

Should we support IE6 anymore?

[closed]

Asked 16 years, 4 months ago Modified 10 years, 5 months ago

Viewed 6k times



16



As it currently stands, this question is not a good fit for our Q&A format. We expect answers to be supported by facts, references, or expertise, but this question will likely solicit debate, arguments, polling, or extended discussion. If you feel that this question can be improved and possibly reopened, [visit the help center](#) for guidance.

Closed 13 years ago.

Are we supposed to find workarounds in our web applications so that they will work in every situation? Is it time to do away with IE6 programming?

internet-explorer

internet-explorer-6

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edited Jul 9, 2014 at 6:09



latonz

1,750 ● 10 ● 21

asked Aug 17, 2008 at 18:15



Niyaz

54.8k ● 56 ● 152 ● 183

-
- 1 You might want to consider that the only thing that will *actually* break is making it look nice and some JS stuff. I'd say just make sure any "mission critical" information gets delivered no matter what, but don't concern yourself with making it look nice in IE6. – [Alex S](#) Aug 10, 2009 at 7:40
-

The trouble is, management (or the people paying for the website) tend to obsess about how something looks, and demand the latest flashy stuff, even if their customers don't really care. See my comment about gmail below.

– [Chris Huang-Leaver](#) Aug 10, 2009 at 8:25

- 14 Can you afford to lose those visitors? then don't invest adapting to an older browser. Are they essential for your survival? then bite the bullet and accomodate their (admittedly obsolete) browser. – [Roadmaster](#) May 18, 2010 at 22:47
-

The hysterical part is that this was asked in 2008, and one place I worked still insisted we support it--in 2011.

– [Dave Newton](#) Nov 13, 2011 at 6:17

35 Answers

Sorted by:

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1

2

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20



It's all about putting in enough effort so that your site degrades *gracefully* as you go to older and older browsers (or for disabled users). Unfortunately, there are a lot of IE6 and IE7 users out there who more or less *can't* switch, so it seems unlikely that your site will force many to do so. If your site just looks bad, that's okay. If

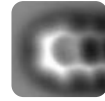


it's unusable, you have a real problem. In general, the more you adhere to current standards (instead of just chasing the latest browsers), the better you'll end up in old browsers without extra effort.

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answered May 18, 2010 at 22:47

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[Eric Mickelsen](#)

10.4k ● 2 ● 32 ● 41

6 +1 For "If your site just looks bad, that's okay. If it's unusable, you have a real problem"... – [Johan](#) May 19, 2010 at 5:12



15



This depends so much on the context of the application, and of its users. There are two key aspects: what browsers are your users using; and how important is it that they can access/interact with your site.



The first part is generally easily establish, **if** you have an existing version with stats (Google Analytics or similar is simple and great) or you have access to such data from a similar app / product.



The later is a little harder to decide. If you're developing a publically availalbe, ad-sponsored site for exmple, it's just a numbers game - work out how much of your audience you lose and factor what that's worth against the additional development time. If, however you're doing something specifically at the request of a group of users - like an enterprise web app for example - you may be stuck with what those users are browsing with.

In my experience those two things can change significantly for different apps. We've got web apps still (stats from last week) with close to 70% IE6 usage (20% IE7, the rest split between IE5.5 and FF2) and others with close to 0% IE6. For relatively obvious reasons, the latter are the kind of apps where losing a few users isn't so important.

Having said all that, we generally find it easy to support IE6 (and IE5.5 as others point out) simply because we've been doing so for a while. Yes, it's a pain and yes, it takes more time, but often not too much. There are very few situations where having to support IE6 drastically changes what kind of development you do - it just means a little more work. The other nice benefit of supporting it (and testing for it) is that you generally end up doing better all-round browser and quirks testing as a result of the polarity of IE6's behaviours.

You need to decide whether or not you're supposed to find workarounds, based on the requirements of your app/product. That's it's IE6 isn't really that relevant - this kind of problem happens all the time in other situations, it just so happens that IE6 is a great example of the costs and implications of mixed standards, versioning and legacy support.

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[edited Feb 1, 2013 at 7:35](#)



[xpda](#)

15.8k ● 8 ● 53 ● 83

[answered Aug 17, 2008 at 21:08](#)



Gareth Jenkins

2,616 ● 1 ● 20 ● 21



5



It depends on your audience, and whether the cost (development, maintenance, opportunity cost of developing to a 7 year old lowest common denominator) is worth it to gain those IE6 viewers.

