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DREAMWEAVER FLASH PHOTOSHOP

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SOFTWARE+TUTORIALS  
INSIDE BACK COVER

ISSUE 116

## The FUTURE'S BRIGHT

Web 2.0 offers to open the  
gates on an Internet eden

### GIRLS ALLOWED

Are female web users turned  
off by masculine design?

### DATA DISGUISED

Revealing the secret world  
of steganography

### HOW TO...

- Create stunning lighting and ray effects in **Photoshop**
- Build an interactive photo album site using **Dreamweaver**
- Design an animated mouse follower with **Flash**
- Construct pop-up menus in **Fireworks**

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*e***Mag**

# Welcome



**I**t's pretty fitting that Web Designer 116 finds itself wrapped in such a bright and sunny cover, because we're pretty much raising the curtain on a new dawn

Much has changed since the last time we saw you, and it's with a sense of renewed optimism that we can look forward to what's ahead. So it's not without a twinge of irony that this month we're celebrating a renaissance for this internet playground we designers so love to muck about in.

Our lead feature gazes wistfully into the crystal ball that is Web 2.0 to not only discover what it represents, but how its philosophies promise to revolutionise the .com landscape. With passive pages set to be junked for desktop-like domains, we're entering a time when interactivity and user power could be reaching a zenith.

The prospect of ignoring the "if it ain't broke don't fix it" adage has frankly never seemed so exciting. But of course with this sea change comes responsibility and the seldom overstated importance of universal design. Our look at accessibility on page 46 is complemented by a unique examination on page 36 of how gender-bias can alienate web users in a wholly different way. Fortunately, we've come a long way from the simplistic assumption that blue equals

boys and pink equals girls, so it's high time our awareness of design etiquette between the sexes becomes more sophisticated too.

If the prospect of delving into your male or female side remains an enigma, then that leads us nicely onto another hot topic up for discussion this issue. Steganography describes the art of delivering a message in disguise, and our mini-feature on page 42 examines how its secretive techniques can be applied to the web.

However one important message we shouldn't cover up this issue is the departure of *Web Designer's* former deputy editor Georgina Crawshaw. She played an invaluable role in producing this edition before the switch to our new publishing house, Imagine Publishing, and I'm sure all will agree that she did a terrific job in her time with us.

Here's to the future!

**Mark Billen**  
DEPUTY EDITOR

**NEVER  
MISS AN  
ISSUE!**

TURN TO PAGE 52  
TO SUBSCRIBE

# bulletin

the latest web development news

## » Coming up...

### Ready...steady...design!

Get fired up for Microsoft's design comp ..... Page 10

### The big screen over broadband

With popcorn at the ready, we're looking forward to Sky's new package ..... Page 11

### Intel keeps you inside

Life on the sofa with Intel's Viiv kit ..... Page 12



## A perfect marriage

Back in June 2005, Steve Jobs stunned the industry and Mac lovers alike by announcing that future Apple computers would incorporate Intel chips rather than the current IBM chips that they have been installed for the past few years. The deadline for this implementation to take place was set at June 2006, so at the recent Macworld Expo in San Francisco it came as a shock when Jobs introduced the first Intel-based Macs, a new high-end laptop and a revamped iMac, nearly six months early, with both including Intel's Duo dual-core chip. Jobs informed the enthralled throng that the iMac will come in the same sizes and sell for the same prices as the current models, but the Intel chips will also make it two to three times faster. He also informed them that the new laptop, the MacBook Pro, will be launched by the end of February and that all products will be shipped with the new Intel chips by the end of 2006.

In addition to the crop of new Macs, Jobs announced a new version of the iLife suite that will include a new tool, iWeb, designed to make it easy to create websites with video, audio and blogs. This whole announcement has delighted and impressed Mac lovers everywhere, not only for the speed of the new chips but also for the fast turnaround and launch of the new Intel Macs. Microsoft even promised continued support for Office on the Mac. Not bad for one event!

# Adobe flexes its new multimedia muscle

Having acquired Macromedia, Adobe has released a number of exciting new products for creative pros

**A**dobe's acquisition of Macromedia was a significant event at the tail-end of last year, and Adobe was quick to capitalise on its new-found bed mate by announcing the release of a number of bundles and products that included both Adobe and Macromedia products, something which we can expect more of in the future.

The new product bundles that have been launched combine the design and publishing

Adobe Web Bundle that brings together Adobe Creative Suite 2 Premium and Studio 8; and the Adobe Video Bundle that delivers Adobe video solutions coupled with Flash Professional 8.

Macromedia Flash Lite 2 software and Macromedia Flash Player SDK 7 – essential technologies for building rich, engaging mobile and device experiences based on Flash technology – are another couple of new products in a long line of new releases from Adobe over the past few months. Flash Lite 2 is a major new release of the Flash Player for non-PC devices, bringing rich user interfaces to mobile phones and consumer electronics devices worldwide. Flash Player SDK 7 is the Flash Player optimised for consumer electronic devices, enabling consumer electronics manufacturers, system integrators and browser companies to create high-impact products and services, with full web-browsing capabilities, that leverage the vast number of internet sites featuring Flash content.

## "Flash Lite 2 is a new release of the Flash Player for non-PC devices"

proven of Adobe Creative Suite 2 and Adobe video tools with the interactive strength of the just-released Macromedia Flash Professional 8 and Macromedia Studio 8 software. The new product configurations are: the Adobe Design Bundle that combines Adobe Creative Suite 2 Premium with Flash Professional 8 software; the

The beta version of Adobe Lightroom is now available

The screenshot shows the Adobe Labs website with a green header. The main content area has a dark background with a grid of images. A prominent announcement reads "Adobe Lightroom Beta Release Now Available". Below this, there is a section titled "Technologies" with three items: "Adobe Lightroom", "Flash Lite 2 Update for Flash Professional 8", and "Flex Framework 2". To the right of this section, there is a "Learn more" link. Below the "Technologies" section, there is a "Introducing Adobe Labs" section with a paragraph of text and a link to "http://labs.adobe.co.uk".

The beta of Adobe Lightroom, a new digital imaging solution for professional photographers, has also been released, taking on Apple's Aperture program. "Today's Lightroom Beta leverages Adobe's renowned digital imaging innovation in areas such as raw image processing, so that even in beta form photographers will find world class technology that complements Photoshop. We look forward to the feedback from the photography community as we refine the product over the next few months," said Shantanu Narayen, president and chief operating officer of Adobe. You can acquire these products and provide feedback via the new Adobe Labs site at <http://labs.adobe.co.uk>. ■





*The latest Adobe bundles bring together the best in web development applications and provides great value for money*

# Web Easy Professional 6 released

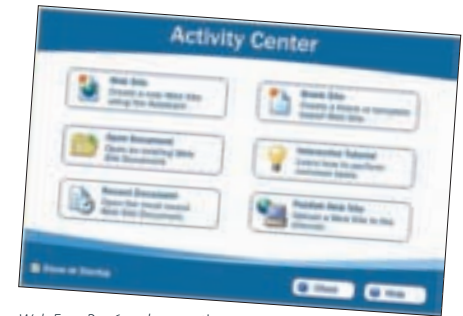
## New Flash animation tool makes creating websites easy

**A**vanquest UK, a leading developer and publisher of business and consumer software, has released Web Easy

Professional 6, the latest version of its powerful website creation and design studio software.

The extensive CD-ROM and online media library of 85,000 images includes ready-made backgrounds, templates, clip art, photos, forms and other dynamic elements such as eye-catching animations, fades, wipes, and other special effects are available to create a complete interactive experience for web visitors.

New to this version of Web Easy Professional 6 is Motion Artist 2, a Flash animation tool developed by eFrontier that



*Web Easy Pro 6 makes creating websites very simple*

enables users of all levels to easily add Flash animations, interactive buttons, banners, and menus to the website design in just minutes using drag-and-drop functionality. Web Easy Professional 6 also introduces Web CEO, a high-performance tool to help promote, analyse and maintain a website. Web CEO promotes the website by automatically registering it with many search engines including Google, SearchIt, and Yellow Pages Superhighway.

Web Easy Professional 6 is available as an ESD for £49.99 from [www.avanquest.co.uk](http://www.avanquest.co.uk), and is also available in boxed form. ■



A look at a few of the issues that are being raised on [www.total-web-design.com](http://www.total-web-design.com)

### Photoshop and web design training

One of the most informative and useful posts on the forum this month comes from regular contributor **Boris** who has discovered a great way to learn how to use Photoshop.

"Looking around for free video for my iPod I found this in the Podcast section on iTunes: free downloads of PhotoshopTV, a great weekly TV show that shows tips for Photoshop users. The great thing is you do not need an iPod to get the show, you can watch it in iTunes on your computer (Mac or PC) by subscribing to the podcast. You can also get the downloads (MP4, so they will work with PSP and iPod) at the website ([www.photoshoptv.com](http://www.photoshoptv.com)) – definitely one to check out for some nice hints and tips."

On a similar theme, **suehay** inquired if anyone knew the best place to go for web design training courses, possibly the Dreamweaver route. **JimmyH** was the first to reply: "If you want to do a course in web design, check out Adobe-certified ones at [www.macromedia.com/support/training](http://www.macromedia.com/support/training).

**JerseyH** added: "I've completed great video tutorials from a place called [www.lynda.com](http://www.lynda.com). Check it out, there are hours of great video tutorials that make it easy to get to grips with the program you want, no too expensive either, good luck." This was backed up by **Devil7**, a MM-certified professional who agreed that it was a great starting point. **Forbes** chipped in with some useful advice: "Try a CIW course and become a Certified Internet Webmaster. Go to [www.ciwcertified.com](http://www.ciwcertified.com) for more info."

# Imagine Cup is open for entrants

Get your creative hat on to win a share of \$125k in Microsoft's international interface competition

**M**icrosoft has announced the start of its fourth annual international student competition, the Imagine Cup ([www.imaginecup.co.uk](http://www.imaginecup.co.uk)) the final of which will take place in Delhi, India, during August 2006.

The Imagine Cup, now in its fourth year, is a competition designed to pit teams of students from across the UK and the rest of the world

against each other in six 'invitationals', to win glory, a share of the \$125,000 total prize fund and the chance to kick-start their careers.

The Interface Design invitational encourages students to look at the ways we interact with software and web pages, and create new functional, compelling, and imaginative user interfaces. Entrants get a unique opportunity to envision an application, connect it to the theme of the Imagine Cup, and show the world how their applications and creative skills can bring it to life.

Kevin McDaniel, Academia Manager, Microsoft Ltd, said: "We're very excited about this invitational, as this is the first year we have run the Interface Design challenge. This new invitational is a chance for students to create real usability experiences for end users that are compelling and innovative."

The other five categories covered in the Imagine Cup 2006 are Software Design, Short Film, Project Hoshimi programming battle, Algorithm and IT. ■



*The Interface Design invitational provides students with a chance to show off their talents*

## Back to the Future the evolution of a site



### ▲ NOVEMBER 1999

Hmm. A very basic site with some nasty navigation buttons. A year before the band really gained fame



### ▲ NOVEMBER 2002

Success really demands that all aspects of promotion need to be addressed, as this site clearly indicates



### ▲ JANUARY 2006

Now as a world-successful group, the site has been updated and incorporates the latest web design aspects and functions

### Coldplay [[www.coldplay.com](http://www.coldplay.com)]

**THE AGENCY:** Outside Line, London

**CLIENTS:** Paul McCartney, Lynx, ITV, Universal Pictures, Adidas, Coldplay, Virgin Galactic, Channel 4, Stereophonics, Sony PlayStation and Universal Music  
**INDUSTRY STANDING:** 2004 Bafta Nomination, 4 BT Digital Music Awards 2005, Top 50: New Media Age Interactive Agencies, New Media Age: Effectiveness Awards 2005

**INFO:** [www.outsideline.co.uk](http://www.outsideline.co.uk)



# Picture this

Web TV gets big boost from Sky's new video download service

**U**ntil now, if you've been enjoying satellite television on your computer it'll probably not be completely legitimate. Online pirate firms have been offering hooky subscriptions to premium channels for some time now, and it seems the really big broadcasting players have just woken up to the obvious demand.

Sky By Broadband is Rupert Murdoch's foray into delivering Sky Movies and Sport packages

onto the desktop so that

viewers can enjoy greater flexibility over how they watch. Currently only available to existing customers, with signup requiring a valid Sky account number and matching address, the free service could eventually herald a new

outlet for audiences unable to obtain the product traditionally. Sky is rumoured to be viewing this initial, tentative rollout as the first step to opening up its market beyond set-top box and satellite technologies – which have possibly alienated potential customers in the past.

However, Mac fans will be aggrieved to learn that non-PC support hasn't been readied as yet, with Windows XP and Media Player 10 obligatory requirements at the moment.

**"Sky By Broadband is Rupert Murdoch's way of delivering Sky to the desktop"**

Rather than streaming material, the service utilises a legal P2P file-sharing network powered by Kontiki to distribute broadcasts locally, where they can be watched until a licence expires. The video files are then removed via

Microsoft Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) to automatically prohibit further distribution or showings. Designed to run optimally with Intel's new Viiv generation of processors, this initiative follows Sky By Mobile's launch into handheld broadcasting earlier this year. Further details can be found at [www.sky.com](http://www.sky.com) with full instructions for customers to sign up. ■



Sky's foray into the digital delivery market could herald a new age for online content. Will competitors join in with their own online offerings?

## Net rumours.....

It was only a matter of time for Jonathan Ive, the designer of the most iconic product in the last few generations (the iPod) to be honoured for his contribution to society. In the New Year Honours list Mr Ives had the title of CBE bestowed upon him and, in all fairness, it was fairly well-deserved.



The Internet Watch Foundation is about to

benefit from the female touch and judgement as Amanda Jordan OBE has been appointed as its new Independent Chair. The IWF is the only authorised organisation in the UK operating an internet 'hotline' for the public and IT professionals to report their exposure to potentially illegal content online.

Meanwhile, Microsoft has received criticism for taking down a blog by a Chinese journalist from its MSN Spaces service. Citing its policy of adhering to local national laws, the blog written by Zhao Jing, also known as Michael Anti, was removed on New Year's Eve to many people's disgust.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### NTL'S SUPER-FAST BROADBAND

NTL has launched a new super-fast broadband that revs up to 10Mbps. The service also includes a PC security package and a premium broadband content line-up. Existing 3MB broadband customers will be upgraded automatically, although some may require a hardware upgrade to get the full 10Mbps. In 2006, 3MB customers will also see a price cut from £37.99 to £34.99 per month.



### FREE SPYWARE-SCANNING CD

Webroot Software has announced its collaboration with the UK's largest PC retail outlet, PC World, to release the PC Spyware Scan CD-ROM tool kit. The CD-ROM is designed specifically to identify malicious malware and test users' PC vulnerabilities to spyware and risk of identity theft. It will be available free of charge from all participating PC World stores.



### SHARE MOBILE PHOTOS AND VIDS

ShoZu has announced the addition of Webshots and TextAmerica to its system. This should help provide users with the smartest and most immediate way to share photos and videos via the ShoZu service. ShoZu is available directly to handsets for free via [www.shozu.com/portal](http://www.shozu.com/portal).





With Intel keeping you entertained, and Domino's sending in the cheese supremes, you may never need to leave your lounge again!

## Intel Viiv technology announced

Experience the latest in entertainment with Intel

**A**t the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Intel's Corporation President and CEO Paul Otellini unveiled two platforms and several content alliances that aim to provide the foundation for new experiences from digital entertainment and wireless laptops. The main star of the show, however, was the announcement of Intel's new home platform – Viiv technology (which rhymes with 'five', apparently).

Intel Viiv technology includes a suite of Intel-based hardware and software that, along with Microsoft Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005, offers new entertainment experiences. Based on a choice of powerful Intel Pentium D, Pentium Processor Extreme Edition and Intel Core Duo processors, these PCs will reflect a variety of features, prices and stylish designs, including all-in-one hybrid TVs and book-sized PCs. PCs based on the platform will have a variety of entertainment options including support for a minimum of 5.1 (or higher) surround sound and high-def video. ■

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### UNIQUE DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

Yorkshire Forward, one of England's nine Regional Development Agencies set up by the government to promote sustainable economic development, has unveiled a unique digital campaign to improve the region's economic performance by encouraging public and private investment. DS.Emotion, the agency behind the campaign, plans to follow the launch with podcasts, viral campaigns and online games.



#### ALL-IN-ONE SERVER RELEASED

FileMaker has announced the release of FileMaker Server 8 Advanced that lets administrators securely and reliably manage and deploy shared FileMaker Pro 8 and 7 database files over networks, intranets, and the internet. FileMaker Server Advanced is an "all-in-one" solution for sharing FileMaker databases among teams of any size. [www.filemaker.com](http://www.filemaker.com)



#### SELF-HEALING TECHNOLOGY

It sounds like sci-fi, but through a combination of in-house systems UKFast.Net is giving birth to a 'self-healing network.' Hosting some of the most competitive ecommerce sites in the UK (plus for the government and NHS trusts), has led to UK Fast boffins designing advanced load balancers to distribute activity evenly across the network, leading to zero disruption.



Thoroughly modern cameras deserve a site that's bang up to date

## Cameras Flashed

Superb new website launched to showcase Nikon's Coolpix range

**F**ed up of merely explaining what their latest selection of cameras can do, leading manufacturer Nikon has opted for a more dynamic approach.

To coincide with the launch of its latest generation of Coolpix Premium products, the Japanese firm has rolled out [www.coolpixfeatures.com](http://www.coolpixfeatures.com) to provide customers with exciting interactive tours. Centred heavily around the unique Pictmotion technology, the Flash-heavy site enables animated slideshows to be produced from a cascade of example imagery, complete with customisable soundtracks and motion settings. These can then be previewed instantly within a virtual LCD display that mimics the capabilities of models like the S6, P3, and L3. Elsewhere, visitors can preview innovative built-in image correction tools like an automatic red-eye remover and the clever Face-priority AF system that gives intelligent focus to any heads located in shot.

