

## Up the WebP chain at Google: Better speed, capability

March 24 2014, by Nancy Owano

## webbb

(Phys.org) —Nicholas Doyle, optimization developer at Akamai Technologies, wrote last December about how image data <u>dominates</u> today's web site bytes, contributing to most of what we see. Loading images quickly is imperative, he said, and for the most part the strategies used to optimize images for web sites have not changed dramatically for quite a while. "Choice of formats between JPEG, GIF and more recently PNG and the choice of lossy compression settings is the usual approach taken by most people today." Doyle spent time implementing image optimizations as part of an Akamai solution and learned a great deal about the topic in the process. Flash-forward to March 2014 and one can say that Mozilla and Google have learned a lot too.

On Google's side, a post on Friday from Husain Bengali, product



manager and WebP optimizer, detailed all that Google has achieved in WebP, a Google-developed image format employing lossy and lossless compression. Webmasters and <u>web developers</u> can use the WebP image format to create smaller and richer <u>images</u> that can help make the <u>web</u> faster.

The post sent a message to developers outside of Google that the data transfer savings and user benefits of WebP are within easy reach. "Our team has been hard at work to make WebP even faster and more capable," he said. "A few months ago, we added support for animated WebP images to Chrome, making WebP the first unified format that can address the key use cases of JPEG, PNG and GIF files. The recent release of libwebp 0.4.0, currently in Chrome's Beta channel, is a culmination of numerous encoder and decoder optimizations that make encoding lossless images twice as fast, and decrease lossless decode time by 25%."

Outside the WebP team's work on improvements, he reported, other teams at Google were deploying WebP in their products. Google Play's online store replaced PNG images with lossless WebP, reducing image file sizes by nearly 35%. YouTube video thumbnails are starting to be served in WebP, he added, with initial results indicating up to a 10% reduction in page load time.

Mozilla, meanwhile, has been paying attention to compression, speeding up the Web and lifting JPEG up into the 21st century. A Mozilla blog recently remarked how the number of photos that the average Web site displays has grown over the years as has the size of those photos. HTML, JS, and CSS files are relatively small in comparison. The Mozilla blog noted too that photos can easily make up the bulk of the network traffic for a page load. Reducing the size of these files has been the goal for optimization. Earlier this month Mozilla introduced its solution, the 'mozjpeg' project, the goal of which is to provide a production-quality



JPEG encoder that improves compression rates. Josh Aas, senior technology strategist at Mozilla Corporation, announced the <u>project</u> on March 5. "What we're releasing today, as version 1.0, is a fork of libjpegturbo with 'jpgcrush' functionality added."

More information: <u>blog.chromium.org/2014/03/webp ... ling-out-</u> across.html <u>developers.google.com/speed/webp/</u>

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