Using the Web Developer Extension for Firefox

The Web Developer extension for Firefox adds a multitude of useful Web developer tools to the browser. You access the tools via a toolbar that is added to your browser once you install the extension (see Figure 5-14). The extension is available for all platforms for which Firefox is currently available, meaning it includes Windows, OS X, and Linux. The Web Developer extension for Firefox is available at chrispederick.com/work/firefox/webdeveloper/.

The Web Developer extension provides more than 80 individual tools that do everything from converting GET requests to POST requests (and vice versa) to allowing live editing of a page's CSS rules. Too many tools exist to list them individually, but the following are the general tool categories:

- The Disable menu provides the ability to disable browser functionality such as JavaScript, CSS, cookies, and animated images.
- The CSS menu contains tools related to CSS rules and style sheets.
- You can use the Forms menu to convert GET requests to POST requests (and vice versa), automatically populate form values, and remove maximum lengths from input elements.
- You can outline and hide images using functionality located in the Images menu.
- You can inspect various information relating to the page such as cookie information, link information, and response headers from the Information menu.
- The Miscellaneous menu provides tools for clearing the browser's cache, history, and session cookies, as well as zooming in or out on the page.
- You can outline tables, table cells, frames, block-level elements, and more using the Outline menu.
- The Resize menu displays the current window size in the title bar along with other tools for resizing the current window.
- You can find quick links to third-party sites for validating CSS, HTML, and download speed under the Tools menu.
- The View Source button provides easy access to viewing the page's source.
- The Options menu provides custom editing of the Web Developer extension's colors, shortcut keys, and behavior.

Some Web developers have described the tools and functionality provided by the Web Developer extension as “indispensable,” “the best,” and “essential.” Install it to experiment with its various tools and determine whether it aids your development and debugging process.