

IS A FLASH SITE REALLY THAT FLASH?

INTRODUCTION

Macromedia has done a great job promoting Flash as a rich and engaging content delivery tool and there are a lot of very clever Flash developers who have created some very attractive and interesting presentations. The fact remains that search engines don't like them and almost all can't access the content within them.

CONTENT COUNTS

It's your content that helps you get better search engine placement, but sites created in Flash usually have very little "indexable" content (text) in them. Most Search engines cannot access the words within Flash and those that can are not provided with the information they require to rank the content properly. For example there are no Title tags, Alt tags or Body Text tags.

Google can follow links within a Flash site but it cannot index or rank the content.

Most search engines cannot index any part of a Flash website.

WHAT IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A FLASH WEBSITE?

If you want to be listed in the search engines you have only one choice. Build a html site. Offer your visitors the choice of visiting your flash website, but submit the html version of your website to search engines.

INCORPORATING FLASH ELEMENTS INTO YOUR HTML WEBSITE

Flash and other multi-media technology such as Windows Media, RealMedia, MP3, and Quicktime provide a sensory rich presentation of information and it can really assist users to absorb and remember your message. To get the best of both worlds use it **within** your html website.

Include the text, or a description of the content of the presentation on the HTML page that contains the multi-media file. Ensure that this page is itself "spiderable", i.e. it is not in an unlinked frame. See [About Frames](#).

ALTERNATIVES

Windows media, Real media MP3 and Quicktime all provide for the inclusion of a title, copyright stream, author, description, and keywords and can therefore be indexed by many more search engines. If you choose one of these technologies ensure that your developer uses these fields and you will stand a much better chance of having your presentation indexed by search engines.

CONCLUSION

If being found in a search engine is important to your marketing strategy resist the temptation to have your website built in Flash. Flash components can be worthwhile and add value for your users, but a whole website built in Flash won't add much value to your business if its invisible to search engines.