Not Enough Memory

issue   misc   programming   stats

Chrome will break extensions backward compatibility
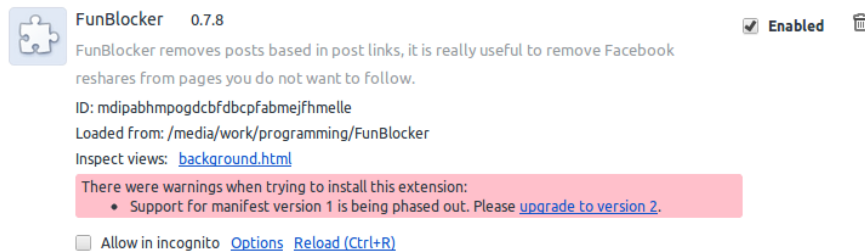
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If you develop a Chrome Extension, you should know that. Some days ago, I received a scary red warning during development of FunBlocker Chrome Extension.

FunBlocker   0.7.8

FunBlocker removes posts based in post links, it is really useful to remove Facebook reshares from pages you do not want to follow.

☑ Enabled   🗑

ID: mdipabhmpogdcbfdbcpfabmejfhmelle
Loaded from: /media/work/programming/FunBlocker
Inspect views: background.html

> There were warnings when trying to install this extension:
>   • Support for manifest version 1 is being phased out. Please upgrade to version 2.

☐ Allow in incognito   Options   Reload (Ctrl+R)

No problem, I can just follow the rules defined in Chrome Extensions Manifest Version and migrate my manifest to get rid of this warning. I just released it and broke my plugin. Why?? It was suposed to Chrome maintain everything up to date and working fine.

Things you should know

- You can disable Chrome auto updates. Yeah, it is not a good option, but I can not blame the user.

- Chrome Extensions are in fact Chromium extensions. Other Chromium based browsers do not update often and extension developers do not have an easy way to handle that.

- Chrome will maintain the extension up to date, even if it does not understand the manifest file.

Reading some docs, I found I can set `minimum_chrome_version`, but to be honest my app does not depend of the Chrome version.

Based in Chrome schedule, Web Store will block new extensions with `manifest_version=1` after Chrome 21 release. I am just maintaining an extension, so it is not a problem for me. Web Store will block updates with `manifest_version=1` after Chrome 23 release, planned to early november 2012.

Based in my Analytics data, I have more than 3% of users in browser versions minor than 18 or in Rockmelt, which will not work with manifest upgrade.

My solution

I decided to maintain `manifest_version=1` as long as possible (maybe early november). In next months, I will add a friendly warning to my options page like "sorry, but this plugin will not receive updates until you update your browser". After that, I will add `minimum_chrome_version=18` and upgrade the manifest_version. Docs does not recommended to use version 2 in Chrome 17, so 18 is a good number.

Just to be clear, I am not against this manifest upgrade, it is really interesting to improve browser security, but some changes break compatilibity instead of do a painless transition.

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