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The Great Email Debate -- Rich Media V. Text

By Doug Hudiburg

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If there is one thing that gets marketing geeks all sweaty and excited, it's something new that promises to help us get the attention of our target market.

It's little wonder that marketers are excited about the possibility of using rich media email (HTML and Flash are the most common) as a way to jazz up emails and make them more interesting.

Being able to use rich media email as a marketing tool allows marketers to do things they never could do in the past.

Retailers, for instance, can send an email with a picture of a close-out product and a quick "buy me" button, a strategy that has been proven effective for increasing sales.

With Flash technology, you can even send a full multimedia presentation via email, the perfect digital salesperson.

If you look to the leaders in opt-in list marketing, however, you will find that 99% of them still use plain text email as their media of choice.

People with huge opt-in lists such as Cory Rudl, Ken Envoy, Terry Dean, and Marlon Sanders, all use text formatted email messages.

There are a number of reasons why they refuse to change to HTML, but the most important is that it creates results.

They have proven time and time again that the best format is still plain text. Results count. Here are some reasons why text email is still the way to go:

~ Most of the new spam filters (software that kills spam before it hits your inbox, see "resources" below) will *automatically* delete HTML email unless the user adds you to his/her friends list.

~ People receive mostly text email from their friends

and associates, rich media doesn't come from "people" it comes from "companies". Who would you rather buy from?

~ Many email clients still don't handle HTML well, so in order to reach everyone with a high-quality message, you need to produce to the lowest common denominator.

~ Rich media takes longer to load which frustrates prospects. Frustration is a state-of-mind that effective email marketers avoid like the plague.

~ Finally, and this is strictly my opinion, Text email generally looks better and is easier to read as long as it is formatted correctly.

I've decided to go with the experts and keep my ezine in the text only format.

The Wrong Email Format Can Destroy Your Offer

By Rich Hamilton, Jr

Which email format is more effective to use, Text or HTML?

A good question, many experts have been debating over for awhile now, is which email format is more effective. It all depends on who you ask, many people prefer the text format over the HTML format. There are also many people who would rather use HTML over the text format. You can pretty much draw a line right down the middle between the text users and the HTML users, it's that close.

The truth of the matter is that the most effective format to use for your email really depends on the offer

you're presenting.

Both text and HTML email formats have their advantages and disadvantages. In this article I am going to go over the advantages and disadvantages of text and HTML email formats. Let's jump right in and start with the format text.

Text

Obviously the real advantage to using a text format is that you have a white background with black font making it very easy to read. The text format loads fast, no matter what size the email is.

If the email loads fast and is easy to read how can text formats have a disadvantage?

Easy!

The real disadvantage of using text format is when you are using email as a source of marketing. To effectively use email marketing you need to use some sort of tracking software. Without tracking you will never know if the subject line and/or email offer needs work.

The point I am trying to make is that people are very cautious about clicking on tracking and affiliate links. As soon as they see a lengthy url, they get the impression that you are trying to sell them something and immediately delete the email. With a text formatted email you cannot hide long tracking urls from the recipient. With an HTML format you won't run into this problem, which brings us to...

HTML

The biggest advantage of using HTML is that you can hide your tracking urls from the viewer. Instead of having a long url in your email offer, you can use a simple "click here". Not only can you hide your tracking url, but you can also mask it from appearing in the browser window.

Moreover, HTML has a lot of disadvantages. For instance, some people can't view HTML email, while others can view it with a limited amount of space. HTML email files can be sizable and take up a lot of space. Most people who use HTML formatted email use a lot of images and other graphics to make

their email have a professional appearance. But they don't stop and think about the size of the email that they are sending, and whether or not their recipients may have limited space.

Sending large email files is a sure way to get your recipients upset. You don't want to strike out before you have the chance to swing!

You can see that both email formats have their advantages, as well as their disadvantages. As for which format is the right one for you, it all depends on your offer.

If you are sending an email offer that doesn't require any lengthy tracking urls or has no affiliate urls, then text should be your format of choice.

Moreover, if you do have tracking or affiliate urls in your email offer, then HTML is the way to go. When using an HTML format be conservative, not everyone has broadband, you'll find that a lot of people are still using 28.8k modems for their Internet connection.

When sending out an HTML email offer it should have a solid white background with black text, and absolutely no images or graphics. This way the email offer appears to be text and loads fast, when it's actually HTML. Your viewer won't be able to see your long tracking or affiliate url which will increase your click through ratio and that means more sales.

Most autoresponders and email softwares have the ability to send email in both formats, but not all of them. There are still some that don't.

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