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Scsi's Mobile WebKISS™ Guide #3: Why use more than one Web browser?

This Scsi's "Web-based Keep-It-Simple, Sonoff" document — Scsi's Mobile WebKISS™ Guide #3 — focuses on presenting some specific reasons to justify why each of us must seriously consider learning to make use of more than one Web browser.

The major headings provided on this Web page are listed below:

- [Why One Size Doesn't Fit All](#) — A short list of some of the decisions and assumptions that are made by Web designers
- [Considerations and Justifications for having more than one tool at your disposal](#)

NOTE: Relevant hyperlinks are included within the associated paragraphs to make your browsing session productive and all the more enjoyable.

Why One Size Doesn't Fit All — A short list of some of the decisions and assumptions that are made by Web designers

Perhaps unknowingly, most Web sites actually have locked out prospective customers because of one or more Web design decisions that will inherently compromise the proper rendering of Web pages across a suite of possible browsers. Let's begin by listing some typical examples of these short-sighted decisions:

- A specific Web Browser and Version is judged as "the one to use" because of its proven dominance in the overall market.
- A specific Operating System/Platform is needed for installing, launching, and using the selected Web browser(s).
- Besides the expected basic HTML source code, JavaScript-based functions are present within one or more of the Web site's pages.
- ActiveX, Multimedia, Flash, animation, or Plug-ins are incorporated to display portion's of the Web page's overall content.

This list could certainly go on and on, but fundamentally they lead to the same conclusion: Adoption of any such "only thinking inside the box" results in inherent limitations for most Web sites. It is for this very reason that Scsi recommends that you keep your options open whenever you actually become engaged in choosing to explore Web site development or redesign activities. In short, accessibility to all should be the dominant design objective for all Web sites, and the remainder of this WebKISS™ Guide #3 presents you with supporting details toward this end.

Considerations and Justifications for having more than one tool at your disposal

The following headings reflect a few of the numerous considerations and justifications for becoming familiar with and making use of several Web browsers.

- Distinctive or Preferential User-controlled Features
- Operating System Restrictions
- Checking for Page Rendering Differences
- Compliance to Mobile Web Standards
- Resident Help and Navigational Aids
- Vulnerabilities to Security Breaches

Distinctive or Preferential User-controlled Features

Looked at from the highest levels, Web browsers are generally one-of-a-kind by design. This may be because of simply wanting to be different from other offerings. For example, imagine being polled for a new design where you'd likely be asked: Want a Tabbed Interface? Want to specify a text size using percentages of your own choices? Want to have tool tips (balloon help information) displayed when the cursor is placed over a hyperlink? Need to operate with a given vendor's Web browser that has versions available for use on more than just one operating system?

Certainly, there are numerous Web browser products out there that will give you these capabilities. Among them are Opera, Mozilla, Mozilla's Firefox, Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Safari, and Netscape. Scsi knows and makes use of many such products on a regular basis for reasons that — as you will find out — go beyond matters of personal preferences as were just stated here.

Operating System Restrictions

Doesn't everyone use Microsoft's Internet Explorer? Not if they are using a proprietary Operating System, as might be the case for various Smart Phones, Appliances, Embedded Controls, and so forth. As another more obvious example, consider Linux-based systems which hold no deference to Microsoft's otherwise almost ubiquitous Web browser. As one more example, consider text-only browsers, such as Lynx. Anyway, by now you get the idea: One size doesn't fit all --- even when just the choice/requirement of Operating System is the only variable that has been taken into consideration.

Checking for Page Rendering Differences

If only Web pages would display in close-to-the-same manner for all Web browsers — even on those that work on the same operating system. Almost all of us have observed some obvious differences in the text layout because of differing text size specifications between Internet Explorer, Netscape, Mozilla, Firefox, Flock, Opera, Safari, Amaya, and others. Could it be that these differences arise because the respective vendors do not choose to work together to establish even a basic set of Web browser specifications from which to build? Or are they convinced that working toward or waiting for such standards to become adopted will unduly prolong their own product development time, and they simply do not wish to wait?

No matter what the reasons may be, the question of the moment becomes, "How can you see what's right and what's wrong with any Web page on your Web site?" Not surprisingly, the very best approach is to test, test, test, and then test some more.

Want some specific advice? Try different Web browsers, different versions of a given vendor's Web browsers, and Web browsers that work on various operating systems — all the while making sure that you also experiment with different screen resolutions, Web window sizes, whether or not tool tips appear (and how completely), and whatever else you have on your working checklist (you do have one, don't you?). Also, make certain to check navigation entirely by keyboard, as well as by using various cursor-pointing devices (e.g., mouse, trackball, touchpad, etc.).

