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New Features in Safari 11

Note: This discussion is based on MacOS, 10.12.6 (Sierra). Some illustrations may differ when using other versions of macOS or OS X.

Safari 11 – Privacy and Websites Preferences

In late-September, Apple introduced the newest version of its Safari web browser, [Safari 11](#), when it introduced macOS 10.13 (High Sierra). It also made Safari 11 available for two earlier versions of the macOS, 10.12.6 (Sierra with Safari 10) and 10.11.6 (El Capitan with Safari 9).

This presentation is an introductory discussion about changes in Safari's [preferences](#), specifically, [Privacy](#) and the new [Websites](#) preferences.

Privacy Preference

In macOS 10.12.6 (Sierra), the Privacy preference looks like this:



Privacy Preference (Sierra)

However, in macOS 10.13 (High Sierra), it has changed quite a bit:



Privacy Preference (High Sierra)

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Notice the changes in Safari's Privacy preferences from Sierra to High Sierra:

Website Tracking. Safari in Sierra included a checkbox labeled "[Ask websites not to track me.](#)" Unfortunately, this was a feature that worked only if websites honored it; many didn't. Regardless, the checkbox is still there in High Sierra.

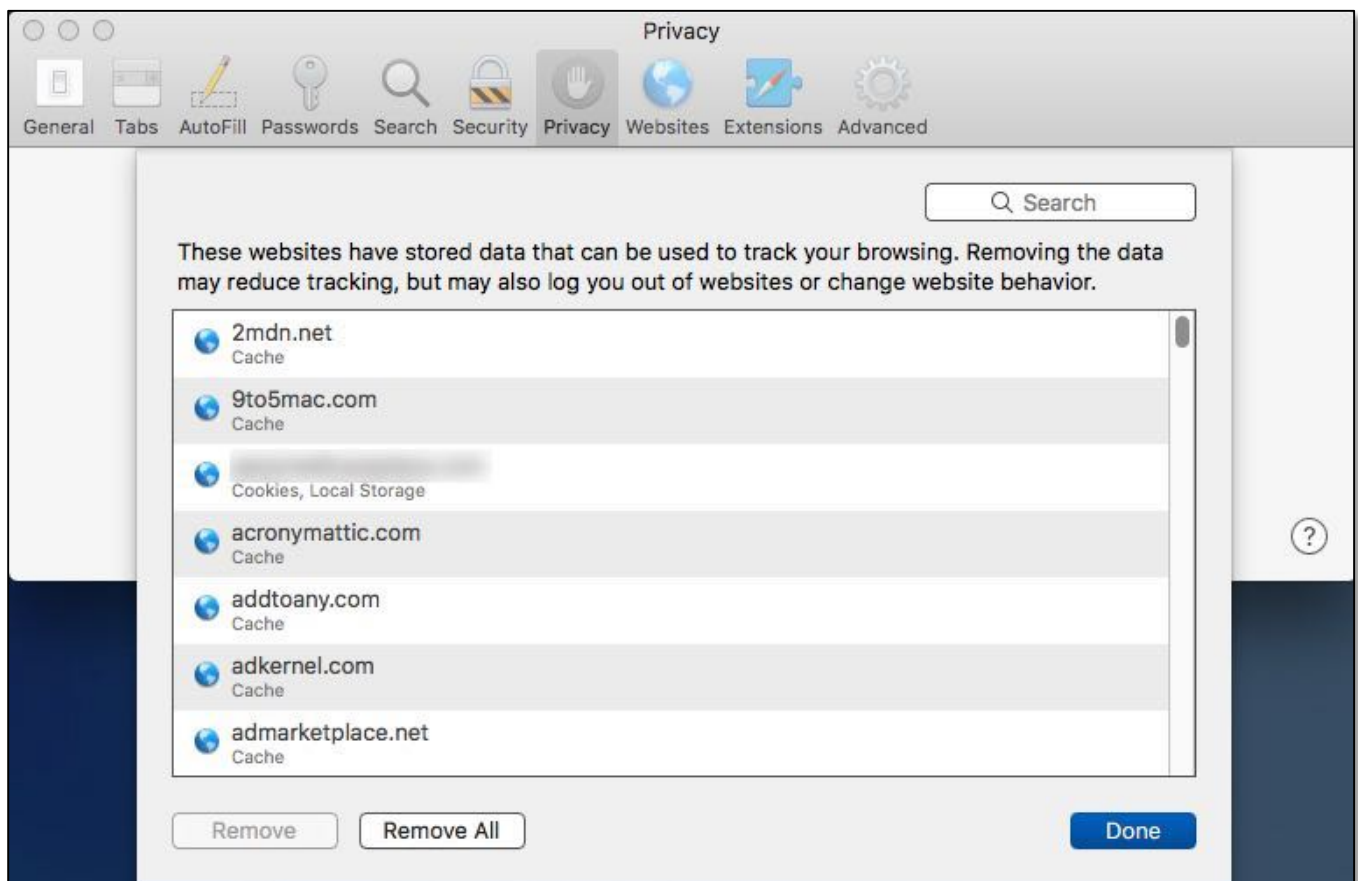
Perhaps more importantly, there's a new feature in High Sierra (a [Prevent cross-site tracking](#) checkbox). More about this at the end of the presentation.

Cookies and Website Data. In Sierra, there were four options:

- [Always block,](#)
- [Allow from current website only,](#)
- [Allow from websites I visit,](#) and
- [Always follow](#)

In High Sierra, there is only one option: [Block all cookies.](#)

Fortunately, the [Manage Website Data...](#) feature—click the button—is untouched in High Sierra, enabling you to display the websites that have stored cookies and remove them one-by-one as you wish. (See the illustration below.)



Manage Website Data – Dropdown Window (Privacy Preference)

