

# Should You Upgrade Your E-zine From Text to HTML?

By Alexandria K. Brown

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Alexandria K. Brown  
alexandria@ezinequeen.com

Boost Business With Your Own E-zine <http://www.ezinequeen.com/>

A few years ago, when I first started seeing HTML e-zines in my inbox, I admit I was jealous. They were attractive, attention getting, snazzy. They made my text e-zines look boring.

But my mind fought the idea of upgrading my own. "My readers appreciate my e-zine for its content," I told myself. "They don't need some slick design to get their attention. They just want my information, straight up. Publishing in HTML won't make a difference."

I was wrong.

Well, I was right that my readers receive my e-zine for its content. After all, that's why they subscribed -- for my concise, how-to articles.

But I was mistaken that a better "presentation" wouldn't make a difference.

After much deliberation, I decided to give HTML a whirl. I had my e-zine professionally designed in HTML, featuring my logo, colors, and photo.

And when I sent out my first HTML issue, I was blown away by the responses:

"Thank you! It's so much easier on the eyes."

"Your e-zine now gets my attention instantly, and makes me want to read it right away."

"This makes such an impact!"

"I get dozens of text e-zines that all look the same, and now yours stands out."

Now, I'm not saying that publishing in HTML is the answer for everyone. But you should definitely consider it. Let's take a closer look...

## Text Versus HTML: Round One

First off, let's all agree that it's ridiculously easy to publish in text. That's a good thing.

If you're just beginning your e-zine and are a bit overwhelmed, text is a great place to start. You can then focus on developing great content and publishing on a regular basis, without worrying about HTML design and coding snafus.

Text also gives you complete freedom and flexibility -- you can add new sections and delete others any time you feel like it, without having to redesign your entire e-zine.

But let's face it: There are hundreds of thousands of text e-zines out there that all look the same. I subscribe to 30+ text e-zines, and they all seem to lump together in my e-mail inbox.

The ones that catch my eye and make me read on -- they're HTML.

### Let's Look at the Facts

"Okay, okay," you say. "I know HTML e-zines look great. But do they get better results?"

I'll let these statistics answer that question:

- \* HTML e-zines are read MORE OFTEN than plain text e-zines.
- \* HTML e-zines have a higher CLICK-THROUGH rate. (That is, people are more likely to click on any links you provide to your site or sales offers.)
- \* HTML e-zines reinforce your BRAND by carrying the same look as your Web site and other marketing materials with your logo, colors, etc.
- \* HTML e-zines allow you to TRACK your readership by showing how many people on your list actually open each e-zine you send.

### What You MUST Know If you Want to Publish in HTML

A year or two ago it just wasn't safe to publish in HTML, because the people on your list with older e-mail programs (about 20-30% of your readership) wouldn't be able to read it. These people would only see a bunch of gibberish code.

But now there's a technology that effortlessly jumps this hurdle: multi-part MIME. This protocol automatically displays the HTML version to your readers who can view HTML e-mail, and an automatic text backup to those who can't.

So if you want to make the jump to HTML, make sure any list service or list software you choose offers multi-part MIME

technology. They may just call it "text backup" in their marketing copy.

It's also nice if you can offer your readers a choice in what they want to receive. Why? While I got dozens of compliments and thank-yous after switching to HTML, I also got a few people asking if they could still receive my e-zine in TEXT! Go figure... ; )

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Online marketing coach Alexandria K. Brown, "The E-zine Queen," is author of the award-winning tutorial package, 'Boost Business With Your Own E-zine.' To learn more about this step-by-step program, and to sign up for FREE how-to articles and FREE teleclasses, visit <http://www.EzineQueen.com/>

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