



# Flash<sup>®</sup> Player Detection Kit

Revision 1.5

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# Introduction

Web technologies evolve rapidly. Content developers need to know that end users have the latest tools they need to interact with the developer's creations. In the case of Adobe Flash® Player, developers who use the latest Flash features must ensure that their audience always has the right version of Flash Player installed.

This document provides the following sections to help developers detect the installed version of Flash Player and initiate upgrades:

**[Detecting the Flash Player](#)** Describes what you need in order to detect the user's Flash Player version and to determine if that version can display your Flash content.

**[Overview of Detection and Installation Techniques](#)** Outlines the different Flash Player detection and installation methods, and describes the contents of the Detection Kit ZIP file.

**[Using Client-Side Scripting to Detect the Flash Player Version](#)** Discusses under what circumstances you would want to use client-side scripting detection, and provides scripts.

**[Using ActionScript to Detect the Flash Player Version](#)** Discusses under what circumstances you would want to use ActionScript detection, and provides scripts.

**[Using Server-Side Code to Detect the Player Version](#)** Discusses under what circumstances you would want to use server-side detection, and provides scripts for PHP and ColdFusion.

**[Installing or Updating the Flash Player](#)** If the Flash Player is not installed on the end user's computer, or if the installed version won't allow proper viewing of your Flash content, you can initiate the installation of the latest version of Flash Player.

## Detecting the Flash Player

Flash content—whether interactive games, advertising, flexible messaging, video programming, or commerce-based applications—runs on the Flash Player. The version of the Flash Player required to view your content needs to be installed on the end user's computer. Even with the wide variety of computing platforms and browsers your audience uses to access the web and your Flash content, you can detect the presence of the Flash Player and its version in most instances and initiate an installation or upgrade of the Flash Player on the end user's computer.

It would be quite a task, however, to test all possible operating system and browser combinations when deploying new Flash content. Adobe has put together the following best practices and templates to help you target a wide variety of deployment environments.

Most expectations you may have for your detection process can be met if the process you use fulfills the following requirements:

- The detection process should run on all operating systems and browser combinations supported by Flash. For a list of supported operating systems and browsers, see the Flash System Requirements at <http://www.adobe.com/products/flash/flashpro/productinfo/systemreqs/>.

- The detection process should detect both major and minor versions of Flash Player. For example, Flash Player 6 was revised several times during its lifecycle. To target those specific versions, the detection method must be able to determine the exact player version installed on the user's computer, and the exact version needed to correctly display your Flash content.
- The detection process should work with all future versions of Flash Player, without requiring any changes to the detection mechanism you've chosen to implement.
- The detection process should direct users to install the latest version of Flash Player in as unobtrusive a way as possible.

Many detection methods fail to meet one or more of these requirements, and often confuse visitors to the web site who cannot access content, or figure out which version of Flash Player is required. The Flash Detection Kit has been designed to help you identify the version of Flash Player installed on end users' computers, and upgrade or install the latest version, with minimum distraction for the end-user.

In addition to the Flash Player detection techniques described in this document, or as an alternative, you can always provide an introduction page that displays version information and contains a link to the Flash Player download page:



**This site requires Flash Player 7 or later.**

The Flash Player download page is located here:  
<http://www.adobe.com/go/getflashplayer/>

## Overview of Detection and Installation Techniques

Flash content is incorporated into websites in many different ways. The various architectures and configurations of websites necessitate different approaches to detecting the Player version an end-user is using to view your Flash content. One detection method won't work for all websites, but most websites can implement at least one of the methods described in this document. Once a player and its version have been detected, you can present the user with an experience that best fits your site design, whether that is to prompt the user to proceed with a player product installation or displaying alternate content. This section points to the resources the Detection Kit provides to assist you.

### Selecting a Flash Player detection method

To detect the Flash Player version, you select and customize a detection method. Make sure to review the discussion of each method, below, to see the advantages and disadvantages of each method:

- [Client-side scripting detection](#) This method uses JavaScript to check for the existence of a Netscape plug-in or an ActiveX control, and provides the logic for either displaying your Flash content or initiating an installation of the correct player version.

Use script-based detection when:

- Script-based detection can be used when deploying Flash content to modern browsers and operating systems. Based on a census of computer users, Macromedia has determined that 98%

of Internet-enabled computers are equipped with modern browsers and operating systems. Furthermore, 98% of Internet-enabled computers have Flash Player 5 or later installed.

- If you want to display alternate content based on the configuration of end users' computers and browsers, script-based detection can determine version and configuration information that is not detectable by other methods.

