Facebook Fan Page iframe applications starter guide

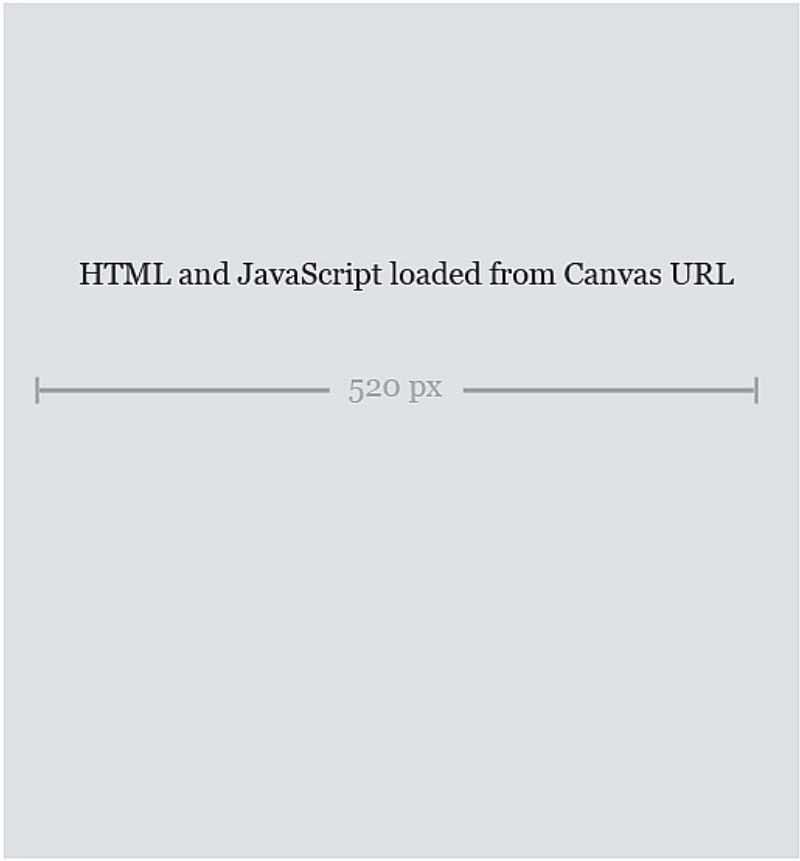
from hostFB developers team

Introduction to Facebook fan page iframe apps

Facebook allows you to use your own application or external web page within the context of Facebook page. From March 2011, Facebook doesn't host your application and allows you to use standard HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP, Python or C# for your application.

Applications on Facebook are loaded into Canvas Page. It's sort of empty canvas which holds your application within the iframe. The Canvas Page is populated by providing a Canvas URL, which literally is the path to the application on the server that contains html, css and Java Script of your app. When someone requests the Canvas Page, the Canvas URL is loaded into the iframe, so the user sees the content from the canvas on the following page.

Since the iframe application is loaded in context of Facebook page, you need to make sure that your application is not wider than 520 px and is not taller than 800 px. Otherwise, the horizontal and vertical scrollbars will appera in the iframe area.



Hosting iframe apps at hostFB

hostFB provides you with the server to hold your application, and gives back the Canvas URL to your app. You'll have to put all of your application files (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, etc) into .ZIP, and then upload .ZIP into the provided server space. hostFB hosts static apps for now, and doesn't allow php files to be submitted.

Before you upload the app you need make sure that:

1. Your app contains allowed file types only: .zip, .html, .css, .js, .txt, .gif, .jpg, .png, .ico;
2. Your app works correctly locally;
3. There is default index.html file in the root of your app;
4. Your app .ZIP doesn't exceed 100 MB.

We kindly ask you to run your application locally (if that's an html application with or without flash, you may double click the index.html or simply drag and drop it into the browser window to preview) first, to make sure it looks like just like the way you planned. If the application doesn't display its content or function properly, obviously the Canvas URL will display incomplete page.

