

Why Flash is a bad idea

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Flash is ment to provide multimedia support for websites, which, is good usage on only a limited number of sites. The problem therefore isn't flash itself, but the use of flash in the wrong context
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Websites should restrain from using Flash, especially informative ones. And not only becuase it is horribly bloated, tend to hog system resources, waste bandwidth, work around popup blockers, and is generally annoying.

Flash break the fundamental user model; by which I mean it break proper use of the browsers back and forward buttons, and the possibility of directly linking, or printing a spesific page. This is of course very annoying if you're looking for a spesific bit of information and want to have a link to it for further reference.

As for the site owner's reasons to not use flash; search engine crawlers are unable to read its content, hence your chance of showing up on search engines such as google will decline drastically, as it won't get an index of the content.

But back to the user's perspective, as that is what this rant is all about in the first place. The browser's search button won't work either, nor will the automatic font-size specified in the browser settings.

And then come the matter of visually impaired users. Browse your website in a text-based browser such as "lynx" and you'll see the same as an aural browser will most likely see, and try to read to a visitor, and you soon see why flash should be avoided.

So to conclude, for an informative site, go for good valid (X)HTML and focus on the content and the functionality.

More information:

- <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20001029.html>
- <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/flash/>

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