

Best Practices: Flash detection and embedding with SWFObject

About Me

- Senior Software Developer @ Schematic(.com)
- Doing web stuff for about 10 years
- Started learning Flash at v.4, made deconcept.com as an experimental playground of sorts in 1999
- Teach Flash & XHTML/CSS at The Cooper Union
- Wrote a couple of Flash book chapters, Tech editor for Flash to the Core by Josh Davis

Some work

- Vongo
- Game Invasion (Comcast)
- GameTap MCE
- XM Radio Online Player
- Snapple.com
- Cosmogirl.com

What is SWFObject?

- A Javascript file that detects the Flash plugin and inserts Flash content into HTML (and XHTML)
- Allows your pages to validate
- Allows use of Flash Player's Express Install feature
- Takes care of Eolas issue
- Very search engine friendly (if done right)
- <http://blog.deconcept.com/swfobject/>

How it works

```
<script type="text/javascript" src="swfobject.js"></script>
```

```
<div id="flashcontent">
```

This text is replaced by the Flash movie.

```
</div>
```

```
<script type="text/javascript">
```

```
var so = new SWFObject("movie.swf", "mymovie", "200", "100", "8",  
    "#336699");
```

```
so.write("flashcontent");
```

```
</script>
```

How it works

- Progressive enhancement
 - If no Flash Player (or not high enough version) users get alternate content
 - If Flash Player is installed, they see Flash content and never know the detection happened
 - No JS? They get alternate content

Express Install

- Express Install allows your users to update their Flash Player without leaving your website

Why use SWFObject?

- Great for valid HTML and XHTML documents
- Express Install is awesome
- Better accessibility than Flash Satay
- Lets you blend Flash + HTML seamlessly
- Better SEO for your content

Why use SWFObject?

- Cool utilities like `getQueryParamValue()`
- Fixes streaming media bug in IE (although this is caused by using Javascript in the first place...)
- Fixes 'out of memory' bug in Flash Player 9
- Everyone else is: Adobe, YouTube, The Library of Congress, Amazon, Skype, every Schematic project

Why it's better

- Vs. Flash Satay 'object tag only'
 - Better accessibility: http://weblogs.macromedia.com/accessibility/archives/2005/08/in_search_of_a.cfm
 - <http://blog.deconcept.com/2006/08/16/embedding-flash-content-using-web-standards-yes-again/>

Why it's better

- Vs. Small Flash movie + redirect
 - Horrible SEO with this method (try searching for “detecting flash” and look at all the wasted landing pages
 - No detection on deep links
 - Pages don't validate, etc. etc.

Why it's better

- Vs. the 'generic' Eolas fix
 - Often no plugin detection
 - Most are poorly written and don't grab param tags

The future of Flash

- Hybrid websites are great: Use Flash for the fancy Video + Audio, and use HTML/Javascript/CSS for the rest
- SEO and deep links are increasingly important: Use SWFObject to create HTML sites 'under' your Flash movies

Questions?

- This is where you ask questions
- Don't be shy
- Nobody will think you're stupid
- Go ahead, ask!

The End

- <http://blog.deconcept.com>
 - <http://blog.deconcept.com/swfobject/>
 - geoff@deconcept.com
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- P.S. Schematic is hiring Flash programmers (*AS2 and AS3*), ask me about it