Adding iframe app to your Facebook Fan Page

There are two major steps to add an iframe app to your Facebook Fan Page. They are:

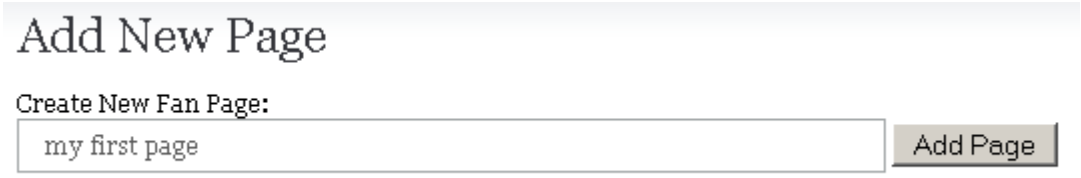
1. Uploading an app through hostFB services; and
2. Installing an app via Facebook developers area.

Below you will find step-by-step guide explaining these two steps.

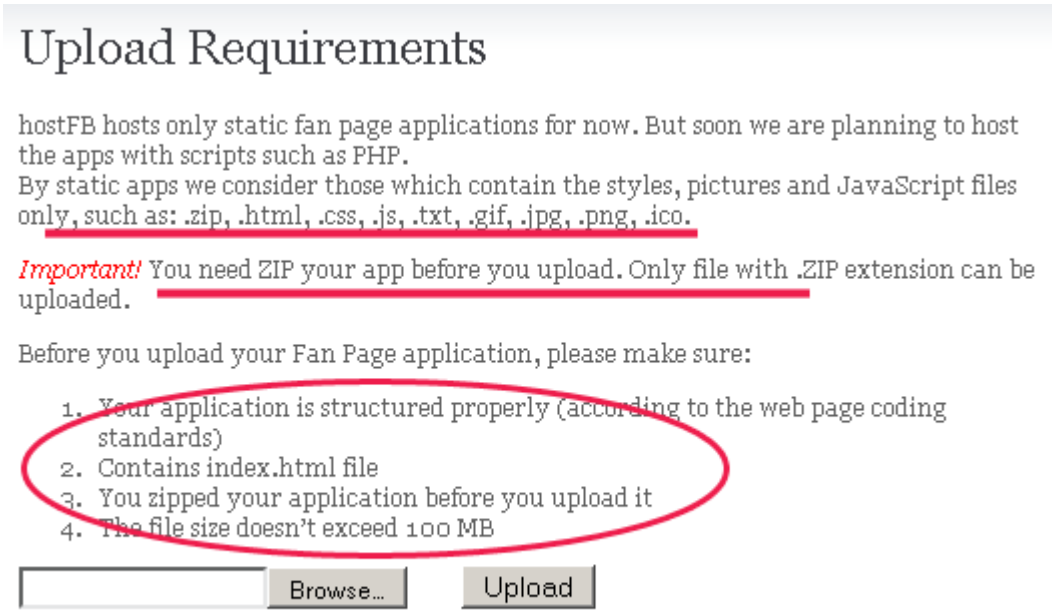
1. Uploading an app through hostFB services

hostFB is an amazing and absolutely free way for you to host your Facebook fan page iframe app. You don't have to go through all this long process of registering the hosting and waiting for it being activated. Instead, you need spend just few minutes on registration at hostFB.com, upload your app through the service and get the Canvas URL for further installation via Facebook developers area.