Of course, doing all these things takes both time and resource allocations, and if you know that you are clearly resource-limited, scsi suggests that you enlist the help of others and do whatever it takes to come up with a realistic assessment of Web page rendering tradeoffs that you may not have realized as a fact before now. You'll likely find more than a few surprises in store for you if you do. Once you gather these results, Scsi suggests that you take a critical look at the specifics of what's wrong and what you should do about it.

Compliance to Mobile Web Standards

Suggestion: Try the W3C's [Amaya Editor/Browser](#) if you want to check a Mobile Web page's rendering according to Web standards. Amaya always represents the document internally in a structured way consistent with the Document Type Definition (DTD). A properly structured document enables other tools to further process the data safely.

Resident Help and Navigational Aids

Let's face it. Some vendors have put the time into making things easier for users to understand and apply the manifold features of their product. Other vendors almost appear to presume that you shouldn't have basic questions or that their product is thought to be so intuitive that a full-fledged help support as part of the Web browser software package is unnecessary.

Vulnerabilities to Security Breaches

Unfortunately, certain Web browsers are reportedly becoming compromised (breached) by spyware (advertising-supported programs or routines) — or even worse yet "real spyware" that might consist of one or more executable routines designed to breach your computer's security. This could involve monitoring of keystrokes or searching for sensitive personal or private information, including account passwords, credit card numbers, or whatever else you would be unknowingly providing, and their ultimate transmission over the Internet to a Web server — all while you are on-line doing other things.

All this is certainly discomfiting, if not downright scary, to even think about. Nonetheless, shouldn't you take some pro-active steps to avoid such possible occurrences altogether? Once again, for this reason alone you should consider making sure that you do not lock yourself into or adopt for use just one Web browser. After all, you may pay the price later by not deciding now to keep all of your options open and to investigate alternative approaches in Web browsers.

Summarial Conclusion

What's the bottom line? Look around, try various Web browsers, and really take the time to see for yourself what you may have missed out on, market share- or accessibility-wise, by staying with a single Web browser offering.

If you don't want to take the above-outlined advice to heart, you, your Web site, and your company's business outlook will be the ultimate losers. If you ignore these suggestions that support learning to use more than one Web browser, you really can't say you didn't know better. Besides, you really wouldn't want to ignore good advice, now would you?

Web Page Validation and Contact Information

Validate this Scsi's Mobile WebKISS™ Guide #3: Why use more than one Web browser? Page to assure full conformance to W3C's [XHTML 1.0 Basic](#), cascading style sheet ([CSS](#)), and [WCAG Accessibility](#) recommendations.

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Mobile Home	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/
Expanded Mobile Home	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/index_expanded.html
Graphics-based Mobile Home	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/index_graphics_mapped_version_3.html
Mobile About Scsi	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/filters/scsi_corp/scsi_corp.html
Mobile Site Map	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/site_map/site_map.html
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Other Mobile Web Sites	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/filters/url_links/url_links.html
Mobile Contact Us	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/filters/contact_us/contact_us.html
Scsi's Mobile Access Keys	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/access_keys.html
Scsi's Mobile Web Best Practices	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_part2.html#h3_3
#2	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_2_of_10.html
#3	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_3_of_10.html
#4	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_4_of_10.html
#5	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_5_of_10.html
#6	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_6_of_10.html
#7	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_7_of_10.html
#8	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_8_of_10.html
#9	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_9_of_10.html
#10	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_10_of_10.html
why the Scsi P&KT Mobile Web Site is both virus- and worm-free	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/mobile_unique_features_1_of_10.html#h2_2
need professional assistance	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/need_professional_assistance.html
addressing productivity	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/scsi_focus_on_productivity.html
knowledge transfer-related matters	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/what_scsi_pkt_does.html
e-mail	mailto:info@sonoffconsulting.mobi
	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_pkt_mobile_wkg_11_total_access_so_what.html
Why One Size Doesn't Fit All	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_pkt_mobile_wkg_3_why_use_more_than_one_browser.html#h2_1
Considerations and Justifications for having more than one tool at your disposal	http://sonoffconsulting.mobi/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_pkt_mobile_wkg_3_why_use_more_than_one_browser.html#h2_2
Amaya Editor/Browser	http://www.w3.org/Amaya/Amaya
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