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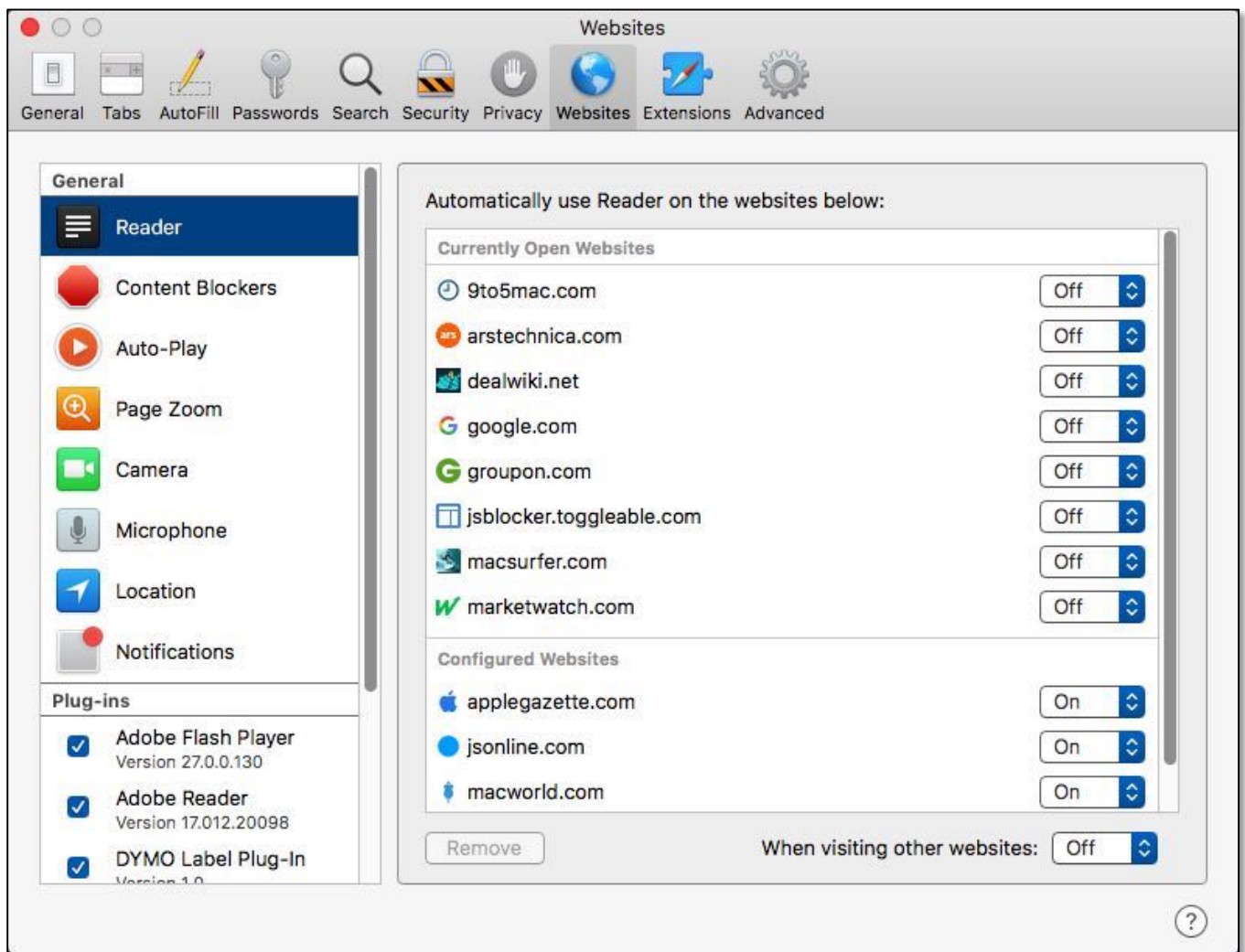
Here you can select cookies, one-by-one or in groups, to remove and then click the [Remove](#) button to delete them. You also have the option to remove all of them by clicking the [Remove All](#) button.

Regardless of how (or if) you choose to remove website cookies, remember that sometimes they store essential information for subsequent logins, such as recognizing you so you don't have to enter an ID and/or password again. Others simply gather statistics for the website developer. However, many cookies are installed by advertisers on websites to track you which can be annoying. (More on this later.)

Apple Pay. The [Apple Pay](#) checkbox remains essentially unchanged in High Sierra except for adding a reference to using [Touch ID](#) if your Mac laptop supports it.

Websites Preference

This is a [new preference](#) in the Safari 11 web browser:



Websites Preference (Safari 11)

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The [Websites](#) preference in Safari 11 appears the same in both macOS 10.12.6 (Sierra) and macOS 10.13 (High Sierra). It may be the same in macOS 10.11.6 (El Capitan), but I'm unable to verify this.

As you can see, the Websites window is divided into three sections:

- [General](#) (upper left pane, the settings you can customize),
- [Plug-ins](#) (lower left pane), and
- [Websites](#) (right pane)

General Pane. The items in this upper left section allow you to configure how websites are displayed as well as control over how you interact with them. Eight website functions can be controlled:

- [Reader](#),
- [Content Blockers](#),
- [Auto-Play](#),
- [Page Zoom](#),
- [Camera](#),
- [Microphone](#),
- [Location](#), and
- [Notifications](#)

Using the Websites Preference. [Safari Help](#) explains:

"The settings you can customize (such as Reader and Content Blockers) are listed in the column on the left [General pane].

- To apply a setting to a website in the list: Select the website in the right column, then choose the option you want.
- *To apply a setting to all websites that aren't currently customized:* Click the "[When visiting other websites](#)" pop-up menu in the bottom-right corner of the pane, then choose the option you want.

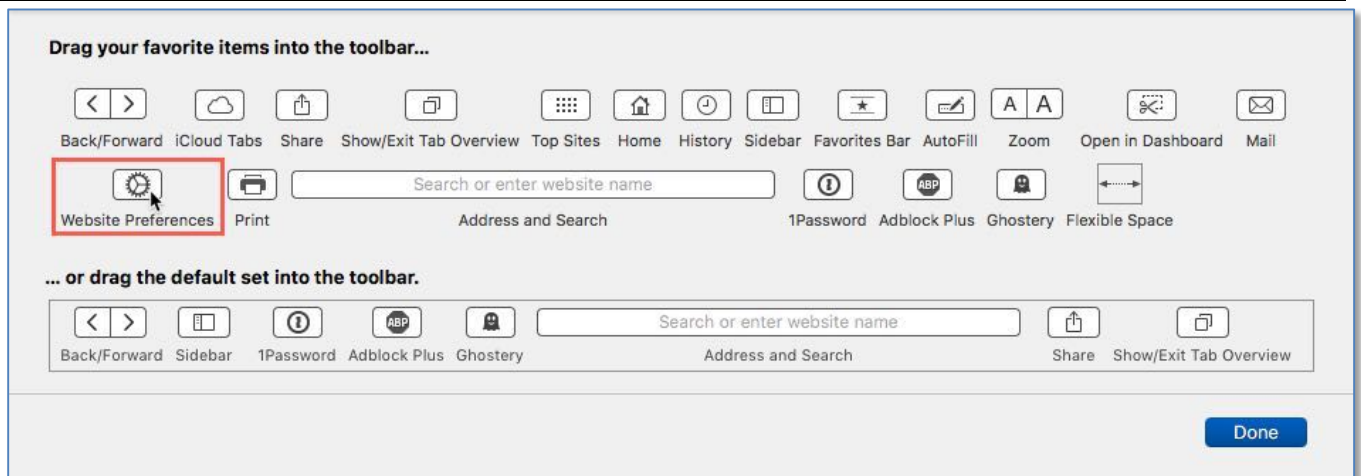
You can see all websites you've customized under the [Configured Websites](#) section. If you don't see Configured Websites, either you haven't customized a website yet, or you've cleared the list.

- To apply a setting to all websites: Make sure no websites are listed under Configured Websites (to clear the list quickly, select the websites, then click [Remove](#)). Click the "[When visiting other websites](#)" pop-up menu, then choose the option you want."

Toolbar Icon. You can add a Website Preferences icon to Safari's toolbar by right-clicking in the toolbar and choosing it from the [Customize Toolbar...](#) dropdown menu. (See the illustration on the next page.)

