

Steve Jobs attacks Adobe Flash as unfit for iPhone (Update)

April 29 2010



In this file photo taken, Sept. 9, 2009, Apple CEO Steve Jobs gestures during an Apple event in San Francisco. Jobs, in a statement Thursday, April 29, 2010, said the Adobe Flash technology has too many bugs, drains batteries too quickly and is too oriented to personal computers to work on the iPhone and iPad.(AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File)

(AP) -- For iPhone users who've been wondering whether their devices will support Flash technology for Web video and games anytime soon, the answer is finally here, straight from Steve Jobs: No.

In a detailed offensive against the technology owned by Adobe Systems Inc., Apple's CEO wrote Thursday that Flash has too many bugs, drains batteries too quickly and is too oriented to personal computers to work

on the iPhone and iPad.

This is not the first time Jobs has publicly criticized Flash, but the statement was his clearest, most definitive - and longest - on the subject.

In his 1,685-word "Thoughts on Flash," Jobs laid out his reasons for excluding Flash - the most widely used vehicle for videos and games on the Internet - from Apple's blockbuster handheld devices.

He cited "reliability, security and performance," and the fact that Flash was designed "for PCs using mice, not for touch screens using fingers" as some of the reasons Apple will continue to keep the program off its devices.

But he said the most important reason is Flash puts a third party between Apple and software developers. In other words, developers can take advantage of improvements from Apple only if Adobe upgrades its own software, Jobs wrote.

Adobe representatives did not have an immediate comment Thursday. But in a March 23 conference call, President and CEO Shantanu Narayen said his company is "committed to bringing Flash to any platform on which there is a screen."

That certainly includes Apple's devices, and Narayen said at the time the Flash ban "has nothing to do with technology."

"It's an Apple issue and I think you'll have to check with them on that," he said.

Adobe has owned Flash since buying its creator, Macromedia Inc., in 2005. Flash is one of the slew of software tools Adobe sells to professional designers and Web developers as part of its Creative Suite

software package, which also includes Photoshop, Illustrator and other programs, and brings in more than half of Adobe's revenue. Adobe benefits from Flash's wide use because it means Web developers will keep buying the tools they need to create Flash content.

Apple has been criticized for the omission of Flash because that limits what the iPhone can do. Hulu.com, the popular video viewing site, uses Flash, for example, as do many restaurant websites. But thanks to the immense popularity of the iPhone, game and application developers are pouring their creations onto Apple's devices without using Flash.

In his rebuttal, Jobs said that with an abundance of media outlets offering their content on iPhones and iPads, "Flash is no longer necessary to watch video or consume any kind of Web content."

"And the 200,000 apps on Apple's App Store proves that Flash isn't necessary for tens of thousands of developers to create graphically rich applications, including games," he wrote.

For consumers, Apple's move means they will have to decide whether or not they want Flash content, and if they do, they'll have to use devices other than Apple's.

"It doesn't mean this is the end of Flash," said Sheri McLeish, an analyst with Forrester Research. "Apple is not the only game in town, and PC and Windows devices continue to dominate the market."

She called Apple's move a business decision, even though Jobs stressed it is based on technology: It is, after all, up to Apple to control how users experience its products.

"They have the momentum to do it today," McLeish said. "A few years ago they wouldn't have been able to."

Although many websites use Flash to display videos, animation and Internet ads, this may change in the years to come. HTML5, a new Web standard - that is, a way to create Web pages - will have built-in support for video and audio files.

But it could take as long as 10 years for HTML5 to be fully adopted, McLeish said. What Apple is banking on is that HTML5 will eventually win out, making Flash obsolete.

"Perhaps Adobe should focus more on creating great HTML5 tools for the future, and less on criticizing Apple for leaving the past behind," Jobs wrote.

Shares of San Jose, Calif.-based Adobe dropped 82 cents, or 2.3 percent, to \$34.65 in midday trading. They have traded between \$24.78 and \$38.20 in the past 52 weeks.

More information: Steve Jobs' post: <http://bit.ly/aiaaNg>

©2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Steve Jobs attacks Adobe Flash as unfit for iPhone (Update) (2010, April 29) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-04-steve-jobs-adobe-unfit-iphone.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.