

From: Steven Sinofsky
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 1999 8:33 PM
To: Tuan Nguyen
Subject: RE: Support for SVG

Doesn't it seem highly unlikely that netscape will really put this in a browser unless someone else does it via opensource?

Yikes...

-----Original Message-----

From: Tuan Nguyen
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 1999 8:30 PM
To: Channing Verbeck; Nicholas Clay; Cristiano Pierry; Bharat Shah (NT)
Cc: Darryn Dieken; Thomas Reardon; Steven Sinofsky; Mark Ryland; Steve Sklepowich; Robert Bennett; Chris Jones
Subject: Support for SVG

We need to decide if we plan to support SVG in future versions of IE.

Background

W3C has formed a SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics) working group (WG) and its charter is to come up with a W3C recommendation for vector graphics on the Web by 08/99. VML (submission from MS, Autodesk, HP, Macromedia, Visio) and PGML (submission from Adobe, IBM, Netscape, Sun) were originally discussed and debated. SVG WG has publicly published a detailed requirement document (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WD-SVGReq>) and is in the process of publishing the first specification draft around the middle of next month (<http://www.w3.org/Graphics/SVG/Group/1999/01/25/>). This milestone will be marked by an official W3C press release along with testimonial quotes from various SVG WG participants. Among companies signed up for providing quotes are Adobe, Apple, Corel, IBM, Inso, Netscape, Sun, Quark, and Visio. I have NOT yet committed MS to a quote but I will need to give the SVG chair a definite answer by next week. It is obvious that having a MS quote (implied endorsement) will give a lot of credibility to SVG.

Status

One of the SVG chair's main goals is to come up with a specification that can rival existing Web raster formats. So it was no surprise that SVG turned into a XML version of a Postscript superset and focused on a "final form" metafile-like representation. But it also attempts to provide hooks to support some of the VML modeling requirements.

Regardless of the SVG outcome and direction, we already position VML as a parallel solution to Web vector graphics. Its main advantage is its seamless integration into Office2000 applications and IE5. The current plan of having the next version of VML (2.0) as the XML metafile format for GDI+ remains unchanged. VML is and will always be the graphics format for Office. It will evolve to support more graphical features based on GDI+ and will be positioned well as the clipboard graphics interchange format for future versions of Windows. Tight VML integration to future versions of IE will ensure high-fidelity graphics viewing of Office documents in our browsers.

Recommendation

I would recommend that we issue a general testimonial quote in favor of SVG support in future versions of IE. My assessment is that SVG has gained enough critical support mass to become a future W3C recommendation regardless of MS view. I expect that its industry adoption will be quick based on Adobe/IBM/Netscape/Sun's commitment to provide multi-platform viewers and support in their authoring tools. Here are the pros and cons:

Pros:

- * Strengthen our on-going message of embracing Web standards
- * Reinforce our browser strategy of being ahead of Netscape in implementing new Web standards
- * Maintain credibility in the Working Group to influence the SVG outcome

Cons:

- * Fall behind on support of new standards in browser, especially with respect to Netscape
- * Add credibility to Adobe's push for standardizing Postscript with the W3C blessing
- * Play into Sun's hands of promoting Java2D as the graphics foundation for SVG

Next Steps

Assuming that we decide to go with my recommendation, I need to identify the owner of the SVG implementation in our browsers. Details on whether we do it ourselves or acquire it from other companies (Adobe?) still need to be sorted out. From talking to Channing, I propose that his group should own this task.

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I can work with StevSk on the quote and get it approve at the right level.

Your feedback is important and appreciated.

Thanks,

-- Tuan

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