



WebDev Insights

Browser Support Matrix

Exploring how developers think about browser support when using new features

About the Research

Objectives:

Understand what browsers and versions people consider essential before they can start using a feature to aid in creating a browser support matrix.

Approach:

- **Survey:** "Browser Support"



233 participants from Google sourced research community.



Respondents represented a mix of front-end and full stack developers, all of whom code.



Fieldwork dates:

11/10/2022 - 11/27/2022

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Detailed Findings

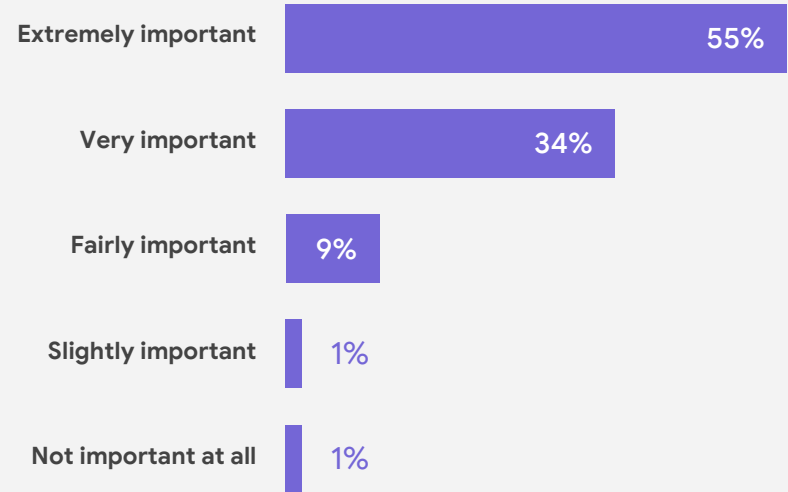
When considering new features, browser support is highly important to developers.

When working on a website's functionality, devs often mention browser support and cross-browser compatibility as information they want to know before implementing new platform features.

Aside from browser support, they seek information about functionality, performance, security, integration, ease of use, and any guides available that would help them with implementing the feature.

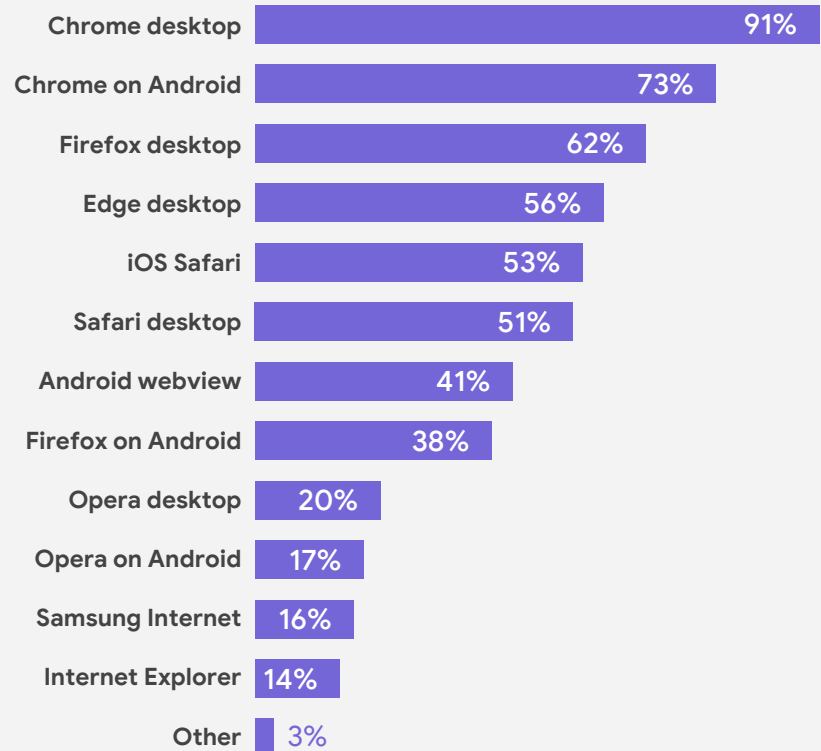
Q4. When you are working on a website's functionality, what do you need to know about a new web platform feature before you can use it?

Importance of Knowing Which Browsers and Versions Can Support a New Feature When Deciding to Use it



Q8. In general, how important is knowing which browsers and versions can support a new feature in deciding to use it? (N=219)

Browsers Devs Feel Must Be Supported In Order To Use a Web Feature



Q5. Which of these browsers must support a web feature before you can use it? Select all that apply. (N=220)

Most devs desire at least some backwards compatibility.

