

Why Flash Might Not Be Good For Your Website

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These days, it seems like every website has some flash, with many websites made entirely of it. One reason why you might be interested in using flash is because it offers a greater degree of interactivity — and at a lower price — than is possible using other methods. Additionally, flash has the advantage of protecting source code, making it virtually impossible for someone to copy code from your website and replicate its functionality on another site. However, flash does have its limitations.

Below, we address some key issues that may arise by using flash in your website.

Search Engine Optimization

If your website will rely on search engines for the bulk of its traffic, an all-flash website is not for you.

One major drawback is that content embedded in flash files cannot be indexed by most search engines. Of course, Google, as well as a few other big search engines, are capable of indexing text and links included in flash files, but all content cannot be retrieved.

User-Friendliness

Sometimes a flash website can improve the user experience. However, it may not be user-friendly for all visitors. Consider the following bullets:

- Visitors may have to install flash software in their browsers to view your website.
- Your website will not be as accessible as its HTML equivalent. This means that visitors using PDA's and smart phones might not be able to view the site. Even worse, if the font size cannot be altered, users with poor vision may not be able to read your content.

Load Time

Flash files can be very large. And depending on internet connection speed, a flash website may take a long time to load. This might have an adverse effect on how many visitors return to your website. If your flash website is large, be sure that it has a preloader, to give users some feedback as they wait.

Maintenance

Another important consideration is maintenance. Generally, Flash websites are more difficult to maintain than HTML websites. And even if your site can be maintained using external XML or text documents, you will probably not be able to update any elements of the design unless you are familiar with Flash. As a result, having a flash website might mean that your ongoing maintenance bills are high.

If you do opt for an all-flash website, be sure to optimize your pages as much as possible. It is also a good idea to have an alternate version of your website in HTML. This will ensure that all users can view a version of your website, and will also enable search engines to index your website's content.

If you only want to have one version of your website, a good option to consider would be to embed flash files in HTML pages. This option will give you the best of two worlds: you will have the interactivity of flash, and the search-engine-friendliness of HTML.