Avoid script based detection when:

- While generally reliable, script based detection will fail if the browser loading the content has had scripting disabled. For the rare occurrences where scripting is disabled, Macromedia recommends using the `<noscript>` HTML tag to display alternate content.
  - While increasingly uncommon, some older browsers do not support scripting (for example, the Macintosh versions of Internet Explorer 4.0 and earlier). If older browsers are important to distributing your content, you will need to detect the browser version and display alternate content suitable for the browser's display capabilities.
- [ActionScript-based detection](#) This method uses a Flash SWF file to detect which version of the player is installed and redirects the end-user to the Adobe Flash Player installation if their player needs to be updated.

**Use ActionScript detection when:**

- You only need to target end users who have Flash Player 4.0r11 (revision 11) or greater installed.
- Browser redirects are not a problem on your web site.

**Avoid using ActionScript detection when:**

- Flash Player is not installed on the end users' computers.
- If browser redirects are a problem for your web site (for example, to redirect the user to the Flash Player installation page).

When you would prefer to display alternate content inline rather than directing end users to a different page to install the Flash Player.

- [Server-side detection](#) This method creates a server-side application to determine which version of Flash Player is installed.

**Use server-side code to detect Flash when:**

- You expect users to have Flash Player 6.0r65 or later.
- You want a server-side implementation as part of a dynamic web site.

**Avoid server-side code to detect Flash when:**

- You do not have access to server-side scripting resources.
  - You want to target users with versions of the Flash Player older than Flash Player 6.
- A combination of the above techniques. You can develop your own custom solution by combining two or more of the above techniques to give your users the experience that's most appropriate for your site and content.

Remember, the success of the detection method you use depends upon the configuration of your website, your target audience, and the end-user environment. Review the recommendations discussed in each section before implementing a detection and installation method.

## Initiating an installation or upgrade of the Flash Player

Once you have determined whether an end-user has a Flash Player installed and what version it is, you have the choice of displaying alternative content, directing the user to the Adobe Flash Player download page, or initiating an installation or update of the Flash Player through a player product installation method, as described in the [Installing or Updating the Flash Player](#) section, below.

To initiate a player product installation on the end-user's computer, you can use Adobe's Flash Player Express Install. This method, and how to customize it, is described in the [Customizing Express Install](#) section. The location of these files is described in the [Express Install files](#) section.

## Contents of the Detection Kit

After reviewing the different detection methods discussed in this document, familiarize yourself with the files contained in the Detection Kit ZIP file. When you unzip the Detection Kit into a directory of your choosing, you can view the following sets of files:

- **A copy of this document** found in the root directory, which describes the requirements, methods, and procedures for detecting and updating the end-user's Flash Player version. Read this document to understand, choose, and customize a detection method.
- **ActionScript-based detection method sample files** found in the ActionScript Based Detection directory. Use these files – along with the instructions in the [Using ActionScript to Detect the Flash Player Version](#) section, below – to detect the end-user's Flash Player version, and to display Flash content if the correct version was detected, or to prompt the user to install the correct version of the Flash Player.
- **Client-Side detection method sample files** found in the Client-Side Detection directory. Use these files – along with the instructions in the [Using Client-Side Scripting to Detect the Flash Player Version](#) section, below – to detect the end-user's Flash Player as both ActiveX control and a plug-in, and to display Flash content if the correct version was detected, or to prompt the user to install the correct version of the Flash Player.
- **Express Install sample files** found in the root directory. Use these files – along with the instructions in the [Installing or Updating the Flash Player](#) section, below – to enable the detection of the end-user's Flash Player version, initiate an end-user installation, and after successful installation, return the end-user to your site to view your content with the correct version of the player.

### ActionScript-based detection method sample files

Under the root directory, the ActionScript Detection directory contains the following files:

Directory/File Name	Description
actionscript_example.html	Sample HTML page; contains the SWF for completing the ActionScript-based detection method
flash_AS_detection.as	Sample ActionScript file; contains the logic for completing the ActionScript-based detection method
flash_AS_detection fla	Sample source file; calls on the ActionScript files of the same name to complete the ActionScript-based detection method
flash_AS_detection.swf	Sample SWF file; contains the ActionScript logic used to initiate the ActionScript-based detection method

Directory/File Name	Description
flash_content/ directory	Sample Flash content; contains the sample content you want to provide the user if they have the correct version of the Flash Player installed
upgrade_flash/ directory	Sample upgrade files; contains the sample files used to prompt the end-user to upgrade to the latest version of the Flash Player

#### Client-side detection method sample files

Under the root directory, the Client-Side Detection directory contains the following files:

Directory/File Name	Description
example.swf	Sample SWF file . used to test your implementation of the Client-side detection
ClientSideDetection.html	Sample HTML page; contains the initial JavaScript logic for client-side Flash Player detection. Additional script is included via AC_OETags.js
AC_OETags.js	JavaScript source file; used by ClientSideDetection.html to detect and embed the Flash Player.

