

# Flash vs. Silverlight

Asked 16 years, 3 months ago   Modified 15 years, 4 months ago

Viewed 3k times



4



We are building a training website where we need to track viewers watching videos and store detailed info about the viewing (when they paused, if they watched the whole video etc)



What should we consider when deciding between the two technologies?



I forgot to add. This is for an in house app. We have complete control over the environment. If it this was for a public application I would definitely go with Flash.

I'm just looking for technical advantages of one over the other from someone who has used both.

flash

silverlight

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edited Sep 19, 2008 at 18:39

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asked Sep 19, 2008 at 18:21



ctrlShiftBryan

27.7k ● 26 ● 75 ● 78

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What server side technology are you planning to use to record the RIA interactions? – [BigBlondeViking](#) Aug 4, 2009 at 14:56

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17 Answers

Sorted by:

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10

I'll chime in because it seems people missed the point of the question: What are the technical advantages of Flash vs Silverlight? (as it pertains to an *in-house* app)



### Flash Pros



- The "artistic" interface is much better, in my opinion. If you have artists and designers that are used to using Illustrator or Photoshop, this is pretty straight forward.
- The way their environment integrates frame-based movie timelines is pretty slick and has been for years. It makes it very easy to integrate and layer many different animated elements and sounds into your movie or animation.
- All coding is done in the JavaScript-esque language ActionScript, so the learning curve for the syntax at least is pretty low for non-microsoft developers.
- Online support. There are years and years worth of posts that can help you figure out what you need to do to get what you want in Flash.

### Silverlight Pros

- It uses .Net as a back end. If you have a lot of .Net developers, you'll be able to leverage the .Net framework which is a much more powerful set of tools, programmatically speaking.
- Easier to debug. In my experience it's easier to debug than Actionscript, largely due to the superior IDE.
- Bringing me to the IDE. The *coding* IDE is vastly superior to Flash's clunky, cobbled together, fancified textpad. It has intellisense, auto-complete, etc.

## Flash Cons

- In my extensive Flash experience, If you're making a highly interactive app, it can be buggy as all get out. Some of the bugs bordering on nonsense, the work arounds being hackish at best.
- The IDE sucks. Period. It's notepad with some poorly implemented intellisense-esque keyword identification.
- The language falls on it's face at times. I've seen instances where all of a sudden a var got all type-sensitive on me, where it wasn't just two stanzas prior. My fault? Maybe. Probably. But nonetheless I've seen some weird behavior from ActionScript, whereas C# has always done what I've told it to.
- No real standard way of doing things. No "best-practice put your code here" way to do things. Flash lets you put code on *anything*. A frame, a MovieClip,

an object, an array... sure whatever, just pop some functions on some stuff and party! This makes finding bugs in someone else's app a real chore.

## Silverlight Cons

- Not a lot of documentation yet, in my opinion.
- Substandard "artist" interface by comparison. If you're going for a certain look, it may be harder for your designer to achieve.
- If you're not used to XAML, layouts can be a real pain in the butt. If you've never used XAML, and you've got a sort timeline to get this thing done, you best be prepared to put in some extra time, or be okay with a less than stellar look and feel. It's not quite as easy to get the look that you want with XAML as it is in Flash.

Again, all of this is in my own *opinion* and from my *experiences*. Other people may have different opinions.

If you have a few designers and some Flash experience, go with flash. If you want to learn something new, pad your resume, and you've got nothing but .Net experience, go with Silverlight.

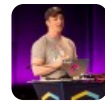
In the end, do whatever it is that makes you like coming to work. (as long as it meets your deadlines. lol)

Oh, and I should note, I wasn't talking about FLEX here, but Flash.

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answered Aug 4, 2009 at 15:04

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**Ben Lesh**

108k ● 47 ● 248 ● 233



8



having had to make the call between silverlight and flash recently for a very intense interactive component, i had to go with flash. and for one reason: online support. If i have a problem building something in flash, chances are pretty good that I'll find help somewhere online from someone thats overcome the same issue. And with Silverlight being new and still fresh from beta iterations, finding that same volume of help is unlikely (at least right now.) In the end, my Flash app was pretty complicated and I still had quite a few issues that I was unable to find help for and just had to dig through api's and try a few things out. Had I gone with Silverlight instead, I would have been desperately idle. dont get me wrong, i'm dying to jump into silverlight and I'd love to convert my flash app to SL someday. I just need the online community/forum presence to grow. And it will. I'm excited to see where Silverlight will go.

