Q: Showing video on the web?

A: You can currently show video on a website in 3 main ways:

i. Progressive Download: Progressive Download is the approach most commonly used by small to medium sized websites who want to add video to their website. It simulates true streaming and is the cheapest and easiest option. When a visitor to your website clicks on the appropriate link, your video starts downloading to their computer. It begins to play (using the media player software on their computer) as soon as a portion of your video file has been received.
We can create a simple hyperlink to your video file, or some HTML code to embed the file into your web page. Depending on your site design, functionality and level of expertise we can provide you with the level of support you require.

ii. Download: If you use the Download approach for your web video, when a visitor to your website clicks on the appropriate link, your entire video is downloaded to their computer before they can view it. Although this provides faster access to different parts of your video, users will have to wait for your whole video file to download before they can start viewing.

iii. True Streaming:If you offer your web video via true Streaming, your video file is sent to the user in an almost constant stream, and the user watches your video as it arrives. So a visitor to your website can start watching the file almost as soon as they click on the appropriate link on your site.
To stream your video, we would encode your video, create a Flash file, and provide this to a specialist Internet Service Provider with a specialised streaming web host server. They provide a hyperlink or HTML code which we embed into your webpage. This is a more expensive option but the advantages of true streaming include immediate viewing of your video, the option to cope with much larger video files and even to broadcast live events, and the ability to detect users' connection speeds & automatically supply appropriate file sizes.
File formats: Your finished video has to be encoded to create a digital file format that is compatible with the web. The most commonly used file formats for web videos are: Flash, MPEG4, Quicktime, RealMedia and WMV.

Balancing quality & speed of access: When your video is encoded into a digital file format for the web, this compresses it to reduce the file size (so it loads and plays quickly). If the video is compressed too much it affects the quality. The solution is to compress it enough to minimise loading and playing time, while maintaining sufficient quality so it looks good and doesn't stutter.

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