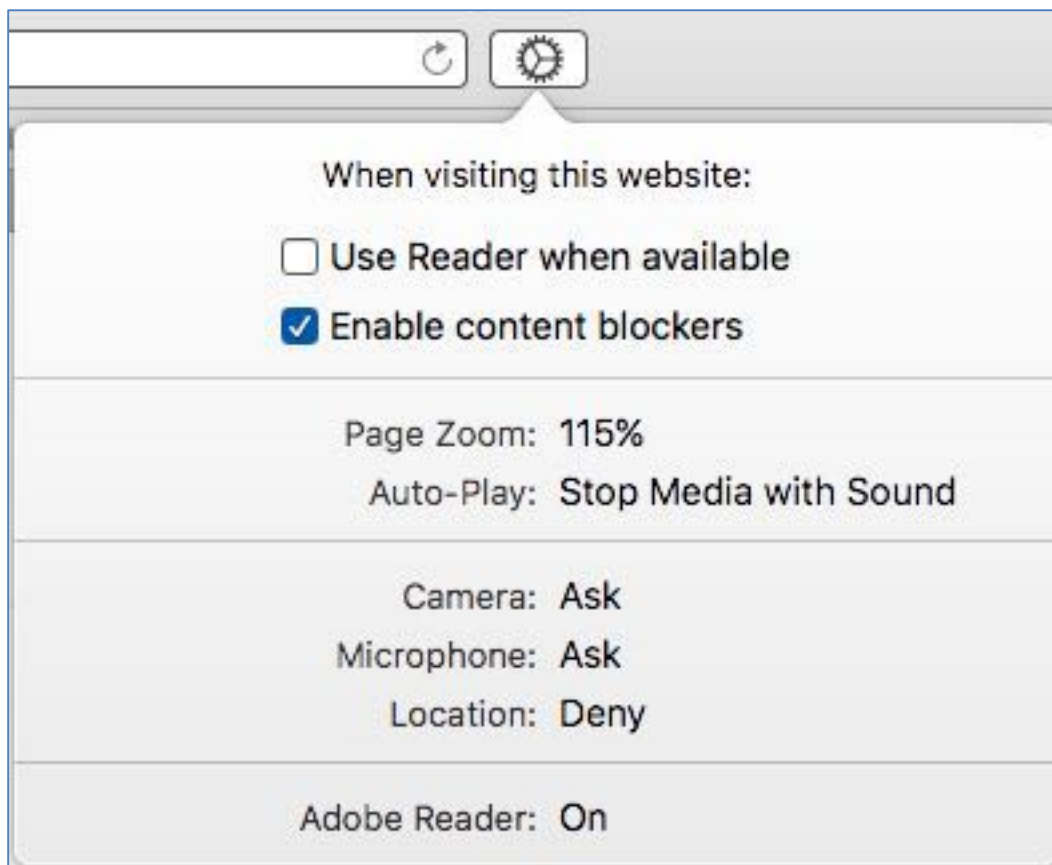
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Website Preferences Icon (Choose from Customize Toolbar... Dropdown Menu)

After choosing the Website Preferences icon, it's added to the toolbar:



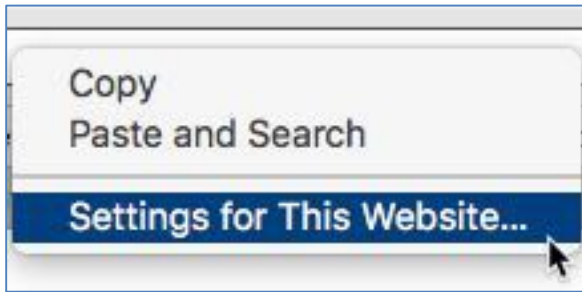
Website Preferences Icon Added to Safari's Toolbar

Website Preferences Dropdown Menu. As you can see, clicking the Website Preferences icon brings up a dropdown menu to configure the [Reader](#) and [Content Blockers](#) settings. It also shows other settings that you've configured in Website Preferences.

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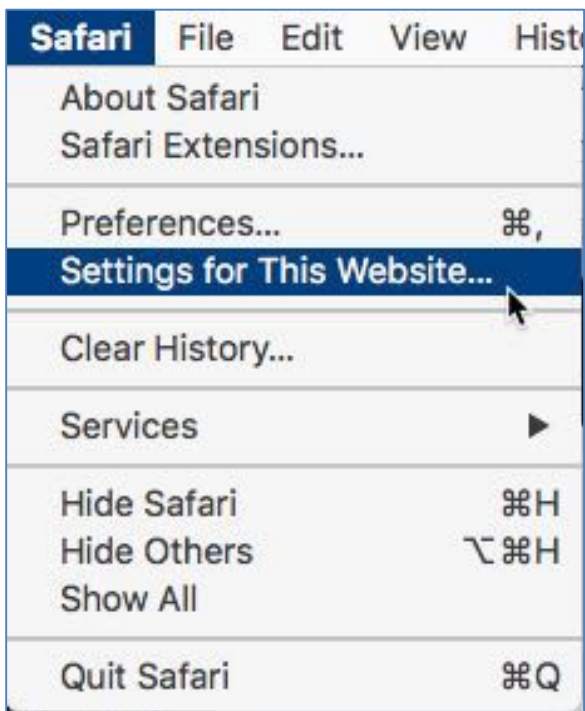
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You can also right-click on the URL or website name that appears in the address bar, and select [Settings for This Website](#) pop-up menu to bring up the same dropdown menu:



Websites Preferences – Settings for This Website... Pop-up Menu

Finally, you can also use the main [Safari](#) menu and select the [Settings for This Website...](#) menu item to bring up the dropdown menu:



Websites Preferences – Settings for This Website... Menu Item

Reader. This is the little button on the left side of the address bar (see below) that strips away all the special formatting (and the ads) of articles that you're reading in order to make pages display faster and easier to read. It works on nearly all websites, but you may encounter a few where it doesn't.