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answered Sep 19, 2008 at 18:28

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**DanWoolston**

283 ● 2 ● 7

1 This doesn't really outline the technical advantages the asker was asking about. – [Ben Lesh](#) Aug 4, 2009 at 14:40

1 The OP asks "What should we consider" that includes, quality of tools, availability of staff and info as well as the

quality of the format itself. – [Martin Beckett](#) Aug 4, 2009 at 14:44

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6

What do your developers know? If they already know ActionScript then use Flash, if they know C#, VB.NET, JavaScript, Ruby, or Python then use Silverlight.



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answered Sep 19, 2008 at 23:02

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[TheTodd](#)

445 ● 4 ● 12



5



If you are looking for maintainability, its silverlight, their programming api, is way cleaner.

But, its not only not installed everywhere, its not supported by every browser or client OS.

If you can, do it in both, but if you can't, do it in flash , and port it when you get a chance after the install base is larger, since silverlight is easier engineering wise.

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answered Sep 19, 2008 at 18:32



DevelopingChris

40.7k ● 30 ● 89 ● 119

- 
- 1 I think since ActionScript 3 improved the language so much, this is actually a misconception. AS3 is very internally consistent, even if it does miss some of the more advanced language features of C#. – [Iain](#) Sep 21, 2008 at 22:00
- 



3



I'd personally use Flash due to installed base. The way I see it, if YouTube and Google Video are using Flash than just about every computer on earth has it so it wins hands down.

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answered Sep 19, 2008 at 18:26



user19087

780 ● 5 ● 6

- 
- 1 He specifically stated that they have full control of the environment, hence this answer is irrelevant. On a public site,

the matter is somewhat different but as that's not the case here. – [Ola Karlsson](#) Sep 22, 2008 at 1:20

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- 1 Not the answer you are looking for. Does not answer Techincal limitations or benifits. Question is for in house application so install base does not matter. Also if nokia does well with it's silverlight support, the install base will jump by a few million. – [Brian Leahy](#) Sep 23, 2008 at 21:10
- 

- 1 Netflix is quite big and uses silverlight for its streaming service. – [Raúl Roa](#) Oct 13, 2009 at 18:57
- 



I have yet to find a silverlight video that works properly in firefox. As far as I know there is also no linux viewer.

3



Also there are more users out there that have flash already installed so not having to install another app to watch a video will have more people watch the video



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answered Sep 19, 2008 at 18:26

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[Tanj](#)

1,354 ● 2 ● 16 ● 25

- 1 Silverlight is now supported by linux via the moonlight project with novell! – [Goober](#) Oct 3, 2009 at 14:31
- 



i found this [blog](#) (not mine!) very interesting on the subject. personally i would adopt a solution based on needs, if i was building say a internal app for a company on a windows network, then silverlight seems great.

3







Otherwise, it seems you leave out the entire rest of the world by going with silverlight on a public site.

I'm all for competition and both are still proprietary products. Although the flex3 compiler and framework have been released open source the actual flash player is still proprietary. That said almost every computer online has some form of the flash player, though it might not be the needed version 9 for flex apps, it can easily be upgraded through a simple click in the browser.

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answered Sep 19, 2008 at 18:36

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**ethyreal**

3,669 ● 2 ● 23 ● 25



2



If you need stats to support a decision for Flash, you can grab it's install stats here:

[http://www.adobe.com/products/player\\_census/flashplayer/version\\_penetration.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/player_census/flashplayer/version_penetration.html)

About 97% install rate. That's pretty sweet.



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answered Sep 19, 2008 at 18:28

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**Brent**

23.7k ● 10 ● 47 ● 49

you should ask how many people have silverlight installed, bet they tell you something very positive. – [DevelopingChris](#)  
Sep 19, 2008 at 18:33

I thought adobe's study was done by a respectable independent third party? Anyway their statistics pretty closely

match the statistics of our website visitors, so I have no reason to doubt them. – [davr](#) Sep 19, 2008 at 18:34

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It matches on the sites I control, which is about 12 million unique visitors all told. That's a pretty decent sample set that corroborates it. – [Brent](#) Sep 19, 2008 at 21:56

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2



It does matter how many concurrent queries you're awaiting. This was also the decision-base for the Olympics-Website, because a lot more server-ressources are needed to deliver videos via flash instead of silverlight. So silverlight might be cost-saving.



