

Useful Website Widgets

What's a Web Widget?



Sample Weather Widget

These are self-contained applications that can be added to a web page easily without having to know too much about programming. They usually come in the form of Java script or Adobe Flash objects. Also known as gadgets, web badges or snippets.

This web owner has always referred to these as Applets or Mini-Applets. The term comes from Java Applets and I think you can consider the Shockwave scripting as Flash Applets.

Bloggers and MySpace users quickly adopt Widgets or (Blidgets) as a way to decorate there content.

But for the web owner this is an inexpensive way to add life to your website and maybe add some value as well.

What Can You Do with a Widget?

There are all sorts of web widgets that do all kinds of things like; scrolling banners, hit counters, cursor effects, clocks, calendars, photo galleries, shout box, games, media feeds and more. It really is amazing all the stuff that is out there.

Shop for Web Widgets

- WidgetBox.com
- FancyGens.com
- DynamicDrive.comjPowered.com
- Widgipedia.com
- BraveNet.comCodeBrain.com
- GlitterTools.com

Lets look at some useful ones like Banners, News Feeds and Slide Shows.

Take a look at what I have posted here at [Widget Page 1](#) . Already you can see how noisy the page is with all this stuff going on.

New Form of Advertising?

These widgets are a little bit customizable but you might have noticed the additional advertising. These are like virtual promotional's for web sites. Many of these are self-serving to WidgetBox or FancyGens and because they are free the link tab can not be removed.

WidgetBox is an example of a distribution management company that supplies free widgets to users for developers of widgets. In this case a program developer could advertise themselves or one of their clients.



There are companies out there that can design a custom widget for you that you could give away free on your website. If your widget is useful enough you may find that your site will gain thousands of links back to itself which will help you immensely for Google Page Rank.

Most widgets are “As-Is” so if you don’t want the additional advertising you need to look at other types of applets.

While many Bloggers and MySpacers are getting lots of free toys to decorate their pages they are in effect adding advertisements. This is what drives the Widget Market.

Note:

One thing to watch out for are widgets that depend on scripts or content hosted on another website. Things change on the web. Web site pages come and go. If your widget gets old it might become a dead link at some point or just stop functioning.

Widgets that do not require outside resources

If you look hard enough you will find widgets for the web hobbyist that with a little reading can still be installed easily and will probably work forever because they do not require any resources beyond your website.

Take a look at what I have posted here at [Widget Page 2](#)

For the most part these are open-source java script. Most of them are free to use and are customizable.

Google Gadgets

No article on widgets would be complete with out mentioning what Google has been up to with their [Google Gadgets](#) These are pretty easy to install and are by a trusted source.

Take a look at what I have posted here at [Widget Page 3](#)

Realtors might find the local temperature useful if selling property in warmer locations. It is quite easy to point this gadget to any zip code.

The Google Talk gadget is an online chat. This may be useful if you want to add it to your contact page or maybe a collaborative project page as you will need to know the persons address if you want to call them. Signup is simple.

And don't forget to feed my fish! Games are always fun to add stickiness to your website. Where users can just have fun wasting time on your site. If you do not see the fish just hit the refresh button on your browser.

Conclusion

Web widgets are fun and can add value to your web site but, be careful not to get too carried away. Widgets often look "cheesy" and can make your website look like its full of bumper stickers. Choose a widget based on customizability and usefulness.

Most web designers should have no problem installing a widget for you on your website. Just remember that they are for the most part "AS-IS"

Need help with a widget?

Why not contact [Site Mechanix](#) were you can just rent a web guy when you need one.

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