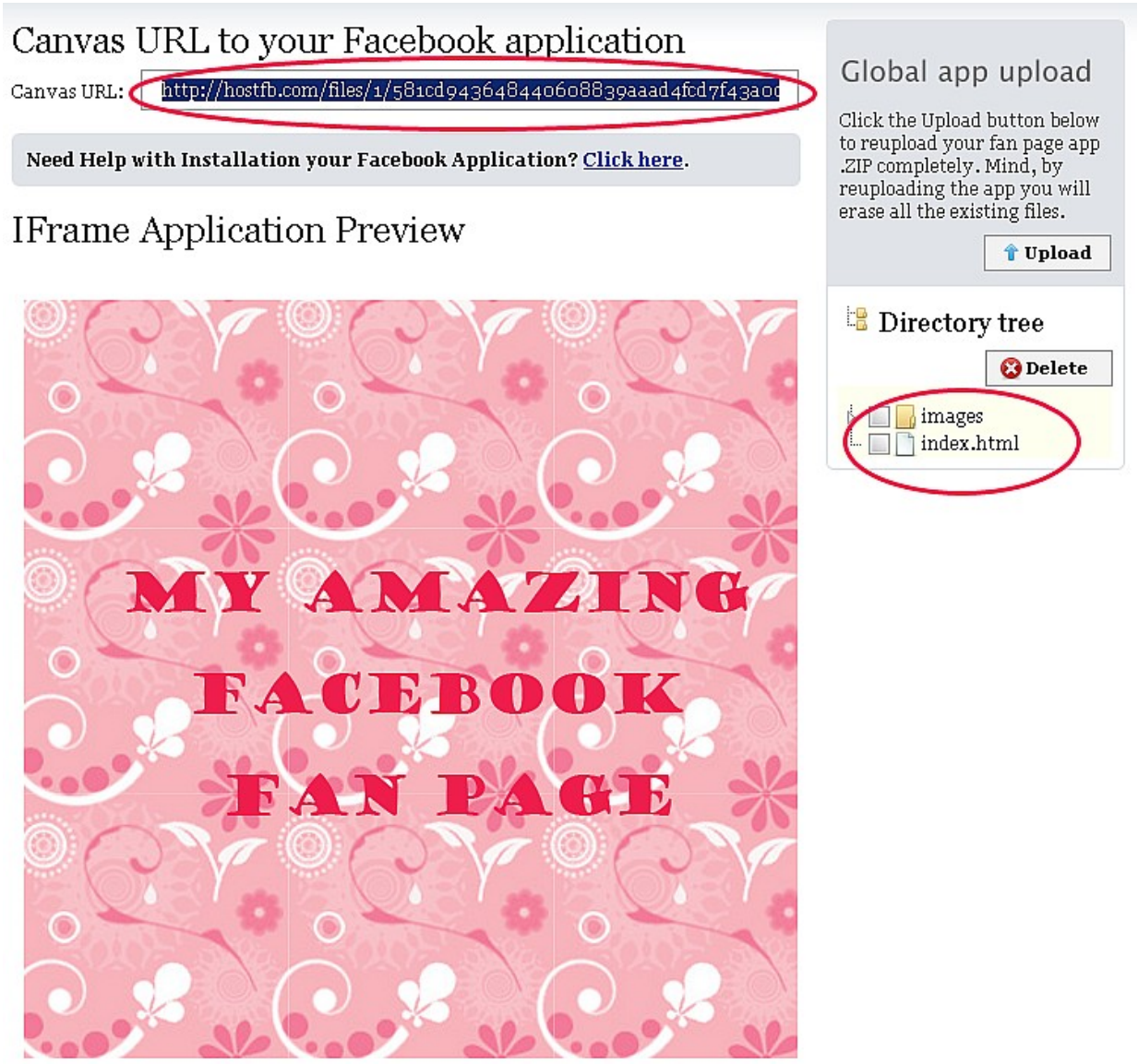
In order to be able to use hostFB's services you need register at http://www.hostFB.com/registration. Now that you are registered, you will be taken to your account page and prompted to create new fan page. Enter the name for your Fan Page app:



After creating new fan page you will be given the page to upload your app .ZIP. Before you upload your app .ZIP, make sure your app fits the upload requirements described and highlighted on the picture below. You will have to read and follow the upload requirements to obtain positive results. Otherwise, your application will not be uploaded to the server, or will not work correctly.

