

Spanglefish 3

The Spanglefish system was first set up in 2006, with the upgrade to version 2 being made in 2012.

Since then there was a small update around 2016 to make sites on the system more mobile-friendly. However because of the way the system was originally built and the server it runs on there are limitations to how modern we can make sites on it.

Because of this we decided to create version 3 as a complete rebuild, effectively starting from scratch. This has allowed us to make sites truly mobile-friendly using the latest web standards and with a much more flexible admin system.

Sites on Spanglefish 1 and 2 were limited to (for instance) one document page, one map, one calendar, one contact form etc. On Spanglefish 3 pages are constructed from a number of blocks, and each block can be (for instance) a folder of documents or a form so you could have (eg) multiple maps throughout your site.

Sites on Spanglefish 2 are only partly mobile-friendly - enough to keep Google happy but not providing a particularly good experience for users. On Spanglefish 3 sites are properly mobile-friendly and easy to use on phones and tablets.

Sites on Spanglefish 3 cost £78 per year compared to £29.95 on Spanglefish 2. However all come with SSL certificates which would normally cost more on Spanglefish 2. SSL certificates are becoming more essential for sites as Google has started highlighting 'unsecure' http sites and downgrading them in search results compared to https ones.

We believe both version 2 and version 3 of Spanglefish can be compliant with the new UK accessibility regulations, but the modern way version 3 is built means we'll be more easily able to tweak the code to improve it in this respect as we need to.

Spanglefish 2 had very limited image sizes, (max 550 pixels wide) due to our need to restrict space used on the server. Spanglefish 3 is cloud-based and we can be much more generous with images saved at up to 1200 pixels wide. We're also able to lift the file size limits we imposed on things like PDF documents.

Spanglefish 3 uses the Cloudflare CDN to distribute much of the static content on sites, making version 3 sites quicker to load than version 2.

Spanglefish 3 sites are optimised for sharing on social media, with Facebook Open Graph and Twitter Card tags built into the code of each page.

There are a variety of other improvements - for instance there are blocks for page and subpage navigation and to show when a page was last updated etc.

Much of the functionality of Spanglefish 3 can be seen by visiting the manual which is also built on the system.

<https://manual.spanglefish.org>