#### Flash Player Express Install sample files

Under the root directory, the Express Installation directory contains the following files:

File Name	Description
example.swf	File used to test your implementation of the Express Install process.
playerProductInstall.as	Sample ActionScript file; contains the logic for implementing the Express Install process.
playerProductInstall.fla	Sample source file; calls on the ActionScript files of the same name to complete the Express Install process.
playerProductInstall.html	Sample HTML page; contains the JavaScript logic for completing the Express Install process.
AC_OETags.js	JavaScript source file; used by playerProductInstall.html to detect and embed the Flash Player.
playerProductInstall.swf	Sample SWF file; contains the ActionScript logic used to initiate the Express Install process.
playerProductInstallCallback.as	Sample ActionScript file; contains the callback function dictating what happens when end user does not install the new Flash Player through the Express Installprocess.



# Using Client-Side Scripting to Detect the Flash Player Version

The most common way to detect Flash Player is by using JavaScript to check for the existence of either a Netscape plug-in or an ActiveX control. The type of script you use depends on the browser your end-user uses to view web content. Because the Flash Player exists as both a browser plug-in and an ActiveX control, a combination of different JavaScript routines is needed to properly check for the player. ActiveX installation is used in Internet Explorer, while Netscape, Firefox, Safari, Opera and other browsers support browser plug-ins.

The client-side scripting method of Flash Player detection is illustrated in the sample file `ClientSideDetection.html`.

In this method, you first create functions for script-based detection of the ActiveX control and the plug-in. These two functions will be called by another function that returns the version number of the user's installed Flash Player. That function calls the ActiveX detection function if the user is running Internet Explorer under Windows. Otherwise it calls the JavaScript detection function.

Depending on the version number retrieved, the client-side script proceeds in one of the following ways:

- If the retrieved version number indicates the right Flash Player is installed, the `<object>` and `<embed>` tags for your content will be written to the page and your content will be shown to the user.
- If the user has an older version of Flash Player installed or if no Flash Player is detected at all the user will be shown the alternate content, including a link to the Get Flash web page on the Adobe web site.

The next sections discuss portions of these client-side scripts in detail.

## Using JavaScript to detect the version of Flash Player

Detecting the existence of Flash Player and its version number requires some additional scripting work for browsers that use the Netscape plug-in API. For these browsers you not only have to write a script to find out if the Player exists and what version number it is, but also what browser is installed on the user's computer.

The script searches for the both the ActiveX control and the Netscape plug-in using a function named `GetSwfVer()`. For ActiveX the `ControlVersion()` function is called. It locates the "ShockwaveFlash.ShockwaveFlash" ActiveX object in the Windows registry and then retrieves the version of the player stored in the `$version` global variable.

```
axo = new ActiveXObject("ShockwaveFlash.ShockwaveFlash.7");
version = axo.GetVariable("$version");
```

Flash Player versions 4.0r11 and later report the version and platform string when the `$version` variable is requested. This lets you query for the full version, which contains the operating system, version number, and the minor revision information. For example, you might retrieve a string similar to the following: "WIN 6,0,65,0". In this instance, the user's computer has Flash Player 6, revision 65 running on the Windows operating system.

Back in the `GetSwfVer()` function the following portion of the script determines the existence and version information of the Flash Player plug-in. This applies to Netscape, Firefox, Mozilla, Safari, Opera, and all other browsers that support the Netscape Plug-in API and a way to interrogate it using browser scripting.

```
var swVer2 = navigator.plugins["Shockwave Flash 2.0"] ? " 2.0" : "";
var flashDescription = navigator.plugins["Shockwave Flash" + swVer2].description;
```

The complete script for retrieving the Flash Player version is available in the AC\_OETags.js file included with this document.