Despite slightly lengthy loading times, these simulated effects are realised with considerable aplomb while the site oozes subtlety and style. Well worth a look!



By entertaining browsers with more than just a standard point-and-click, Nikon makes a big impact

# Master monitor

The latest Samsung screen promises to deliver 'magical' visual performance

**H**ow many times have you stared blankly at your computer monitor and yearned for a better, brighter display? Scrimping on your chosen CRT or LCD screen is a bit like wearing sunglasses at night; utterly pointless if you want to optimise what you see.

That's why it could be exactly the right time to check out the new Samsung Syncmaster 204B and its array of awesome features designed specifically for the demand of professional applications. Measuring in at 20.1 inches and boasting a whopping 16.7 million maximum colours, it significantly lays claim to an incredible five-millisecond response time. This, coupled with a 1600x1200 max resolution, makes it

particularly ideal for multimedia usage and viewing online content. "With the introduction of the SyncMaster 204B, Samsung raises the bar of display perfection even higher providing best-of-breed technology that delivers great image quality at an affordable pricing point," said Samsung's director of display marketing, David Nichols.

This superior quality is largely achieved by the 204B's patented MagicTune, MagicColor, and MagicBright technologies, which let users tailor display settings instantly. Within just a few mouse clicks it is possible to tweak colour, contrast and brightness settings or create application-specific profiles that can be easily interchanged. Available in black or silver finishes, the 204B retails at around £360.



*Got some serious cash to splash on a screen? The SyncMaster could be just up your street*

Everyone's  
talking  
about...

## Creating online help systems

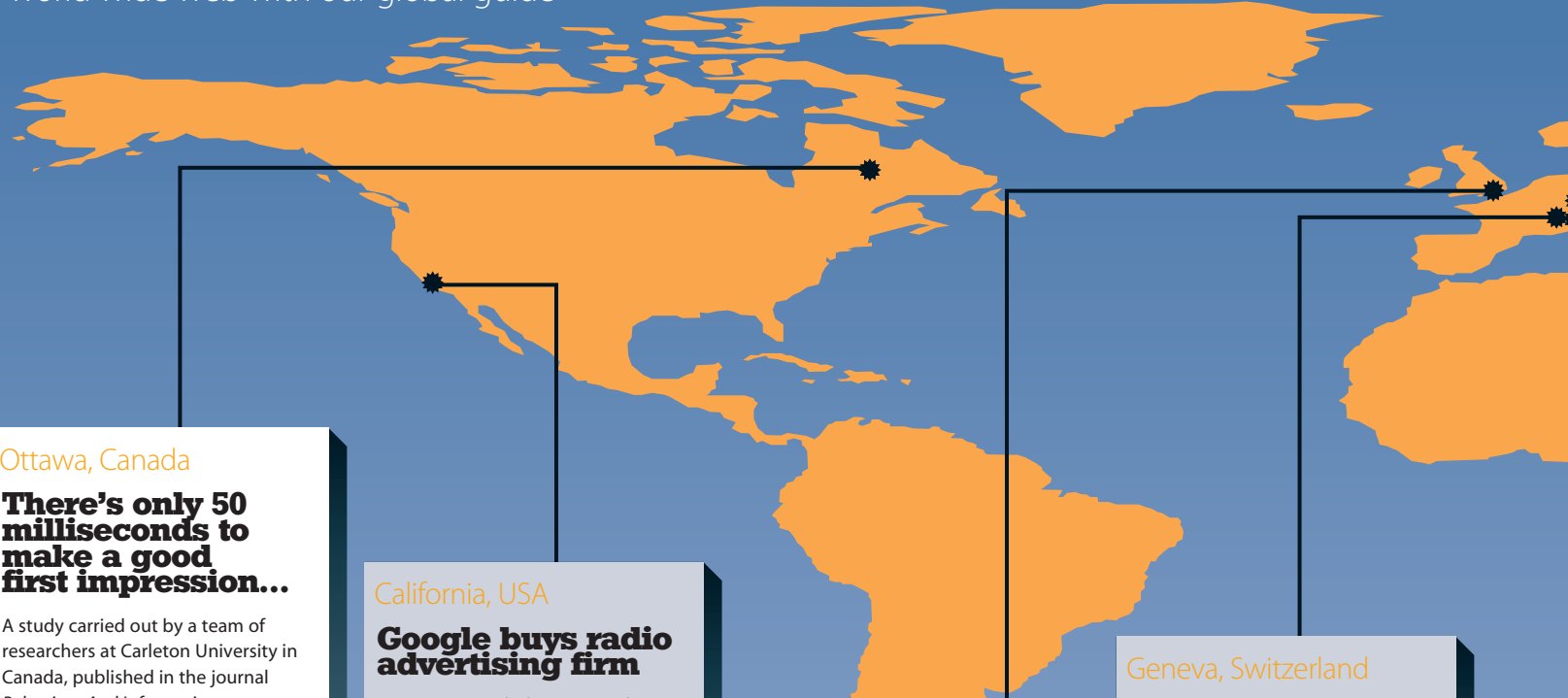
Doc-To-Help Enterprise 2005 empowers you to author or import documentation in Microsoft Word or any HTML editor to create online help systems and professional printed manuals. It enables web designers to produce these Help systems in virtually any popular format including HTML Help, Cross-Platform HTML-based Help, JavaHelp, WinHelp, Visual Studio .NET-style Help, and printed documentation. [www.qbssoftware.com](http://www.qbssoftware.com)





# ►► Global News

Catch up with what's happening on the world wide web with our global guide



## Ottawa, Canada

### There's only 50 milliseconds to make a good first impression...

A study carried out by a team of researchers at Carleton University in Canada, published in the journal *Behaviour And Information Technology*, has discovered that internet users judge the quality of a website and form an opinion in a matter of milliseconds. In the tests subjects were exposed to websites for 500 milliseconds and then asked to comment on visual appeal and the relation to several design features. They then used the same method with only a limited exposure of 50 milliseconds on another group. Bizarrely, the same conclusions were reached, indicating that users form an opinion as soon as the information and design hits the eye. First impressions obviously do last...



## California, USA

### Google buys radio advertising firm

Not content with dominating the internet, it seems Google has its sights set on all forms of media. Its recent acquisition venture now includes radio, having snapped up US radio advertising firm dMarc Broadcasting for a reputed upfront figure of \$102 million (£58m). dMarc connects advertisers directly to radio stations through its automated advertising platform. In the future, Google plans to integrate dMarc technology into the Google AdWords platform, creating a new radio ad distribution channel for Google advertisers.

"Google is committed to exploring new ways to extend targeted, measurable advertising to other forms of media," said Tim Armstrong, vice-president of advertising sales for Google. "We anticipate that this acquisition will bring new ad dollars and accountability to radio."



## London, UK

### NCC calls for new laws to protect consumer rights

In its submission this week to an MP's inquiry into Digital Rights Management (DRM), the National Consumer Council (NCC) has outlined its concern at current self-regulation, and calls for new laws to ensure that consumers' rights to use digital content are protected. As the recent Sony/BMG case illustrates, this is proving problematic for consumers.

Jill Johnstone, director of policy at NCC, explained: "Because of the current situation, consumers face security risks to their equipment, limitations on their use of products, poor information when purchasing products and unfair contract terms. Whilst we recognise the value of intellectual property rights, we have little confidence in self-regulation by the industry."



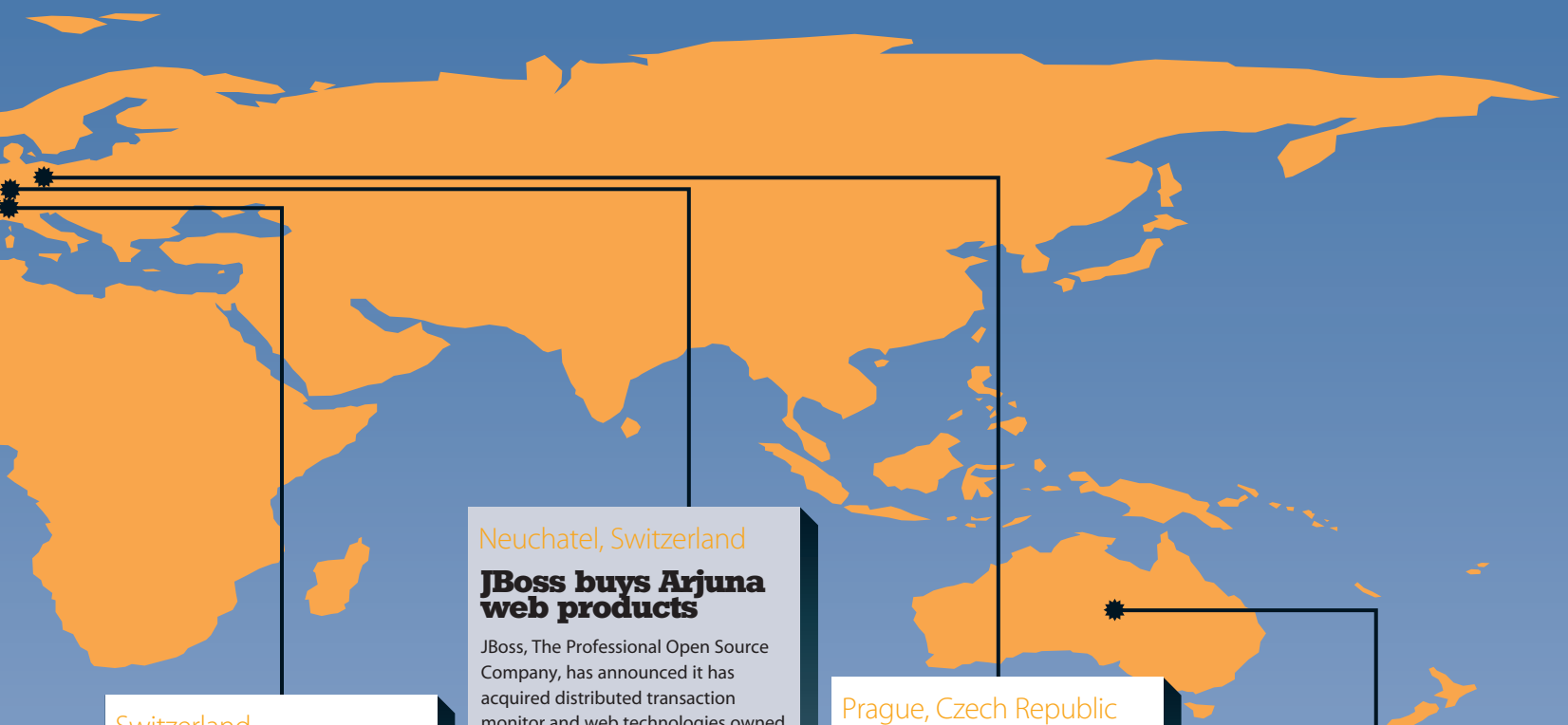
## Geneva, Switzerland

### UN plans a new internet group

Following the WSIS Summit in Tunisia at the end of 2005, where arguments raged over who had control over the internet, the UN has begun the process of setting up a world body known as The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) to help alleviate some of the problems faced. The first meeting in Geneva, Switzerland was held on 16 February, where stakeholders were asked to develop a common understanding on the nature and character of the IGF.

Many are hoping that the IGF will try to loosen the US' stranglehold on control of the net and in particular ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), the non-profit body overseeing the web's addressing system. Greece has offered to hold the first IGF conference, which will hopefully take place by June 2006.





### Switzerland

#### **WeRoam teams up with Orange**

WeRoam, the wholesale WLAN broker, has signed a roaming agreement with Orange UK to extend its Business Everywhere mobility offering with broadband WLAN access. Orange selected the WeRoam open roaming platform as the most flexible solution that could integrate WLAN with its current GPRS and 3G mobile data services. Using a WLAN hotspot is easy and simple for Orange UK customers. The subscriber sends an SMS code and receives a one-time username and password. The data is then entered on the login page of the public hotspot for access to the web, and the costs appear on the bill. Key WeRoam hotspot network partners for Orange UK include Surf & Sip in the UK, Ganag in Germany and Wayport in the USA, which offer WLAN coverage in premium hotels and coffee shops.



### Neuchâtel, Switzerland

#### **JBoss buys Arjuna web products**

JBoss, The Professional Open Source Company, has announced it has acquired distributed transaction monitor and web technologies owned by Arjuna Technologies and HP and will open-source them for the JBoss Enterprise Middleware Suite.

The acquisition includes Arjuna Transaction Service Suite (ArjunaTS), one of the most advanced and widely deployed transaction engines in the world, with a 20-year pedigree, and Arjuna's Web Services Transaction, the market's only implementation supporting both leading web services specifications, Web Services Transaction (WS-TX) and Web Services Composite Application Framework (WS-CAF). This implementation is one of the few that has shown interoperability with industry leaders such as Microsoft and IBM.



### Prague, Czech Republic

#### **Best Java IDE goes to JetBrains**

JetBrains' IntelliJ IDEA has been named winner in the Best Java IDE category of the tenth annual Java Developer's Journal Readers' Choice Awards. IntelliJ IDEA was also runner-up in the Best Java Application, Best J2EE Application Development Framework, and Most Innovative Java Product categories. The awards, held by SYS-CON Media, recognise excellence in solutions provided by the top Java vendors in the market.

"Winning this award is recognition that our work on IDEA has not gone unnoticed," said Alex Tkachman, director of marketing at JetBrains. "Our focus on helping developers become more productive, enjoy their work more and improve the quality of their code addresses a basic need in the market." The full results are available at <http://jdj.sys-con.com>.



### Australia

#### **Firefox for Macs**

According to a report by ZDNet Australia, the Mozilla Corporation is aiming to launch a version of Firefox for the up-and-coming Intel-based versions of Mac OS X.

"We are targeting the official release of Firefox for Intel Mac OS X in late March with the Firefox 1.5.0.2 update," Mozilla software engineer Josh Aas told ZDNet Australia.

It will be no surprise that Mozilla tries to gain acceptance on the new Macs following its huge success on the PC. French web metrics firm released figures last month indicating that Firefox now has over a 20 per cent share of the market across Europe, with Finland, Slovenia and Germany being the highest users.



# message board

HOW TO CONTACT MESSAGE BOARD:  
EMAIL: [webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk](mailto:webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk)  
POST: Web Designer, Richmond House,  
33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth,  
Bournemouth, BH2 6EQ

Whether you've seen a site to die for, discovered a brilliant design tip, or you simply want to show off your skills, we want to hear about it!



If you want to put a few good domain names in the bank for future use, head to [www.internic.net](http://www.internic.net)

## The name game

I'm looking to register several domain names, but I don't want to build the sites for them yet. I'd like to register these names for some length of time, preferably years, and I'm wondering if you can recommend somewhere where I can legally register these domain names and nothing more.

Having looked at a few packages already I'm wary of companies who charge to transfer domains. I expect to need plenty of web space and bandwidth when I finally have these sites up and running, so I want to be able to shop for the best hosting deal without the hassle and cost of transferring my domain to a new provider.

Lee Gorman

Your first port of call should be [www.internic.net](http://www.internic.net), Lee. InterNIC is a service set up by internet overseer ICANN, and it's your one-stop shop for domain registration information. You don't have to set up website hosting at the same time as registering your site's name, and on the site you'll find a list of ICANN-accredited registrars with whom you can just register domain names. These registrars offer a variety of deals and packages, allowing you to register domain names for up to ten years at a

time. Some charge yearly subscriptions, while others charge a one-off fee. Whatever you choose, you'll find yourself paying a NIC fee to have your domain registered. One good deal is the Advanced Registration package on [www.nominate.net](http://www.nominate.net), which starts at £13 per year for a .com address and allows you to choose whichever host you like.

## Secret code

About a year ago, I created a website for a friend, which I now look after. I host the website, manage the domain name, and update the site now and again, and my friend then sends me a cheque yearly.

But now he wants to transfer maintenance of the site to someone else. The problem I have is that I've spent a very long time working on scripts and code, which I use in other sites as well, and I don't want to give the guy access to all my source code. What should I do?

Richter

It depends on who the source code belongs to in the first place and what exactly your friend paid you for when you created the site, Richter. Assuming that the site's source code was created by you and you were paid to create, run and maintain the website in question (but the entire thing wasn't 'bought' from you), then you can sell him a licence to use your source code on that particular site.

This means that your code still belongs to you and you can use it wherever you like, but he's paid you to be able to use it on a specified website. This is why you should always be aware of the inherent copyright on your own code, even if it's under an open-source licence. You can get more information

## Letter of the month



### All white now

I've just invested in a brand spanking new Apple iMac, which now lights up the corner of my study like a gleaming white shiny thing. I've always had an interest in web design, and in a bid to combine my gorgeous toy with some new-found knowledge, picked up my first copy of *Web Designer*. It's the first web mag that's really fired my aspirations as a designer, and I'll be roving the shelves for next issue. So, I'm all ears – where's the best place for a web design newbie to start? And please don't mention the 'C' word just yet!

Chris James

Well done for making the first step, Chris. We're not sure you needed a brand new bit of kit just to get into web design, but those Apple stores are so very hard to pass by... If you haven't experimented with web design at all, dip your toes in the waters of iWeb, which will let you tie together the media in your iLife '06 apps into your website. We'd also recommend that you browse the gallery on page 22, as it will give you an idea of just how fantastically creative web design can get.

And if you're in love with your new Mac, keep your eyes peeled for our sister mag *iCreate*, which shares your joy of all things white and curvaceous. And as for the 'C' word (and we hope that you're referring to coding here), well, let's just see how you get on. You might be embracing Dreamweaver's Code View sooner than you think!

on copyright over at [www.whatiscopyright.org](http://www.whatiscopyright.org), and getting some legal advice on your particular circumstances would probably be a good idea for future reference if nothing else. Swot up on your general law skills with our legal feature on page 42.