Regardless of the web browser, roughly half of developers believe a new web feature should be supported by at least the current and previous major version.

Between one-quarter and one-third of devs would only require support from the current major version.

For browsers used less frequently by devs and users alike, developers are slightly more likely to say no support of any version is needed.

Q9. When you're considering a new web feature, which versions of each of these browsers need to support it before you use it?

	In just the current major version	In the current and previous major version	In earlier versions as well	No support needed in any version
Chrome desktop (n=199)	34%	47%	18%	1%
Chrome on Android (n=159)	29%	53%	16%	1%
Firefox desktop (n=135)	28%	53%	18%	1%
Firefox on Android (n=83)	29%	57%	14%	0%
Edge desktop (n=122)	25%	58%	16%	0%
Safari desktop (n=112)	24%	58%	17%	1%
iOS Safari (n=116)	22%	57%	20%	1%
Android Webview (n=90)	32%	50%	16%	2%
Opera desktop (n=43)	26%	60%	12%	2%
Opera on Android (n=37)	30%	51%	16%	3%
Samsung Internet (n=35)	26%	54%	17%	3%
Internet Explorer (n=31)	39%	42%	16%	3%

*respondents were only shown the browsers they selected in an earlier question as browsers that must support a web feature before they can use it

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to testing browser and version support, and developers utilize many different strategies.

Devs most commonly mention the following three methods for learning more about browser support:

Straight from the source.

Some developers say they will look to the feature's website, compatibility manual, or release notes to determine which browsers/versions are supported.

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Running their own tests.

A popular method is trial and error; developers manually test out the feature on different browsers to determine its compatibility.

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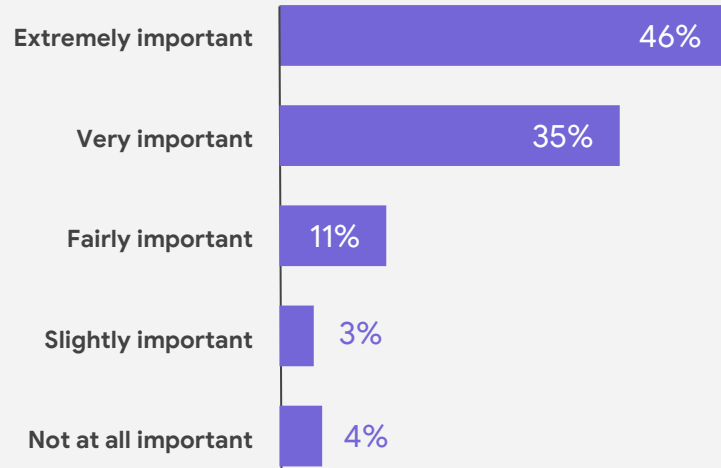
Websites and blogs.

Devs look to online tools and sources of information to find out more, with caniuse.com and MDN receiving the most mentions.

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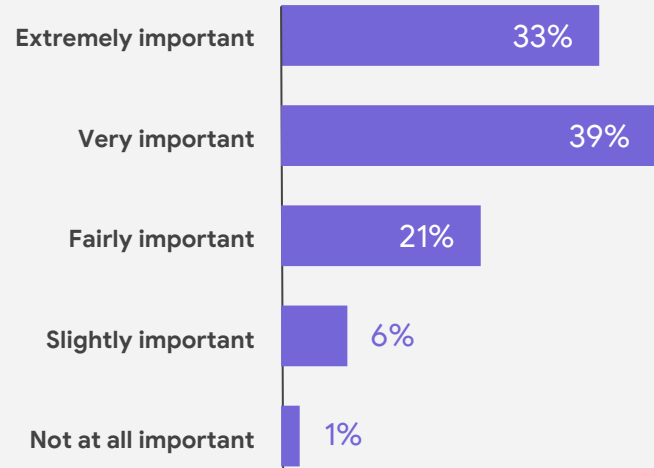
Knowing about browser support for user-enabled features is slightly more important than knowing a feature is shipping soon, though the majority of developers (81% and 72% respectively) find both at least very important.

How important is it to know about browser support for web features that must be enabled by the user?



Q6. How important, if at all, is it for you to know about browser support for web features that must be enabled by the user? (N=219)

How important is it to know whether a browser is planning to ship a feature in an upcoming release?



Q7. How important, if at all, is it for you to know whether a browser is planning to ship a feature in an upcoming release? (N=219)

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Appendix

Q2. About what percentage of your time is spent in coding? (N=223)

