

# ***iMacro Workshop – Firefox add-on for repetitive task***

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Macros are a set of instruction used in programming that help people overcome repetitive tasks and save time. Most macros are used in programming software and hardware. Tabbed browsing in Firefox lets a user load web pages in separate tabs of a single browser window, that lets one jump among web sites quickly and easily. iMacros, a Firefox add-on, takes advantage of both macros and tabbed browsing. Instead of applying macros to software/hardware programming, iMacros applies the concept to navigating the Internet. The free tool allows users to input a search expression once and search multiple databases, search engines, other sites, or a combination of all three. The search expression is automatically placed in the search box for each database. For example, one could create an iMacro to search WorldCat, Google Books, and Gale Virtual Reference Library for the same search expression. Each database will have its results display in a separate tab. Thus, iMacros allows one to search in the native interface and the results are not parsed unlike federated search and metasearch engines. Another way to use iMacros - create a macro to perform click-throughs of clunky web sites/tools (e.g. course management software).

Librarians may use iMacros to create search or navigation macros. One does not need to know programming to create these macros. Once one understands the basics, he/she can create many macros for different tasks, subject searches, etc. Plus, a librarian may bookmark an iMacro in Firefox, or share iMacros with others via a web link or Delicious bookmark. Then the hyperlink can be shared as long as each user has iMacros installed. Some may see it as a very light alternative (no bells and whistles) to federated search.

**Get the add-on at - <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/3863>**

Or search: imacros and firefox

## **Other useful information**

- **Video demo** – A three-minute video on creating an iMacro for the local catalog, and then adding it to a search macro of Google Books, and WorldCat.  
<http://www.northern.edu/library/demos/imacros/imacros.htm>
- **LibGuide** with all this information - <http://research.northern.edu/BCR2008>