### Call of the Apache

I'm about to start learning PHP and MySQL and have just realised that my web host doesn't support one of these, so I'm shopping for a new one. I've noticed on some hosting sites that there are two different types of server package, Windows and Linux. I'm assuming that I would pick the Linux package?

I know it's probably an obvious question but I want to be sure because it's so much hassle changing from one web host to another!

Forbes

Go for a Linux package hosted on an Apache server, Forbes. You'll be able to use a wider variety of coding languages such as MySQL, and this setup is famously reliable too (and often cheaper than Windows packages). Not for nothing are Linux Apaches the backbone of the internet...

Gen up on your rights and how to protect them at [www.whatiscopyright.org](http://www.whatiscopyright.org)

## WHAT IS COPYRIGHT PROTECTION?

### Introduction.

This page covers the basic definitions regarding copyrights. It has been written using the **Berne Union for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Property (Berne Convention)** as the main bibliographical source, and does not refer to the laws of any country in particular. Therefore, comparing this document to the particular laws of your country may arise in discrepancies. However, copyright laws vary from country to country but as a rule do not contravene or provide less copyright protection than the Berne Convention, provided the country in question is a member thereof.

### What is a Copyright?

Copyright is a protection that covers published and unpublished literary, scientific and artistic works, whatever the form of expression, provided such works are fixed in a tangible or material form. This means that if you can see it, hear it and/or touch it - it may be protected. If it is an essay, if it is a play, if it is a song, if it is a funky original dance move, if it is a photograph, HTML coding or a computer graphic that can be set on paper, recorded on tape or saved to a hard drive, it may be protected. Copyright laws grant the creator the exclusive right to reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute, perform and display the work publicly. Exclusive means only the creator of such work, not anybody who has access to it and decides to grab it.





# Clock

We hooked up with creative web design agency Clock to discover just what makes this multi-award winning company tick



How did the Clock agency get started and what aims and objectives were behind its inception?

Clock began in October 1997 as a result of our founder, Syd Nadim, being made redundant – again! In a desperate bid to make something of his miserable life, he turned to The Prince's Trust for help. His humble mission was to build the best digital marketing agency on the planet.

How has the company grown and evolved during this time, and why do you think it has been so successful in what it does?

Clock has grown organically since its conception and is now one of the top 100 new media agencies in the UK (*Marketing*, Nov 2004). Its success is largely due to the people we've managed to attract.

They're here because of the work that they get to do and because we really bend over backwards to accommodate personal situations and value a healthy work/life balance. In fact, Clock was listed in the top 100 marketing employers of 2005. Our clients like our expansive in-house creative and technical skills – we develop our own

applications and can therefore deliver exactly what they want.

Your website boasts a varied selection of work, although we couldn't help but notice that comedian sites constitute a significant share of your portfolio. Are these a speciality?

Yeah, we're big fans of comedy and it's been rewarding to work with such inspirational source material. Most of the awards we've won have been for humour, which is fantastic considering how many funny sites there are on the web.

However, the site we did for Abbey was voted best business banking site, and we have numerous other corporate clients too. Our aim is to bring entertainment and fun into the corporate world and commercial awareness into the entertainment world.

How has the general concept of web design changed during your time in the industry?

The main difference these days is that we don't have to start each presentation with an explanation of what the internet is. On one occasion the client we were talking to thought

the Freeserve website *was* the internet. Admittedly the site had a great deal of content with extensive news and weather etc, but you can imagine his amazement when I typed in another URL into the address bar! From a design perspective there are also, thankfully, less gratuitous 3D spinning logos, drop-shadows and skip intro pages.

How would you describe your agency's signature style, and from which sources do your designers draw their creative inspiration?

We try not to take ourselves too seriously – being fun to work with is really attractive to our clients. Inspiration can come from anywhere, be it current affairs, what's on at the cinema, or the bottle of wine our creative director had last night.

During a typical web design project, which software tools do your team favour and why?

For accessibility and general good practise, all sites we develop now use advanced CSS2 and a fair amount of coding.

Do you feel clock.co.uk is an important outlet for the company's work?

As with most cobblers' children (who have bad shoes), we spend the majority of our time on our clients' sites.

However, we're currently working on a Chinese-language version of our site, which will have a different look and feel.

What advice could you offer anyone looking for a way to break into the web design business?

Are you mad? Seriously, though, if you really want to make it in the web design world you need to stay up to date with new developments and make sure you continue to learn. It's a good idea to have a general grasp of the overall picture but specialise in one area that you particularly enjoy (and are consequently more likely to be good at). Then partner with people who specialise in the other areas.

You've been commissioned by a number of high-profile clients. Which would you rate as your favourite?

Comedian Eddie Izzard's site is an involving and zany site that acts as a flagship creation for the Clock team





Al Murray's pub-themed site at [www.thepublandlord.com](http://www.thepublandlord.com) offers his fans an innovative, quirky interface and perfectly complements his comic persona



Eddie Izzard's site has earned us numerous awards and raised the profile of the company. He's been great to work with and is heavily involved with ongoing developments and future plans.

What has been the proudest moment of your career and do you still get a kick out of the work you produce?

Of course we still get a kick out of it! When we don't we'll be doing something else. Our proudest moment was to be one of five UK companies to go to New York and pick up no fewer than two Webbys.

We were in good company with the BBC, Virgin Radio and Guardian Online among others.

Are there any fellow agencies that you admire or even perhaps draw comparisons with?

We've enjoyed working with Poke developing a merchandise site for Jamie Oliver. They're a very talented company who came up with the POKIA: a retro, hands-free kit for your mobile. Much respect for that.

What do you personally think constitutes a great website and what are the most common design and content faux pas?

Great websites are ones that address the demands of the audience for that particular site. Functionally, they need to work as you'd expect (usability) and creatively they need to have the right tone.

Accurate and well-written copy is often a forgotten area – spelling mistakes are all too common these days and really let some websites down.

Does Clock have any exciting projects in the pipeline that you could give our readers a bit of inside info on?

Yes and no. We have some great ideas for improvements to the drinks brands' sites. Watch this space.

Describe Clock in five words  
Clever, Lovely, Oblique, Creative, Kool.

■ For more details and to explore the portfolio for yourself, visit the agency's site at [www.clock.co.uk](http://www.clock.co.uk)



Clock's portfolio covers styles from the organised chaos of J D Wetherspoons (top) to the understated yet information-packed chic of audioVille's online home (above)

**"Our aim is to bring entertainment and fun into the corporate world and commercial awareness into the entertainment world"**

# Gallery

THE BEST IN WEB DESIGN

## Who's We Studios

[[www.whoswestudios.com/flashsite.html](http://www.whoswestudios.com/flashsite.html)]

Designed by: Who's We Studios

This Flash version of the Who's We Studios site really showcases the company's impressive flair for unusual but useable interfaces. Navigation is handled by mousing over and clicking on a 'remote control' interface, which causes things to happen on screen. The site is somewhat lacking in information – clicking on Who We Are will cause a small animated spaceship to swoop down and arrogantly proclaim "The Best" – but as a vehicle for displaying Who's We Studios' capabilities this site really does show the world what the studio stands for simply, effectively, and humorously.



## Low Morale

[[www.lowmorale.co.uk](http://www.lowmorale.co.uk)]

Designed by: Monkeehub

Low Morale is a journey through the world of a melancholic little guy, the highlight of which has to be the hapless creature's version of Radiohead's 'Creep'. Elegant animation is used to populate the character's empty world, a world made up of shouting colleagues, untidy desks, half-dead plants and other depressing paraphernalia. It's let down, however, by the problems and errors generated when you try to head to the About or Contact sections on this and several other Monkeehub websites.



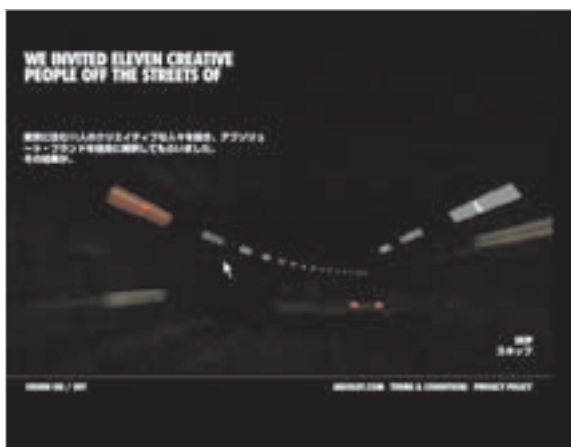
## Beck

[[www.beck.com](http://www.beck.com)]

Designed by: Hi-ReS!

As changeable as the singer/songwriter's musical style, Beck.com is an all-singing, all-dancing extravaganza. Every flicker of the mouse causes a change in the backdrop behind a picture of the artist.

Despite this, the interface is simple rather than frenetic; the menu is easy to find and use and you can access streaming media of the artist's latest works. Although sites that play music automatically are often considered anathema to right-thinking people, this site's tunes actually work properly and are worth listening to.



## Absolut Metropolis

[<http://absolut.com/metropolis>]

Designed by: GreatWorks

Absolut Metropolis bills itself as what happens when a bunch of 11 Japanese creatives attempt to encapsulate the idea of the vodka brand. Starting with an animation that hurtles at high speed through the streets of Tokyo, the site is navigated via a subway map that depicts each of the artists as 'stations'. Clicking on a name gives you more about each artist and their work. With text in English and Kanji, the site has an automatic air of post-modern oriental cool.



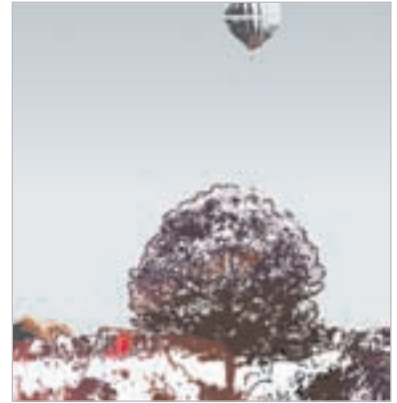
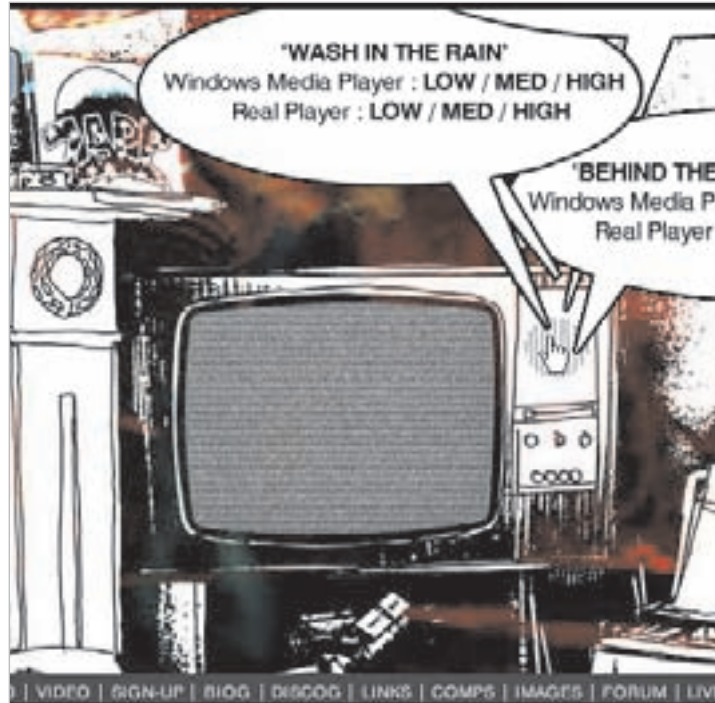
## The Bees

[[www.thebees.info](http://www.thebees.info)]

Designed by:

Zombie Flesh Eaters

Indie band The Bees' website interfaces as an illustrated landscape that looks like it was drawn by EH Shepard after a few too many absinthes. Several parts of the landscape can be clicked to launch other areas of the site. Good-looking, utterly useable and a pleasure to navigate, this website is a serene little bubble in the otherwise fraught world of the internet. Disappointingly, some of the more obvious objects within the landscape – the hot air balloon in the sky, for instance – aren't clickable when you really think they should launch something.



## O'Neill

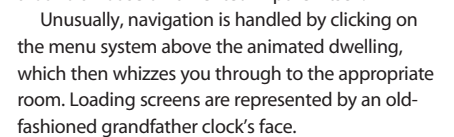
[[www.oneill.com](http://www.oneill.com)]

Designed by:

2advanced Studios

A Flash site that's low on fancy animation and high on navigability, this creation basks the viewer in sun, sea and simplicity. Colourful and – of course – easy to surf, an animated dial forms the main menu system while pages are largely low-key and static, with only little bits of animation serving as subtle decoration here and there. There's sound, of course – silly noises on various mouseovers, and the soft shushing of the ocean in the background, which is an excellent idea and far less annoying than looped music.









# The FUTURE'S BRIGHT

**Dave Howell** went looking for a definition for Web 2.0, but instead found the web in renaissance. A new platform is being created that will have a profound effect on everyone involved with the internet

**A**sk ten web or new media companies what Web 2.0 means to them and you're likely to get ten completely different responses. As the latest buzz word to hit the newsgroups and blogs, a universal definition is hard to come by.

But what is clear is that the next stage of the web's development is gaining pace. The web as you know it today is moving through a seismic shift, which will result in an information space that will deeply affect how you access and manage information forever. The original term was coined by Dale Dougherty of O'Reilly Media during a brainstorming session with MediaLive International. This helped to develop what would become the Web 2.0 Conference ([www.web2con.com](http://www.web2con.com)), the first of which took place in 2004. Since then, thousands of column inches have been devoted to defining

what this evolution of the web is and what it means to businesses and consumers alike. "Web 2.0 is often considered a name in search of a technology," explained Andrew Betts, co-founder and director of Assanka ([www.assanka.net](http://www.assanka.net)). "I think it's more of a philosophy than a technological innovation. Website developers have long tried to engage their audiences, interactivity being one of the driving forces behind the success of the internet, but Web 2.0 is really about making websites interact with each other as well as the end user.

"The adoption of technologies such as XML, JavaScript, RSS, APIs and other standard methods of data exchange has brought about something of a revolution in the freedom of information online. Sites no longer necessarily succeed because they have the best data, but because they offer users the best ways of interacting with it."

What is clear is that Web 2.0 is changing how the flow of information is managed and by whom. Cooperation and interaction are certainly key components of Web 2.0. Being able to place just about any kind of content online that others can see and even edit is a central tenant of what Web 2.0 is all about. Websites then become conversations between their users. This is one of the central foundations of the Cluetrain Manifesto ([www.cluetrain.com](http://www.cluetrain.com)), which has become a reality with the evolution of today's web into an access point and application platform.

Gerred Blyth, the director of consultancy at Amberlight ([www.amber-light.co.uk](http://www.amber-light.co.uk)), described: "Web 2.0 is a seamless online experience of information and people made possible by a development in technology and a shift in our thinking. The shift in our thinking is from a selfish ►





# the future's bright

► to a social web. It's about websites that aren't constructed by one single editor, but instead they are created by users or out of their usage. Flickr, with its community tagging of photos, is a great active example of this. It can also be passive, like Amazon's seminal 'people who bought this also bought...' The key technology change has been to make APIs [application programming interfaces] publicly available. Google allows third parties to access the database that Google Maps is built on via its API, and link it up with other data sources via their

ecommerce became the latest gold rush for business. Berners-Lee himself hasn't lost sight of his vision and is at work on what he calls the 'semantic web' ([www.w3.org/2001/sw](http://www.w3.org/2001/sw)), which he describes as "an extension of the current web in which information is given well-defined meaning, better enabling computers and people to work in cooperation." Web 2.0 gives anyone the tools to create their own content and distribute it to anyone that is interested, as Tim O'Reilly succinctly stated in his paper *What Is Web 2.0?* (which has perhaps done more than any other

**"The web is moving towards a seismic shift in information space that will deeply affect how you access and manage information forever"**

own APIs. For example, linking Google Maps data with an accommodation database would create [www.housingmaps.com](http://www.housingmaps.com)."

## Social networking

So, who is building Web 2.0 and what does it all mean to users? Web 2.0 can be seen as a manifestation of the internet as a community – something that the web's creator, Tim Berners-Lee, always intended, but that got lost as

document to fuel the Web 2.0 debate). "The central principle behind the success of the giants born in the Web 1.0 era who have survived to lead the Web 2.0 era appears to be this, that they have embraced the power of the web to harness collective intelligence."

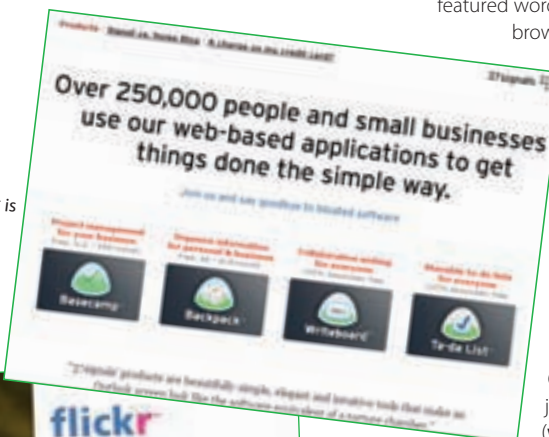
Dan Gillmor (<http://bayosphere.com/blog/dangillmor>) called this decentralising of power "we, the media", which sums up how individuals are using the tools that Web 2.0 has

## Get Web 2.0 today!



► **Writely** [www.writely.com](http://www.writely.com)  
Web 2.0 is characterised by the move from the desktop to the webtop of desktop applications like word processors. Writely is the first to show how this new metaphor can work in practice via its online word processor

► **Backpackit** [www.backpackit.com](http://www.backpackit.com)  
One of several Web 2.0 apps from [www.37signals.com](http://www.37signals.com), Backpackit is a superb organisational tool that allows you to keep track of notes, lists, images and other info



► **Flickr** [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)  
One of the leading Web 2.0 sites, this illustrates how content can be shared by its users via a database of images and links. Flickr illustrates how social networking can forge functionality

Microsoft's Windows Vista has to reinforce the desktop metaphor for users if a wholesale move to the webtop is to be avoided



given them. But what are those tools exactly? There are a group of new enterprises that define what Web 2.0 means in a practical sense, as they have applications available now that you can log onto and use.

