tor Browser. I didn't try to restart Tails.

Wow, interesting. I can't reproduce this when booting from the 1.4~rc1 ISO, neither in English nor French. I also tried restarting Tor Browser a few times (in English) and Startpage was still the default. Do you have any local customization to the browser or anything that could explain this discrepancy? Can you provide precise steps to reproduce this behaviour?
sajolida wrote:

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I cannot reproduce it either. The amnesia@branding extension will make sure that Start Page is used, so the only way I can see this happening is via some persistence modification that removes/disables that extension somehow.

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#12 - 05/07/2015 02:50 AM - anonym
- Status changed from Confirmed to In Progress

Applied in changeset 4a6fc8595d96c96bf3a6889389477e33cb823c3.

#13 - 05/07/2015 02:56 AM - anonym
- Category set to Internationalization
- % Done changed from 0 to 50
- QA Check set to Ready for QA
- Feature Branch set to bugfix/9309-default-disconnect-search

So I ended up overdoing this a bit. Basically, see the commit message of 4a6fc85. This branch vastly improves the browser localization situation, and should IMHO go into 1.4 despite moving more towards being more of a feature (post-freeze!) than a bugfix. It of course fixes this ticket's bug.

Here's a thorough way to test all it does, that should take ~20 minutes:

Boot Tails in any locale and run this code (and do not start the Tor Browser before doing so):

```bash
LOCALES="ar_EG de_DE es_ES en_US fa_IR fr_FR it_IT ko_KR nl_NL pl_PL pt_PT ru_RU tr_TR vi_VN zh_CN"
cp -a .tor-browser .tor-browser.orig
for LOCALE in "$LOCALES"; do
done
```
During each locale's iteration, go through this check list:

- Make sure that the home page is correct, in particular that it is properly localized for de_DE, fr_FR and pt_PT.
- Verify that the UI is properly localized, e.g. by checking the menus (press ALT). Actually this branch changes nothing w.r.t. that, but hey, it's related.
- Check in about:config that spellchecker.dictionary is set appropriately. Only tr_TR and zh_CN should have defaulted back to en_US. Note that this pref actually has no effect (it must be set as a user_pref() which seems impossible to do via a .properties file like we do in the branding extension), so this step is more "for completeness" to verify that there's no "regression".
- Make sure that a localized Disconnect.me is the default, pre-selected search engine. Do a search and verify that the correct location (e.g. Egypt for ar_EG) is chosen in the top-right corner.
- Do a search with the Startpage plugin and:
  - make sure the UI is localized for all but ar_EG, fa_IR, ru_RU and vi_VN
  - make sure the search results are localized, which can be a bit hard to come up with in some cases. If you get a "Pages in ..." link (e.g. "ال-عربية" for ar_EG) in the bottom-left corner that should indicate that it works.
- Look in the list of search plugins, and make sure that the ones we previously got from the iceweasel localization packages are there. Make sure that yahoo is not there.
- When you close the Tor Browser the Unsafe Browser will start, and then you should only make sure that Google is the default search engine.

Note: Previously we localized pt_BR too, but it was identical to pt_PT except setting a more specific spellchecker. I tried adding it, but pt_PT takes precedence, probably due to that being the only langpack, and it being a "full" locale, including location (i.e. it's not just pt). Not a huge loss, IMHO, especially given that the spellchecker pref doesn't work.

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#14 - 05/07/2015 03:19 AM - BitingBird

anonym wrote:

> So I ended up overdoing this a bit.

Haha, that's the understatement of the year :)

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#15 - 05/07/2015 09:54 AM - sajolida

Wow, interesting. I can't reproduce this when booting from the 1.4~rc1 ISO, neither in English nor French.

I'm very sorry. Today when I rebooted I saw that Disconnect is first in the list, but that StartPage is selected by default. Matching what you are reporting. Note that the last selected search engine is not reset to the default when switching to a new identity but I guess this is not a bug.
As said in the review'n'merge request sent to tails-dev@, intrigeri has reviewed the code and is happy with it, so all that remains is independent testing of it.

Also, I've run a full test suite run, noticed that an image needed updating (TorBrowserUnableToOpen.png, which shows the new tab search bar, which has the name of the default one in it) and after that everything passes.

FTR I've merged the proposed branch into experimental.

Testing is currently underway and results will be forthcoming.

First: Very impressive work here (as usual) ;) I did my testing with a self-built ISO from the bugfix/9309-default-disconnect-search branch.

The only discrepancy from the above instructions:

Check in about:config that spellchecker.dictionary is set appropriately. Only tr_TR and zh_CN should have defaulted back to en_US. Note that this pref actually has no effect (it must be set as a user_pref() which seems impossible to do via a .properties file like we do in the branding extension), so this step is more "for completeness" to verify that there's no "regression".

All of the locales had the localized spell check language selected except for these which had en_US set:

- Chinese
- Dutch
- Korean
- Polish
- Turkish

- Status changed from In Progress to 11
- % Done changed from 50 to 100
kytv wrote:

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anonym wrote:

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- Chinese
- Dutch
- Korean
- Polish
- Turkish

The additional locales without spellchecker are expected after 4998d84, which was done after I wrote those instructions.

So:

- Code review passed (intrigeri)
- Manual tests passed (kytv)
- Automated test suite passed (anonym)

Merging!
#23 - 05/12/2015 06:35 PM - BitingBird

- Status changed from 11 to Resolved

**Files**

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