**Note:** In creating this script, we identify Netscape plug-in based browsers as any web browser other than Internet Explorer. A special case was made for the Opera browser, which, while it identifies itself as Internet Explorer, did not provide support for ActiveX controls until version 8.01.

```
// Flash Player Version Detection - Rev 1.5
// Detect Client Browser type
// Copyright 2006 Adobe Systems, Inc. All rights reserved.
var isIE = (navigator.appVersion.indexOf("MSIE") != -1) ? true : false;
var isWin = (navigator.appVersion.toLowerCase().indexOf("win") != -1) ? true : false;
var isOpera = (navigator.userAgent.indexOf("Opera") != -1) ? true : false;

// JavaScript helper required to detect Flash Player PlugIn version information
function GetSwfVer(){
    // NS/Opera version >= 3 check for Flash plugin in plugin array
    var flashVer = -1;

    if (navigator.plugins != null && navigator.plugins.length > 0) {
        if (navigator.plugins["Shockwave Flash 2.0"] || navigator.plugins["Shockwave
Flash"]) {
            var swVer2 = navigator.plugins["Shockwave Flash 2.0"] ? " 2.0" : "";
            var flashDescription = navigator.plugins["Shockwave Flash" +
swVer2].description;
            var descArray = flashDescription.split(" ");
            var tempArrayMajor = descArray[2].split(".");
            var versionMajor = tempArrayMajor[0];
            var versionMinor = tempArrayMajor[1];
            if ( descArray[3] != "" ) {
                tempArrayMinor = descArray[3].split("r");
            } else {
                tempArrayMinor = descArray[4].split("r");
            }
            var versionRevision = tempArrayMinor[1] > 0 ? tempArrayMinor[1] : 0;
            var flashVer = versionMajor + "." + versionMinor + "." + versionRevision;
        }
    }
    // MSN/WebTV 2.6 supports Flash 4
    else if (navigator.userAgent.toLowerCase().indexOf("webtv/2.6") != -1) flashVer = 4;
    // WebTV 2.5 supports Flash 3
    else if (navigator.userAgent.toLowerCase().indexOf("webtv/2.5") != -1) flashVer = 3;
    // older WebTV supports Flash 2
    else if (navigator.userAgent.toLowerCase().indexOf("webtv") != -1) flashVer = 2;
    else if ( isIE && isWin && !isOpera ) {
        flashVer = ControlVersion();
    }
    return flashVer;
}
```

The JavaScript `GetSwfVer()` function searches for the Shockwave Flash plug-in by parsing the `navigator.plugins` array, which is used by all browsers that support the Netscape plug-in API. If the Flash Player plug-in is located in the array, its version number is stored in the `flashVer` variable, and returned to any script that calls it (see the [Putting It Together](#) section, below). Browsers that do not support the `navigator.plugins` array, or that do not have Flash Player installed, return a value of -1, indicating that you must install the latest version of Flash Player.

**Note:** Internet Explorer 4 and earlier running under Mac OS classic does not support the `navigator.plugins` array.

## Putting It Together

Now that you have methods to detect Flash Player and return the version for both the ActiveX control and plug-in across platforms, you need to combine the information in a function that can be used to present the desired experience to your end users. The following script retrieves the version number of the installed Flash Player and compares the installed version to the minimum version required to view your content.

```
// When called with reqMajorVer, reqMinorVer, reqRevision returns true if that version or greater
is available
function DetectFlashVer(reqMajorVer, reqMinorVer, reqRevision)
{
    versionStr = GetSwfVer();
    if (versionStr == -1 ) {
        return false;
    } else if (versionStr != 0) {
        if(isIE && isWin && !isOpera) {
            // Given "WIN 2,0,0,11"
            tempArray      = versionStr.split(" "); // ["WIN", "2,0,0,11"]
            tempString      = tempArray[1];          // "2,0,0,11"
            versionArray    = tempString.split(","); // ['2', '0', '0', '11']
        } else {
            versionArray    = versionStr.split(".");
        }
        var versionMajor    = versionArray[0];
        var versionMinor    = versionArray[1];
        var versionRevision = versionArray[2];
    }
}
```

```

// is the major.revision >= requested major.revision AND the minor version >= requested minor
    if (versionMajor > parseFloat(reqMajorVer)) {
        return true;
    } else if (versionMajor == parseFloat(reqMajorVer)) {
        if (versionMinor > parseFloat(reqMinorVer))
            return true;
        else if (versionMinor == parseFloat(reqMinorVer)) {
            if (versionRevision >= parseFloat(reqRevision))
                return true;
        }
    }
    return false;
}
}

```

The `DetectFlashVer()` function accepts the following three parameters: `reqMajorVer`, `reqMinorVer`, and `reqRevision`.