Enterprises that have appeared in the last few months include Flickr ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)), which takes photo storage and blogging to new levels and Box ([www.box.net](http://www.box.net)), which allows you to store your digital files online and reach them anytime you like. There is little point in having web-based applications if you have to refer them back to disk-based data that is held on your own PC. Placing this data in the virtual world gives it infinitely more versatility. Expect to see online storage services explode over the next few years. Writely ([www.writely.com](http://www.writely.com)) is in effect a full-featured word processor you access via your browser, with no need to install an

application. Backpackit ([www.backpackit.com](http://www.backpackit.com)), Basecamp ([www.basecamp.com](http://www.basecamp.com)), Writeboard ([www.writeboard.com](http://www.writeboard.com)) and Ta-da List ([www.tadalist.com](http://www.tadalist.com)) all come from one innovative company that is placing a number of desktop utilities online. Kiko ([www.kiko.com](http://www.kiko.com)) is an online calendar application. If you use Hotmail, for instance, and want an Outlook-like calendar, this site offers just this feature. Protopage ([www.protopage.com](http://www.protopage.com)) gives you a web page that can contain a wide range of information including news feeds and links. And if you have a memory like a sieve, Rememberthemilk ([www.rememberthemilk.com](http://www.rememberthemilk.com)) is an online 'things to do' app.

What all these Web 2.0 applications have in common is that they are all web-based. They move the functionality of their programs from the desktop on your computer to the web. Web 2.0 is characterised by applications that don't have any version development. They are simply improved on the fly with the user not having to install or update their software: the "perpetual beta", as Tim O'Reilly dubbed it. This fires a



broadside across companies like Microsoft, which depend on the upgrade path for revenue. You can already get hold of an open-source version of Office, but this too is desktop-bound.

Will we see a day when you use an Excel, Publisher, Access, Word and PowerPoint lookalike entirely online? The desktop as a metaphor is giving way to the webtop that is creating a regeneration in how we all interact with the data we create. But what will this mean to today's desk-bound businesses?

## Moving to the webtop

A battle is set to take place between the developers of desktop applications and those vendors that have embraced the Web 2.0 paradigm. Microsoft is radically overhauling Office for its next release, and with a market share that is clearly dominant on the desktop, completing a move to a web-based application isn't going to be easy – if indeed it ever throws off the shackles of the desktop.

Sites such as Writely will certainly give the guys in Seattle a run for their money, but the web is certainly not off Microsoft's radar: witness the reanimation of Internet Explorer. But shouldn't Microsoft be using this application as the basis for its other developments? After all, Firefox is faster and is the perfect complement to the new raft of webtop Web 2.0 applications that are now available. It seems that Gates and co are being pulled in two diametrically opposing directions. ►



*A new range of applications is challenging established players; is this Microsoft's attempt to strengthen its hold over the desktop?*



## Interview with Sam Schillace

Co-founder, Writely ([www.writely.com](http://www.writely.com))

Sam Schillace spent his first 20 years in the Midwest before realising that being a "serial entrepreneur" didn't involve farming. After college, he headed to the San Francisco bay area to write video games. Since then, he's been involved in a number of startup ventures and has sold technologies to Ashton-Tate, Macromedia, Intuit and others as a result



**Your company is often cited as one of the first enterprises to embrace the principles of Web 2.0. What makes your company and its products different and defined as a Web 2.0 business?**

Well, to start with, that label seems to get applied pretty easily. We never set out to be Web 2.0; we set out to build great software to help our users. I think some of the things we embrace that I think of as Web 2.0 are: very tight iterations and focus on the user; a simple, well-defined problem space well solved; an open, component approach to our application (we want users to be able to use and remix our application); and certainly an embrace of the idea that software as services has finally come to maturity and is ready for a broader market.

**There seems to be a clear move away from desktop-based applications to web-based software. Is the net as a platform changing to embrace the next wave of applications that will exist entirely online?**

I always go back to a user need to answer this question. I think that users want software that is both simpler to use and understand, and that is more net-centric than desktop-centric. This is particularly true as the net starts to move out to mobile devices. So, I think there is an opportunity to build new applications that solve modern problems in a way that makes more sense in this context.

For example, when the early desktop publishing/word processing programs were being designed, the end point of most documents was a print copy. Now the end point more often has to do with some kind of publishing, collaboration or communication. The tools should reflect that.

**It has been stated that the rush to build Web 2.0 could result in another dotcom crash. Do you agree with this view, or have we learned the lessons of the last one?**

We've learned some of the lessons, but the basic imbalance in the venture community is the same. A lot of the VCs [venture capitalists] that got shaken out of the funds in 2000 wound up making new funds from the LP [limited partners] money floating around. The result is that there are even more investors now than there were during the dotcoms.

I think it's inevitable that mistakes will be made, but that's okay, it's part of innovating. I think the real sin of the dotcoms was making these mistakes in the public markets. I think that's less likely this time around. The VCs will be okay, I'm sure.

**The move away from tangible data storage on hard drives or memory cards to virtual storage online is a fundamental shift from the desktop. As more data such as music, photos, movies and general data becomes digital, will people want the freedom to access it anywhere anytime?**

There are certainly a number of businesses making that bet right now – look at the media locker space, for example. I think as the services become branded, reliable, and known, and the bandwidth becomes more predictable and cheaper – more of this will happen. Do you want to have a hard disk that you have to back up, that can be stolen or burned up or lost? Do you really care about installing updates on

your computer? No – you just want to listen to your music and get work done. Most people do, so I expect a lot will shift to the net, eventually, but it may take ten years for it to really happen.

**The internet browser seems to be taking centre stage once again as it is the fundamental tool that people will use to access Web 2.0 technologies and services. What do you think the future holds for society as we move into this next phase of the internet's development?**

I don't really know. It is interesting that the younger generation takes to this stuff so readily, and already has different usage patterns. For example, personally, I hate instant messaging, but it seems like everyone under 30 loves it. Or things like Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) would have been really cool to have when I was in school!

I think that the current crop of technologies for application development in the browser – XML, AJAX, JSON, SOAP, etc – are probably 'good enough' and simple enough to win the battle for the next generation of application development platforms. It's becoming very easy to do things accidentally that used to be very hard. A case in point for us – we have Chinese users already, a bunch of them! We never even localized the app for Chinese, or even thought of distributing it there, and I personally haven't done any testing at all on Linux, which most of them use. Now that's a global development platform. I think this will have really interesting effects on the software industry, at least.

**Have you seen any patterns to the people who use your services? Are early adopters your users, or is a wider audience seeing the advantages?**

We started with early adopters, but this is a very consumer-oriented application and is readily picking up mainstream users. There are all kinds of patterns – some folk want to have their documents where they can find them online, some need to collaborate, some want to send documents and make sure the other person can read them, some want to be free of the endless 'document attached to an email' chains.

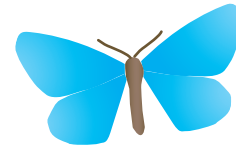
We see significant uses, like education and distance learning, professional uses like contract and project collaboration, and personal ones – like me coordinating my son's Thanksgiving party in his classroom with a bunch of the other parents. We're also starting to see mashups and extensions coming out of the user base.

**The Web 1.0 was a walled garden. Web 2.0 is more like a vast mall where you can pick and choose exactly the information you want or offer your own content for the masses to read and interact with. How will the net look in five years?**

I think there will be some 'best of breed' applications in various spaces, like ours, and there will probably be some interesting next-generation portals knitting them together. Hopefully, the next thing after open source is 'open services', where people make services and components available on the net to be remixed into lots of more useful user experiences.

But that's just my guess. This is moving so fast it's really hard to tell. At the end of the day, we just follow what our users want.





- ▶ They have to protect the Windows platform and the Office applications that are their cash-cows, but at the same time need to compete in a market that is increasingly net-centric.

Windows Live and Office Live do indicate Microsoft is moving onto the webtop (<http://ideas.live.com>). Microsoft's Office application is pretty much ubiquitous in the office desktop market, but convincing users to upgrade is increasingly difficult. With these new web-based features, Microsoft hopes to continue with its dominance of office apps, although even Windows Live and Office Live still require a link to your PC's desktop. The jury is out on whether these new features are compelling enough, but

**"The jury is out on whether Microsoft's web features are compelling enough, but even Web 2.0 companies think Office still has a future"**

even Web 2.0 companies think Office still has a future, as Jason Fried, founder of Backpackit.com, describes. "I don't think Word is headed for the trashbin, but I do think Microsoft needs to pay attention to the new wave of web apps out there. And I think it is, with Ray Ozzie at the helm. And I do think they need to realise that their desktop monopoly may not give them the same advantage on the webtop. But time will tell. I would never count Microsoft out, but it's definitely a new time, and all Microsoft needs to do is buy up some of its web app competition and then it's in the lead again. It's certainly exciting times."

However, Microsoft has also released betas of several applications that move it for the first time

into brand new markets. Expression Sparkle Interactive Designer competes directly with Macromedia's Flash. Expression Acrylic Graphic Designer competes with Adobe's Photoshop, and Expression Quartz Web Designer – you guessed it – competes with Dreamweaver 8.

But isn't Microsoft simply playing catch-up with these apps? It would seem that it can see its days of dominance in the desktop applications market as being numbered. All the applications it is competing with are desktop-bound. But what if Adobe – who is in the last stages of buying Macromedia – was to move its applications to the webtop and embrace the Web 2.0 paradigm? This would leave Microsoft looking even more

decrepit and out of touch with what users really want to do. There is a fly in Microsoft's desktop ointment called Google. This company above all others has the potential to be the Microsoft of the Web 2.0 revolution. It has developed the Talk, Sidebar, Mail and desktop search applications. Anyone that has used Sidebar will know that it fulfils the promise of the 'interactive desktop' that Microsoft pioneered back in the days of Windows 98. It is fitting that a company born of the web should perfect this technology. Google's Gmail is a good case in point. If it had more of the capabilities of Outlook 2003, would you switch?

Google is fast and nimble at releasing new innovations very quickly. It is not burdened by long product cycles that require stress-inducing

## Web 2.0 defined

We ask leading industry experts what Web 2.0 means to them

"If you missed out on Web 1.0, then here's your second chance to be in the right place at the right time. That's why Web 2.0 is extremely exciting. It's not just for technology suppliers like Actinic. Online retailers are going to cash in big time. In Web 1.0 stores were dumb; they told you the price and they took your order. In Web 2.0, however, they're smart and they relate to you. Imagine going to a clothes shop and only being shown what fitted and was in stock. What if the store knew what you shouldn't wear (making Trinnie and Susannah redundant)? That would be better. It might even tell you what you could afford. The end result would be smart in every way." **Chris Barling, CEO, Actinic**



"Web 2.0 will greater resemble the original concept of the internet, with ubiquitous access and easier interaction. Whilst Web 1.0 has been dominated by large corporate sites, Web 2.0 will be defined by the personal user, by their participation and by the collective intelligence that collaborative platforms will generate. Today's teenage generation takes email, instant messaging, personal homepages and MMOs [multi-player online games] already for granted. Web 2.0 is just a 'signpost' along the way to even more integrated digital lifestyles in the future." **Andreas Gauger, CEO, 1&1 internet**

"The only thing new about Web 2.0 is the name. Everything claimed for the internet in the dotcom boom is now coming true, so perhaps this new era should be called 'Told you so' 1.0. The curse of the dotcom boom was not that the ideas were wrong but that the orgy of money thrown at the birth of the web attracted the wrong kind of business player.

"Finally, the web has entrenched itself in enough lives to start rewriting the rules. The visionaries' dreams of 'free information,' 'network computing' and 'business at the speed of thought,' are exploding into the mainstream from their early-adopter lairs." **Clem Chambers, CEO, ADVFN**

updates to software and operating systems. Did your heart miss a beat when you installed the last service pack for Windows XP? This is simply not required on the webtop, as what Tim O'Reilly calls "perpetual upgrades" can take place on a daily basis if needed. The Google Desktop illustrates what they can do. Are we just a few steps away from a Google OS? How much easier would developers find working with Google APIs than ones constrained by Microsoft? How would Microsoft react – if indeed it could in time – to Google releasing its own version of Microsoft's Office, optimised for the web of course and integrated into its other webtop applications?

If Google bought companies like Writely, Kiko, Backpackit and Box.net or created its own similar applications, it would then have a framework for a new webtop office applications suite which could be released for free. We don't know what Google has planned, but it's riding high at the moment and can seem to do no wrong with investors and users alike.

Keep a close eye on what Google and the other Web 2.0 startups are doing. You may find that you don't need to upgrade to Vista when the time comes. It's still early days for all the Web 2.0 technologies and the companies that are developing them. But as Clem Chambers, CEO of internet businesses ADVFN ([www.advfn.com](http://www.advfn.com)), concluded, Microsoft had better keep an eye over its shoulder. "Almost unbelievably, the nerd fantasy of 'death to Microsoft,' dreams of Apple

*This meme map clearly shows the technologies that revolve around Web 2.0 and offers a clearer insight into its origins*





# the future's bright



► ascendancy and the web as the platform all seem to be coming to pass. Both Google and Apple are just a version away from becoming a credible replacement for Office and Windows. Office in particular looks like a dinosaur poised on the brink of a meteor strike of generic free net-based spreadsheets and word processors.

"To consider Microsoft a monopoly any longer is to miss the fact that its hegemony is dead. While Google is destined to quickly replace

as consumers you can become creators.

Podcasting, music mixing, blogging, and mobile access all become one using the tools that Web 2.0 is now offering.

But didn't Berners-Lee always intend this? Is the semantic web he is building an attempt to reset the web so it becomes what he originally envisioned? It seems that one of the central foundations of Web 2.0 is that content and information becomes free from the applications

## "Podcasting, music mixing, blogging, and mobile access all become one using the tools that Web 2.0 is offering"

Microsoft as the new bogeyman, Gates will have to pull off the most brilliant manoeuvre to stay anything like on top. Yet real-world inertia is still well entrenched, and while the 'internet messiahs' may see this future bright and clear, it may take until Web 3.0 for the reality."

The web is changing, but so is how people are using its content. You can now create your own news feeds, website links and blogs so you take only what interests you from the vast sea of information that is online. Web 2.0 means more control over this content. But it also means that

that created it. It can then be repackaged into any form – the mashup effect, if you like.

For the web designer, Web 2.0 presents some major challenges, as the technology that drives the new paradigm isn't just one technology but many, as Jesse James Garrett of web design firm Adaptive Path summarises. "Ajax isn't a technology. It's really several technologies, each flourishing in its own right, coming together in powerful new ways. Ajax incorporates: standards-based presentation using XHTML and CSS; dynamic display and interaction using the



The regeneration of IE is a clear indication that Microsoft is interested in having a presence online as Web 2.0 takes shape

Document Object Model; data interchange and manipulation using XML and XSLT; asynchronous data retrieval using XMLHttpRequest; and JavaScript binding everything together." So it's back to school if you want to start developing Web 2.0-compliant technologies and sites. Looking at the web as a programmable platform is becoming the norm. APIs are being developed to push the web even further.

### Future tactics

Jason Fried, who is at the sharp end of Web 2.0's development (his company is actually building Web 2.0 applications today), offered his conclusions. "Just a few years ago the net was dead. The bubble burst, billions were lost, hopes were smashed, people were exhausted and afraid. Today it seems to be the complete opposite. I suspect we'll see big gains in online trust, in web-app sophistication, and we'll also see the big companies playing a major role in the next web.

"The web will continue to commercialise, the big guys will smell blood and use muscle to gain market share, and we'll see the typical business cycles reveal themselves online. I don't think big media can push independent

content out of the way – it's too valuable."

The last word should go to Tim O'Reilly, who really got the debate going about what Web 2.0 is and what it means for the future of the web as we know it: "The competitive opportunity for new entrants is to fully embrace the potential of Web 2.0. Companies that succeed will create applications that learn from their users, using an architecture of participation to build a commanding advantage not just in the software interface, but in the richness of the shared data." The web is transforming. Hold on tight – it's going to be a great ride. ■

## Building the new web



► **Programmableweb**  
[www.programmableweb.com](http://www.programmableweb.com)  
One of the central foundations of Web 2.0 is to use the web as a platform just as if it were an OS. Web 2.0 APIs will harness this new platform to create the next generation of web apps

► **Ajax**  
<http://tinyurl.com/7xzse>  
Web 2.0 apps aren't built with just one technology. Ajax is a combination of technologies, including standards-based presentation using XHTML and CSS, XML and XSLT, and more

► **Del.icio.us**  
<http://del.icio.us>  
A great attempt to make the semantic web a reality. Instead of the taxonomy with which the web is categorised, folksonomy allows users to associate keywords to information





# Unisex sells

**PINK FOR GIRLS, BLUE FOR BOYS – IS THAT A SEXIST STEREOTYPE  
OR DO DIFFERENT DESIGN STYLES APPEAL TO WOMEN AND MEN?**



Often hailed as an influential female-oriented site, iVillage does have sharp corners but the colours, dotted lines and close-up images of women match the female aesthetic

**O**n the internet, so runs the famous joke, nobody knows you're a dog. What do you know about the audience for the sites you design? Especially if they're selling something, women might make up more of your clientele than you may think. And the latest research shows they probably don't like your website.

You can't afford to ignore female shoppers – or women making the decisions about what the family buys. Women either directly spend or influence the spending of around 83p of every pound spent by consumers. For holidays and new homes the figure is even higher (over 90 per cent); three-quarters of estate agents say it's women they have to reach when they're trying to sell a property.

**“On average, six out of every ten new web users are female (especially in the under-30s category)”**

With women buying over half of new cars sold, there are plenty of areas you can't consider a traditional male preserve any more. Women are responsible for buying up to 80 per cent of DIY products, 75 per cent of consumer electronics and 80 per cent of all healthcare.

