

## **Flash Streaming**

Flash streaming is very similar to other streaming solutions in terms of its components. It consists of a server, an encoder and a player. However with flash streaming the similarities stop here.

Unlike many other streaming solutions, Flash was purposely designed to be very interactive. All of the elements used are fully customizable to do the specific job that you would like to do. Let's take a look at these in more detail:

### **Server**

The flash media server is a very vital and power piece of the puzzle. It allows user to connect to the content very quickly and has the ability to serve thousands of people at a time. The server has many customizable options available to it. For example, if the server is only going to be used for audio streaming the server would be configured to allow a lot more concurrent connections than that of a video server.

### **Encoder**

There are many different encoding solutions available for flash streaming. The most notable being Adobe Flash Media Encoder which is free and available from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)

Encoding for flash streams has lots of varied options which allow you to get great results. For high bit rate streams (such as good quality 800Kbps video) the H.264 codec is usually used. For lower bit rate streams the VP6 codec is preferable.

Flash encoders always push to the flash server using the RTMP protocol, taking away the need for port forwarding in most cases.

For more information on codec's and compression performances for flash see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H.264>

### **Player**

The player is the most complicated section on the puzzle. Many people think it's simple in that all that is required is users to have adobe flash player installed on their system. In short, it is kind of like that but with many further variables.

These further variables are what you actually **see** on the webpage. When you visit various different websites their players generally look different to each other. This is because these are files which contain the behavior and colour elements of the player. Adobe Flash Player is the part that reads these files and displays them in the correct place in the page.

Many flash players on websites have been built on a free open source file and then customized to their own liking in Abode Flash Professional.

A great example of these open source players is the JW Flash player. You can find and play with it here: [www.longtailvideo.com](http://www.longtailvideo.com)

### **Conclusion**

As you will see there are many things to think about when it comes to flash streaming. Sharpstream can provide just the server or all elements of flash streaming depending on your requirements. Feel free to contact us for further technical information about flash by filling in the contact form at [www.sharp-stream.com](http://www.sharp-stream.com)