Also worth asking - is the IE6 demographic likely to care about or use your site? I think a large amount of IE6 users don't care about new technology (duh) or are accessing the web from corporate networks which restrict browser installations. Maybe those viewers aren't worth the effort - only you can answer that.

I was happy to see that Apple's Mobile Me site won't support IE6.

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answered Aug 18, 2008 at 5:05

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Jon Galloway

53.1k ● 25 ● 127 ● 194



4



There's no hard and fast rule on this. Supporting IE6 and IE7 takes an investment of time and knowledge that you may not have available, but on the other hand, if you want your site to look as you intend, it's an investment that has to be made. So the question becomes: which is more important to you?

You say the "if I check the statistics of the pages, i noticed that almost half of the visitors uses this kind of browsers," which says to me that unless you're OK with half your visitors seeing something other than the design/layout you intended, you're going to need to make that investment or get the help of someone who can.

If that's not an option, you could try using some of the CSS "frameworks," like Blueprint or Grid960, and see if that's easier, but that will require a little bit of learning as well.

The other options are either going with a simpler design likely to work across browsers, removing the stylesheet for IE6/7 and letting viewers see the raw HTML document structure, or using table-based layouts if you know how to wield them (and contrary to what some people will tell you, there's nothing at all wrong with this route if it's the one that best fits the requirements of your project combined with the constraints on your abilities and resources).

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answered May 18, 2010 at 23:15

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Weston C

3,632 ● 2 ● 27 ● 33



3

I recommend people check their own user stats for their site before making this decision, but here's a common reference regarding popular browser versions :

http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_stats.asp



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answered Aug 17, 2008 at 18:25

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Matthew

1,155 ● 1 ● 9 ● 8



4 The stats from w3schools.com are hardly representative, unless you are maintaining a website with a primary audience of type "geek". In most "general audience" websites, IE seems to have a way larger market share than presented here. – [Jørn Schou-Rode](#) Aug 10, 2009 at 7:47



2

Depends on the situation. A site like this, where most people are techy I think it is safe to assume people have the latest browsers.



However if you are open to a wide public of possibly not-so techy people, you'll probably have IE6 hitting your site a lot.



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answered Aug 17, 2008 at 18:26

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user1144

2 No this isn't even true, a lot of people read this for/from work and are forced to use IE6 there still. – [jcoder](#) Aug 10, 2009 at 7:38



Someone [asked the same question](#) about a week ago and got some good answers. My personal favorite was [doekman's suggestion to try IE7-js](#).

2

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edited May 23, 2017 at 12:33

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Community Bot

1 • 1

answered Aug 17, 2008 at 18:35



Patrick McElhaney

59.1k • 41 • 137 • 169



2



Sadly, we still need to support IE6 in most cases as it still represents a significant portion of the internet surfing users. If you are in a corporate environment, this is even more true, as corporations have less incentive to upgrade stuff the works simply for some pie-in-the-sky "web standards."



If not, try to gmail approach and just toss up an error for IE6 viewers and/or display a disclaimer that if they upgrade, the site will work/look better.

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answered May 18, 2010 at 22:46

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Nate

30.6k • 24 • 119 • 187



1



Unfortunately not - I'd rate myself as a fairly techy person and at home I use Firefox 3 and IE7, but at work (a large American Pharma) I have to use IE6, and I don't think that's going change any time soon. The company has a significant investment in an internal line of web-based apps - the business case for testing and upgrading them





all against another browser (or even an upgrade) isn't compelling.

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answered Aug 17, 2008 at 20:49

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[Drew Gibson](#)

1,644 ● 3 ● 18 ● 22

My firm has warnings that the Intranet site is only compatible with Internet Explorer, but work fine, well no worse, in Firefox – [Chris Huang-Leaver](#) Aug 10, 2009 at 8:18

Yeah, the options at my place of work are IE6 or Firefox 2 :) – [Drew Gibson](#) Aug 11, 2009 at 6:27



1



Ask your customer this: are they willing to upgrade to Vista? If they say yes, then don't support IE6. Your target customers are the people who goes "whoa! vista. *drool*". They're also the kind of people who want the *fastest and most powerful computer*.



If your customer goes, "huh? what's vista? I want my screensaver of cats back please", then you need to support IE6.



In short: if they have Vista, then they don't have IE6. The irony is: for web developers to finally get rid of IE6 and its legacy, they have to promote Vista or hope that Vista will be successful.

