SearchInDefaultBrowser

What's all this then?

Like many of my small projects, this arose out of someone online saying: "I wish…." In this case, it was a poster on the MacWorld forums wondering if he could change the behavior of the "Search with Google" command that showed up for text selections in Mail's context menu. Simple concept: He wanted it to search with his default browser, rather than always going to Safari. Problem is, that behavior isn't provided by Mail; it actually comes from Safari itself. But, I said, making a service to offer the same function using your default browser should be a trivial task for any developer. I might, I continued, even do it at lunch because it sounded fun. And I did.

Later that day, I realized that I could generalize it to handle most search engines with almost no extra effort on my part. So that's what I've got now. Built in support for Bing, Google, Digg and Yahoo; and it's structured in such a way that an industrious user could add more with nothing other than a text editor.

How do I use it?

Simplicity itself. See the file called "SearchInDefaultBrowser.service?" Move or copy it to /Library/Services or ~/Library/Services. In the first, it'll be visible to all users. In the second it'll be just for you. You can create the Services folder if it doesn't exist. It'll be available at your next login, and perhaps immediately, but if you'd rather not log out just open a terminal and enter the following command:
`/System/Library/CoreServices/pbs`

The last thing you may need to do is open System Preferences, select the Keyboard pane and then the "Keyboard Shortcuts" tab. In the left-hand column select "Services" and then in the right scroll down; you should (in the Text group) find a set of entries named "Search <site> in Default Browser." Make sure any sites you want to search are checked.

Now just select some text in almost any application and bring up the context menu. In the "Services" submenu, you should see the search commands you activated.

How do I get rid of this?

Just drag it from wherever you put it to the trash. It might be a good idea to run that `pbs` command up above again.

You said I could add my own?

Yes, indeed. Right-click or control-click on the service's icon and choose "Show Package Contents." Open the "Contents" folder in the window that appears. The file named Info.plist is just a plain text XML file. It controls a lot of stuff about how the application runs. Among other things, it controls what services the app advertises. Open it in an editor - it'd be a good idea to make a backup copy first - scroll down until you find the "Services" key in the file and then look at the "dict" entries immediately following them. Here's one for reference:

```
<dict>
  <key>NSMenuItem</key>
  <dict>
    <key>default</key>
    <string>Search Yahoo in Default Browser</string> [1]
  </dict>
  <key>NSMessage</key>
  <string>performSearch</string>
  <key>NSPortName</key>
  <string>DefGoogle</string>
  <key>NSSendTypes</key>
  <array>
    <string>NSStringPboardType</string>
  </array>
  <key>NSUserData</key>
  <string>http://search.yahoo.com/search?p="%@"</string> [2]
</dict>
```

If you know you'll never want to search on a given site, you should probably just use System Preferences to disable that particular option but you could delete the entry outright. It won't save you CPU or disk space or RAM or anything, but it'll work.

To add a new site, just select one entry - making sure to get the <dict> and </dict> tags - and then copy and paste. You can configure the new search (or modify an existing one) by changing the two numbered lines.
1. The text to show in the Services menu.
2. A template for the search, which you can generally work out by doing a search manually at that site. Just do the search and then on the results page look at the address field. Copy what's there into the XML entry in this plist file and then replace the search terms with %@. You'll also want to replace any occurrences of %22 with double-quotes.

Once you've made the changes you want, just save. Make sure you're saving it as a plain text file. Finally run that `pbs` command from up above to get the system to rescan.

System Requirements?

Mac OS X 10.5 or later. It's PowerPC and Intel-native, and on Intel-based systems will run in 32- or 64-bit mode.

What's the catch?

Nothing. It's free. If you feel moved to pay me I won't say no. You can send PayPal payments to user ID gweston@mac.com. You can also send something in paper mail to:

Greg Weston
PO Box 54
Avon CT 06001
USA