

Outlook 2007

HTML Rendering Tips

There have been some concerns recently about HTML rendering incorrectly in Outlook 2007 owing to changes in functionality. Many email marketers have discovered their HTML newsletters are not rendering accurately on customers' computers running Outlook 2007. Why is this happening, and what can be done to eliminate the problems?

Let's begin by defining exactly why these rendering issues have arisen in the first place. Previous versions of Outlook used Internet Explorer for reading content and Microsoft Word for editing and composing.

Microsoft recognized that many customers wanted the editing facilities of Word incorporated into Outlook which is why they opted to use their HTML rendering engine for both reading and composing in Outlook 2007, the plan being to allow unification of the rendering and editing engines.

There are however, some issues which should be considered when using Outlook 2007 to put your email newsletters together. Here is a list of suggestions to help ensure your email newsletter recipients will receive an HTML newsletter which looks exactly how you intended:

- Background images – avoid background images in table cells, using gifs instead.
- Background colours – If a table cell has background colour, avoid nesting another table inside that table.
- Padding and margins – these may behave differently, so check the appearance before sending.
- Embedded e-mail surveys – Include links in your email to surveys on a website.
- Animated GIF files – Animated gifs will appear but will not animate.
- Flash animations – these will just appear as a big red “X”. Instead, send readers to a site to see these images.
- Images/photos - can definitely be used, be sure to include captions in case images are blocked.
- CSS – Be sure to update your CSS templates to reflect the changes above.

As always, sound advice is to test and double-check the appearance of your messages before sending them.



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