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answered Aug 18, 2008 at 5:15

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[MrValdez](#)

8,613 ● 10 ● 57 ● 79



1



I'm a coder for a group that creates free templates for gaming clans. Our view is that we will drop IE6 support when IE8 is fully released. But at the end of the day, as many people have stated, it depends on your user audience. Our target audience is relatively wide (people download and use our templates in places where we can't predict) - however it is primarily gamers who are generally smart enough to keep their software up-to-date.

I find my natural coding style works in IE6 on my first try usually, and the bugs are easy enough to root out so maybe I don't find it as much a pain as other people do. Personally I'll drop support for IE6 when it reaches it's end of life or IE8's full release - whichever comes first.

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answered Aug 20, 2008 at 22:39



Ross

47k ● 39 ● 123 ● 173



1



Is it time to do away with IE6 programming?

Yes.

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answered Aug 20, 2008 at 23:42



maxsilver

4,584 ● 4 ● 29 ● 24



1

Simply because IE6 still [represents 27.21% of the web's population \(or 15.21% depending on your numbers\)](#) as of July 2009.



Now I know some of you will probably tell me that if more and more sites stop supporting IE6, the browser will eventually disappear. **That's a lie.**



Picture this:

Corporation ACME has over 150 000 computers all running Windows 2000/XP. They also have a nice intranet site developed 7 years ago which works in IE6 quite well, but not so much in other browsers.

Do you really think they are going to invest money into fixing their intranet application when they control their complete IT infrastructure and who gets what updates? It's less costly to just postpone the update until they migrate to a new system.

A lot of corporations are in that situation.

Here is another example:

Business FooBar sells its products on the Internet. A little more than a quarter of their traffic

is coming from IE6, which also means a quarter of their sales.

Do you think FooBar will simply block off those customers or annoy them with a [huge notice telling them they are using a buggy browser](#)? That would cost them nearly a quarter of their sales! As long as there is monetary value to supporting IE6 (and it does and will till its market share drops below about 8%), IE6 will prevail, which is also why Google won't be phasing out support for IE6 anytime soon.

Campaigns such as [Browse Sad](#) do not understand the mentality of the corporate culture (change is costly) and do not understand that in the end, consumers have a negligible impact on the worldwide IT ecosystem. The big corporations control it.

Consumers do have a growing impact but it is still insignificant compared to the impact corporations have.

And let's be truthful here: everyone who has the technical expertise and who could upgrade to a better browser already did. The rest are people still running outdated OSes, don't know how to upgrade, or don't have admin rights on their machine.

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answered Aug 10, 2009 at 7:36



[Andrew Moore](#)

95.2k ● 30 ● 166 ● 175

Spot on. It's a catch-22 situaion - Important business systems are made for ie6 only, and there is little incentive or money available to change them since they (lets's face it) usually went over budget before the first go-live anyway. Because of this, many users *have* to use ie6, which means even new systems have to support ie6. – [Console](#) Aug 10, 2009 at 7:46



1

My guess is the majority of IE6 users these days are due to a large number of companies/organizations that are stuck with illogical browser upgrade fear.



I work as a contractor for the US Government and, as of the time of this post, the entire Heath and Human Services department of the US government is still standardized on IE6 (and doesn't appear to be planning on upgrading anytime soon). When I ask the IT people about it, they claim it's too expensive for the government to test new browsers for compliance with security standards, but I get the sense the real reason is they are afraid of having to deal with things rendering differently across browsers.

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answered Oct 2, 2009 at 17:45

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[Matias Nino](#)

4,285 ● 13 ● 48 ● 63



1

Yes (emphatically) and No (doubtfully).

Unless you are creating some manner of internal tool for a group where you know IE6 penetration (no pun



intended) is high; ignore IE6. With vigor.



As for IE7, it's a bit of a toss-up. Generally speaking, if you are aiming for the private sector, you can get away with ignoring it (for the most part) and assuming that your IE8 support will take care of the most heinous problems; but if it's a site for selling stuff (specifically a web-shop; sales pitch site, etc.), you might want to at least check that it looks *somewhat* sane, and add a few small fixes as appropriate.

As an aside; and a real-world example; at my site of employment (we do web sites) we are currently undergoing (or rather, considering) a shift vis-a-vis IE-support in general: Prices are stated with basic IE8 support; full IE8 support would cost ~10% more; IE7 ~30% more and IE6 support ~100% more.

Edit: Think of it as charging extra to make a camper wagon designed for a WV to work with, respectively, a pinto, a yugo and a horse-drawn carriage.

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answered May 18, 2010 at 22:58

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[William Totland](#)

29k ● 6 ● 53 ● 68



1

Under IE6, make it at least show something. A page for FF3 that just dies on IE6 just looks bad, like you didn't plan well. If you don't support IE6 at all, make sure the user knows it is deliberate by showing a special page advising them where to go.