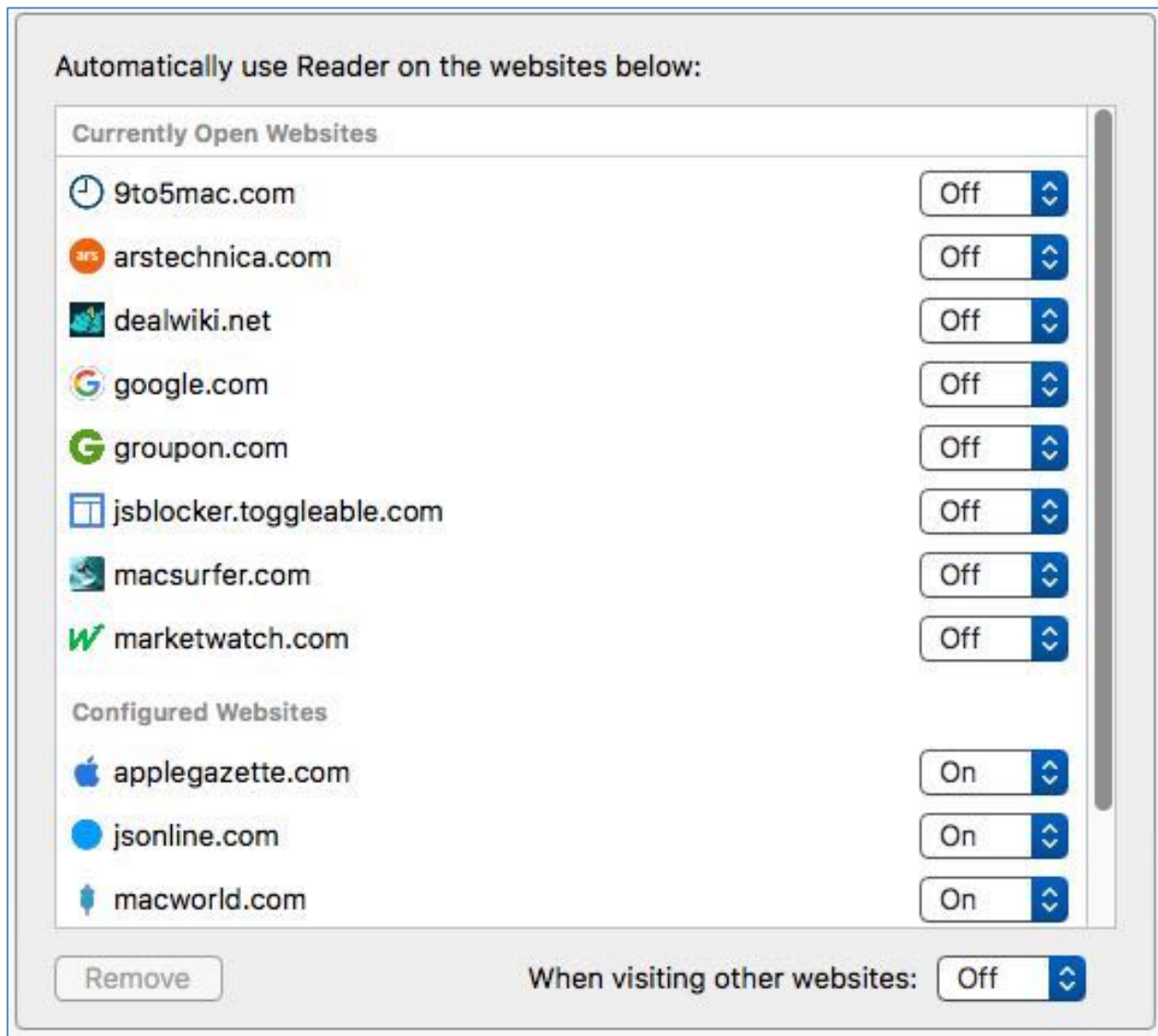


Safari Reader Icon (Left End of the Address Bar)

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Click the [Reader Websites Preferences](#) button to adjust Safari's settings for websites that you visit automatically. You can control the [Off/On setting](#) for websites you've already configured, ones you've visited recently, or for *all* sites you visit:



Reader Websites Preference

As you can see in the illustration above, the Reader website preference shows you the setting for:

- [Currently Open Websites](#),
- [Configured Websites](#) (those that you've already set up), and
- [When visiting other websites](#).

[Safari Help](#) notes: "For the sites you specified, you can choose one of two settings:

- *On*: Automatically use Safari Reader to display webpage articles on the site without ads or other distractions.
- *Off*: Don't use Reader by default on the site. (You can still choose to use Reader for articles on the site.)"

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If you discover that a particular site has consistently have formatting or ads that you don't care for, turn this [On](#) to get clean view whenever you go to the website.

Even when you've set Reader to be [On](#) by default for a website, you can still toggle it [Off](#) (or on again) by using the [Hide Reader/Show Reader](#) menu item (setting toggles) under Safari's View menu.

Check the Setting. When you're on a website, you can check the [Reader](#) preference setting via the [Website Preferences pop-up menu](#). (Refer to the first illustration on Page 5.)

Content Blockers. This preference setting lets you set whether to activate any ad-blocking extensions (1Blocker, Ghostery, Adblock Plus, etc.) you may have installed. (Refer to the first illustration on Page 5.)

Select [Content Blockers](#) from the in the [General](#) pane for a [websites list](#) (right pane) of sites that have been configured for content blocking:



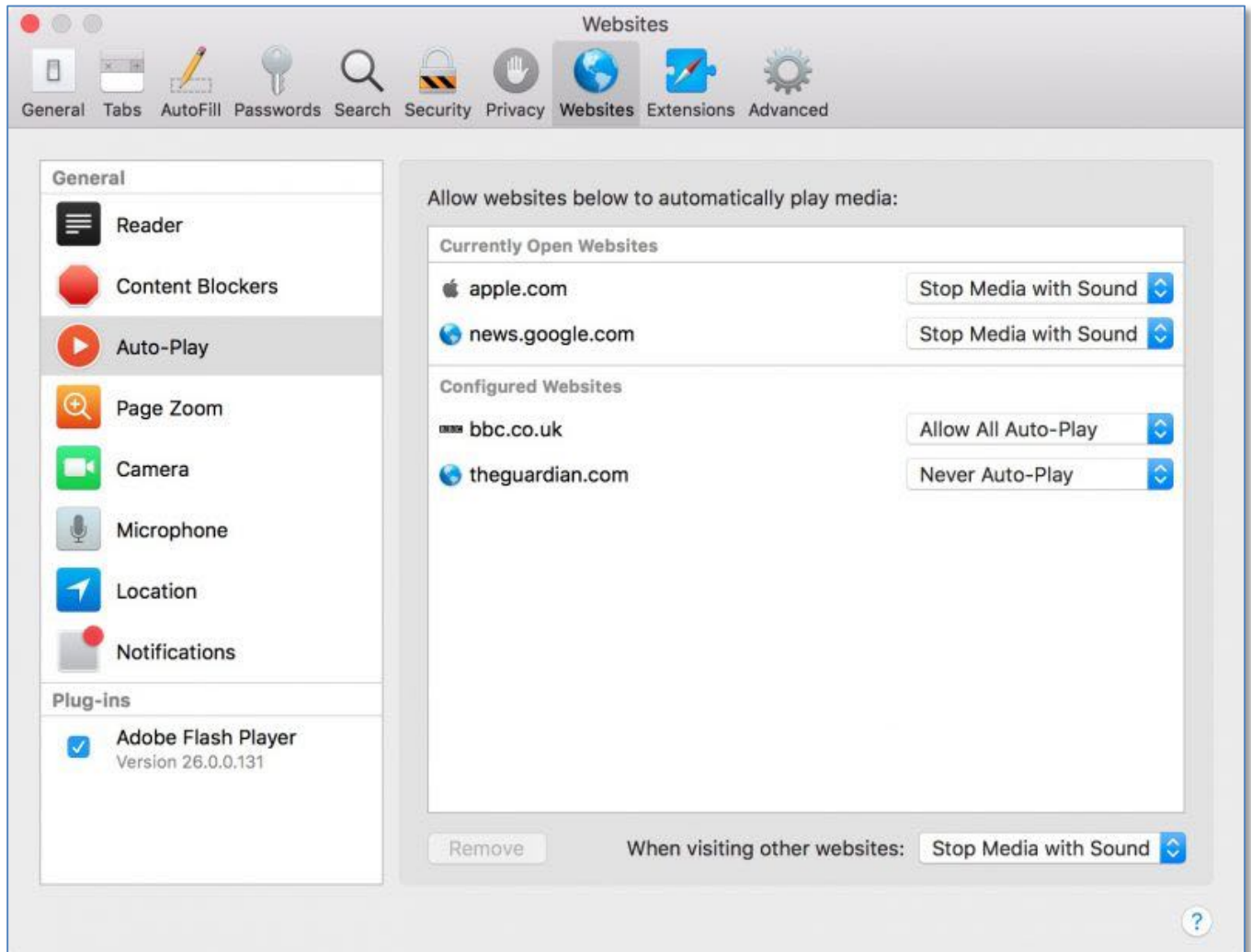
Content Blocker Websites Preference

Check the Setting. When you're on a website, you can check the [Content Blocker](#) preference setting via the [Website Preferences dropdown menu](#). (Refer to the first illustration on Page 5.)

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Auto-Play. Tired of auto-play video and audio found on some websites? The Auto-Play website preference setting is now available:



Auto-Play Websites Preference (Credit: macrumors.com)

For each website in the website list (right pane), Auto-Play has three setting options:

- [Allow Auto-Play](#),
- [Stop Media with Sound](#), and
- [Never Auto-Play](#)

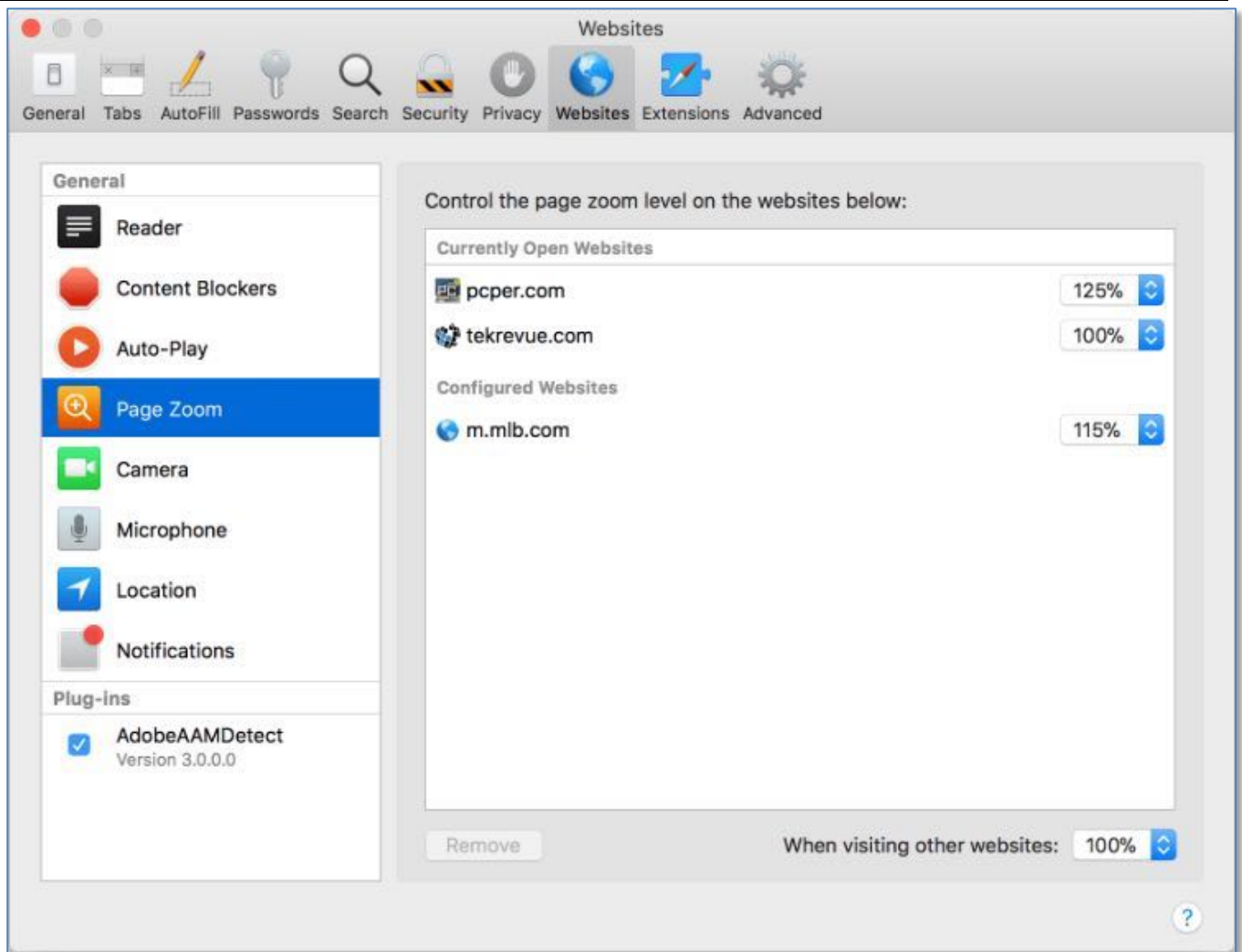
The default setting ([When visiting other websites...](#)) is found just below the right pane and offers the same three setting options.

Check the [Setting](#). When you're on a website, you can check the [Auto-Play](#) preference setting via the [Website Preferences dropdown menu](#). (Refer to the first illustration on Page 5.)

Page Zoom. You may find that the [Zoom level](#) on some webpages that you visit frequently needs to be adjusted to suit your taste. Until Safari 11, you had to adjust this each time that you visited the webpage (View menu). Now, you can preset the degree of page zooming. (See the illustration on the next page.)