These values represent the minimum version of the Flash Player your content requires for playback. For example, to check for Flash Player 6.0r65 you would use the following call:

```
var hasRequestedVersion= DetectFlashVer(6, 0, 65);
```

The `DetectFlashVer()` function requests the installed version of the player from `GetSwfVer()`. The `GetSwfVer()` function determines the browser and operating system and then selectively requests the version of the player using the appropriate script for each browser type. The returned Flash Player version is compared against the values that were passed to the `DetectFlashVer()` function, which checks to see whether the required version of Flash Player is installed, and returns a `true` or `false` value.

If the detected version of the Player is equal to or greater than the version your content requires, the `DetectFlashVer()` function returns `true`, and the SWF file is embedded in the page and plays using Flash Player. If the function returns `false`, the minimum version of the Flash Player needed to view the content is not installed, and you should either display alternate content or direct the user to install the latest version of Flash Player.

The script below shows how to structure an `if` statement to choose between embedding the SWF file if the correct version of Flash Player is installed, or directing the user to try a different method of installing the Flash Player:

```

if (hasRequestedVersion) {
    // EMBED the SWF
} else {
    // Instruct the user to install the player, start Player Product Install,
    // or show alternate content
}

```

The file `ClientSideDetection.html` uses JavaScript within the body of the page to write the `<object>` and `<embed>` tags for the Flash content directly into the page at that spot. If you prefer to redirect the user to a different page containing the Flash content, installation content, or alternate content you can customize that file accordingly.

By default the `ClientSideDetection.html` example requires you to enter a few global values for the detection to work properly. These values are:

1. Required Major, Minor, and Revision versions of the player necessary to view your content. This is specified at the beginning the script. The following script requires Flash Player 7.0r19

```
// Globals
// Major version of Flash required
var requiredMajorVersion = 7;
// Minor version of Flash required
var requiredMinorVersion = 0;
// Minor version of Flash required
var requiredRevision = 19;
```

2. Alternate content that will be displayed in the event that the player is not installed, or the installed version of the player is not the version you require, or browser scripting is disabled. The content to be displayed under these conditions is defined in the `alternateContent` variable inside the script block contained in the example `<body>` tag.

```
// flash is too old or we can't detect the plugin
var alternateContent = 'Alternate HTML content should be placed here.<BR>'
+ 'This content requires the Adobe Flash Player. '
+ '<a href=http://www.adobe.com/go/getflash/>Get Flash</a>';
document.write(alternateContent); // insert non-flash content
```

## Using ActionScript to Detect the Flash Player Version

If your targeted user audience has Flash Player 4.0r11 (version 4, revision 11) or later installed on their computers, you can use a Flash SWF file to detect which version of the Player is installed. The Detection Kit includes a Flash FLA file and the ActionScript code needed to create a SWF file that determines which version of Flash is installed on an end user's computer.

The Flash files needed to detect the Flash version are:

**flash\_AS\_detection.flas** The FLA file from which you generate the flash Detection SWF file.

**flash\_AS\_detection.as** The ActionScript include file whose parameters you must modify to detect the version of Flash required to view your content.

### To detect Flash Player using ActionScript:

1. Edit the `flash_AS_detection.as` include file to detect the version of Flash Player needed to view your content. For a description of the variables you can modify see [“Flash detection ActionScript variables”](#) later in this section.
2. Publish the `flash_AS_detection.flas` file as a SWF to embed on your web site.
3. Upload the Flash ActionScript detection files to your web server. For information on the files, see [“Uploading the Flash Detection Kit files to your web server.”](#)
4. Test the Flash Detection SWF file by viewing it in a browser that has the Flash Player version 4.0r11 or higher installed.

## Flash detection ActionScript variables

The following variables, which are also described in the ActionScript comments, can be modified to customize the behavior of the Flash Detection SWF file:

**altContentURL** The URL that the visitor should be redirected to if they do not have the required version of Flash installed. The URL can be alternate content for use without Flash, or an upgrade page as in this example. The following example uses a relative path to redirect the user's browser to a web page from which they can upgrade to the latest version of Flash:

```
altContentURL = "upgrade_flash/upgrade_flash.html";
```

**flashContentURL** The URL that the visitor should be sent to if they have the required version of Flash. The following example uses a relative path to redirect the user's browser to a web page containing your Flash content:

```
flashContentURL = "flash_content/flash_content.html";
```