If you are expecting corporate visitors, it has to work under IE6 even if only a simplified version. If not, you can drop IE6 entirely if you handle it well as described above.



The time is nowhere near ready to consider dropping IE7 though. I'd expect this is the default browser on XP, which is the most prevalent OS.

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answered May 18, 2010 at 23:10

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Mr. Boy

63.5k ● 100 ● 348 ● 642

Actually, I think IE6 is the default XP browser, maybe depending on which SP, but we can expect IE7 is very widely used on XP due to Windows update. – Mr. Boy May 26, 2010 at 9:39



1

If you don't want to spend effort in supporting your site for IE6 you could possibly use any one approach in the below URL.



These approaches suggests the user to download any of the advanced browsers like IE7+, Firefox 3+, Safari 3+, Opera 9.5+ or Google Chrome



<http://garmahis.com/tools/ie6-update-warning/>

But, that's about IE6. I believe you should still support IE7.



1



Keep always in mind your target audience, client needs/requirements, project objectives and of course keep it real (according to your budget/time)

Code/design a site that fits most browsers is not an easy task you will need to use those so called "hacks" to work-around common problems (yes mostly on IE browsers) this is something I personally discourage but I've been there when the target it's mostly IE.

Nowadays you have several options, you can choose to detect what browser its in use to browse your site and trigger an script to recommend an alternative browser that follow better standards (with or w/out showing a legible content) or you can code an alternate entry page for those IE fellas or what (most of the time) I prefer is to gracefully degrade the page and make the user aware about his/her outdated browser and recommend an option.

I have read you're using a CMS to create these sites, most CMS work "fine" on most browsers out of the box still as you pointed some CSS and JavaScript elements doesn't work as you go using more "edgy" techniques.

If you intent to develop more sites allow me to recommend the following sites:

To try how your site looks on several browsers (versions, OSes, JavaScript, Java, etc.) you can use

```
http://browsershots.org/
```

Compare your favorite CMS options try

```
http://www.cmsmatrix.org/
```

To start learning (x)html, css, php and more you can go to

```
http://www.w3schools.com/
```

A good CSS reset style sheet is the Meyer's

```
http://meyerweb.com/eric/thoughts/2007/05/01/reset-reloaded/
```

I have to say that this is an starting point to archive consistency across browsers :)

I am sure you may have hear or know these sites they are just tools I use from time to time looking for reference, new knowledge or alternatives I can also recommend several FF extensions like Web Developer Toolbar and FireBug.

I guess it's all for now, hope it helps and wish you happy coding/webdev.

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answered May 19, 2010 at 5:21

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alemani

111 ● 1

hmm do you know more about browsershots.org/ i tried it but i got an error every time: Could not read `www.ovlu.li/robots.txt`. . But i defined this file – [RoflcoptrException](#) May 20, 2010 at 20:11

@Sebi, it's possible that your robots.txt is not allowing browsershots.org? Also check your .htaccess if you have one you can try to temporarily disabling them and test. – [alemani](#) May 26, 2010 at 22:35



You might want to take a look at [IE7.js](#).

1



IE7.js is a JavaScript library to make Microsoft Internet Explorer behave like a standards-compliant browser. It fixes many HTML and CSS issues and makes transparent PNG work correctly under IE5 and IE6.



Their IE9.js claims to:

Upgrade MSIE5.5-8 to be compatible with modern browsers.

I have not tested this myself with Acid or other standards tests, but this might be promising.

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answered May 19, 2010 at 6:08



[sirhc](#)

6,097 ● 2 ● 27 ● 29



1



The problem is that if you're not willing to add support for IE6/7, there are plenty of competitors out there that will gladly "steal" your customers in exchange for a little browser hacking. As long as there is money involved, support for these browsers will phase out very slowly.



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[edited May 19, 2010 at 6:44](#)



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answered May 19, 2010 at 6:03



[Martin Konecny](#)

59.5k ● 20 ● 143 ● 159



0



I'm all for pushing users to upgrade to the newest available version of IE (since problems improve with every release), however I'm also against telling people to upgrade or change their browsers.



I still support IE6 on my website. I even support as far back as IE5.5 pretty well I think.



Generally it is a good practice to never force your users to upgrade their system just to view your website. Unless, of course, you're developing an internal application, then I'd say everyone should upgrade to the newest available version.

