

Clearing Your Browser Cache in: Mozilla Firefox 3.5+

In this short lesson, you will learn the steps necessary to empty your browser cache in Mozilla Firefox, versions 3.5 to 3.9.x. Users of version 3.0 or earlier really should upgrade at this point. At the time of this writing, version 4.0 has just been released; versions 3.5 and higher are considered "current."

Note that this document does NOT cover Firefox 4.x, only versions 3.5 to 3.9.x.

The basic procedure described in this document applies to users of Firefox 3.5+ on any operating system. The window borders shown in our diagrams are from Windows 7, but that makes no difference here. The positions and content of the menu items should be the same or very close on all platforms.

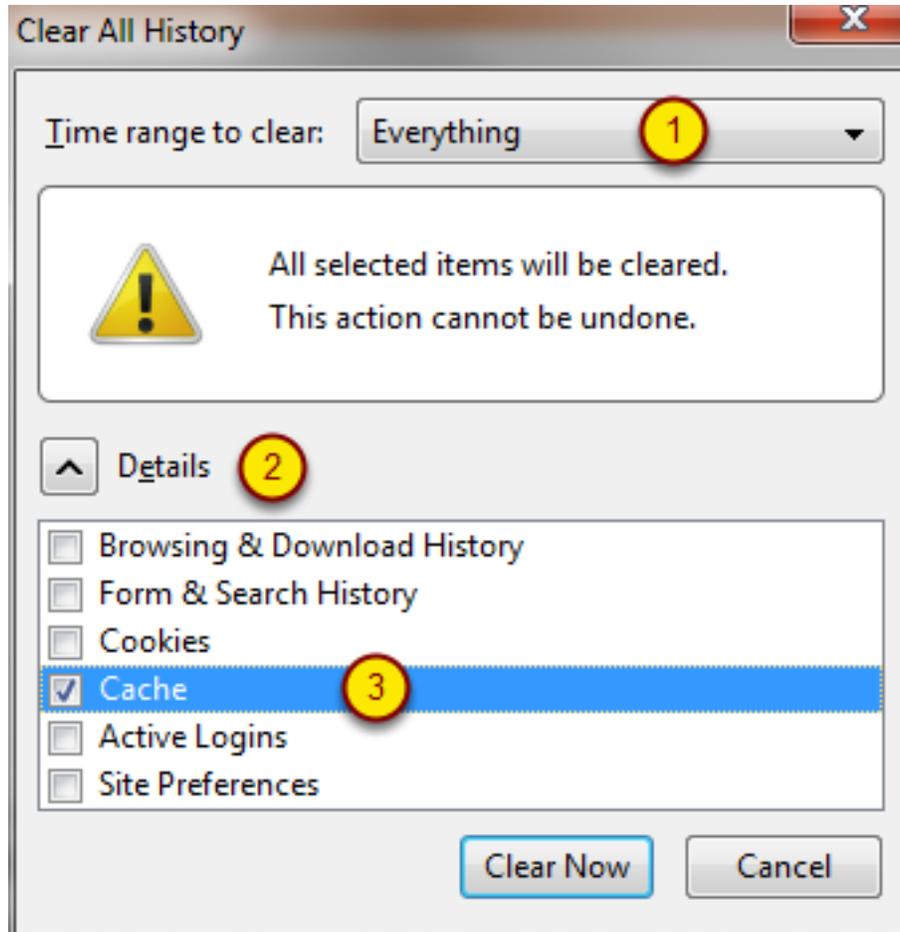
There are optional steps at the end of the lesson for setting smart cache settings. These are not required for the basic procedure but are recommended in order to minimize future cache-related problems. There will be variances in this optional procedure based on which operating system you are using. Macintosh users will have a slightly different first step from all other users, but the rest of the optional procedure remains the same.

Open the "Clear Recent History" Menu



With Firefox open, go to the Tools menu in the upper left (1) and select the "Clear Recent History..." (2) menu item. This will open a new, small window where you get to choose what is deleted.

