

Technical Note TN2020

Browser Plug-ins for Mac OS X

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This document describes the unique features of browser plug-ins for Mac OS X. You should read this document if you are:

- writing a browser for Mac OS X
- porting a browser to Mac OS X
- writing a browser plug-in for Mac OS X
- porting a browser plug-in to Mac OS X

This document assumes that you already know how to create a Netscape-style browser plug-in, and how to create a CFM library for the Mac OS X.

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Overview

Browser plug-ins for Mac OS X follow the same basic plug-in architecture for traditional Mac OS that was introduced by Netscape. A browser plug-in is implemented as a CFM (Code Fragment Manager) library; all calls between the browser and the plug-in assume CFM-calling conventions. All calls between the browser and plug-in are made using simple `ProcPtr`s instead of `UPPs`.

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Required changes from Earlier Versions of Mac OS

Browser plug-ins for Mac OS X are similar to browser plug-ins for Mac OS 7, 8 and 9 with the following differences:

- Carbon plug-ins must link to `CarbonLib` instead of `InterfaceLib`, `QuickTimeLib`, et cetera.
- All Carbon plug-ins must have a 'carb' resource with an ID of zero (this resource need not contain any data).
- The main entry point of the plug-in should be a function "main" instead of a routine descriptor "mainRD" (There are no routine descriptors in Carbon on Mac OS X).
- All calls between the plug-in and the browser use simple `ProcPtr`s rather than `UPPs`.
- A Carbon plug-in's file type should be 'BRPL' instead of 'NSPL'. This change is designed to prevent already

shipping `InterfaceLib` browsers and installers from finding and attempting to use carbonized plug-ins.

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Other differences

A plug-in can be a simple CFM library, but may also be built as a package, or as a packaged data-fork-only file. Packaged data-fork-only plug-ins are encouraged since they can be installed on non-HFS file systems. On traditional Mac OS, many browsers will look for plug-ins in a directory adjacent to the browser as well as in the System Folder's "Internet Plug-Ins" folder. On Mac OS X plug-ins should only be placed in the `/Library/ Internet Plug-Ins` directory. The location of the directory can be determined programmatically with `FindFolder`, specifying `kLocalDomain` (-32765) for the `vRefNum` and `kInternetPlugInFolderType` ('fnet') for the folder type.

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References

See Apple Technical Note TN2003 for general information about Carbonizing your code, <http://developer.apple.com/technotes/tn/tn2003.html>. For more information about how to write a browser plug-in for traditional Mac browser plug-in information, see Netscape's plug-in documentation at the address <http://developer.netscape.com/docs/manuals/communicator/plugin/index.htm>.

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