**contentVersion** The minimum required Player version needed to view your Flash content. The following example specifies that Flash Player 6.0r65 be installed to view the content:

```
contentVersion = 6;
```

**contentMajorRevision** The major revision number (or dot release) of the Player needed to view your Flash content. The following example specifies 0 (zero), which, in conjunction with the above example, specifies that Flash Player 8.0 is the required version:

```
contentMajorRevision = 0;
```

**contentMinorRevision** The revision number of the player necessary to view the content. The following example specifies 3 (three), which, in conjunction with the above example, specifies that Flash Player 8.0.3 is the required version:

```
contentMinorRevision = 65;
```

**allowFlashAutoInstall** Specifies that, when running under Internet Explorer on Windows, the latest version of Flash Player is to be automatically installed. Specifying `true` causes the Flash Detection SWF file to skip the detection test, and lets Internet Explorer automatically upgrade the Flash Player to the latest available version.

**Note:** Adobe recommends that you specify this on the HTML `<object>` tag, and NOT on the `<embed>` tag.

The following example specifies that the Flash Detection SWF not automatically update the Player.

```
allowFlashAutoInstall = false;
```

**requireLatestVersion** Specifies that the latest available version of Flash Player must be installed in order to view your content. The following example is set to `false`, which checks for the minimum required version of the Player.

```
requireLatestVersion = false;
```

**Note:** If this setting is set to `true`, it is recommended that you check for the latest version of the Player you require, and ensure that settings inside the Flash movie reflect the version as well. These settings begin at line 35 of the `flash_AS_detection.as` include file. For example:

```
MACLatestVersion = 8;  
MACLatestMajorRevision = 0;  
MACLatestMinorRevision = 24;
```

## Upgrading Flash Player 3 and earlier versions

At the bottom of the `flash_AS_detection.as` include file is a `getURL()` command that contains a hard coded address. This address is used when the Flash Detection SWF detects Flash Player 3 or earlier versions. Prior to Flash Player 4, the Player did not support the use of variable. For this reason, we use the `getURL()` command to redirect the browser to a page from which the user can upgrade to the latest version of Flash Player.

Adobe recommends that you change the Meta Tag setting in the `actionscript_example.html` file. The Meta Tag redirects the browser when the user either does not have Flash Player installed, or has a faulty installation. The URL setting in this tag is usually set to the same HTML file as the `altContentURL` variable, as in the following example:

```
getURL("upgrade_flash/upgrade_flash.html", "_self");
```

## Uploading the Flash Detection Kit files to your web server

Once you've modified the `flash_AS_detection.swf` and `flash_AS_detection.as` files using the ActionScript variables described earlier in this section, you must upload these files and the HTML files specified by the `altContentURL` and `flashContentURL` variables to your web server.

The files you need to upload to the web server are:

- `flash_AS_detection.swf` (The name of this should not be changed)
- `actionscript_example.html` (This can be renamed as needed)
- `altContentURL` HTML file The HTML file specified by the `altContentURL` variable.
- `flashContentURL` HTML file The HTML file specified by the `flashContentURL` variable, which contains your Flash content.

# Using Server-Side Code to Detect the Flash Player Version

If you are familiar with server-side development languages such as ColdFusion, PHP, or others, you can create a server side application to determine which version of Flash Player is installed using the mime-type information included in the `HTTP_ACCEPT` header information. To do this, users must have Flash Player 6.0r65 (revision 65) or later installed.

With the release of Flash Player 6, the Flash mime-type “application/x-shockwave-flash” was added to the client `HTTP_ACCEPT` header. The `HTTP_ACCEPT` header is sent to the server each time a web page is requested, and includes information on all mime-types the browser can accept. If the user's computer has Flash Player 6.0r65 (revision 65) or later installed, the “application/x-shockwave-flash” entry is added to the request header.

## Important Notes about server side detection

The following issues with server side detection should be closely noted. Internet Explorer on Mac OS is hard-coded to accept `*/*` and cannot be modified dynamically. Secondly, users can manually uninstall Flash Player by deleting the executable itself. This causes the custom accept header to be “orphaned” such that server detection logic thinks Flash has been installed, when in fact it is no longer available. It is also possible to disable ActiveX controls through the Windows XP Service Pack 2 security settings, which will similarly cause the custom accept header to be orphaned.