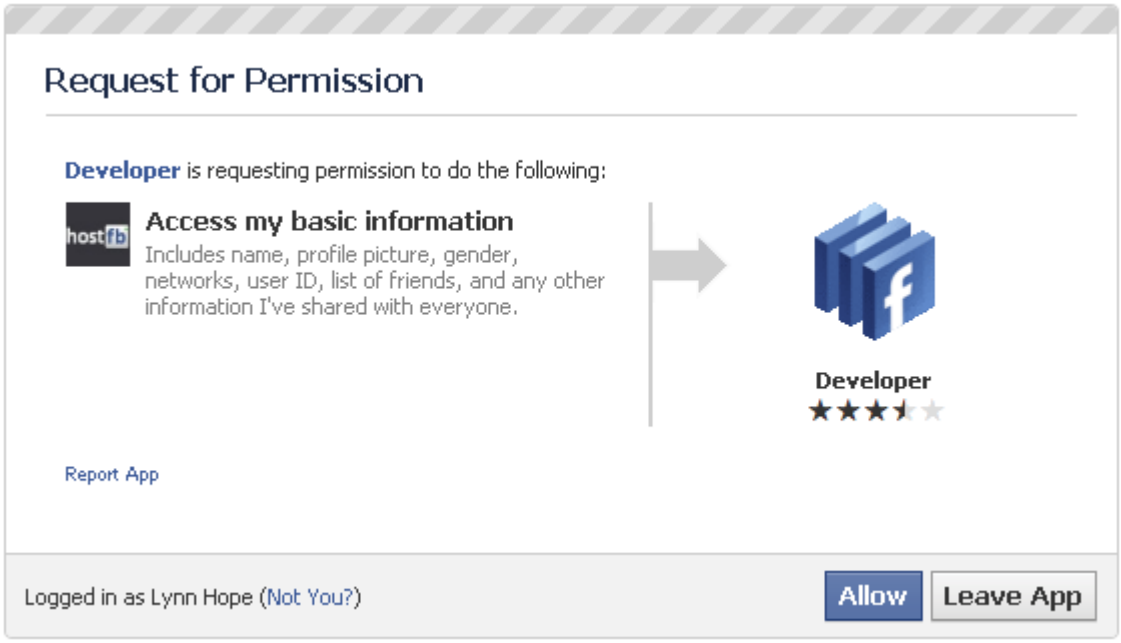


Once your app is uploaded you will be able to preview the app and obtain the Canvas URL. This Canvas URL will be used by you later when integrating the Facebook fan page app.



2. Installing an app via Facebook developers area

In order to set up the Canvas Page and Canvas URL you need login to your profile and go to http://facebook.com/developers to register your application. If this is your first time adding an app to your fan page, you will see a similar screen as displayed on the picture below:



Hit “Allow” to proceed. Then, on the top right side click “Set Up New App”:



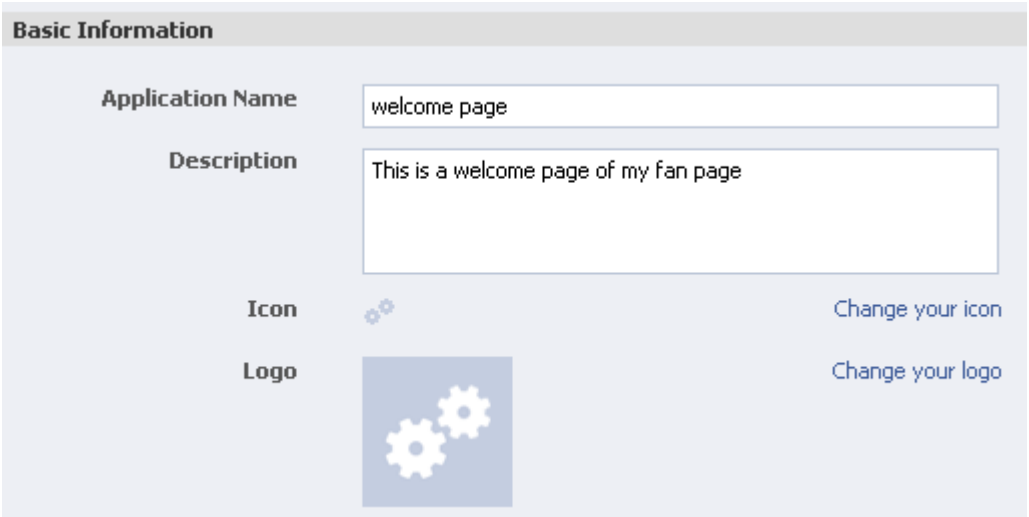
Enter the name for your app and agree to Facebook Terms:



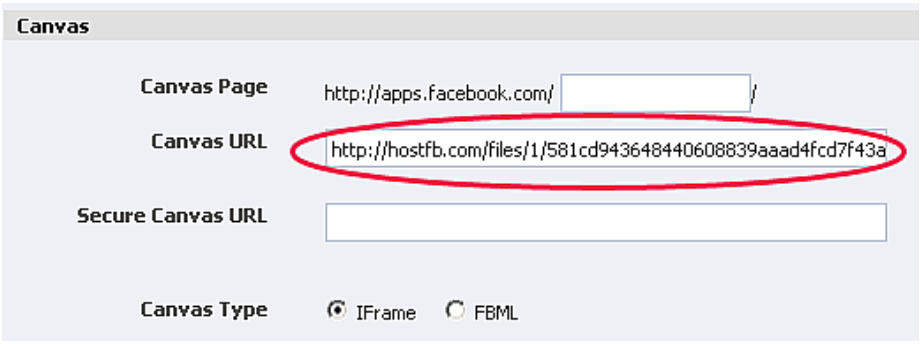
Confirm you are a human by inputting the security check phrase:



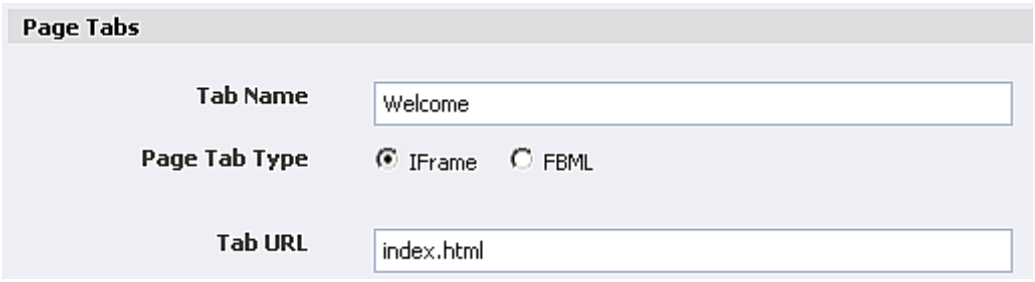
Now that you created empty app, Facebook will ask you some basic information about the application you create (such as description, icon, logo).



Now let's go to "Facebook Integration" to set up the Canvas Page. That's quite an important step!



Down the page you need specify the Tab Name and Tab URL:



Note, that the Canvas URL is exactly what hostFB service generates for you once you upload your app to the server. Just copy it as is and paste into this field.

Canvas Page field may be blank for now.

Tab Name is what will appear on the left side of your fan page (in its available position). By clicking on that tab your visitors will access the Canvas Page which will load the Canvas URL into the iframe.

Tab URL is the name of the file which must be loaded first when user loads the page. Usually, it's index.html or maybe something else (for example, welcome.html).

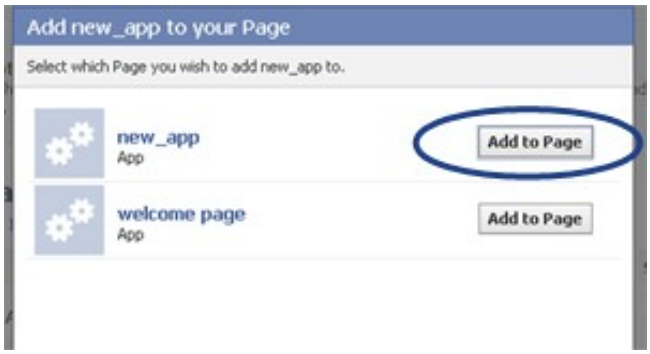
Now click "Save Changes". By clicking that your new application will be added to the listing of all the application of your Facebook profile. In order to make this application added to the actual fan page, you need click "Application Profile Page" on the right side of the page:



You will be taken to a page with the information about all (or the only) apps you have on your profile. Click “Add to My Page” on the bottom left:



Then choose the application you want added to your fan page and click “Add to Page”:



Adding the page app may take up to few minutes. If you still cannot see the tab with your app on the left side bar, most probably you need update the settings of your fan page. To do this, go to your Fan Page and click “Edit Page”.

That’s it! We are done. When the user navigates through your fan page, he will see the Page tab added to the left sidebar area into the next available tab position.

Troubleshooting

Check your application locally before you submit it
If for some reason your application doesn't look like you planned on the local computer, obviously it will not look correct via Canvas URL. Make sure the main index file is named properly – index.html. Before you submit the application to hostFB server, you need ZIP it. hostFB will extract .ZIP with your app directly to the root folder, so you need avoid double zipping or deep packing. See examples of packing incorrectly below:

Scrollbars
The iframe area on the Canvas Page is limited to a maximum of 520 px in width. We highly recommend you to use some basic CSS formatting for your application to avoid margins, padding and borders from being added by default. If your application is wider than 520 px, expect the horizontal scrollbar to appear on the Canvas Page.

Still have questions or troubles?
Submit them via support page from http://www.hostfb.com/support