

Microsoft Outlook 2007

By now you know the big news. When Microsoft announced that Outlook 2007 would no longer be rendering email based on the Internet Explorer engine but would instead be using Microsoft Word, the email world let out a collective snarl. Some designers even declared that email design had just been jettisoned back five years in time.

To a certain extent they have a point. This change has eliminated many previously available design options. On the other hand, since Microsoft owns a 75-80% share of the corporate email market, they are setting the rules of the game for all the other browsers. While you may find you have fewer design choices, if you play by Microsoft's rules you may also see an increase in your deliverability and renderability across browsers and platforms. That can't be all bad.

Here's what used to be supported but is no longer going to render properly for your Outlook 2007 users:

- + Background images
- + Flash and animated GIFs
- + JavaScript and forms
- + Various CSS (cascading style sheets) properties

Start looking at creating emails without these elements. It is best to stick with tables to build the structure for your email, instead of CSS Positioning. And if you're going to use CSS, use inline CSS. The transition to Outlook 2007 isn't going to happen overnight, but we are beginning to see an ever-increasing adoption rate. By working within the Outlook 2007 boundaries you'll also be increasing your deliverability rates on handheld and mobile devices.

Learn more about the changes in the new Outlook 2007 by visiting the Microsoft information site.

<http://msdn2.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa338201.aspx>

You can also download a CSS validator to help you find anything in your code that may not be compatible with Outlook 2007.

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=0b764c08-0f86-431e-8bd5-ef0e9ce26a3a&displaylang=en>