The internet clearly isn't male dominated any more – at least as far as the users are concerned. More and more women are arriving on the web. On average, six out of every ten new web users are female (especially in the under-30s category). Increasingly they're going to be doing their purchasing online – if they like your site, that is.

In contrast, the vast majority of web designers, about three quarters in fact, are men and in some areas like academia up to 90 per

cent of designers are male. Are they building websites that appeal to women? You'd expect the way we act online to be broadly similar to the way we act in real shops, but according to senior research fellow at Glamorgan University Dr Gloria Moss: “Women dominate conventional grocery shopping in a way they don't online”.

The research performed by her team has shown that men and women design very different websites: and we tend to prefer the style of our own gender, something that web designers are becoming increasingly aware of.

We've moved a long way beyond old-fashioned stereotypes and discrimination: a woman's place doesn't have to be in the home or the supermarket. A man might be as interested in home design and personal grooming as football. We're happy to recognise

that in many cases what people want to know about doesn't necessarily

have anything to do with their gender.

But there are still differences. Ninety per cent of perfume is bought by women and most insurance is bought by men. It's men who buy more alcohol, diesel oil, garden tools, petrol, records, sports goods, video and SLR cameras, computers, fridges and washing machines. If you're selling chocolate, china and glass, electric kettles, furniture, books, cosmetics, kitchen equipment, jewellery, photographic equipment, small electrical goods, stationery or toys, your market is predominantly women.

And according to the Glamorgan research it's not just what the site is about that determines how much it will appeal to male and female visitors. The look and feel of a site makes a difference too.

## HOW TO TUNE YOUR SITE FOR A MALE OR FEMALE AUDIENCE

*There are no hard and fast rules, but try these tips to get the aesthetic for your audience*

### Mind your language

Jargon and an emphasis on the status and expertise of the brand, appeal more to men than women; women tend to prefer a less competitive style approach that tells a story. Unless you're working on a lads' site, formal language appeals more to men. Lighten up and use contractions (it's not it is) for women.

### Who are you promoting?

Try adding information that's about the visitor – tips and techniques they can use – rather than celebrating the brand by giving them a full-length copy of the latest TV ad to download. For women, your website should be about them as well as you.

### Link and link again – but not too much

Without confusing your navigation, link to a lot of relevant information and you'll help female visitors to do the iterative research they prefer. For most women, forget 'three clicks to anything'. But don't fill the page with long lists of links that aren't differentiated; make it clear why they're there and how they help. It needs to be a clear and logical journey through the sections of the site or out to other sites.

### Use more colours for your text, especially headings

While black text on a white background is the most readable way of presenting long pieces of text, you don't have to stick to that for every word. Blue is the usual alternative but women seem to prefer a wider range of colours: white, yellow, pink and mauve proved popular in Gloria Moss's research.

Use more colours in your design in general; women seem to prefer pages with more overall colour rather than more restrained palettes.

### Round it out

Women prefer objects with rounded corners to sharp edges and straight shapes on the page. Avoid a horizontal layout and don't have all your text evenly spaced at the same height if you want to keep female visitors happy. If you're breaking different areas of the page up use colour or dotted lines for women – but straight lines make clear divisions for men.

Show your visitors people who are like them; it helps them to identify with what your site covers. If you want to attract women, show pictures of women, especially close-up images of faces rather than distant figures. Of course, sex sells. For some male-oriented sites you'll want pictures of women rather than men, but remember that you could be alienating female visitors. Think of a woman driving a sports car, not sitting on the bonnet.

### Do you need that extra dimension?

3D effects appeal more to men than women, as do flashing, rotating and attention-grabbing graphics. Women tend to prefer still pictures to gratuitous animated images, but if a 3D animation makes instructions clearer than step-by-step pictures then that's the best choice.

*Think about what images you use as well as how many. People or products? Abstract blobs or icons made up of real objects like flowers? Men tend to like serious, abstract, inanimate themes in designs. Women tend to prefer more informal designs with people and real-world objects.*





It may be women's basketball, but are there women watching? ESPN has the technical terms, dark colours and straight lines that appeal to male visitors, who may be the main market



Where, what, when, how much: the top line is right there for male visitors but mums can explore the site to find out more about the holidays

## REDESIGNING BOUNTY

*Bounty.com used the Glamorgan research to redesign the site to appeal to mums*

If you're a new mum, or a mum-to-be, you've probably heard of Bounty because it will send you a free baby pack. While fathers do visit the site and join in the discussions, this is a site whose primary audience is female. Ecommerce director Andrew Thomas knew he wanted to make changes to the site, and when he saw the Glamorgan research he invited the team down to run a workshop. The outcome of that is what you see on the site today.

"What Bounty.com has evolved into is the leading meeting place for mums and mums-to-be," says Thomas. He describes the old site as "all blue, all the corporate colour; we had very, very straight lines". He was already planning to introduce new sections from planning a pregnancy through to pre-school and these are now colour-coded. "We introduced more colours. We broke the page up with dotted lines and used a lot of iconography. We introduced white space; it's not too linear."

Not only has the feedback from mums and clients alike been positive, but since the redesign the number of pages per session has risen, as has the length of sessions. "It's one measure of increasing comfort with the site."



Before the redesign: straight lines and blue everywhere



Now with colours and shapes: the new Bounty

In one study Moss and Gunn looked at student websites, picking out common characteristics in sites designed by male and female students in terms of the colours, typography and shapes used, as well as the type of images. They also found that in general, female visitors preferred the sites designed by women and male visitors preferred the sites designed by men. Surprisingly, when they looked at online retailers (who you'd expect to appeal to men and women) as well as at female-oriented beauty sites and male-oriented angling sites, they found that they all tend to use what Dr Moss terms "the male production aesthetic".

So what are the differences? It's a lot more than the 'shrink and pink' approach of some product marketing. Men look for linearity, formality and a not-too-colourful look, while women prefer more colour (in the background and the text), more informality and less linearity. The language they use is different and the sites women create also have more links than the

women did not perceive the site to be as well organised as men did. Men more than women perceived product information to be well presented. Further, women were significantly less satisfied than men with the navigation of the site."

When they liked the site, they liked it for different reasons: "Women were more attracted by the colours on the site, and men by the interactive and 'flashy' aspects of the site". Although the research didn't confirm it, she thinks men and women prefer online information to be presented in different ways.

## ALL IN THE MIND

We already know there are definite differences in colour preferences between men and women. Women seem to be more conscious of colour and their tastes in colour are more flexible and diverse. Blue stands out more for men than women; women often prefer soft colours to bright. Ask people if they like

## "Men respond better to dark colours and straight horizontal lines, 3D and animations rather than stationary images"

men's. Women prefer informal to posed pictures: pictures of people, animals and other nature images to inanimate objects. Men respond better to dark colours and straight horizontal lines: 3D and animations rather than stationary images.

The web designers behind women's gaming site Zylom ([www.zylom.com](http://www.zylom.com)) came up with a similar 'female aesthetic' from their female focus groups. COO Erik Goossens sums it up as "using rounded edges, a conversational tone and shying away from dark and hard colours in favour of more pastel colours".

Interestingly, the results don't only apply to UK designers and visitors. Moss and Gunn found that they got similar results to research covering France and Poland, and Dr Dianne Cyr's study of male and female attitudes to the Canadian Sony Style site found several of the same preferences. "For every design item, the men had a higher opinion of the website than did the women. In the area of information design,

orange or yellow: men pick orange, women choose yellow.

There are plenty of social and cultural explanations but there may also be physical differences behind the results. As a rule, women's eyes have more rods (which gives you better peripheral vision) and men's eyes have more cones (which improves depth perception). That could make it more natural for a woman to look at the whole picture and for a man to concentrate on one thing at a time. Women rarely suffer colour blindness: eight per cent of men are colour-blind compared to less than half a percent of women. And studies that found some women can differentiate between a wider range of colours may reflect the fact that while men (and most women) have three colour pigments on their retinas, a small number of women have four pigments.

Certainly, male and female brains are wired differently. Women have four times as many connections between the left and right sides of





*Logically organised doesn't have to mean laid out in straight lines. Think about your audience – are they more interested in what the beauty products look like, or what the products make them look like?*

the brain and ad expert Michele Miller says that changes the way they make buying decisions. Men tend to concentrate on right-brain activities: doing research, analysing and comparing products, choosing a brand and rationalising the decision. They might ask a friend – a more left-brain act. In contrast, a woman will do the same right-brain research but she'll often hear about a product from someone else and her decision will incorporate a lot more left-brain activities: gathering opinions, thinking about who she knows who's already bought something similar, visualising herself using the product and drawing on emotional memory and experience. Her experience of a business in general – everything from how easy it is to find to how pleasant it is to deal with – will affect whether she decides to shop with them, says Miller.

Andy Farmer of agency Design UK agrees, and he was impressed by how well the Glamorgan research reflected what the agency had been seeing with client sites already. "Men are far more task-oriented. They follow a faster, more linear path to purchase with the product bought having provided the best solution to a given problem, while women take longer and iterate back through the research phase. They take advice from friends and colleagues to make a 'perfect' decision and importantly they like this sense of community to translate online. Women see their relationship with the brand as far more long term. Female customers take longer to get pushed over to the point of purchase – it might take emails or a special offer to push them over. They want to see photos of real-life women doing the activity or wearing the clothes, not a flat picture of the cloth, but they spend more and have a longer relationship with the brand."

Some of this may be because of what Caltech neuroscientist Steven Quartz has seen happening in the brains of people after they make decisions. According to his research men's brains tend to shut down after they've made a decision. But women don't relax so easily; there's still activity in several areas of the brain including areas where we anticipate rewards, do planning and organising and perform checking and monitoring. Women seem to keep thinking more about whether they made the right choice and what the results will be.

In sales terms, prospective buyers are sometimes divided into satisfiers and maximizers. As US psychology Barry Schwartz (author of the Paradox of Choice, about the paralyzing effect of unlimited choices) explains it; "The satisfier is somebody who is satisfied with good enough. You have

*Talking to...*

## GLORIA MOSS

*Art galleries, diversity training and student home pages: just some of what's inspired Dr Gloria Moss*

Walking round an art exhibition, Gloria Moss noticed that all the paintings she preferred were by women artists rather than men. Her background in human resources training and diversity studies made her wonder whether it was just her personal preferences or if there was more to it. "I was used to thinking about organisational culture and it's not a million miles away from my HR experience, where I was used to thinking about diversity in relation to the visual and relation to marketing. The principle is that individual difference needs to be taken into account."

Over the next seven years she studied the preferences of art lovers and the design styles of artists, finding significant differences in the way men and women use colour, shape, detailing and thematic material. Now she's extended her studies to websites, working with statistician Dr Rod Gunn.

She's reluctant to call the characteristics of male and female designers that the research has revealed "a definition" and insists that "it's hard to be prescriptive. There may be grounds for a male and female aesthetic in terms of the different design 'palettes' but there's a complex interplay of features. You can't just say 'make it pink': we do a seminar to explain how it all works." And she wants to emphasise that this work is only a beginning: "It's a start; we can always do more." Although the figures are statistically significant she'd like to see more studies validating the research: "Sample size issues bedevil social science. It would be good for other people to step in and do some work in this area. We want to see something with a really large sample."

Picking student home pages for the study was the perfect sample. It didn't only give her a good range of pages to include, but it meant she could try to look at the naïve designers rather than those working to male-dominated industry norms: "I didn't want training to be too much of an influence. I hoped we could catch male and female designers almost at an equivalent level."

Websites are designed by teams and it can be hard to isolate individual contributions by male or female designers in commercial sites, but she does think the predominantly male web design industry may be missing a few potential tricks. "There's tremendous scope for exciting design. In the commercial world the full breadth and scope of design ideas – the full design 'palette' – may not be being used."

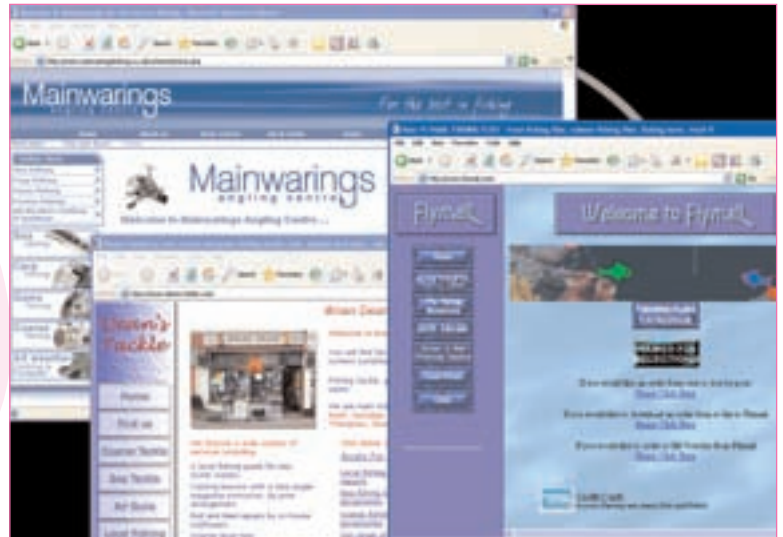
The key, for her, is diversity and matching the design to the target market. Rather than looking for universal absolutes, she thinks design values are 'interactionist', coming from individual perception. "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. It's not about design in the absolute. It's not saying one is better than the other. Diversity is about always trying to optimise the way you connect to the end user."

She's convinced the right look matters in many ways: "The visual aesthetic is important in terms of whether you like the site. Our attention span is finite; if you're comfortable you're much more likely to stay."

Design isn't just colours and shapes; good design will support the different ways men and women do things. Moss quotes retail anthropologist Paco Underhill, the author of *Why We Buy: The Science Of Shopping*. "Shopping is still and always will be meant mostly for females'. Men buy quickly: women look at something, they take it out of their basket and put it back in."

And would she put the differences down to cultural influences, perpetuating existing design styles, or biology and innate preferences? "Probably a mixture of these factors. Who's to say what the balance between nature and nurture is?"

At the end of the day, Moss wouldn't want to see designers focus only on whether their audience is male or female. "There are several variables to bear in mind: gender, nationality, age. Gender is one of several factors. You need to focus on all the variables and find out what your gender mix is. There are ways of creating websites with elements that appeal to both."



Professionally designed or not, angling sites often stick to straight lines, limited colours and images of fishing equipment rather than fishermen

standards; they may be very high standards, but as soon as you encounter something that meets those standards, you stop the search and you choose it, and you're happy, satisfied with the results of the choice. A maximizer, in contrast, is someone for whom the goal is to get not good

## “These aesthetics are about far more than whether you make a headline black or pink”

enough, but best. And if you're that kind of person, the only way to know you've got the best is by doing an exhaustive search.”

However, not all maximizers are women and not all satisfiers are men, but coming up with a design that lets satisfiers find what they want quickly but gives maximizers good tools to explorer fully will keep them both happy – while also pleasing visitors of both sexes within the same website.

You can also address buyers at all three stages of the buying process, as Andy Farmer identifies. “There are hunters, trackers and explorers. Hunters are looking for a specific item. Trackers have already made their decision and just want to buy. Explorers want to mosey around and

check things out before making a decision. To support all three kinds of visitors and all the different stages of the buying process you may want to have a configuration tool or a quick buy option on the home page, perhaps a gift suggestion.”

Instead of presenting the product, you might be presenting a lifestyle; “sell the dream” says Andy Farmer. Showing what the product does – or an animation of how it works – will appeal to a male audience. For women, you'll have more success showing the difference the product will make to them; get them to imagine themselves

using it. You want them to say “that's me!” Then they project themselves into the site and buy into the brand idea. He suggests that women are looking for hints and tips, case studies and benefits: “We do a lot of focus groups and women say they want to be talked to more personally”.

The navigation site of a structure needs to be logical, but that logic can also be creative. If you're looking for blue denim jeans, it makes sense to click on trouser, then jeans. But women might want to start out shopping by colour (‘show me all the blue trousers and skirts’) or see clothes that suit a particular body shape or a specific occasion.

Consider multiple versions of a site served from a CMS to suit different audiences. When they redesigned Butlins' site, Design UK looked at who was involved in the buying process. “It's influenced by young children, but the person doing the research – apart from ‘how much’ and ‘when’, which is what the father wants to know – is the mother. So we have pictures of children enjoying themselves but the presentation is biased to the female audience.” There's another version of the site for adults who'll be going on a theme weekend without bringing the kids.

If you are designing for children, getting the right language and the right level of information makes a big difference. According to usability guru Jakob Nielsen, in his studies “boys were significantly more annoyed by verbose pages than were girls (40 per cent of the boys complained, compared to 8 per cent of the girls), possibly because at the ages we tested, boys are not as accomplished at reading as girls. In contrast, girls complained much more than boys when sites lacked good instructions (76 per cent of the girls compared to 33 per cent of the boys).”

## DIVIDE AND CONQUER?

Currently, marketers can use services that target ads at visitors identified as male or female based on the information they volunteer about themselves in the profile they give when they sign up for something like a Hotmail account. But in the future it might be more automatic. The AdCenter Incubation LabMicrosoft Research

## WINNERS AND LOSERS

How do mainstream sites measure up to the male and female aesthetic?



### Smile

Women are more likely to use the web for online banking and Smile should appeal to them. Stereotype or not, pink was popular with women in the Glamorgan studies and the site also has rounded decorative shapes and icons like arrows and smiling mouths rather than boring squares. The site is rather overwhelmingly bright and pink and this might put some men off, although we'd all like our finances to be ‘in the pink’ rather than going ‘into the red’.



### HSBC

The HSBC site has many hallmarks of a site designed with the male aesthetic. Apart from the slogan, the text is in blue or black and the only other colours are grey and red. There are lots of straight lines in the design, although the boxes have a mix of square, rounded and cut-off corners. There's a note of authority in the mention of “600,000 business customers” and the language is formal (“make no loan repayments” instead of “don't make any loan repayments”).



