

Mozilla's Shumway pushes Flash to off-ramp

June 7 2012, by Nancy Owano



(Phys.org) -- Mozilla's experimental project on GitHub, a hosting service for development projects, is taking on a happy buzz where developers look at a future that may not include Adobe Flash. The project, called Shumway, is designed to try to interpret SWF (Flash files) using browser-standard technologies such as HTML5 and JavaScript. Said one anonymous Slashdot writer—reflecting general developer response-- “All I can say is please and thank you!” The Shumway project replaces Flash player with a virtual machine. Those familiar with Shumway say that it is an open way to translate Flash content.

Shumway is variously described as a Flash virtual machine and runtime written in JavaScript. Shumway is also described as “an HTML5 technology experiment” that explores building an efficient renderer for the SWF file format without native code assistance. (The term SWF, a

Flash file format, originally was used to abbreviate ShockWave Flash.)

Using JavaScript to create the Flash [virtual machine](#), it works in taking an SWF file and running it in a HTML5-compliant browser in a way that you no longer need the plug-in, and Flash developers continue to have their content run. The hope is that it will work well enough to enable a smooth transition where Flash development stays alive for a few more years if Flash fades as a standard browser plug-in.

“Shumway is community-driven and supported by Mozilla,” says the project statement. “Integration with Firefox is a possibility if the experiment proves successful.”

If Shumway does become part of Firefox, Mozilla will enjoy Flash compatibility as standard without having to collaborate with Adobe. Shumway is described as a “clean” solution in that it sidesteps any security issues in the [Flash player](#); there is no Adobe code being run in order to render the content.

Developers have had to put up with a series of reports and fixes of vulnerability exploits stemming from outdated versions of [Adobe Flash Player](#). Flash is nonetheless pervasive; most online video content uses Flash, which continues to be a key part of browsing; the Web browser plug-in is still popular and is with all the grousing a principal addition for desktop browsing. As one tech site put it, a browser without Flash support in [2012](#) is a crippled browser.

Microsoft has announced an “embedded”, not a plug-in, technically, of Adobe Flash Player in the Metro version of IE10 in Windows 8 and Windows RT. According to reports, BlackBerry 10 will support Flash.

[Other](#) applications translate [Flash](#) for the iPad and other devices, but they don't always work dependably, says one observer exploring the new

Mozilla project. If Shumway, still a work in progress, does prove to be a dependable way to translate SWF-based content on the fly, says the blogger, then it will be to Mozilla's great credit.

More information: github.com/mozilla/shumway

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