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answered Sep 19, 2008 at 18:51



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[Anheledir](#)

4,377 ● 7 ● 34 ● 34

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Microsoft paid for the Olympics website as a promotion for Silverlight, it has nothing to do with server technologies - think YouTube, BBC iPlayer etc, etc – [Iain](#) Sep 21, 2008 at 22:02

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1 “with Windows Media Services we need 40 servers to serve 100.000 concurrent users. With Flash Streaming we should need 270 servers for the same amount.”, said Roeland Stekelenburg, Head of New Media , NOS – [Anheledir](#) Sep 22, 2008 at 8:40

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Unless he works for the largest company in the world, I don't think this will matter for his inhouse app. You know, if you read the question.... – [Ben Lesh](#) Aug 4, 2009 at 19:24

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Pls find some additional info here:



## [Silverlight vs Flex](#)

2

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edited May 23, 2017 at 12:01

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1 ● 1

answered Sep 19, 2008 at 18:23



Gulzar Nazim

52.2k ● 26 ● 130 ● 170

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if the answer is sequitor, plagiarize it, the purpose of the site is not to have to click bunches of links to get answers

– [DevelopingChris](#) Sep 19, 2008 at 18:30

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well i just posted if they want to check up additional info..Why did you have to downvote me for that? – [Gulzar Nazim](#) Sep 19, 2008 at 18:31

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also most of the time, this can help in avoiding duplicates

– [Gulzar Nazim](#) Sep 19, 2008 at 18:33

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Gulzar is just trying to help the poster to get his question answered. Shame on you ChanChan. – [jinsungy](#) Sep 19, 2008 at 18:38

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Thanks jinsungy. I guess hard to understand what people are trying to do here. :) – [Gulzar Nazim](#) Sep 19, 2008 at 18:40

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2

Sounds like you have got complete control over the environment So it is better to choose Silverlight because of the ease of development and extensibility features of this new technology. It supports the best scripting language(C#, the most matured language ever). I bet the





investment you can make on this new technology wont depress you in the future.



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answered Sep 21, 2008 at 17:19

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Jobi Joy

50k ● 20 ● 110 ● 120



2

There is a valuable blog where the author compares Silverlight and Flash from a developer and end-user point of view.



Both Silverlight and Flash running the same use cases are shown, the code can be downloaded and the users can up/down about the best one.



I consider this site as a great Silverlight vs Flash resource.

<http://www.shinedraw.com/>

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edited Jun 20, 2020 at 9:12

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1 ● 1

answered Oct 10, 2008 at 5:59



Larry

18k ● 9 ● 80 ● 108



Silverlight is actually closing in in flash, and functionality flash just recently got is rapidly being implemented in

2

silverlight, but there's still a lot more users with flash than with silverlight, so you'll reach out to more with flash.



here's statistics of how many % of users have them installed.



<http://riastats.com/#>

as you can see, flash is far ahead

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answered Aug 4, 2009 at 14:12

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I've gotta say silverlight has a much better API and with the .NET it's got a huge benefit

2

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answered Aug 4, 2009 at 14:36

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Flash is more widely use but SilverLight got good press during the Olympic. Can't you have both to have the more user. Because if you stop just with SilverLight you might cut all user that doesn't bother to install the needed file.

1



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answered Sep 19, 2008 at 18:25

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[Patrick Desjardins](#)



141k ● 89 ● 294 ● 346



0

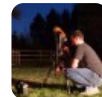
Both can fulfill all of your requirements, so go with the one with the higher install base - which is, hands down, Flash.



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answered Sep 19, 2008 at 18:27

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ceejayoz

180k ● 41 ● 308 ● 380



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If you have full control of environment, consider WPF/Web Browser Application. Compared to Silverlight, development is a bit easier and learning curve for typical .NET developers is practically flat.



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answered Aug 4, 2009 at 14:48

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ima

8,255 ● 3 ● 23 ● 19