

Microsoft broke "disable web search" in Windows 10 version 1803

by Martin Brinkmann on April 07, 2018 in Windows - Last Update: June 14, 2018 - 86 comments
<https://www.ghacks.net/2018/04/07/microsoft-breaks-disable-web-search-in-windows-10-version-1803/>

Windows 10 users and administrators who plan to upgrade devices running the operating system to Windows 10 version 1803, the Spring Creators Update, need to be aware that certain policies are broken currently in the new version of Windows 10.

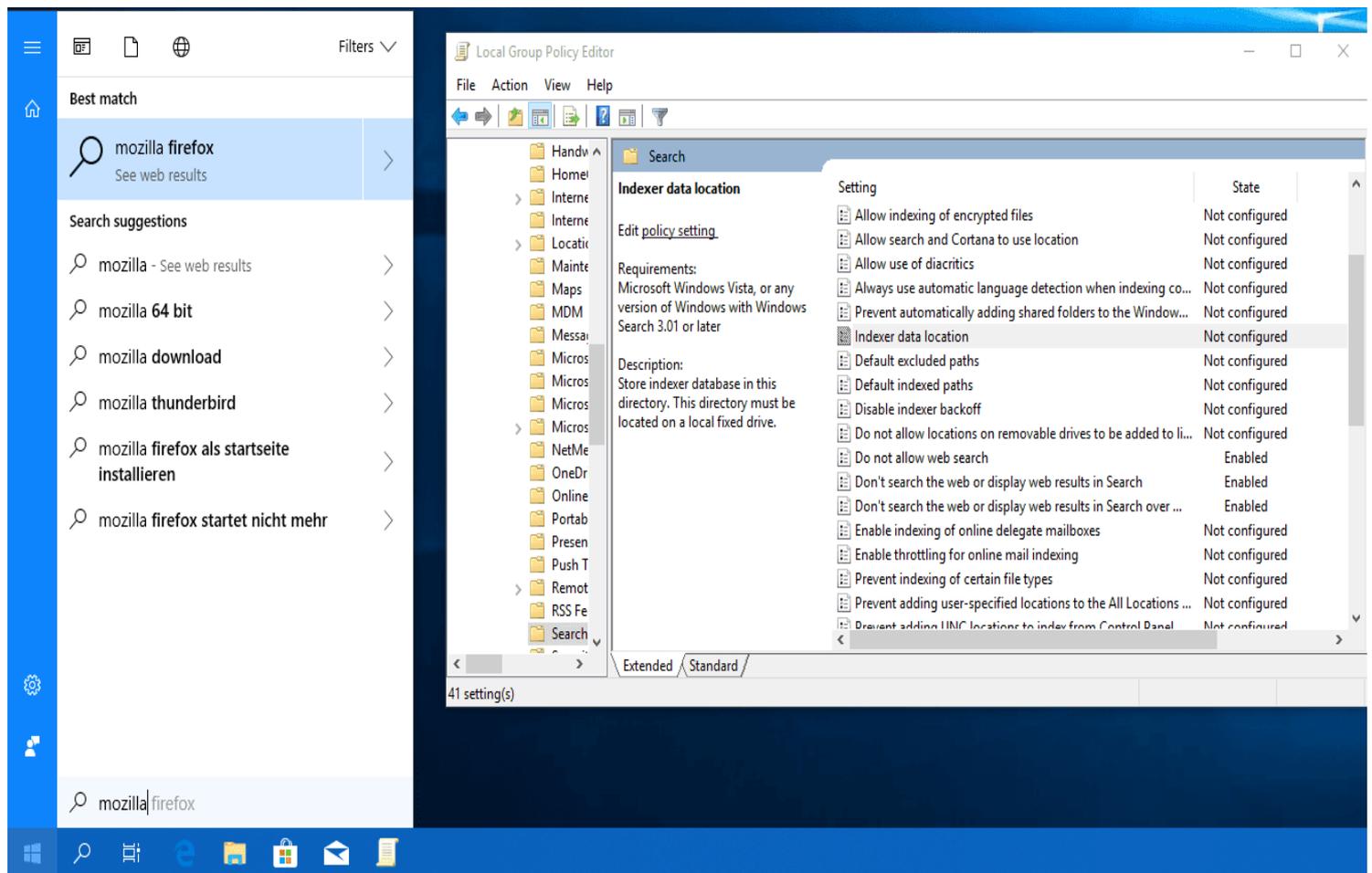
In particular, the policy "Do not allow web search" has no effect when enabled on the device. The initial version of Windows 10 combined local search functionality with web search functionality when it came out.

Search results displayed local results, for example files or preferences that match the search term, and suggested web search results. These suggestions were pulled from Bing and loaded the results page on Bing in Microsoft Edge when selected.

Microsoft changed web search several times since that initial release. The company removed the user interface setting to disable Cortana or web searching in the Anniversary Update which meant that users had to disable Web Search in Windows 10 this using policies or the Windows Registry.

Web Search was improved in the Fall Creators Update when Windows Search began to display direct results on the Windows 10 desktop pulled from Bing. A search for the German city of Dortmund returned a map, a short description, some images and other information directly.

Disable Web Search broken in Windows 10 version 1803



Microsoft broke the ability to disable web search in the Spring Creators Update of Windows 10. Even if you have configured all three anti-web search policies, web searching remains enabled on the device. Note: The change impacts Windows 10 Pro systems only according to reports. Enterprise or Education systems are not affected.

You find all policies under Local Computer Policy > Computer Configuration > Administrative Templates > Windows Components > Search.

The policies are:

- Do not allow web search
- Don't search the web or display web results in Search
- Don't search the web or display web results in Search over metered connections

Windows 10 won't block web search results if you enable all three of the preferences. A quick check on a system running Redstone 5, the next version of Windows 10 after version 1803, revealed that the policies are broken in that version of Windows 10 as well.

Update: Here is a Registry script that you can run on an affected device to disable web search functionality:
[block-web-search.zip](#)

Closing Words

While Microsoft might publish an update for Windows 10 version 1803 on day one to fix the issue, I don't think it is very likely that this is going to happen. Web search functionality has privacy implications as search terms need to be sent to Microsoft so that the company can return search suggestions.

Now You: Do you use web search in Windows 10?