

## Is Windows 10 making it hard for you to change your default browser?

Your “browser” is the program you use to connect to websites and receive their contents. The most popular browsers are Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari, and Edge. Click this link for my blog posts that have previously covered browsers - [browsers mentioned in David Leonard blog posts](#).

A “default” program is the program that will be opened to handle a particular kind of file if the program is not specified in a particular instance. So, for instance, if I double-click on a spreadsheet file then Windows knows that my default program for handling spreadsheet files is Microsoft Excel. Therefore, it opens the Excel program and then opens my spreadsheet inside that program. Likewise, if you click on a link to a website in an email, then your default browser will open to display that website.

Now, it’s well known that Microsoft have been chucking their weight around with Windows 10. One respect in which this has been happening is with the setting of default programs. The different browsers mentioned above were created by different organisations:

- Internet Explorer - Microsoft
- Edge - Microsoft
- Chrome - Google
- Safari - Apple
- Firefox - Mozilla

You and I might think it perfectly reasonable that if we wish to nominate, say, Chrome, as our default browser, then Windows should allow that to happen and that MICROSOFT SHOULD RESPECT THAT DECISION.

But, no, Windows 10 will quite often switch default programs back to defaults that suit Microsoft’s agenda better than our own wishes (ie by reverting defaults to their own programs). This can happen with lots of type of programs (which program should handle your images, which your music, which your pdf files and so on). But let’s use the internet browser as an example.

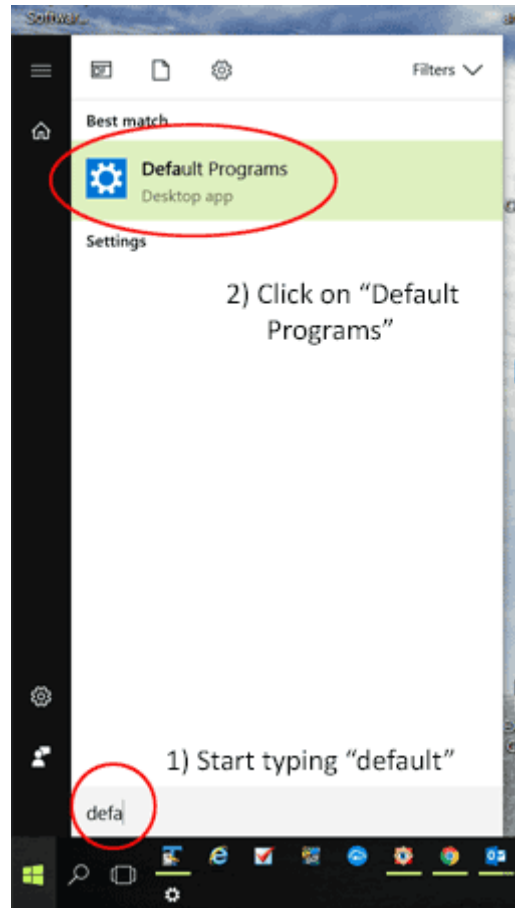


Figure 1) Click on "Start" button and then just start typing

The normal way to set your preferences for default programs is as follows:

- Click on the "Start" button
- Start typing the word "default" (without the quotes)
- When "Default Programs" appears above where you are typing, left-click on it
- In the window that pops up, look down the list until you reach "Web browser"
- The program listed under "Web browser" is the current default, so, if it's not the program you want as your default then click on it

What is supposed to happen next is that Windows should list all the programs that are currently installed on the computer that could become your default. You should simply have to click on your preference and then close the window.

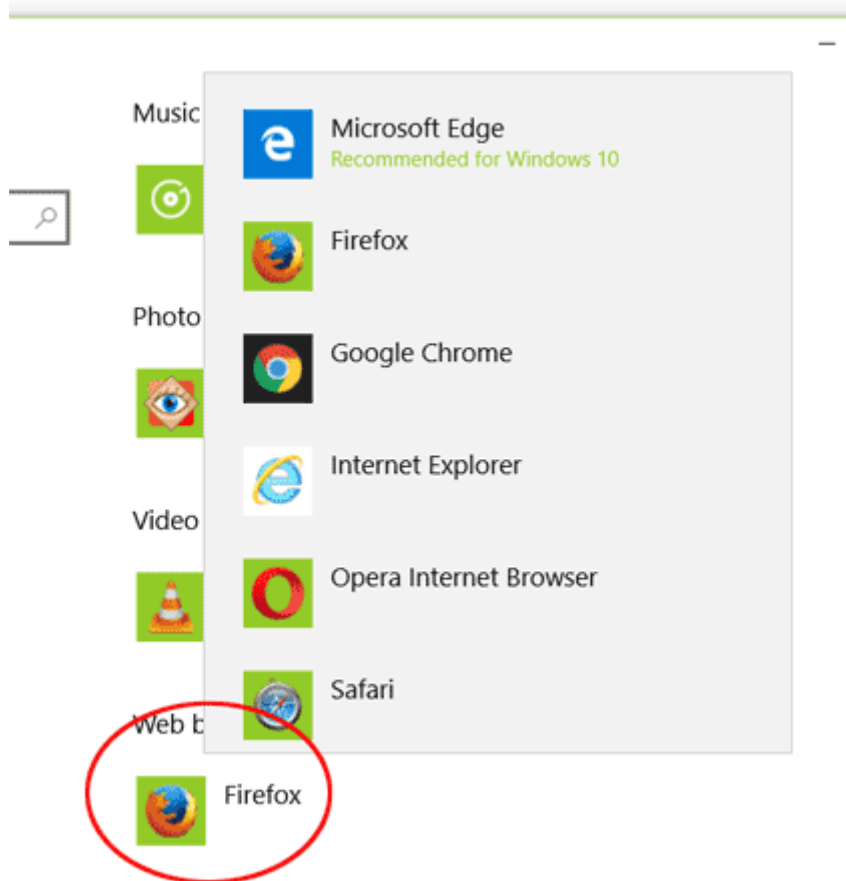


Figure 2) Click on the current default. You should then see a list of other potential defaults (as above)

