



The

# Broadcasters' Desktop Resource

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## Technical Tips

### Here's a Flash: Flash is Fading Out!

*By Barry Mishkind*

*[August 2020] Do any of your applications depend upon Flash? If that is so, you will want to be ready for the End of Support – even rejection of Flash applications – by software operating systems.*

No, we are not talking about “The Flash,” the DC Comic’s characters who managed to gain the ability to do things *very fast*. But like flash bulbs (remember them?) Flash (no “The”) is being seen less and less.

In this context, Flash refers to the formerly very popular application platform from Adobe Systems. It has been used for everything from animations to video players and browser-based applications.

Using Flash permitted apps to feature audio and video streaming, as well as full integration of local mouse, keyboard, microphone, and cameras. In the broadcast industry, in particular, Flash supported a number of apps utilized for remote control of studio and transmitter sites.

But, as of December 31, 2020, Flash will essentially be history. That is because it has been what is called “deprecated” by programmers, and will not have support any longer.

#### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

The simple reason for the upcoming changes is that Flash code itself became too vulnerable to Internet malware.

Actually, it was 10 years ago that Apple stopped supporting Flash on its iOS, encouraging use of HTML5 coding as the basis for the latest Internet browsers, etc. for iPhones and iPads. The move cut the user base significantly and, during the next five years or so, the entire IP industry has moved to supporting HTML5.

In addition to HTML5, programmers will continue to use SNMP (Simple Network Management Protocol) to communicate between equipment and the Graphic User Interfaces (GUIs). (Adobe has renamed the newer versions of Flash as Adobe Air, but many programmers have already moved on.)

In the end, all the major browsers announced they were dropping Flash support at the end of the year. In other words, the apps themselves will not suddenly stop working, just that browser connections to Flash code will no longer work with the most current browser versions installed.

#### **NO INSTANT CHANGE NECESSARY BUT...**

You *can*, in theory, continue to use your favorite, older browser without any changes.

If it is only used to do certain initial setup functions, it is likely to continue to work acceptably. Similarly, if you stay with an older browser, you can continue as you have been at least for the near future.

But with no support, the potential for being hurt by malware will increase. That is why the latest browsers will not communicate with Flash.

Thus, the main effect upon end users is that they will need to replace Flash-based applications. Most manufacturers using Flash-based apps like Nautel, Broadcast Devices, and others have planned for this transition and generally are announcing no-cost upgrades to users.

## WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO

During the next four months, you have an opportunity to survey all the various apps you are using, and determine if any of them are using Flash.

As noted, since Apple stopped supporting Flash a long time ago, if you have an app that works on an iPhone or iPad, you likely are doing fine. If you are on a Windows or Android system, you will want to investigate and find out how to proceed.

The first thing to do is ensure you have made a record of the login credentials (name/password) and other communication setup needs.

## GETTING INFORMATION

If you are registered with the manufacturer, it is likely they will be contacting you, if they have not already done so, with upgrade information.

If you are not registered, or do not know (perhaps you have just changed jobs), there are a couple of alternatives.

Public announcements are one. Nautel has long announced their HTML5 control application is coming. And Broadcast Devices has done so as well. Information is on their web sites, and web discussions have answered many questions.

For example, recently on the [BDR Lunch Gathering](#), Bob Tarsio of Broadcast Devices appeared and did [a good Q&A to explain what users need to know](#).

Nautel has also been sharing information on the web, and has committed to a similar discussion on the [Lunch Gathering on September 24<sup>th</sup>](#).

## FINDING OUT

If, running one of your apps, you get a message to update your Flash – that is a good sign that you will need to make changes at some point.

Another way to check is while running the app, right click on the display. If Flash is involved, you should get a Flash “Settings” menu – the clue to seek an upgrade.

However, if you need to know right away for planning, probably the fastest answer will come from calling the Tech Support number for the manufacturer of the gear you have.

A list of many of these manufacturers’ contact information is [located here](#).

The upside of all this is that with the HTML5 browsers, you will likely see some new features incorporated, as well as perhaps even smoother operations.

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