

Please, No more Flash!

This week I received a new client interested in a search engine optimization service. Since he already had his website developed, we visited it to check it out. What a disappointment! His whole web site was created with Macromedia Flash.

Yes, the site is pretty and has enough sound-effects to rival a town fair (fireworks included); however, it's completely useless to submit it to search engines, and to anything else, for that matter.

Don't take me wrong, I like a good flash animation as much as the next guy and I've seen fabulous work in videogames and business presentations with this tool. The problem is that it is misused, overriding the most basic elements that are required when developing a website. What is supposed to be a good auxiliary tool becomes the principal feature of the site. From my point of view, designers who use only flash for a web site don't know what they're doing.

Why am I so negative about this? Let me explain:

1. It is expensive. Generally, flash design requires more time from the designer, which translates in more cost to the client. If you choose to use flash for your site, prepare to pay more for the same. Also, this time will affect the release of your project
2. Difficult modifications. Since a flash site needs more attention to detail, each modification made by the designer will have to be reviewed carefully to avoid any mistakes. Of course, this is more time, and more money for you.
3. It can't be indexed. Search engines can't read flash code, so all your precious work (and fireworks) will go to waste. Optimization for a flash website is almost nil/
4. Load time. There is nothing more annoying than waiting for a flash site to load. Think of your clients trying to check your products and services while looking at "loading... please wait", and how many of them will simply close their browsers and go to your competitor's website.
5. Expensive maintenance. Do you want to change a phone number? Need to place a new product or change a price? Be ready to pay a king's ransom. Again, it will take days to make what would take mere hours with HTML, and it will cost you triple that.
6. The code gets lost. Sounds stupid and it is. The most common problem with flash websites is when the code gets lost, either because nobody can find it, the designer no longer works at the company you hired, or the files are simply corrupted and no longer useful. If you had made your site with HTML, you would only need to copy all existing information and make a new page, for less money and in less time.

Do you think your site doesn't have these problems because you only use a flash screen (one of those obnoxious short presentations that run when entering a website) and everything else is in HTML? Let me tell you that your flash presentation bores visitors after the first viewing, and I would rather use other sites that won't make me waste my time.

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About the Author

Founder and actual CEO, Ricardo d'Argence has been in the field for more than ten years. Alojate.com is now one of the biggest web hosting providers in Mexico. <http://www.alojate.com>