

Is It Video or Is It Gifeo?

By Jim Kelley and Dave Hubai

The popularity of online video has exploded over the past couple of years. According to a recent Nielsen report, the total number of video streams increased 41% from a year earlier, and the total number of people streaming video increased to 18%. Beyond the stats, we know there's a demand for more video, as marketers have been discussing ways to incorporate video into their e-mail marketing campaigns. Unfortunately, putting a video clip in an e-mail campaign still doesn't really work. Although there are a few workable solutions, like Goodmail's Certified Video, most recipients won't be able to view the video due to tight security around the inbox.

However, there is a way to add video motion to your e-mails that will be viewable by most users. Introducing video's cousin, the gifeo.

The gifeo is simply an animated GIF converted from a video. Frame for frame, it's pretty much the same live action feel, just without sound. It adds a visually exciting component to your messages and allows you to utilize video content from your Web site. And of course, it promotes click-through activity to your Web site when people want to see more.

Already the NFL has successfully incorporated gifeo into a recent edition of their Fantasy Newsletter, and although the file size of the animated GIF was just over 1MB, the delivery and spam results were identical. While it can be a successful and fairly easy tactic to implement, here are some important things to keep in mind when adding gifeo to your e-mail campaigns:

- Outlook 2007: Animations don't work, including animated GIFs, which is what a gifeo is. So be sure to include your primary message/promo within the first frame as that's all Outlook 2007 will display.
- Video length and file size: It is important to edit the gifeo and keep it short. File size can get large quickly, so make sure to keep file size in check in order to load quickly and preserve a good customer experience on download. Large images files can also add to your spam score.
- Stream it: Renaming the .GIF to a .JPG file will force the animation to play as it is loading, perfect for that preview pane. Keep in mind, however, the image will appear broken when locally referenced in the HTML code. You need to use the absolute path, i.e. <http://www.yoursite.com/...>



- **Metering:** Send your e-mail campaign a little slower than normal. Many customers could be downloading the gifeo at the same time, so metering helps avoid adding that extra stress on the friendly servers that host this.
- **Sound:** Again, an animated GIF does not play sound. Your customers will need to click through to a Web site or landing page to see the sound and video combined.
- **Call to action:** While the gifeo is a strong call to action in and of itself, some of your customers may have images off by default. Be sure to include a text link to help push click-through activity.

Maybe you might like to use gifeo to promote your new online catalog, an instructional video, or an exclusive message from the CEO. For more information on how this is done, contact your e-Dialog account team representative. Let's get gifeo in your e-mail today!