However, several of my own IT Support clients have told me that if they try this they are offered just one browser - Windows Edge! Ho hum, what is going on here? I don't know. No doubt Microsoft would tell us it's just a glitch. Strange, though, that it's always Edge (Microsoft's own latest browser) that's offered if there's only one.

## Web browser



Firefox

## Reset to the Microsoft recommended defaults

Reset

[Choose default apps by file type](#)[Choose default apps by protocol](#)[Set defaults by app](#)

*Figure 3) Click here if the only potential default previously offered was Edge*

The solution that seems always to work (as far as I know) is to look a bit further down the screen to the link entitled "Choose default apps by file type". If you click on this, a new windows opens that lists all the different file types down the left hand side (they all begin with a dot). Scroll down the list until you find the file type ".htm". Click on the name of the browser that is listed to the right of this file type and - with a bit of luck and a following wind - all of your installed browsers should appear. Simply click on the desired one. Then move down a row until you are on the file type ".html" and do the same again. Then close the poup window.

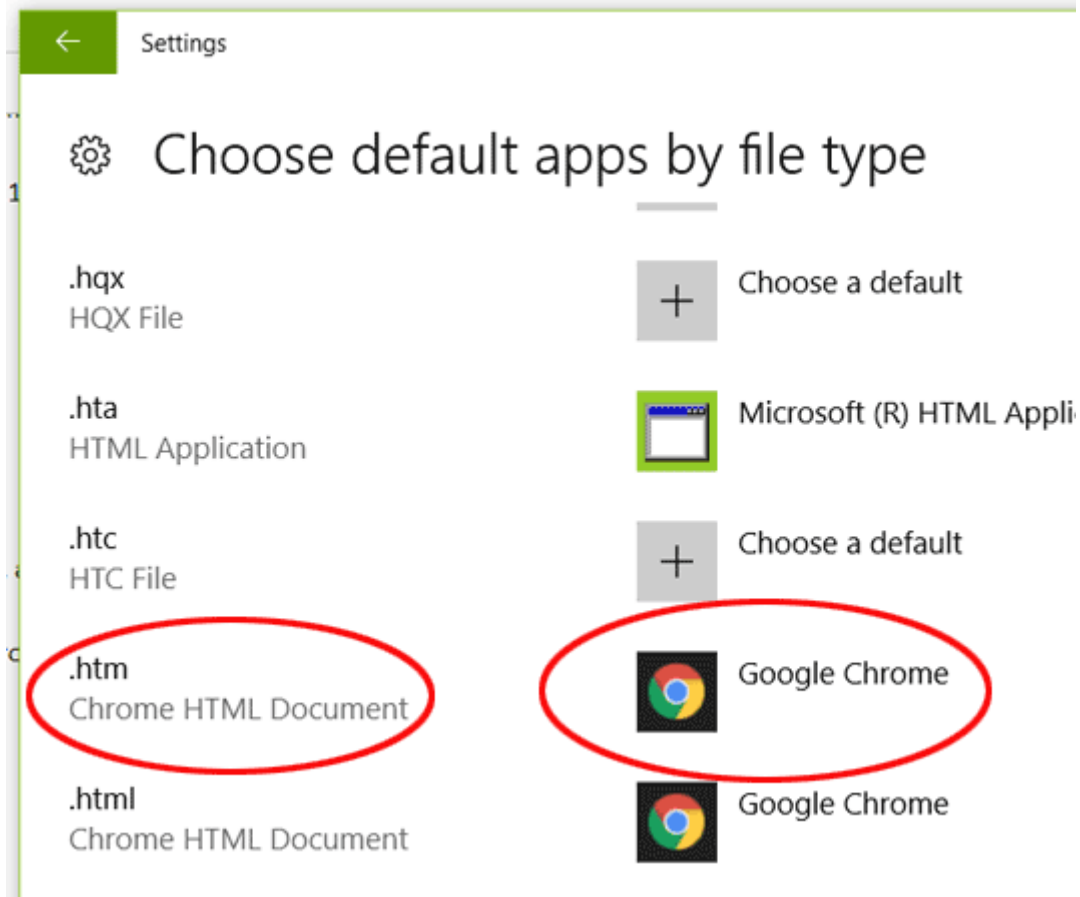


Figure 4) Find the appropriate file type and then click on the current default. You will then be able to choose a different default.

One of the most likely times for Windows to reset default programs is after installation of a Windows Update. It's really annoying that you should have to do it, but the above processes should let you put things back the way you want them.

By the way, the Chrome browser will often suggest to you that you click on a button in the browser to set Chrome as your default browser in Windows 10. This seems to not work - at least not always.