

# The Loading Spinner

AKA, the “throbber”

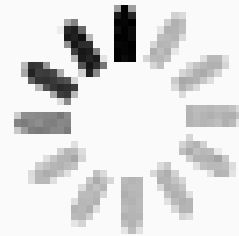


# Why do we have loading spinners?

Purpose: tells the user that the computer is performing an action in the background

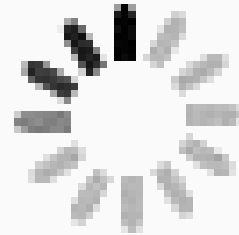
ex:

- downloading content
- conducting intensive calculations
- communicating with an external device



# Why do we have loading spinners?

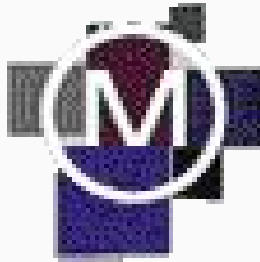
- Unlike other progress bars, does not communicate how much of the content has been loading



# History

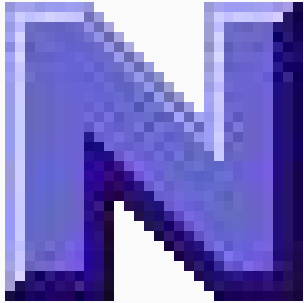
# early 1990's: Mosaic

- first appearance usually credited to NCSA Mosaic web browser
- clicking on the browser would stop the application from running



# early 1990's: Netscape

- origination of the term “throbber”



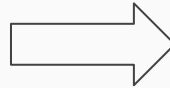
# 1990's - today: Microsoft Windows NT

- Early throbbers were quite large
- Reduced in usefulness as web browsers and computer systems introduced wait cursors
- Switch into annular shape



**1993**

Windows



**2006**

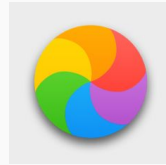
Windows Vista

# 1980's - today: Apple's "Spinning Pinwheel"



1988

classic Mac OS (2-bit)



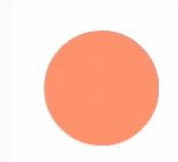
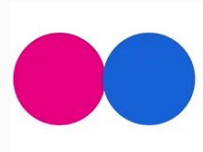
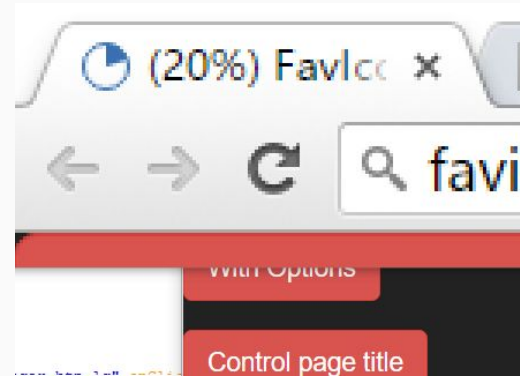
2015

Mac OS X El Capitan



# Today

- Images used for throbbers are less elaborate.
- Browsers (Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Opera) replace Favicons with small annular versions
- Many companies have their own throbber.



# Cool stuff

- <http://tobiasahlin.com/spinkit/>
- [https://joannehan1.github.io/joanne-webdesign/07\\_loadingspinner/index.html](https://joannehan1.github.io/joanne-webdesign/07_loadingspinner/index.html)

# Sources

<https://www.jwz.org/doc/about-jwz.html>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosaic\\_\(web\\_browser\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosaic_(web_browser))

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spinning\\_pinwheel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spinning_pinwheel)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Throbber>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windows\\_wait\\_cursor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windows_wait_cursor)