## Using ColdFusion to detect Flash Player

The following ColdFusion code uses the `cfif` tag to parse the return value of the HTTP Accept header, and checks if the application/x-shockwave-flash mime-type is returned:

```
<cfif #cgi.http_accept# contains "application/x-shockwave-flash">
    // Flash 6r65 or above is installed
<cfelse>
    // Flash was not detected
</cfif>
```

For more information on ColdFusion and the `cfif` tag, see the following article on the Adobe Developer Center: [http://www.adobe.com/devnet/mx/flash/articles/browser\\_hawk.html](http://www.adobe.com/devnet/mx/flash/articles/browser_hawk.html).

## Using PHP to detect Flash Player

The following PHP code uses the `$hasFlash` variable to parse the return value of the HTTP Accept header, and checks if the application/x-shockwave-flash mime-type is returned:

```
<?php
// Search through the HTTP_ACCEPT header for the Flash Player mime-type.
$swfheader = strpos($_SERVER['HTTP_ACCEPT'], 'application/x-shockwave-
    flash');
if($swfheader === false)
{
    $hasFlash=true;
}
else
{
    $hasFlash=false;
}
?>
```

# Installing or Updating the Flash Player

Adobe provides a number of installation options for end users and developers. Standalone installers are provided for download and installation, as are CAB and XPI files that handle integrated installation within Internet Explorer and Netscape-based browsers.

In cases where the detection kit determines that the end user does not have the required Flash Player version, there are a number of options, for example:

**Display alternate, non-Flash content** In the case where Flash is not installed and the correct version is not available, or browser scripting is disabled, you can offer alternative, non-Flash content.

**Direct Users to the Adobe Flash Download Center** You can direct users to the Adobe Flash Download Center at <http://www.adobe.com/go/getflashplayer>. The Flash Download Center automatically determines the browser and platform the user is using, and provides the appropriate Flash Player installer.



**Invoke the Flash Player Express Install process** Provide a streamlined, in-context experience that installs the latest version of Flash Player, and then sends the user back to the site and content that initiated the installation process.

**Rely on the default browser behavior** If you don't implement a Flash Player detection process, the browser will try to automatically install the player in many cases.

Users with Internet Explorer who do not have Flash Player your content requires will go through an "Autoinstall" process using the CAB file specified in the `codebase` attribute of the `<object>` tag. The CAB install will start if the version specified in your `<object>` tag is less than the version the user has.

```
<object classid="clsid:D27CDB6E-AE6D-11cf-96B8-444553540000"
codebase="http://download.adobe.com/pub/shockwave/cabs/flash/swflash.cab#version=6,0,65,0"
width="400"
height="200">
  <param name="src" value="example.swf">
</object>
```

The `#version` parameter tells the browser to look for that version to be installed. If the user does not have the appropriate version the browser will take over and install the latest version from Adobe.

In Firefox, Netscape 8, and Mozilla based browsers a Cross-Platform Install (XPI) process will be invoked for users that do not have Flash Player. This process usually starts by showing a plug-in icon and the text, "Click here to get the plug-in." When the user clicks on the icon they are directed to an appropriate location, depending on the browser in use, where they can download and install Flash Player.

Flash Player is also available from the Firefox plug-in finder service, which can be used for new installs.

So users who do not have Flash Player installed at all will be prompted to install it before they can view your content. If the user already has an older version of Flash Player, or if they have a browser that does not support XPI, your content will be displayed, but it will not display properly. To handle these cases you should implement one of the detection processes to give users the best possible experience.

## Using Flash Player Express Install

Express Install uses the existing Flash Player to upgrade users to the latest version of the Player when it is required for viewing content. As a developer, this means that you have the ability to not only detect when users do not have the latest version of Flash Player, but you can initiate an update that securely installs the latest version of the Player from the Adobe web site. When the installation is complete, the user is directed back your web site, where they can view your Flash content. Express install also relies on the Client-side detection discussed earlier to make sure that the player required to start the process exists. In the case where the requirements are not met alternate content will be presented.

**Note:** Express Install requires that the user has Flash Player 6r65 or later installed on Mac OS or Windows, and that their browser have JavaScript enabled.

### Express Install files

To use Express Install, you must configure the site hosting your Flash content using the Express Install configuration files. You can either use the HTML and SWF templates that come with the detection kit, or modify them to integrate with your web site's look and feel. The required files are:

**playerProductInstall.html** Web page that users will first encounter when attempting to access your Flash content. If they encounter this page with Flash Player 6.0r65, and do not have the minimum required version of Flash Player installed, an installation SWF (the installkit.swf file) that displays the update dialog prompt is downloaded to their browser from the Adobe website.