Clear the Browsing History



In the new window, select "Everything" for the time range at the top. (1). You can set this to a lesser time frame to clear out less of the cache. However, we recommend that when clearing the cache, it is best to clear it out entirely.

Ensure that the Details menu (2) is in the "open" position. If it is, you will see a number of checkboxes below the Details menu, allowing you to select what is to be deleted. If it is not open, you will see nothing but the 2 buttons at the bottom of the window. If this is the case, click the arrow button next to the word "Details" to open the menu.

We are only concerned with clearing the cache and nothing else; in fact, you may lose things you want to keep if you aren't careful with this step. Therefore, ensure that the only box checked "on" is the one for Cache (3). All others should be unchecked, or in the "off" position.

When you have these markings set, click the Clear Now button.

NOTE: If you have never done this or have built up a large cache, this Delete operation may take a while. The window will not appear to be doing anything and you may think the machine is locked up, but it isn't. You may be able to hear the computer's hard drive thrashing very hard as things are being deleted, which may sound a bit like grinding metal.

When the computer is done, this window will disappear and you will have control again.

Smarter Cache Settings - Begin

If you're on dial-up, you can stop here, because these settings will actually make the web very slow for you.

Every web page you visit, every image on that page, every file associated with making that page work properly... all of it gets stored in a temporary folder on your computer called the browser cache. If you ever go back to that page, your browser will first check to see if you have it already in the cache, because loading the site from your own computer is a whole lot faster than getting it from the web when you're on dial-up.

As such, caching made sense in the days of dial-up-only Internet Access. Web pages were small, hardly ever changed, and didn't have much more than basic text and a few images. Storing them on your computer was a trivial matter and really sped things up for most users.

However, with high-speed broadband access (cable, DSL, some kinds of Wi-Fi) there is little need to ever cache anything. The connections have become so fast that speed is no longer much of an issue, and many web pages today are dynamic; that is, the page changes every single time it is loaded, or it is generated right then and there, on the fly when you go to it and doesn't actually exist otherwise. Most of EB Marketing Group's web pages are dynamic. In these dynamic cases, caching can actually cause you problems when browsing. As such, it makes sense to set some smarter cache settings so that we can minimize cache-related problems.

Fortunately, Firefox (unlike most browsers) allows us to remove the cache entirely. What's more... there is only 1 setting to change, and it is easy to make.

So, let's walk through making that setting. To begin, proceed to the next step.