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answered Aug 17, 2008 at 18:29

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Dan Herbert

103k ● 51 ● 192 ● 221



0



Dean Edwards' [ie7.js](#) makes IE6 behave (mostly) like a respectable web browser. It requires the client to have Javascript turned on, but that's a reasonable concession to make. I use that script and the script from [Save the Developers](#) on sites I create, and it makes supporting IE6 a breeze.



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answered Aug 17, 2008 at 18:32

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eplawless

4,323 ● 7 ● 35 ● 35



0



It would be nice if we could deny support for terribly non-compliant browsers. The problem is, **denying IE support hurts your site, hurts your prospective users, but doesn't hurt IE.** That's not exactly what we're going for. I propose a different technique. What if all anti-IE developers put a "Please stop using your crappy browser" splash screen for all IE(6) users accessing their web site. They could provide a few good, simple reasons to switch, that the user can't ignore, but then allow the user to access the (IE compliant) site. That way they could get the point across, without hurting themselves (much), or the user (except a little).



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answered Aug 17, 2008 at 21:12

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stalepretzel

15.9k ● 23 ● 78 ● 92

-
- 1 Gmail has the right idea. They have a list of browsers they "support" and everything else gets a extremely vanilla, but usable version. Some people might get offended by being told the taste in browser is poor. Even if it's true!
– [Chris Huang-Leaver](#) Aug 10, 2009 at 8:21
-



0

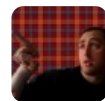


It depends on your target audience and if you think you can afford to alienate users. If you are making a geeky web app and you think most users will use firefox, then don't worry about IE6. I would launch with it working in Firefox, IE7, and Safari and look at who goes to your site. If you see the need to make it work in IE6 then start working on it then.

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answered Aug 18, 2008 at 4:48

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wusher

12.4k ● 22 ● 73 ● 96



0



Notice that some users in the Enterprise have no choice. So if you target Enterprise customers, notice they are still on IE6. In general, Enterprise moves slower than consumer.

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answered Aug 18, 2008 at 5:25

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csmba

4,083 ● 3 ● 33 ● 42



0



depends on your target audience.. I mean, some universities have firefox on them, right? only (i think) the third world countries have IE6 for default. (I know, I see them) I don't know about other countries, though. But I'm pretty sure still a large chunk of the population still use IE6 by default. If you think it's really necessary (I think so), go ahead. I don't see any problem in it. ('cuz I'm inexperienced in software development and such.. XD)

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answered Aug 20, 2008 at 22:30

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Allan



0



Support IE6 by not blocking it and letting it fend for itself for the most part. Only work around IE6 bugs that break major functionality.

As for JS bugs and horrible DOM support, you still have that in IE7 and IE8. In that case, you might as well use a JS toolkit and get IE6 support for almost free.

Bugs are bugs and they should be fixed (in any browser) instead of being worked around. But, you gotta do what you gotta do to please visitors.

One day, working around IE6 bugs will be asking too much.

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answered Aug 20, 2008 at 22:45

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Shadow2531

12.2k ● 5 ● 38 ● 51



0



I am certainly opposed to excluding browsers from a public facing site. There is nothing more irritating than going to a website and discovering they ONLY support IE because some dev somewhere couldn't make things "work".

As many of the other authors above have noted there is a considerable number of users out there who use a company imposed desktop build or install of IE6. Your best bet is always to identify and communicate with your users, not impose your draconian concepts upon them.

Ryan Farley had an [entry about this recently](#) which describes what I think is the best first step to transitioning over users to a different browser. It encourages people to upgrade and explains why things may not render correctly in one graphic. Many years ago, BinaryBonsai.com was the first blog I encountered which had a badge appear suggesting FireFox and I totally downloaded it just not to be bothered with an additional graphic.

There really is nothing like nerd peer-pressure.

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answered Aug 20, 2008 at 23:01



Ian Patrick Hughes

10.4k ● 3 ● 32 ● 37



0



Vista's failure to gain mass acceptance is largely responsible for the reason we still have to support IE6. Most of the people still using IE6 are the ones who never upgrade their browser or update their OS. If most of them just moved to Vista, IE7 would automatically replace IE6



Share Improve this answer

edited Aug 20, 2008 at 23:41



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answered Aug 20, 2008 at 22:24



Imran

90.8k ● 26 ● 100 ● 131



0



If you're writing an application that's free or open to the public, maybe give reduced support to IE6 in order to have time to build more things for the majority of your users.

If you're writing an application that's not free, base it on your users. Odds are you'll want to give IE6 full support for another year or two.



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answered Oct 2, 2009 at 17:58



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Dean J

40.2k ● 17 ● 70 ● 94

1

2

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