Like Bounty, Directski has used the Glamorgan research to redesign the website with rounded corners, more colours and pictures of skiers, ensuring that it appeals to as many people as possible

in Beijing is working on tools to predict a user's age and gender based on websites they visit and the search terms they type in. Microsoft's Jed Nahum says the research suggests that someone who types in 'Toyota Corolla' is more likely to be female than someone who just types in 'Toyota'.

Don't go overboard on multiple versions of a site, as they take a lot of resources to design and build. Andy Farmer cautions that it can be hard to get a client to spend the time and money to create assets specifically for one website rather than re-using images from printed marketing. And Jakob Nielsen emphasises that you have to get the basics right first.

"The differences between men and women that have been measured in various psychology experiments are usually in the one per cent range, or smaller. This means that they don't matter for user interface design, where our focus is on the issues that mean a 100 per cent difference to the business success of a website. Theoretically, in the far future, when big usability problems have been fixed, it may be time to fiddle with issues that may have a one per cent impact. But certainly not now. Not when we face problems ranging from search engines that don't work to headlines that don't make sense. All issues that would double sales if fixed, and which should be fixed the same way for men and for women."

He highlights other areas to bear in mind. From his research, current websites are twice as hard to use for older visitors as they are for younger users. "The difference between young and old users is much greater than the difference between men and women, and the difference between highly educated users and people with very little education is even more pronounced."

Directski has just redesigned its website after a consultation with the team at Glamorgan (pictures above), changing the kind of images it uses on the pages as well as the shapes on the page and the way that colour is used. It's not that the company only wants women skiers. The proportion of men and women who've been skiing and are considering going again is pretty similar, and so is the proportion of men and women who haven't been skiing but who would consider trying it. But because Directski finds that it's mainly women who actually book the

holidays, it wants to make sure that it is appealing to them; it's good business sense.

Gloria Moss's research found that women prefer sites designed by women and that men prefer sites designed by men. Extrapolating the principles of what seems to make up the female and male aesthetic means that you don't really need a female designer to appeal to women visitors (which is just as well, as the industry continues to be male-dominated).

## THE FINAL WORD

These aesthetics are about far more than whether you make a headline black or pink; they cover the information architecture as well as the typography, colour scheme and style. Some of the principles are obvious. You don't need a study to tell you that vibrant colours, varied shapes, detail and a more light-hearted approach are going to suit a beauty website more than straight lines, boxes, serious images and few colours. What we're also learning is that the design style women seem to prefer is more like a magazine than a catalogue; it put them and their needs in the spotlight rather than the product, the brand or the company.

Really, this is just another way to understand your audience, which is the key to any successful website design. Some sites will need to reach a broad audience that crosses boundaries of age, gender and demographics. But many sites do want to target a specific audience. And the point of targeting is not to reach everyone, it's to reach the right person, at the right time, with the right message, which is where this gender-specific research comes into its own.

As Andy Farmer puts it: "The web is the presentation medium but in the end you're talking to your customers and you need to understand them. If you haven't got an emotional engagement with the customer, then you won't get that conversion, that registration, that purchase or whatever else. You want to get more in your customer's head".

There isn't a single, ideal way of designing websites, and there are exceptions to any rule. With the latest research, making your sites more welcoming to women, men or a mixture of the two may involve rather more trial, but you should find there's also less error.

## APPEALING TO YOUR AUDIENCE AND USING DESIGN TO SELL IS NOTHING NEW

*Steal some winning ideas from design and marketing in the physical world*

Brighten up – the US Colour Association puts the increased use of colour in business marketing down to the influence of women. Its latest report on colour trends says that "navy blues, corporate grey and just plain black-and-white now seem old-fashioned and predictable for real estate, legal firms and even banks. Women are often drawn to colours like hot pink, lavender, sky blue, and citrus shades. They have also been shown to be more receptive to subtle shadings and patterns." It highlights New York estate agent Corcoran (run by Barbara Corcoran) for using multi-coloured graphics that create "a strong image of a firm that is prestigious, approachable and dynamic all at once".

Show it off – the IKEA catalogue doesn't just show individual products. You see them in a room set, where the combination of furniture, soft furnishings and accessories offers a way of life, not just a new sofa. The shopper doesn't see the thousands of red, green and blue books the catalogue team keeps on hand so that they always have something to match the rugs and cushions.

To get in your customer's head, consider eye-tracking. It's easier to do for websites – Proctor & Gamble had to ask mothers to strap tiny cameras to their heads to get a look at their daily life but they came up with new ways of packaging nappies and wipes that made them much easier to use.



Run by Barbara Corcoran, US estate agent Corcoran uses the same colourful mix of graphics and emotional appeal for both online and print materials



# HIDDEN IN PLAIN VIEW

## Steganography and the web

Sometimes a picture can truly be worth a thousand words – that is, if you use it to hide them. We'll show you how the online world can host much more than meets the eye

**A**t some point, most of us go through a stage where we're attracted to the idea of sharing secrets. Whether it's playing James Bond, or exchanging classroom gossip, creating codes and leaving hidden messages offers a chance to escape the scrutiny of parents and peers.

Although we grow out of it, it never loses its fascination. And if it wasn't for codes, the history of computing might be very different. The pioneering Colossus machines were built in secret during World War II for one reason: to decrypt German communications. Ever since, intelligence agencies have been at the cutting edge of computing, demanding ever-more powerful tools to crack codes and create unbreakable ones of their own.

For most ordinary users, encryption still plays an important, though marginal role in online life. We'll use encryption keys to lock down a wireless network, and look for the padlock icon that confirms our details are being sent securely, but that's about as far as it goes. (Logins and passwords don't really count.) Few people use encryption when sending email,

even though intercepting messages is easy and software exists to protect them; it's considered too much hassle, and there's an understandable belief these days that concealing their content will only draw undesirable attention.

However, there's a way to send or store information that's both public *and* secret, never broadcasting its existence to the world. It's a method called steganography (from the Latin for 'secret writing'), which involves concealing data in an otherwise innocuous container. In the digital realm, this can be an image, an audio/video file, or even the HTML of a web page. With cryptography, messages may be easy to find, but hard to decipher. With steganography, a message may not need deciphering at all; the secret is in knowing where to find it.

Here, we'll run down the ways that steganography can be used, including digital watermarking to protect your online content from being plagiarised. We'll point you to tools and techniques that make it easy to create files using steganography, and explain how to avoid having your secrets exposed. Finally,

we'll tackle the thorniest question associated with any form of encryption technology: its association with criminal activity, and particularly terrorism.

### TATTOOED HEADS AND INVISIBLE INK

You'd be forgiven for thinking that steganography started life in the computer era. In fact, its use goes back thousands of years to the ancient Greek histories of Herodotus. His most famous early example concerns a ruler in the sixth century BC who wanted to tell a friend in another city to launch a revolt. He shaved the head of his most trusted slave, tattooed the message on his scalp, and once the slave's hair had grown back, he was sent off on his mission, safe from

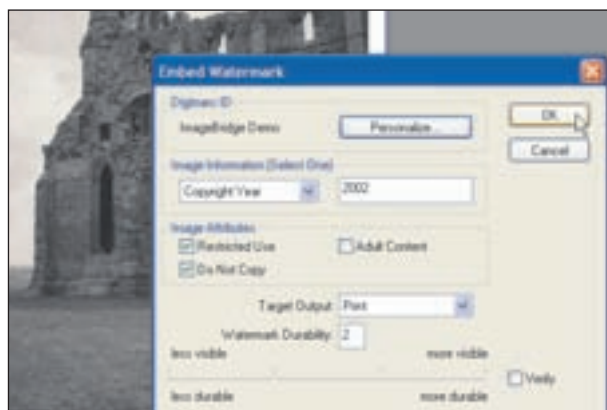
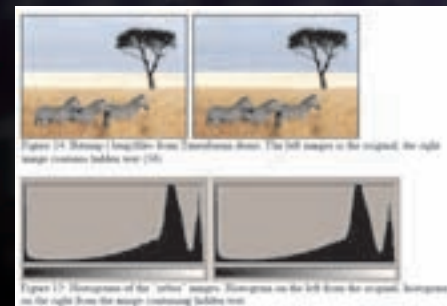
### BREAKING THE CODE

For every code-maker, there's a codebreaker. In this case, it's steganalysis

Finding files that use steganography to conceal information is like searching for a needle in the world's largest haystack. That doesn't prevent people from trying: steganalysis has long been included in many governments' surveillance operations, and is now finding a place in the commercial world to seek out copyright violators. The process is easiest when the carrier file is known to the analysts: for instance, a popular MP3 or a commercial image. In these cases, it's possible to compare 'checksums' – essentially, the fingerprints of a file – and pick out the ones that don't match.

When the carrier file is less well-known, things get trickier – but not impossible. In these cases, steganalysts use a number of methods. One involves creating statistical models of 'normal' images, then running a comparison against those models to pick out ones that show signs of tampering. This requires a great deal of computing power, reserving it for organisations that work in fenced-off areas with heavy security.

Steganalysis isn't off-limits for ordinary users: one of the most versatile packages available is the Digital Invisible Ink Toolkit [diit.sourceforge.net](http://diit.sourceforge.net), a Java-based kit that combines steganography and detection programs.



Adding a digital watermark to an image in Photoshop can help discourage unauthorised re-use and track potential plagiarists

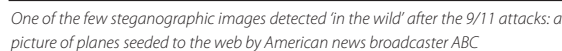
## Understanding the geek-speak behind steganography

**Coverttext (or carrier file)** The file used to conceal data.

**Payload** The data hidden inside a coverttext.

**Steganalysis** The process of detecting data that is concealed by use of steganography.

**Cypherpunk** An early-90s movement dedicated to using cryptographic methods to protect online privacy and civil liberties.



Renaissance artworks often used stenographic methods, requiring a particular lens or an unconventional viewing angle to show the real text or image. In modern times, spies would send dull letters to contacts, hiding secret information underneath the stamp, to be steamed off once it reached its destination; or placing it in a microdot that took the place of a typed full stop.

Most digital steganography, though, involves embedding hidden content in binary files – images, audio and video – through a variety of programs that can also be used to extract that content. If you take digital photos, or listen to MP3s, you'll know that those files can contain more than just images or sounds; they include metadata that records when a

## STEGANOGRAPHY STORIES

## WHEN CHEESECAKE MEETS CYPHERPUNK

As you might expect, this combination of geekery and glamour inspired journalists to cover cypherpunk in the early 90s, and even though some of that pioneering, revolutionary spirit is gone from the online world, it shouldn't be forgotten.

When stories in early 2001 alleged that al-Qaeda was sending messages embedded in auction pictures on eBay, computer scientists Niels Provos and Peter Honeyman ([niels.xtdnet.nl/stego](http://niels.xtdnet.nl/stego)) decided to try and find them. They used the best publically-available steganalysis tools, combined with a web crawler and password-breaker, so that any suspicious payloads might be decrypted.

After scanning over two million images from eBay, and a million more from USENET newsgroups, Provos and Honeyman found a number of suspicious images, but they were all 'false positives'. Their conclusion: 'we are unable to report finding a single hidden message'.

The best time of the year for movie filesharers is awards season: judges are provided with 'screeners,' advance copies of DVDs for films that may still be showing in cinemas, and illicit versions usually make it onto P2P networks. This year, the film studios decided to fight back by embedding a unique serial number into the video frames of each DVD they provided, which would survive being compressed into the preferred format for filesharers. When pirate copies started showing up, they were able to trace them to their source: let's just say that one judge won't be invited back.

## INSIDE THE BINARY

The simplest form of online steganography is to include hidden content in the HTML source of a page, enclosed in comment tags. This was especially common in the early days of the web, when most

photo was taken, or the name of a particular artist and track. Those forms of metadata are well-documented, and form part of the specification for each file type. Binary files also have a degree of 'redundancy': spare capacity that can be altered without appearing to affect their main content. Digital steganography takes advantage of this, allowing users to tweak the raw content of a file to include that can then be extracted by a recipient who knows that its true content is hidden.

There's a wide range of software capable of doing this, depending on the type of information you wish to conceal and the format of the files you'll be using as your cover: you'll find a comprehensive list at [www.stegoarchive.com](http://www.stegoarchive.com), including free programs and commercial suites such as Steganos. Regardless of the package you choose, the process is basically the same: you choose your carrier file or covertex,



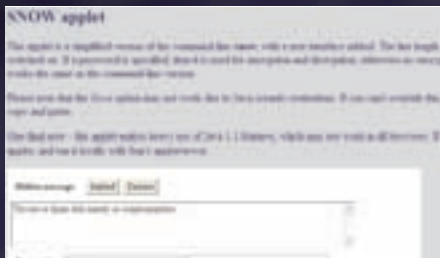
## STEGANOGRAPHY RESOURCES

Software tools and technical details for those wanting to learn more



### STEGANOGRAPHY SOFTWARE (WWW.STEGOARCHIVE.COM)

Because many steganography programs were created out of the cypherpunk movement over a decade ago, they don't always reflect today's online activity. To help you pick out the wheat from the chaff, the Stego Archive keeps a regularly-updated list of packages, organised by operating system.



### SNOW: WHITESPACE STEGANOGRAPHY (WWW.DARKSIDE.COM.AU/SNOW/JSNOWAPP.HTML)

Java steganography applets are especially useful: first, because they're cross-platform; second, because browser-based tools are quite easy to conceal. The SNOW applet is a clever text-based solution, which works by translating the hidden message into whitespace in the carrier file.



### DETECTING STEGANOGRAPHIC CONTENT (NIELS.XTDNET.NL/STEGO)

This is Provos and Honeyman's groundbreaking steganalysis paper, detailing their concerted attempt to find hidden messages in images posted on eBay and to newsgroups, which proved that most of the reporting on steganography in the wake of 9/11 was groundless.

then add the files or plain text you want to conceal. While steganography primarily relies upon concealment to keep your data from prying eyes, there's always the risk of getting caught out. That's why most modern software provides an extra layer of security, by encrypting the 'payload' before it's embedded in the coartext. This process is generally straightforward: you'll be asked for a passphrase before saving your encrypted file, and the recipient will need to enter it before unlocking the payload. But this raises a problem associated with steganography: how does that recipient learn the password – or, indeed, where to look in order to find the secret contents? Presumably, through another secret message... and you get the picture. Steganography is best suited to relatively small payloads, especially when the carrier file isn't that large, as the alterations become more evident as the concealed data grows in size.

### DIGITAL WATERMARKS

The basic principles of steganography are more widely used these days for another technique: digital watermarking. For many years, graphic artists and the sellers of stock images have embedded invisible copyright and ownership details to restrict piracy. In some cases, if users attempt to re-edit the image or



The only hidden message from al-Qaeda so far? According to this poster, Osama likes watching Sesame Street

early months of 2001, a number of articles appeared in the American press suggesting that al-Qaeda members were using steganography to embed messages in images posted on eBay. At the time those reports attracted little attention, but in the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that followed the attacks the subject once again hit the headlines. Reports spoke of encoded images in email attachments or posted to newsgroups, and pointed to a group of Arabic websites and message boards sympathetic to al-Qaeda that included photographs and other images. But what all these reports lacked

## “In 2001, articles suggested that al-Qaeda members were using steganography to embed messages in eBay images”

remove these watermarks, the image becomes unusable. More recently, online music vendors have implemented an enhanced form of watermarking known as Digital Rights Management, while film studios and record companies now routinely embed tracking numbers in pre-release DVDs and albums, so that any leaks to P2P sites can be traced back.

While digital watermarking can be circumvented, it's often worthwhile using if you're sharing high-res images on a site and don't want them re-used. You'll find a demo of the Digimarc system in Photoshop CS's Filters menu, which lets you add a personalised copyright notice, along with the option to fine-tune the visibility and durability of the watermark.

### THE DARK SIDE OF STEGANOGRAPHY

We can't discuss steganography without acknowledging its potential use for harm. Government intelligence services have routinely used steganalysis, scanning files in search of anomalies that might be messages, but in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the ways that terrorists might encrypt communications attracted media coverage. In the

was actual proof. No government has produced a single encrypted image related to terrorism.

Academic researchers scanned millions of eBay images, only to reveal nothing; the journalist behind the initial reports resigned after it was shown that he had fabricated other stories. The article discussing email and newsgroups was prompted by a press release from a vendor of steganalysis software, calling its objectivity into question. It was even revealed last year that the CIA spent months mistakenly 'finding' co-ordinates in the news ticker at the bottom of al-Jazeera's broadcasts. In fact, an al-Qaeda training manual discovered in 2000 makes no mention of the topic. Perhaps the only example of a 'hidden terrorist message' came from a demonstration in Bangladesh, in a poster featuring Osama bin Laden... alongside Bert from Sesame Street.

While the use of digital steganography by terrorists can't be dismissed, most experts now believe that it's unlikely. So don't worry about being hauled off in chains for employing this technology: the tools are out there to allow you protect your work and share private information, so use them!





# TO EVERY VISITOR

In business it's essential to meet the needs of all your customers.  
**Hal Devlin** investigates guidelines that help you cater for everyone

**A**s the owner and builder of a business website, you will have to wear many hats and juggle many responsibilities. Your first priority should always be to your customers, though, and that means looking after all of them. Every single customer should be able to access and use your site, whatever platform they're using and whatever special needs they might have.

Designing sites that are accessible to all is a business essential. No one can afford to turn away customers. If your site excludes people with visual or hearing impairment, or if it's impossible to navigate for people with restricted motor skills or learning difficulties, then you're excluding a significant section of the populace. According to government surveys, around 15 per cent of the UK population have a disability that may affect the way they access the web. That's 8.6 million people.

If this all sounds daunting, well, let's be frank, it could be. If you have a large ecommerce site that's already on the web doing lots of business then you might have quite a big job on your hands. It depends on the structure of your site. A static website with hundreds of pages that's using tables for layout and HTML for formatting instead of CSS...you really should be thinking about a major overhaul by now anyway.