**AC\_OETags.js** Supplemental JavaScript source file that contains the script for detecting and embedding the SWF file.

**playerProductInstall.swf** SWF file that contains the ActionScript logic used to initiate the Flash Player installation.

**SWF content** When the installation is complete, or if it the Player version your content requires is installed, this is the SWF file that the playerProductInstall.html file will load and play. The Flash Detection Kit includes the file example.swf for testing purposes.

The playerProductInstall.html file contains the JavaScript used to start the detection process. You must edit the JavaScript contained in this file to include the following information:

- the major version of Flash Player required to view your content
- the minor version and revision of Flash required to view your content
- the location of the content to view after installation has completed
- alternate content to display in cases where Flash Player does not exist, or where a Player version earlier than 6.0r65 is installed

For example, if your content requires Flash Player 8.0, the JavaScript variables need to be modified as shown below:

```
// Globals
// Major version of Flash required
var requiredMajorVersion = 8;
// Minor version of Flash required
var requiredMinorVersion = 0;
// Minor version of Flash required
var requiredRevision = 0;
```

Next you can set the page that end users will be sent to after the install is complete. By default, the page will be the same as the location you have placed the playerProductInstall.html file:

```
// Location visited after installation is complete if installation is required
var MMredirectURL = window.location;
```

The script saves the current location in a variable named MMredirectURL and directs the browser back to this location when the install process is complete.

If you wish to direct users to a different web page, you must modify that line of JavaScript to specify the URL of your page:

```
// Location visited after installation is complete if installation is required
var MMredirectURL = "http://www.yoursite.com/yourcontent.html";
```

When you have configured the playerProductInstall.html file, you can immediately start using the Express Install process. Upload the required files (playerProductInstall.html, playerProductInstall.swf, and your content SWF) to the same directory on your web server, and navigate to the playerProductInstall.html page. If you already have Flash Player version that meets your requirements, you will see your Flash content correctly displayed. If you view the page using an older Flash Player, you will be directed to the playerProductInstall.swf file, and the Flash Player installation process will begin.

## Customizing Express Install

The Express Install experience can be customized beyond what Adobe provides in this Flash Detection Kit. Adobe provides an ActionScript callback function that you can change to create your own version of the `playerProductInstall.swf` file. This function is defined in the `playerProductInstallCallback.as` file.

The full set of source files for the Flash Player Express Install process includes:

**playerProductInstall.fla** FLA source file for Adobe Flash MX 2004 and later.

**playerProductInstall.as** ActionScript source for `playerProductInstall.fla`.

**playerProductInstallCallback.as** ActionScript source containing the callback function dictating what happens when end users cancel, complete, or fail to install the new Flash Player.

```
function installStatus(statusValue) {
    if (statusValue == "Download.Complete") {
        // Installation is complete. In most cases the browser window
        // that this SWF is hosted in will be closed by the installer
        // or manually by the end user
    }
    else if (statusValue == "Download.Cancelled") {
        // The end user chose "NO" when prompted to install the new
        // player by default no User Interface is presented in this
        // case. It is left up to the developer to provide an
        // alternate experience in this case
    }
    else if (statusValue == "Download.Failed") {
        // The end user failed to download the installer due to a
        // network failure by default no User Interface is presented
        // in this case. It is left up to the developer to provide
        // an alternate experience in this case
    }
}
```

These functions are provided to give developers better control over the user experience. Over time as the process becomes more widely used this capability may be expanded to give developers even greater flexibility.

## Conclusion

Flash Player detection has gone through different iterations over the years with no true definitive source. This kit serves not as a single solution to every detection need, but a source for some of the best solutions that have been created by the Flash community and Adobe engineering. This kit provides a variety of solutions to common challenges that developers run into when deploying Flash content. Over time this document will grow and change, adding even more solutions to the ever growing Flash community and the platform that serves it.

# Revision History

1.0 Initial revision

1.5 Updated to address Internet Explorer “Active Content” and to fix known bugs.

## Bugs Fixed

<u>Bug #</u>	<u>Description</u>
169074	Player detection crashes Internet Explorer on Windows with Flash player 6.0.22 or 6.0.29
157773	Misspellings in attributes: "aligh" should be "align".
156755	Error messages do not differentiate between "wrong Flash player" vs. "scripting is turned off"
156753	Bug in version checking logic
155346	Cosmetic issues in "alternate content"
155343	Missing whitespace between attributes generated by document.write
155335	Express Install always appends " - Flash Player Installation" to title, even when not necessary
135224	Express Install and the detection kit scripts do not provide messaging to users on unsupported platforms