Get into Tools->Options

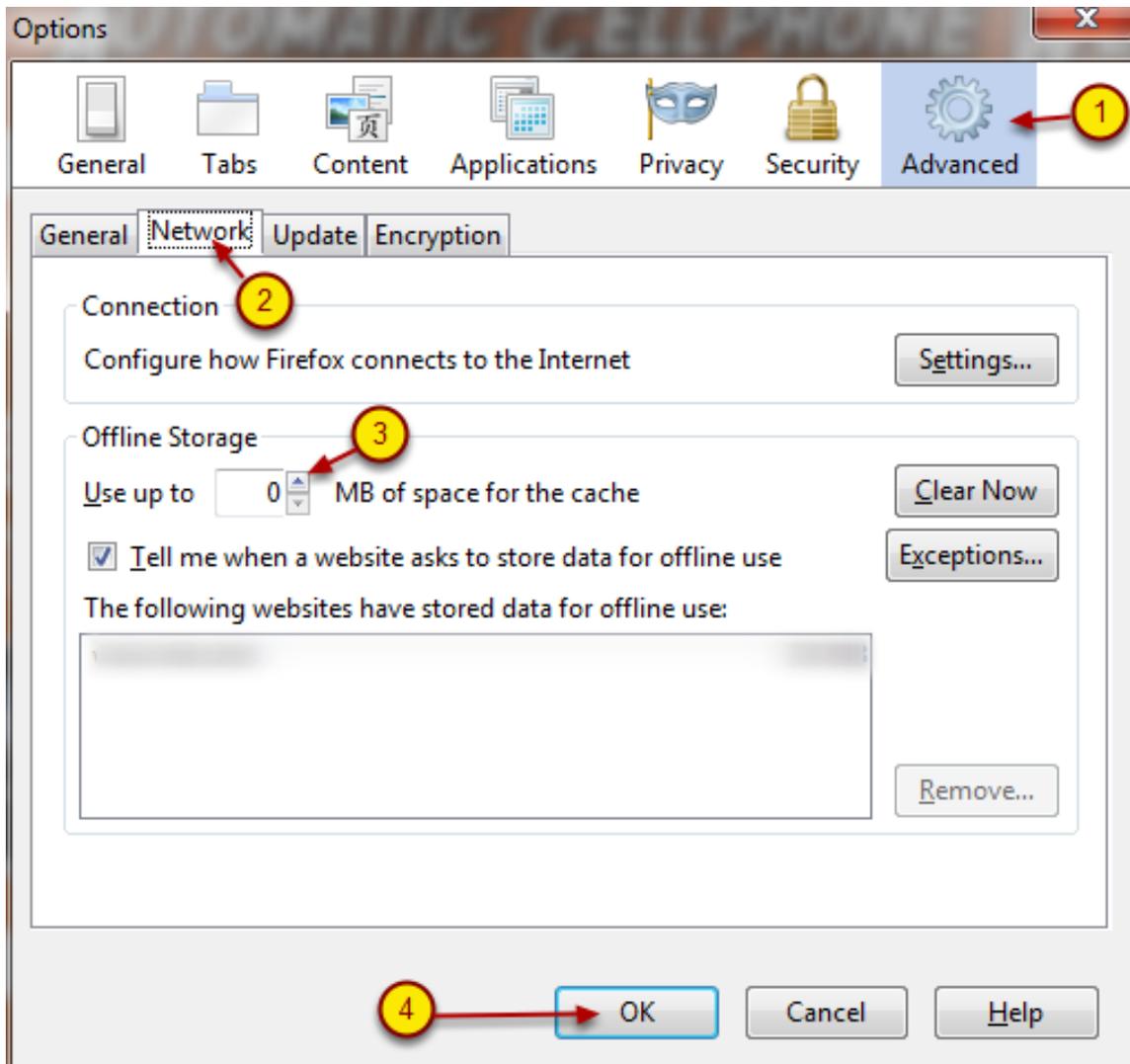


Our first step is to get into the window that controls the inner workings of Firefox. On Windows, Linux and most other operating systems, this is in Tools->Options. Thus, click the Tools menu (while Firefox is open and "in front") in the window's menu bar (1), and select the Options item (2).

Mac users will have a slightly different menu to use, shown in an inset box in the lower right of our diagram. Go to the Firefox menu (while Firefox is open and "in front") next to the Apple menu and select Preferences. From here on in, your process should be the same as the users of other operating systems. Your menu will appear different in style to those shown in these diagrams, but the placement, names and purposes of all functions should be the same.

Whatever your operating system, this will open a window like the one shown in the next step.

Get into Advanced Network Settings



In the Options (Preferences on Mac) window, select the advanced button at the top (1), and the Network tab below that (2).

To have a minimal cache, set the item marked (3) in our diagram to any whole number below 100. To not use a cache at all, set this number to 0. You can do this by deleting what is there and typing a zero, or by using the down arrow at the right edge of the box.

Note: if you are on some sort of Internet plan where you are paying by the MB downloaded -- such as on a mobile phone or an iPad via 3G -- then it is **not** recommended that you use zero cache. This will cause you to greatly increase your download amounts and it will show up on your Internet usage bill!

When this is set, click the OK button (4).

That's it! You now have a cache much more appropriate for a high-speed connection in a dynamic-pages environment. You may now resume normal browsing as you please.