At the other extreme, if you have a dynamic site that connects to a database, with formatting controlled by external CSS and layouts contained in HTML templates, you might have a few afternoons' work ahead of you (and that's providing that you've been sticking to web standards along the way).

If we haven't been persuasive enough, then consider this. Building accessible websites isn't just a matter of good practice or maximising customers. It's the law.

## Accessibility law

There are many myths about the state of accessibility legislation in the UK. A Disability Rights Commission ([www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)) survey conducted last year found that only 19 per cent of sites met a minimum standard set by the commission – from a sample of 1,000 commercial players. That result was put down to widespread ignorance of accessibility standards.

The fact is that we've had a specific web accessibility law in place since October 1999. That's when section three of the UK Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) came into power. This law states that it's illegal for any service provider to "discriminate against a disabled person by refusing to provide any service which it provides to members of the public". It then gives several

specific examples that apply to websites, including online booking forms and access to content for those with hearing or vision impairment. By 'service provider', the law means any commercial website: any business that sells products through the web or provides services in other ways. If you run an ecommerce website and your pages don't comply with the DDA, you may well have been breaking the law for a long time.

The final part of the legislation came into force in October 2004. Many believed this was the date by which they had to be compliant, but this part of the law has no direct bearing on the internet. So far, few British sites have fallen foul of the legislation, despite widespread examples of them lacking ▶



*The Royal National Institute for the Blind ([www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)) has campaigned voraciously for the adoption of accessibility guideline in the building of websites*

# Accessibility in Dreamweaver

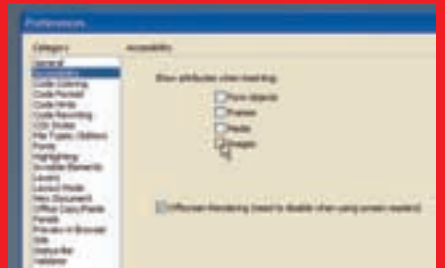
Dreamweaver, the world's favourite web tool, has features to help you create accessible sites

Accessible documents are “well formed” documents, following a specific page structure. Fortunately, Dreamweaver does this for you by default, writing the correct `!DOCTYPE` declaration at the top of your code. This tells modern browsers which version of HTML (or XHTML) is being used to lay out your pages so they will render properly in browser or screen reader.

We'd advise that when you create new pages you choose 'XHTML 1.0 Transitional' from the DTD drop-down menu, or 'Make XHTML Compliant' in older versions of Dreamweaver.

Dreamweaver 8 and MX 2004 have special accessibility features. Go to Edit > Preferences and choose 'Accessibility'. Tick all the boxes under 'Show attributes when inserting', then click OK. Now, when you try to insert new images, or create forms, frames or media, Dreamweaver will prompt you to add any additional data required to make your page compliant with accessibility guidelines.

The best way to check for the standards compliance of your code is to verify it using the W3C's online validation tool. This gives you a full and comprehensive breakdown of all the syntax and code errors in any page submitted. In the current version of Dreamweaver, hit the Validate markup icon on the document window or click the Validation tab in the Results panel.



► compliance. With no central body bringing prosecutions, it has been left to cash-strapped charities to bring the DDA to the attention of the business community. The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), for example, has persuaded several sites to overhaul their accessibility provision by sending letters out to site owners.

It's just a matter of time before some transgressors take an expensive trip to court though. Sites in other countries have already been on the receiving end of big fines. In 2004, high-profile travel site [www.priceline.com](http://www.priceline.com) promised to invest \$77,500 on improving the site's accessibility following an investigation by New York's Attorney General.

## Designing for disability

One problem for site-builders is not knowing what actually makes a site accessible. Fortunately, we'll be talking about and pointing you towards all the major resources you'll need to research the area for yourself. The good news is that making your pages accessible doesn't really require any



As multimedia content becomes common, more sites need to consider the experience of the hearing-impaired web user. You'll find factsheets that offer plenty of information at [www.signcommunity.org.uk](http://www.signcommunity.org.uk)

access your page, regardless of what equipment they're using and what abilities they have. It shouldn't be that difficult, but it may mean changing your habits. HTML was designed for accessibility from the ground up – and it still is. If

formed", which means they should follow a standard structure. Tools like Dreamweaver automatically create documents that conform to XHTML standards for you.

In team environments, this approach needs to be practiced by every member. They shouldn't have to learn new skills, because the skills used are the same back-to-basics chops you need to build any good web page. Despite the simplicity of this advice, it's always handy to have a set of clear guidelines to follow.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), global arbiter of web standards, has produced the most comprehensive set: the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). It's such a comprehensive document that it's quite difficult to follow in places. However, it does clearly set out what accessible web-building should achieve: the "four principles of accessibility".

"If you run an ecommerce website and your pages don't comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, you may have been breaking the law for a long time"

special design techniques above or beyond those you should already be using. If you're building standards-compliant, cross-platform friendly sites right now, then you should be on your way already. Making your sites accessible means ensuring they can be used by anyone who might

you're building a site on your own, taking care of the code as well as the layout, then you can achieve accessibility simply by sticking to current web standards. Pages should be for content and content alone, and layouts should be formatted with external CSS. Documents need to be "well

## Our five top tips

Here are five tips you can apply to your sites right now to help make them accessible to all

- ✓ The W3C sets out three levels of website accessibility compliance within its guidelines. Priority one guidelines must be addressed, priority two should be addressed, while priority three may be handy to implement. Go to [www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT](http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT) for more information.
- ✓ When embedding links, use text that makes sense and that describes the content users will navigate to. Avoid instructions like 'Click Here', which don't tell people where they're going.
- ✓ If you must use frames, use the `<noframes>` tag to embed the full textual content of the page into your frameset file. Give individual frames meaningful titles in the frameset and document.
- ✓ Define keyboard shortcuts using the `accesskey` attribute within links and forms. This takes the syntax `accesskey="1"` (where one is any number). Users hit ALT and the number to activate the shortcut.
- ✓ Avoid opening pages in new windows. The new window doesn't retain the browser history of the old one, effectively breaking the Back button. For a visually impaired user it may seem like their browser has stopped working.



The Disability Rights Commission is an independent body set up by the government to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. Find out more at [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)



# Accessible sites

Learn by example. Here are four sites that get the balance between great-looking design and accessible content just right

These advise that content must be perceivable by every user, that user interface components must be operable by every user, that content and controls should be universally understandable and that content should be robust enough to work with both current and future technologies.

The full guidelines are essential reading, and you'll find them at [www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20). The RNIB also has its own, much simpler and more practical guide to building accessible sites at [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk) - just click on the 'Good Design' link.

One thing that emerges from these documents is that making sites accessible shouldn't mean sacrificing aesthetics. It's not about having a 'text-only' version of your site - it's about building sites that work wherever they're deployed. With CSS enabling you to separate content from form, this is easier than it might first seem. Images can be the most problematic element in pages, so it makes sense to begin optimising them first.

Most web designers will recognise that filling in the Alt attribute of the image tag plays a crucial part in enhancing accessibility, as screen readers and text only browsers render them instead of the image. You should deal with them on a case-by-case basis, though - don't treat every Alt attribute the same way.

Illustrations, photographs and diagrams should be described thoroughly in 20 words or less, while screen furniture like horizontal lines or headers just need a simple label telling users what they are. A text-based image, such as a logo, should repeat the text contained in the picture. Images with no content value, like spacers and table braces, can be marked up with an asterisk to show that the picture can be ignored. Only background images escape unlabelled. Link images should always have descriptive text alternatives.

## Clarity of content

Like images, embedded media such as video or audio requires an alternate description using the Alt parameter in the <object> tag. Again, 20 words or fewer should do it. You should also provide a textual transcript of the audio track of



**Green Methods** [www.greenmethods.com](http://www.greenmethods.com)  
A site about biological pest control that's notable for a great layout and keyboard-based navigation system. Pay attention to the use of title labels in links.



**Royal National Institute for the Deaf** [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)  
Clean and filled with easy-to-access content, this site is also a useful hub for advice on building highly visual, accessible sites.



**Imagine** [www.imagine.org.uk](http://www.imagine.org.uk)  
This site for Tyne and Wear Museums demonstrates that you can create aesthetically arresting sites that comply with accessibility guidelines.



**Disney Store UK** [www.disneystore.co.uk](http://www.disneystore.co.uk)  
Graphics-heavy, this Disney site demonstrates how an ecommerce portal should be built. Every image has Alt text and the all-important text can be resized.

# Testing your site

How do you know if your site needs an accessibility overhaul?  
It's time to put it to the test...

Shoehorning accessibility into a large, established site could be an overwhelming undertaking. If you're concerned about how compliant your site is right now, then the best thing would be to do some consumer research.

Gather together some people to try out your site, and take note of how they cope with navigation and content. Whether this is practical or not, you should also test your site using the online tools that are available. The first port of call should be the W3C's suite of quality assurance testing tools at [www.w3.org/QA/Tools](http://www.w3.org/QA/Tools). A site with valid code is usually an accessible site. For direct accessibility testing, you'll find a dedicated set of tools at

<http://webxact.watchfire.com>. These will help determine how closely your site follows WACG and other guidelines.

Adobe, formerly Macromedia, provides a five-page accessibility testing suite at <http://tinyurl.com/8q3jl>. Sourced from accessibility expert [www.usablenet.com](http://www.usablenet.com), the test automatically produces a full report that is forwarded to your email address. Taking the first step towards making your site accessible is as simple as testing it using the tools we've mentioned. Making sure it meets those capabilities is up to you, but ultimately it's just a matter of old-fashioned good practice in design - an approach we should all be taking by default.

# extend your hand to every visitor

- ▶ your media, either on the same page or from a clearly labelled hyperlink.

The textual content that's already there should be clear and readable. In an age when it's common for designers to specify font sizes as small as ten points this might seem like a tall order, but CSS can save you from that. Instead of specifying point sizes, use relative sizes. First, you should set a default size for your text in a CSS declaration, either in an external CSS file or embedded in a stylesheet declaration in the head of your document, like this:

```
<style type="text/css">
body {
font-size: 12px;
}
```

Next, specify other text sizes as percentages:

```
h1 {
font-size: 130%
}
```

```
h2 {
font-size: 110%
}
</style>
```

We'd add that your font sizing strategy should be part of a switch to using fluid CSS for formatting and layout throughout.

Test your pages at different font sizes to make sure that the layout doesn't break – which is easier when <div> containers have relative rather than absolute sizes too, and are 'floating' rather than fixed. Text should also be high-contrast. Grey text subtly placed on a white background might look cool to you, but could be invisible to someone with poor eyesight.

By now you should be getting the message that making content accessible is largely about labelling conscientiously and handing the power to control the look and feel of the page back to users. That advice goes double for form-based pages like payment systems. Forms come with their own built-in accessibility features. You can tab between text boxes and use arrow keys to navigate menus. To make things easier, make sure all form elements are clearly labelled on the page and have unique ID or name attributes.

## Beyond HTML

Although dynamic sites driven by PHP or ASP scripts can conform to accessible standards by using carefully crafted CSS and HTML templates, there are an awful lot of other formats on the web. Among the most popular are Flash movies and Adobe PDF files.

Fortunately, when used for delivering content, Flash can be highly optimised for accessibility. Textual content can be rendered with relative font sizes, just like HTML. Failing that, users can zoom directly into a movie if they wish; Flash's vector format enables you to view content at any size. Savvy Flash developers will place internal



The [www.accessible.net.org](http://www.accessible.net.org) site is packed with tutorials and tips on making your site comply with the law. You'll also find links to tools, organisations and news updates

Users can zoom into PDFs, change font sizes, and Adobe Reader can be configured to work with assistive software. From an authoring point of view, Acrobat Professional lets you place add navigation tags to content within your text, making it easier for users to find their way around

## “Making sites accessible shouldn't mean sacrificing aesthetics. It's about building sites that work wherever they're deployed”

bookmarks within projects and label objects for screen readers.

Finally, never link directly to Flash movies – always embed them in an HTML page that contains a full description of the content. PDF files have similar, built-in accessibility features.

documents. When building accessible websites, it helps if you start from the ground up. Not only do you then get the chance to tweak every piece of code as it's added, but contemporary authoring tools take accessibility more seriously than their older counterparts.

Macromedia's Studio MX 2004 put the issue of accessibility at the front of the agenda, with enhanced screen-reader support in both Flash and Dreamweaver, and code validity checking throughout. That support continues into Flash and Dreamweaver 8, now badged as Adobe products. Adobe's own web development package GoLive ships with templates that are Section 508-compatible (Section 508 of the American Disabilities Act being the Stateside equivalent of the DDA).

Building accessible sites shouldn't be an afterthought, something you bolt on to the design and architecture you've already come up with. Accessibility, like web standards compliance and usability, should be at the forefront of your strategy from the very beginning.

When you can meet those standards you'll have the satisfaction of being able to cater to any potential customer on your site, and you'll get a business boost from being able to market your site as Disability Discrimination Act-compliant. Everybody wins, which is the fundamental point of accessibility in the first place. ■



Research the Disability Discrimination Act in detail at the official government site, [www.disability.gov.uk](http://www.disability.gov.uk). You'll find links to comprehensive guides along with the full text of the act itself



Rodger Page used to work as a digital-imaging technician before studying Software Systems for the Arts and Media at university. After successfully completing his course, he established himself as a new media designer and now works as a multimedia editor.



## The brief

### On the CD

**Tutorial files:**  
Metal\_final.psd  
Pseudo\_3d\_final.psd  
Graffiti\_final.psd & more

### Tutorial objective

Create vector-based text effects for all media

### Time required

Two hours

### Skill level



# Create cool vector-based text effects

Create four very different vector-based text effects in Photoshop and use them to bring your online projects to life

IT MAY SOUND like we're stating the obvious, but when designing anything you must first think about the delivery medium. If you're designing for print, you want to keep as many things as vectors as possible, to keep that nice crisp edge on the page – and of course do everything at high-res. Vectors are not constrained by resolution, but textures are.

When designing for screen-based media you can get away with murder, but because EPSs will not render in your web

browser simply saving the text as a GIF or JPG and keeping check on the compression is all that's required.

In this tutorial we'll be using filters and layer effects that are relative to the resolution you're working to, so everything will be designed at 300dpi. If you applied these effects to a text object at 72dpi, the result wouldn't be the same. To use these effects for the web, simply complete the tutorial at 300dpi, then rasterise and reduce the resolution to 72dpi.



## Metal effect



### 01 Create a new document

Create a new document measuring 20cm by 10cm, with a resolution of 300dpi, a white background and a colour mode of RGB (but remember to convert to CMYK as you are intending to use this for print once you've finished). Hit OK, save the document as a PSD and name it 'Metal'.



### 02 A touch of text

Select the Type tool and click within the document. Type your text and change the colour to white. Transform the size of the text by changing the point size until it fills the document, or selecting Edit > Transform > Scale (Ctrl+T); press Shift and change the size and position of your text.



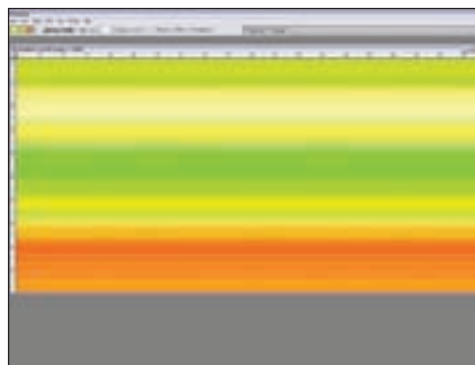
### 03 Apply a text layer effect

Go to Layer > Layer Style > Bevel and Emboss. Add: Style: Inner Bevel, Technique: Chisel Hard, Depth: 430%, Direction: Up, Size: 8, Soften: 0, Angle: 120, Altitude 30, Gloss Contour: Cove - Deep (in the drop-down, hover over styles to see the names). Leave Highlight, set Shadow to Linear Burn.



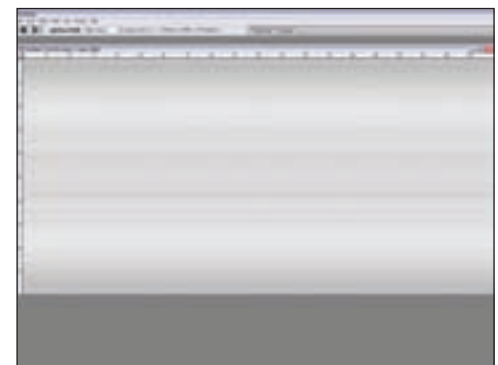
### 04 Gradient tool

Add a new layer to your document and select the Gradient tool from the toolbar. In the options bar at the top of the screen click inside the layer fill colour; this will bring up the Gradient tool options. From the Gradient Type drop-down menu, select Noise and click OK.



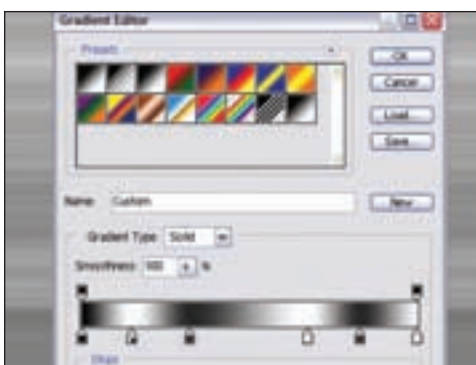
### 05 Texture fill layer

In the new layer press Shift and draw out your gradient fill from the top of the document to the bottom. Once happy with the fill, desaturate the layer via Image > Adjustments > Desaturate (Ctrl+Shift+U). This removes colour from the layer, much like converting the document to Greyscale.