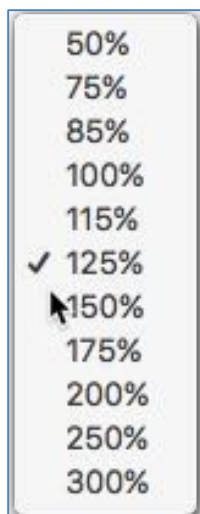
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Page Zoom Websites Preference (Credit: tekrevue.com)

For each website in the website list (right pane), [Page Zoom](#) can be adjusted in 11 steps from 50% to 300%:



Page Zoom Settings Range

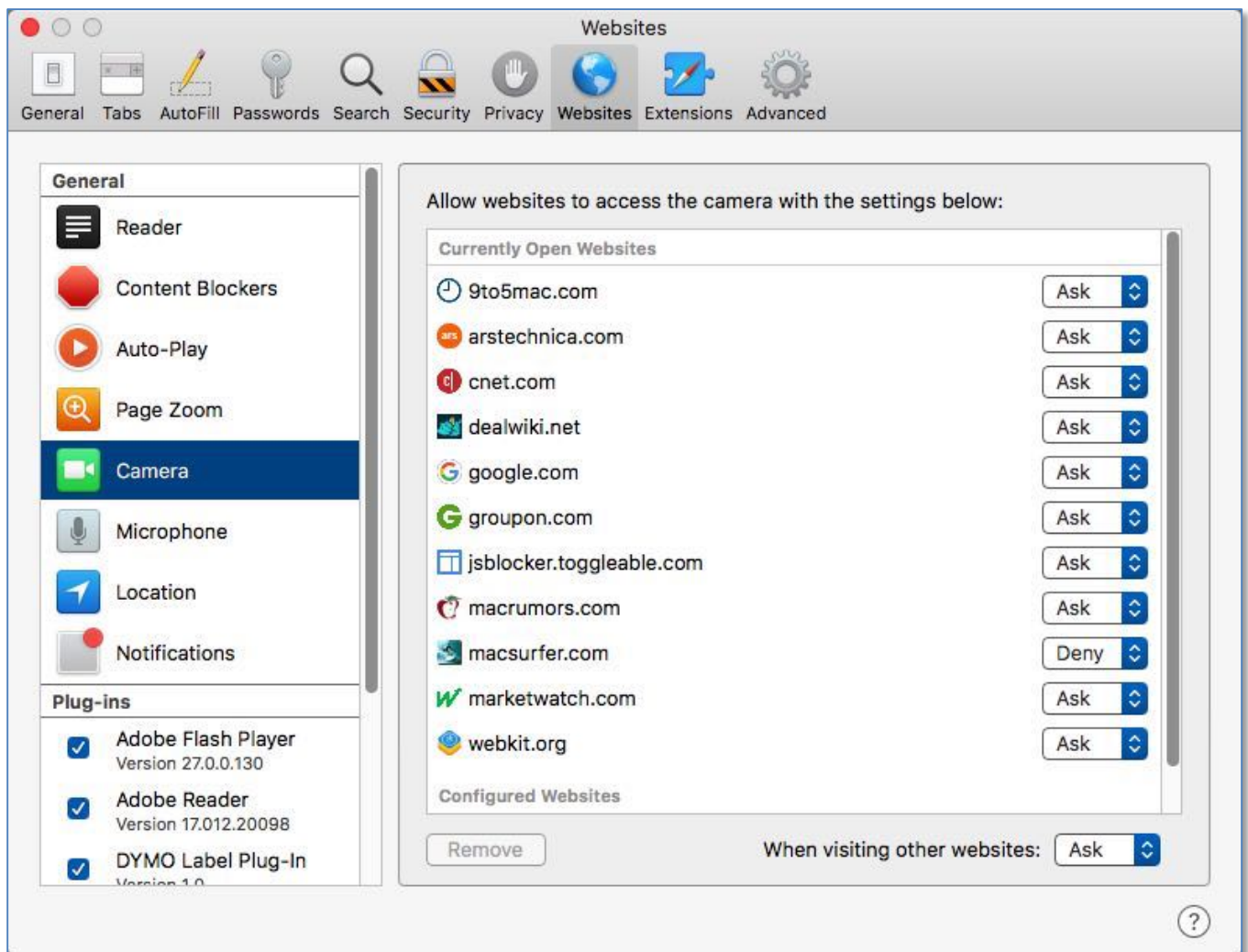
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The default setting ([When visiting other websites...](#)) is found just below the right pane and offers the same [Zoom](#) setting options.

Check the Setting. When you're on a website, you can check the [Page Zoom](#) preference setting via the [Website Preferences dropdown menu](#). (Refer to the first illustration on Page 5.)

Camera. You determine whether to allow a website to use the camera built into your Mac:



Camera Websites Preference

The Camera website preference has three settings:

- [Ask](#),
- [Deny](#), and
- [Allow](#)

The default setting ([When visiting other websites...](#)) is found just below the right pane and offers the same [Camera](#) setting options. Here you can choose among the [Ask](#), [Deny](#) and [Allow](#) settings.

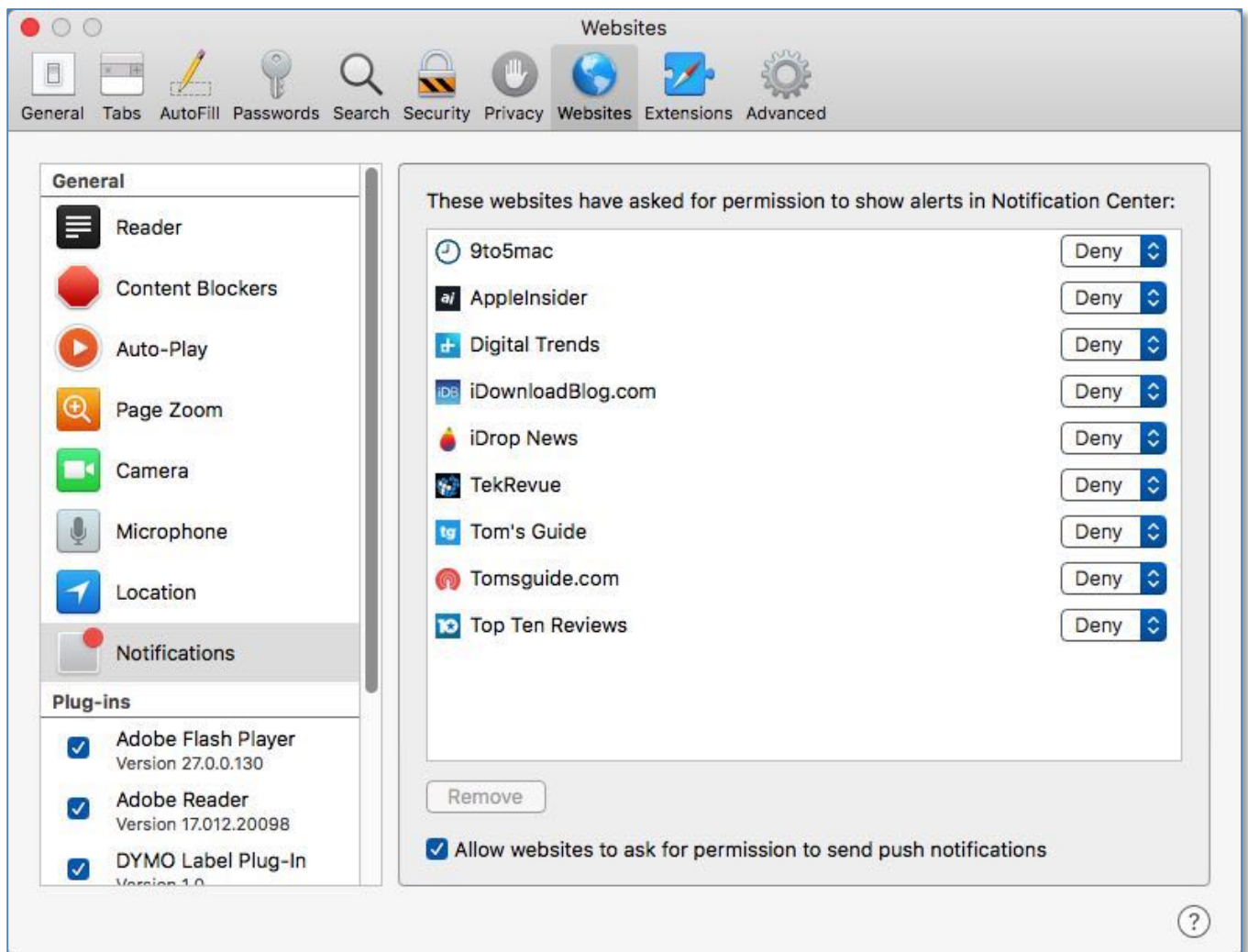
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Check the Setting. When you're on a website, you can check the [Camera](#) preference setting via the [Website Preferences dropdown menu](#). (Refer to the first illustration on Page 5.)

