

# Strike it Rich!

 By [Grant Shippey](#)

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Long ago, rich media companies had a reputation for making web pages that were burdened with showy but insignificant elements. But rich media has evolved from a mere animation device into a powerful tool ideal for creating web applications, user interfaces, games, and presentations.

Today, it is not just about animation anymore; there are actually strong business reasons to use rich media rich...it can tell a story, can enhance a brand, and can even create a satisfying user experience.

## Feeling lucky?

The Web used to deliver static pages, but as we moved to the world of web applications, it became clear that HTML wasn't always the best tool for providing a robust front end for real-time web applications, so it morphed to more dynamic applications - or rich media, which then helped bring the web into the Technicolor world of on-demand information, entertainment, and e-business.

Despite this, most content for businesses on the web today is still pretty dull. So, rich media's goal is to let users have a fun experience whilst getting the information they need out of it. Basically, rich media is starting to speak the language of business improvement by helping companies to construct a compelling experience.

But why should you incorporate rich media into your site? Because it enhances the user experience, it highlights your brand, it creates a narrative, and it provides users with immediate content and information.

## Rich media gets richer

Rich media can add interactivity to information-sharing sites, create narratives, and provide immediate information in a way that flat HTML sites cannot. But these are not the only benefits of incorporating rich media into your online experience.

The layer of interactivity it offers also gives visitors the opportunity to engage with your site. So why not create a rich and memorable user experience that will educate consumers about the values of your company or its products?

However, before creating an experience that will resonate with your users, it is vital to consider exactly who your users are - and whether they are even able to benefit from such an experience.

Are your users ready for an interactive, all-encompassing experience, or do they just want to find contact details? Are they

likely to have the capability to view a broadband site at all, or will their processors and connections wane under the demand?

You can find out by spending some time getting to know your customers. Also, find out how they run their day-to-day business online. Then look at the ways in which the use of rich media can enhance their world.

But be careful not to lose them in the process. If you are creating a barebones information site, using rich media or creating a broadband experience may hinder your users' ability to find what they need. So, to provide a compelling, consistent experience, your customers' basic needs must be considered first.

At the end of the day it is all about getting your users and visitors to identify with your site - whether through audio, Flash, video, words, or some fitting combination of these elements.

Ultimately, rich media suggest not only that some very cool content is headed your way, but it also has real potential for becoming a robust platform for building brand awareness online by interacting with your visitors.

## ABOUT GRANT SHIPPEY

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