

Media Item Caching

We have made it our top priority to improve the overall performance and user experience of our Web sites. One of the many things we have implemented to achieve this goal is enabling media item caching. We understand for some that this practice is something new and a little concerning. We have created this short document to help alleviate any questions and apprehension you may have.

What is Media Item Caching?

Media item caching is a computer process that helps your computer run faster and load frequently visited Web sites faster. The process temporarily stores recent and regularly used information in your browser in a temporary file on your harddrive.

Media item caching helps reduce the number of HTTP requests your computer sends out. When you visit a Web site, your computer sends a HTTP request for information about the Web site. If media item caching is not utilized this process occurs each time you visit the Web site, which can slow down your computer and detract from your experience. However with media item caching enabled, the Web site information is requested once and stored in a temporary file where it is immediately accessible by your computer.

Media item caching also reduces the download size of a file by storing it in the temporary folder. If a Web site requires a 50K file is downloaded, with media item caching the download size is reduced by 50K. This feature of media item caching is most noticed on Web sites with multiple images, style sheets, scripts, or flash.

How does Media Item Caching Affect Me?

Your browser only caches media items from Web sites you have previously visited. If you are visiting a Web site for the first time or your browser's cache is empty, the benefits of cached media items are not noticeable.

Most individuals are first-time visitors to a Web site, and most of the time your media items have not been changed. So the possibility that a repeat visitor to your Web site will run into a media item that has been replaced is negligible. The most plausible situation of a replaced media item being noticed is by an administrator user who changed the file in the first place.

If you are an administrator user who wants to force a HTTP request to view the new media item, press **Ctrl+F5** while on the Web site containing the cached media item.

Why Can't ACS Invalidate the Cache After Replacing a Media Item

We, Extend and ACS Technologies, do not cache media items for you. All we do is tell the browser to cache media item files locally. Due to security reasons, we cannot invalidate a user's browser cache. We rely on your browser's adherence to today's standard practices to control how we cache media. In theory, a browser can cache everything whether or not it is told to do so. Most browsers must be configured for this option, but there are a few that cache everything by default.

Is There a Way to Make Sure Cached Media is Not Viewed?

Media items can be cached by proxies, firewalls, Web filters, and browsers whether you consent or not. To be certain a user does not see a cached media item, make certain you upload new media items with unique names.