Microphone and Location. All the settings, including the default setting, for the [Microphone](#) and [Location](#) website preferences are the same as for the Camera. You can also check their settings when on a website in the same way as for the Camera.

Notifications. You determine whether to allow a website to send you Notifications:



Notifications Websites Preference

The [Notifications](#) website preference has just two settings:

- [Ask](#), and
- [Deny](#)

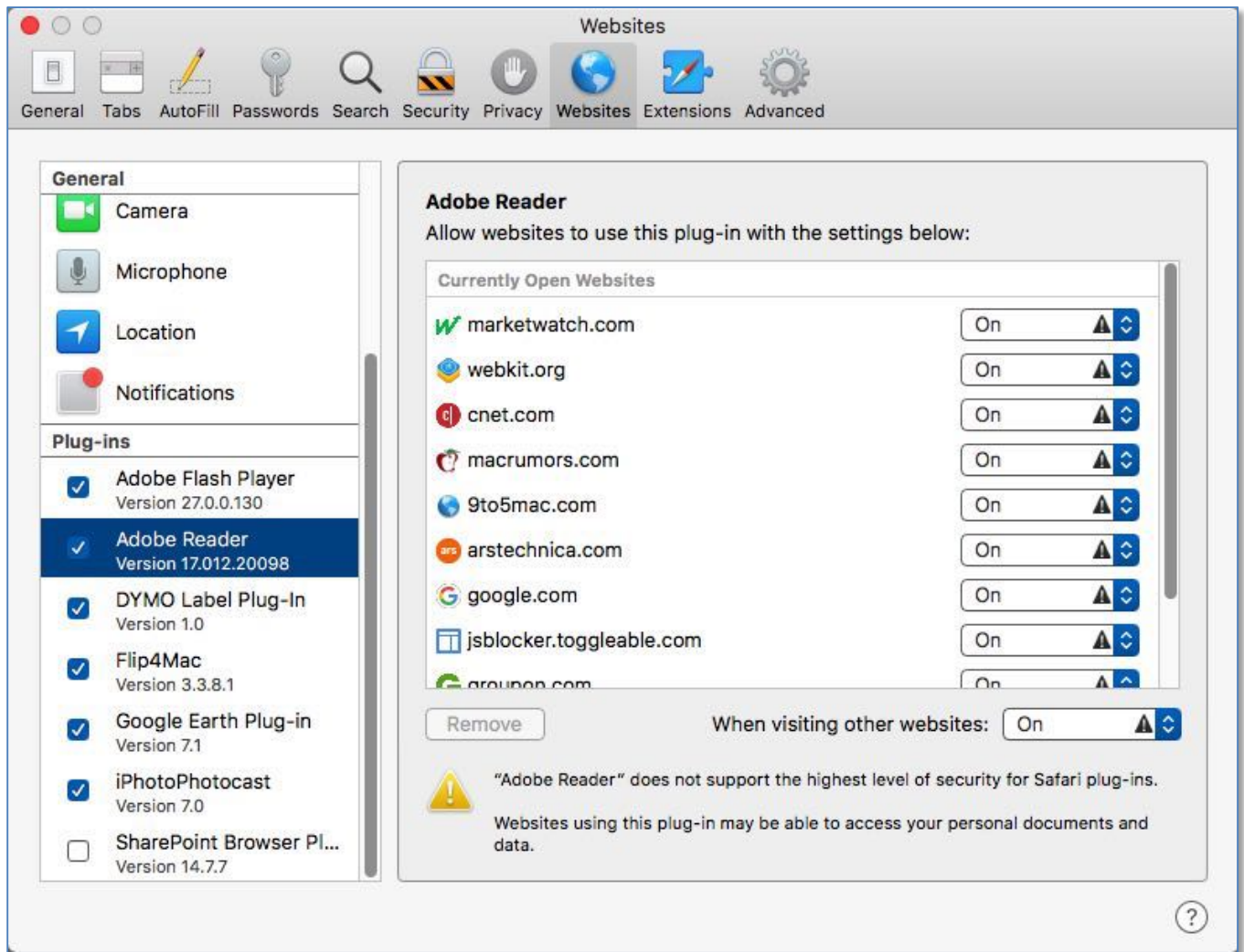
The default setting, found just below the right pane, is a checkbox ([Allow websites to ask for permission to send push notifications](#)).

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Check the Setting. When you're on a website, you can check the [Notifications](#) preference setting via the [Website Preferences dropdown menu](#). (Refer to the first illustration on Page 5.)

Plug-ins. This section in the Websites Preferences window (bottom left) is used to manage any Plug-ins that you add to Safari:



Plug-ins Websites Preference

There are a variety of plug-ins available for the Mac. The illustration above shows a number of them. Click the checkbox next to select each one to turn it on or off.

For each plug-in, the right pane will change to reveal three settings:

- [Ask](#),
- [Off](#), and
- [On](#)

The default setting ([When visiting other websites...](#)) is found just below the right pane and offers the same plug-ins setting options.

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In the illustration on the previous page, I selected the Adobe Reader plug-in (used as the default PDF viewer, replacing Apple's Preview). I selected it because of the warning triangle that's displayed: "Adobe Reader" does not support the highest level of security for Safari plug-ins. Websites using this plug-in may be able to access your personal documents and data. I checked to make sure that I'm running the latest version of Adobe Reader DC, so this warning came as a bit of a surprise. I prefer Adobe Reader because of the way it displays PDFs. Even though I've never noticed a problem, this warning may cause me to change my thinking about continuing to use it.

Check the Setting. When you're on a website, you can check the [Camera](#) preference setting via the [Website Preferences dropdown menu](#). (Refer to the first illustration on Page 5.)

Intelligent Tracking Prevention (credit: <https://www.macrumors.com/>, <https://webkit.org/>, and <https://9to5mac.com/>)

In the opening Privacy preference (Website Tracking) discussion, I noted that websites can track you. As the WebKit website notes: "Websites can fetch resources such as images and scripts from domains other than their own. This is referred to as cross-origin or cross-site loading, and is a powerful feature of the web. However, such loading also enables cross-site tracking of users."

