How I Got Firefox To Accept The TEL Tag And Place Phone Calls From Web Pages

How I Got Firefox To Accept The TEL Tag

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Anyone who'se written web pages is familiar with the "mailto" tag, which looks like E-Mail Me (if you didn't know about the "subject" thing, I'll bet you start using it).

The "mailto" tag is standard HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language), and works with any browser. Even most phones will jump you to a Message or E-mail App on the phone to send e-mails. The trick is to get computers to use a Tag that's common to modern mobile phones, but not to most computer desktop browsers, the Tel tag.

The Tel tag looks alot like a Mailto tag, Call Me. The thing is, most desktop browsers haven't got a clue as to how to use the Tel tag. Here's how I got Firefox to accept it.

First, I installed Skype on my computer. This VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) application is the "Gold Standard" for computer to computer voice communications, and (if you're willing to pay for it) place calls to POTS (Plain Old Telephone Service) phones on the PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network).

Skype conforms to all International Standards called "Reccomendations" (the International Telecommunications Union can't force soverign nations to conform to standards, but can make "Reccomendations"). Skype does that because it's based in Europe, where you're crossing someone elses international border every 50 miles or so (at least, that's how it seems).

When you install Skype, it inserts code into the file "mimeTypes.rdf" in the directory "C:\Program Files\FirefoxPortable\Data\profile". I use Firefox Portable on my desktop, because it doesn't interact with the Microsoft Registry. Normally it runs off a Thumb Drive so you can carry your Bookmarks with you to use on any computer you need to borrow when you need to access websites.

What I did was search for the word "skype" (without quote marks, of course) within "mimeTypes.rdf" using Notepad, a program that is a simple ASCII (American Standard Code for Information interchange) editor. Each time I found the word, I copied the line or lines needed, pasted a copy of the line(s) below the existing one(s), and replaced the word "skype" in the copied line with the word "tel" (there's more than one of these line groups to deal with). You don't have to put in the ":" colon character that's needed if you use the Tag in a web page. If you look for the word "mailto" in the same file, you'll see that no colon character is used for that keyword in this file. Some of the things to copy have mutiple lines. One such starts with "<RDF:Description ...", has a few lines of code, and end in "</RDF:Description>" You need to copy these whole sections, changing only "skype" to "tel". Just see what's in the file for "skype" and make similar text with "tel".

Once edited, I saved the file, closed Firefox, and brought Firefox up again so it read the new version of the file as it reloaded. Then I went to my mobile web page. http://M.CheshireCatalyst.Com and chose **Menu Choice 6** for the US Naval Observatory Master Clock where Durward Kirby, the announcer from The Gary Moore Show in the 1960's, is immortalized as the Navy's talking clock at 202-762-1401. I don't pay for Skype's POTS connection services, but clicking the hyperlink on the page brings up Skype, so I know the Tel tag there works.

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