New browser search plugins

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As a subscriber to Blockbuster 's online movie rental program I often want to search for a specific movie usually with the intent of adding it to my Queue. I was recently looking for a search engine plugin for Mozilla Firefox so I could simply use the built-in search bar, instead of first having to pull up the Blockbuster web site. Not that I'm opposed to pulling up web sites. I mean I do that all day, most days. But I'm a developer and it is often said that, developers are lazy. Any shortcut I can find for something I do repeatedly, I'll take.

So, that was the start of me developing the Blockbuster search engine plugin for both Firefox 2.x and IE 7.x.

When I first started thinking about it I thought that I'd end up developing a search plugin specific to Firefox. However once I looked into it I found that Firefox supported an open search standard known as OpenSearch. Furthermore Internet Explorer 7.0 and later was supposedly going to support this same standard. So, the good news was that, if I wrote it carefully, I would be able to create one search plugin that would work with both of the major browsers.

And before anyone e-mails me complaining that their favorite browser is a "major browser", I'm basing this statement on the proportions of visiting browsers I get hitting this web site. 81% (and falling) for Internet Explorer versus 16% (and rising) for Firefox.

Anyway, after a fairly minimal learning curve I got my first Firefox plugin working. Great. As an added bonus, it even worked unmodified with Firefox under Windows, Mac OSX and Linux/X Windows. But as soon as I tried it with Internet Explorer it, not surprisingly, did not work. This was due to a minor, subtle difference between exactly what parts of the OpenSearch specification are supported by Internet Explorer. However with a few minor tweaks I was able to get the search plugin working under both Firefox 2.x and Internet Explorer 7.0.Moving onto Movielink

Having already seen what was involved with these OpenSearch search engine plugins, I decided to tackle another site that I frequent, Movielink. Now their search engine is a little more involved, but having already cut my teeth on the Blockbuster search plugin, I was soon able to create a platform-independent, browser-neutral search engine plugin for Movielink.

Just to be clear, I developed each of these plugins purely for my own use. I also decided to them available for free to anyone else that wants to try them out. So, feel free to try them out. If you don't use them you can always remove them later on.