The WebKit website adds these comments: "The success of the web as a platform relies on user trust. Many users feel that trust is broken when they are being tracked and privacy-sensitive data about their web activity is acquired for purposes that they never agreed to."

The article on the macrumor.com website explains: "Another new feature Apple has added in the latest Safari is Intelligent Tracking Prevention (ITP). Apple's own testing has found that popular websites can harbor more than 70 cross-site tracking and third-party cookie trackers that all silently collect data on users while making the browsing experience increasingly sluggish.

"To solve this, ITP uses local machine learning to identify cookie types and partition them or purge the cross-site scripting data of suspect ad trackers, without affecting the functioning of helpful cookies like those containing localized data or login details, for example. The feature should increase user privacy as well as boost overall browsing speed. You don't need to do anything to enjoy the benefits of ITP – it's on by default."

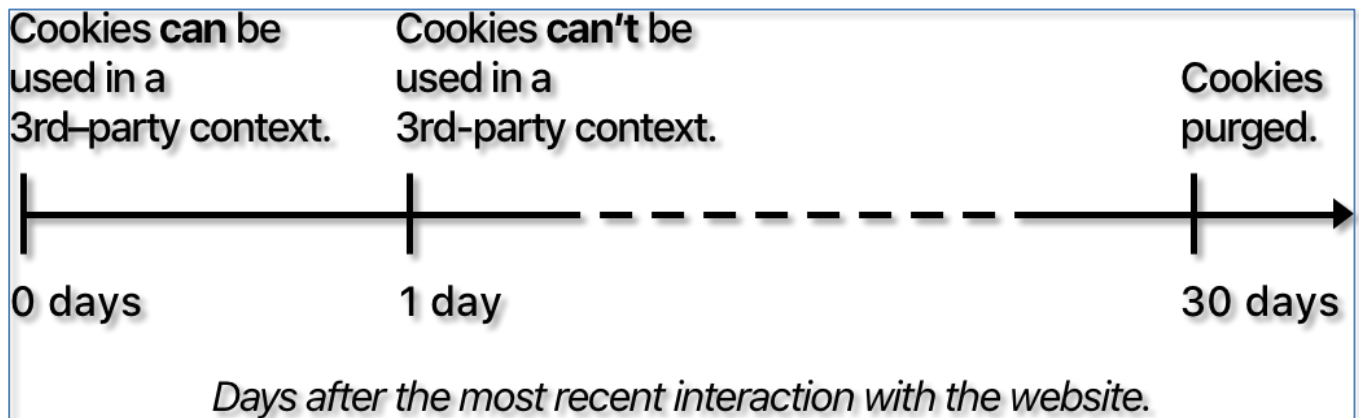
The 9to5mac.com website has an article with a somewhat contrarian view of this new feature. Quoting Apple, "If the user has not interacted with example.com in the last 30 days, example.com website data and cookies are immediately purged and continue to be purged if new data is added.

However, if the user interacts with example.com as the top domain, often referred to as a first-party domain, Intelligent Tracking Prevention considers it a signal that the user is interested in the website and temporarily adjusts its behavior as depicted in this timeline."

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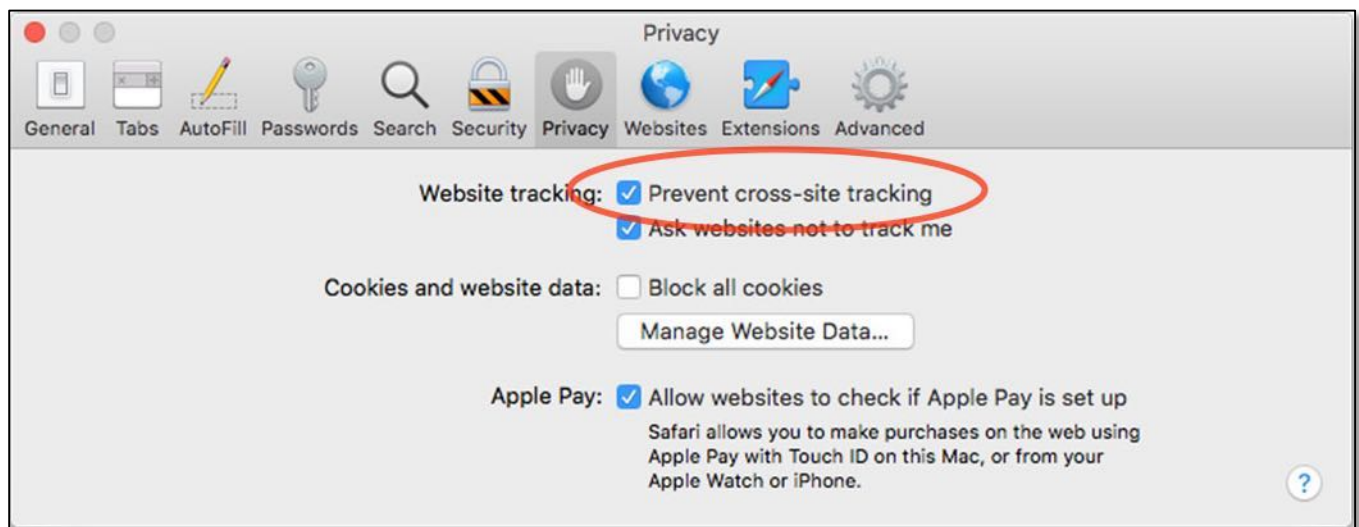
Here's the timeline:



"What that effectively means for businesses is that, in many cases, if you visit a website more than a day after you saw an ad, the company will have no idea that its advertising brought you there. Advertisers are upset about that, and have written an open letter to Apple asking the company to rethink [its position].

"What ITP means for consumers is that Safari will effectively forget which sites you've visited after a day. Net result: you'll see fewer targeted ads, and more generic ones."

To invoke the feature to help prevent websites from tracking you, click the [Website tracking](#) checkbox:



Website Tracking Preference

Some will take the view that this move to prevent cross-site tracking by websites is a good thing. However, tracking cookies supposedly contain no personal identification, so maybe there's no harm in all this tracking—unless perhaps it results in another webpage being loaded with time- and data-consuming ads. On the other hand, most websites are free, and they need to pay their bills. What happens to them when ad revenue drops? It will be interesting to see where all this goes. More pay-to-view websites, perhaps?

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Next Presentation

For the next presentation, we'll take a look at another macOS feature.

If you have any suggestions for presentation topics, including macOS utilities, please contact me at slp4668@gmail.com.

–Steve Parker

Credits:

- Safari 11 Help
- macOS 10.13 High Sierra: The Ars Technica review
<https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2017/09/macOS-10-13-high-sierra-the-ars-technica-review/5/>
- macOS High Sierra: Block Ads and Set Zoom Levels With Website Settings in Safari
<https://www.tekrevue.com/tip/settings-for-this-website-safari-high-sierra/>
- Intelligent Tracking Prevention
<https://webkit.org/blog/7675/intelligent-tracking-prevention/>