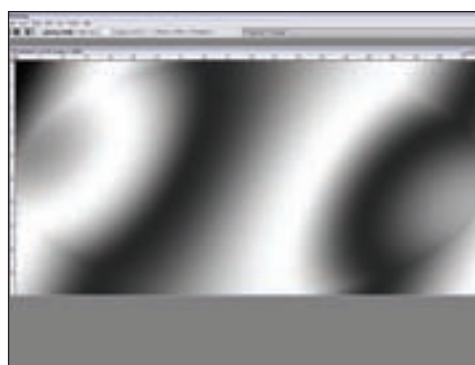
### 06 Duplicate the layer

Duplicate the texture fill layer by highlighting it and selecting Layer > Duplicate Layer (Ctrl+J). Set the blending options to Screen and flip the layer vertically by selecting Edit > Transform > Flip Vertical. This will add to the texture and also lighten the layer.



### 07 Lighting layer options

Create another layer. Again, select the Gradient tool and bring up the Gradient dialog. In the drop-down Gradient Type menu select Solid and a black and white gradient. Add four new fill colours so the order goes: black, white, black, white, black, white. Space them unevenly apart.



### 08 Lighting fill layer

Fill your new layer from the top left corner to the bottom right. This will create a lighting effect across your texture layer. To help achieve this further, apply a Spherize filter to the layer with a value of -100%. Set the Layer Blend option to Screen and the opacity to 70%.



### 09 Bring it all together

Finally, merge the two texture layers and the lighting layers together, move the text layer above the texture, make a selection of the text and reselect the texture layer. Select Layer > Add Layer Mask > Reveal Selection. Now set the Text Layer Blend option to Multiply.

## Technique

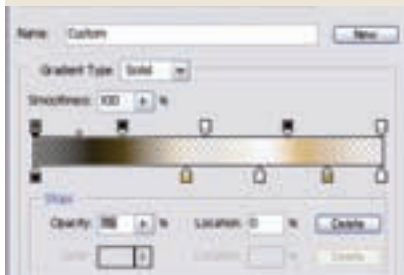
### Create great gradients

The Gradient Editor is a powerful tool that can produce spectacular results. Play around and see what you can do



#### 1: Gradient overlay

The bottom of the colour bar determines what colours are used within the gradient. To add a new colour, simply click on a blank space then click on the Color menu to define your colour.



#### 2: Location, location

On either side of the new colour will be two dots. This is called the Location and determines how the colour fades into the opposing colour. Set at 50%, the fade will be equal between the two colours.



#### 3: Variety of colours

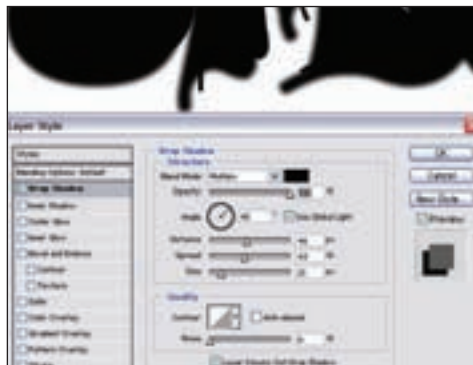
The top bit of the bar determines the opacity of any given section, so you can have many different colours with varying opacities. If you use the Gradient Overlay Layer effect, you have more control over the blending options.

## Graffiti effect



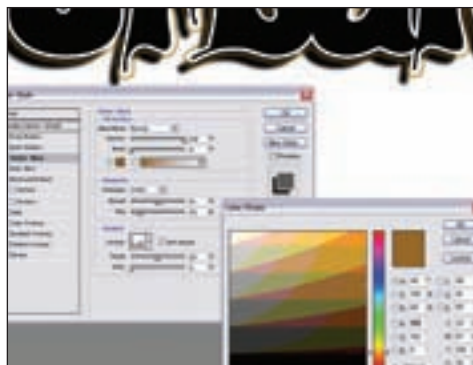
### 01 The font of knowledge

As before, create a new document to the same dimensions and resolution. Choose a suitable font for the text. If you can't find an appropriate font, try looking on the internet – there are many sites that provide free fonts. Our favourite is [www.acidfonts.com](http://www.acidfonts.com).



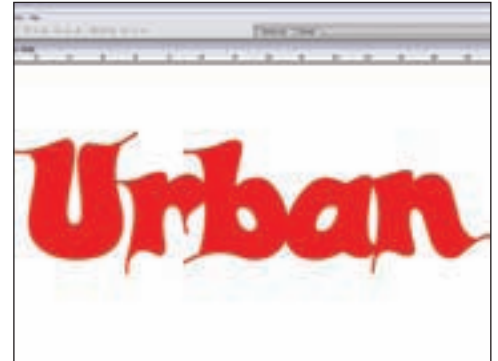
### 03 Drop shadow

You should now have two text layers, the bottom one being black and the top red. Hide the top layer, select the bottom one, go to Layer > Layer Style > Drop Shadow and enter the following values: Blend Mode: Multiply, Opacity: 100%, Angle: 45, Distance: 46px, Spread: 43%, Size: 21px.



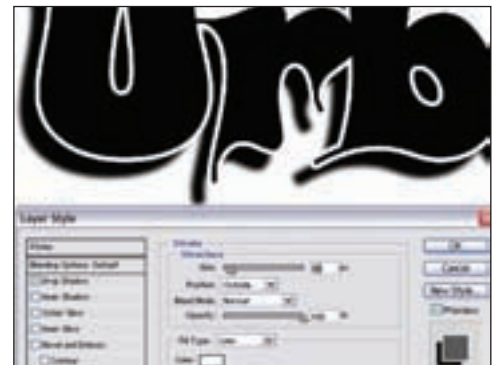
### 05 Give it some glow

On the same text layer apply an Outer Glow. Go to Layer > Layer Style > Outer Glow and insert: Blend Mode: Normal, Opacity: 100%. Select the solid colour radio button, add: Color: #996600, Technique: Softer, Spread: 51%, Size: 29%, Contour: Rolling Slope – Descending, Range 50%, Jitter 0%.



### 02 Word up

Type your text and make the fill colour black. We'll use Hexadecimal colour values, but obviously you can use whichever you wish. Duplicate the text layer (Ctrl+J), change the colour of the top text layer to red (#FF0000) and reduce the kerning of the font so the letters overlap.



### 04 White lines

On the same text layer apply a stroke by selecting Layer > Layer Style > Stroke and insert the following values: Size: 10px, Position: Outside, Blend Mode: Normal, Opacity: 100%, Color: #FFFFFF. This will now give us a heavy white line which knocks out the drop shadow.



### 06 Top layer stroke

Select the top text layer. Now we'll apply a stroke by selecting Layer > Layer Style > Stroke, then insert the following values: Size: 24px, Position: Inside, Blend Mode: Normal, Opacity: 100%. This will complete the stroke effect for the top layer.





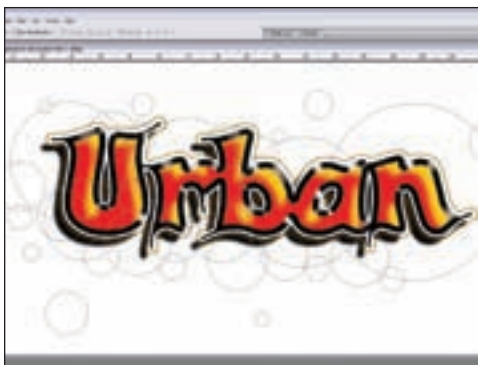
## 07 Bevel and Emboss

Apply a Bevel and Emboss by selecting Layer > Layer Style > Bevel and Emboss, and insert the following values: Style: Stroke Emboss, Technique: Chisel Soft, Depth: 1000%, Size: 250px, Soften: 10px, Angle: 45, Altitude: 30, Gloss Contour: Ring, Highlight Mode: Screen at 100%.



## 08 Inner Shadow

The final effect to add to the text is an Inner Shadow, so select Layer > Layer Style > Inner Shadow, and then enter the following values: Blend Mode: Normal, Color: #FFCC00, Opacity: 100%, Angle: 45, Distance: 73px, Choke: 14%, Size: 32px.



## 09 Create a background

To set off your text we are going to create a vector-based background, and once again layer some effects over the top of it. Select the Ellipse tool, and in the options bar at the top of the screen select Paths (the pen in the square). Now draw your circles by holding down Shift.

## In detail

## Resizing the effects

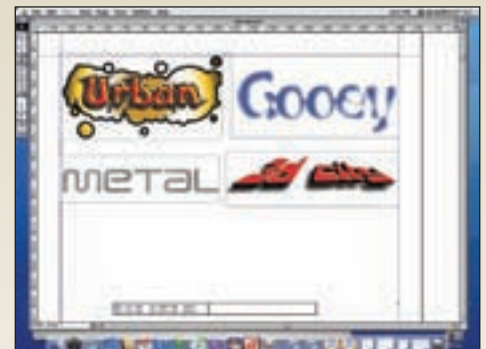
Take further control over the effects by scaling them down in other design packages

THE AIM OF creating effects as we have in this tutorial is to keep the text editable. This means you can apply the effects to multiple objects with the minimum of fuss. Also, maintaining the vectors means that when it comes to print you will have the desired crisp edge around your font, giving it a professional touch.

Unfortunately, the effects we've produced are relative to the size and resolution of the object – with the result that if we scale down the text using the Transform tool the effect will be ruined. There is a function in the Image Size dialog which will scale the effects up or down in proportion to the document, but this only works within a percentage of the size or within the boundaries of the layer effects. However, the good news is that there are several ways to overcome this problem.

If the desired medium is print, all that's required is to save the document as an EPS and import it into QuarkXPress, InDesign or even Illustrator (it's worth noting that both InDesign and Illustrator also handle the PSD format), and then to scale down the object to suit within that program. If you require a transparent background, making a vector mask and converting it into a clipping path is all that will be necessary.

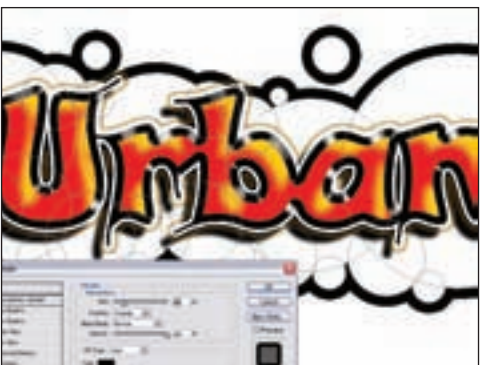
If the desired medium is the web, then rasterising the text layers, reducing the size and saving off as a GIF or JPG is all that's needed with these creations. For anything else screen-based, you can use the PNG format (a cross between a GIF and a JPG), because it is lossless compression such as a GIF that handles continuous tones such as a JPG.



Saving the effect as an EPS and scaling down in QuarkXPress/InDesign maintains the proportions of the effect



Use the 'Save for the Web' function to achieve the fine balance between compression and quality



## 10 Vector ellipsis

Open Paths and pick the paths layer. Go to Layer > New Fill Layer > Solid Color; set the fill to white (#FFFFFF). Put the layer below the text layers. Apply a stroke via Layer > Layer Style > Stroke and insert: Size: 32px, Position: Outside, Blend Mode: Normal, Opacity: 100%. This gives a black line.



## 11 Finishing touches

Apply a gradient fill over the circles via Layer > Layer Style > Gradient Overlay. Blend Mode: Normal, Opacity: 100%, Style: Radial, Angle: 180, Scale: 150%. Click the fill colour. Between the black and white add three colours to the right in the order: #000000, #FFCC00, #FFFFFF, #CC9933, #FFFFFF.



## Creating 3D



### 01 Start your next document

Once again, create a new document to the same dimensions and resolution. Choose a suitable font for the text – but if you can't find one, have a look on the net where there are many sites offering free fonts. Just type 'free fonts' into Google for a range of options.



### 02 Type your text

Select the Type tool and click within your document. Type your text and change the colour to black. It's difficult to add perspective to text in Photoshop without converting it into a shape or paths, so we will be applying an envelope.



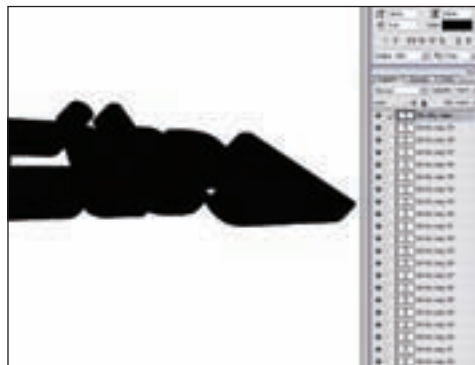
### 03 Distort the text

To distort the text, select Layer > Type > Warp Text and enter the following: Style: Arc Upper, select Horizontal, Bend: 0%, Horizontal Distortion: -30%, Vertical Distortion: +40%. Now click OK. This will apply an envelope over the text that will still enable you to edit the text.



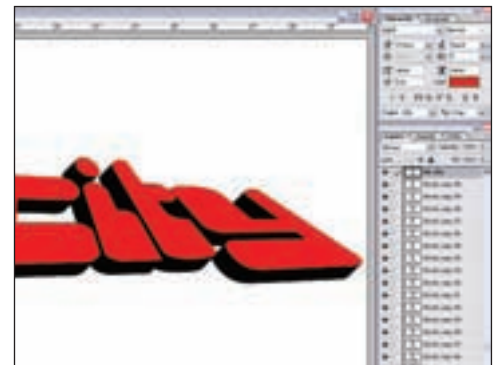
### 04 Distort and resize

To complete the perspective effect, distort the text further by scaling down the height. To do this, select Edit > Free Transform. In the options bar at the top of the screen enter a value of H: 70%. At this point you may wish to resize and reposition the text within the document.



### 05 Duplicate layers

Now comes the tricky bit. Photoshop has a very useful function that enables you to duplicate a layer and nudge it 1px in any direction. With the text layer selected, hold down Ctrl+Alt, and press the down arrow and left arrow 20 times each (Ctrl+Alt+down, left, down, left, etc).



### 06 Rearrange the layers

Open the Layers palette, where there should be many duplicated text layers. Scroll down to the bottom where your original text layer sits. Select this layer and select the Text tool. In the options, change the colour to red and move the layer up to the very top of the stack.



### 07 Drop in an outline

Next, with your topmost layer highlighted, select Layer > Layer Style > Stroke and then enter the following: Size: 10px, Position: Inside, Blend Mode: Normal, Opacity: 100%, Fill Type: Color. Finally, change the colour to white.



### 08 Create a second effect

On the same layer select Layer > Layer Style > Bevel and Emboss and enter the following: Style: Stroke Emboss, Technique: Smooth, Depth: 100%, Direction: Up, Size: 30px, Soften: 0px, Angle: 45, Altitude: 30, Use Global Light: On. Leave the rest at the default values.



### 09 Add a shadow

Select the layer below the top one – it looks as if it's on the bottom of your text. Go to Layer > Layer Style > Drop Shadow and add: Use Global Light: On (Angle: 45), Distance: 90px, Spread: 0%, Size: 50px. Link the layers (not the background), and position and resize as needed.

## Gooney effect



### 01 One more new document

Create one more new document to the same dimensions and resolution. Choose a font you like for the text, but if you don't have a specific one in mind, scour the net for a suitable font at one of the sites that provide them free of charge. As we mentioned, we like [www.acidfonts.com](http://www.acidfonts.com).



### 02 Type in the text

Select the Type tool, insert your text and increase the size to fill out the document. To make things a little easier we'll be using Hexadecimal colour values, but obviously you can use whatever colour you like. Make the fill colour dark grey (#333333).



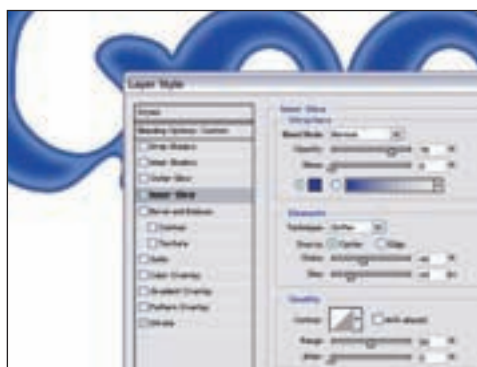
### 03 Duplicate the text layer

Duplicate your text layer (Ctrl+J) and change the colour of the top text layer to blue (#3366CC), then reduce the kerning of the font so that the letters are slightly overlapping. At this stage, set the blending options of the layer to Screen.



### 04 Add the first effect

With the top layer selected, begin to layer up the effects by adding a stroke. Select Layer Style > Stroke and then insert the following values: Size: 10px, Position: Inside, Blend Mode: Screen, Opacity: 100%. Now make the colour #003399.



### 05 Glow for it

With the top layer still selected, go to Layer > Layer Style > Inner Glow and enter the following: Blend Mode: Normal, Opacity: 75%, Noise: 0%, Color: #003399, Technique: Softer, Source: Centre, Choke: 40%, Size: 49px. That's all the effects required for this layer.



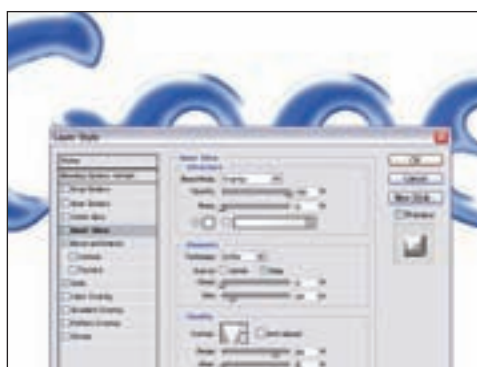
### 06 A touch of satin

Add the first effect to this layer by selecting Layer > Layer Style > Satin and entering the following: Blend Mode: Color Dodge, Color: White #FFFFFF, Opacity: 84%, Angle: 45, Distance: 143px, Size: 111px, Contour: Rounded steps, Anti-aliased: On, Invert: On.



### 07 Emboss your text

With the bottom layer still selected, go to Layer > Layer Style > Bevel and Emboss and add: Style: Inner Bevel, Technique: Smooth, Depth: 400%, Size: 95px, Soften: 16px, Gloss Contour: Cove – Deep, Highlight Mode: Screen, Opacity: 90%, Shadow Mode: Multiply, Opacity: 100%



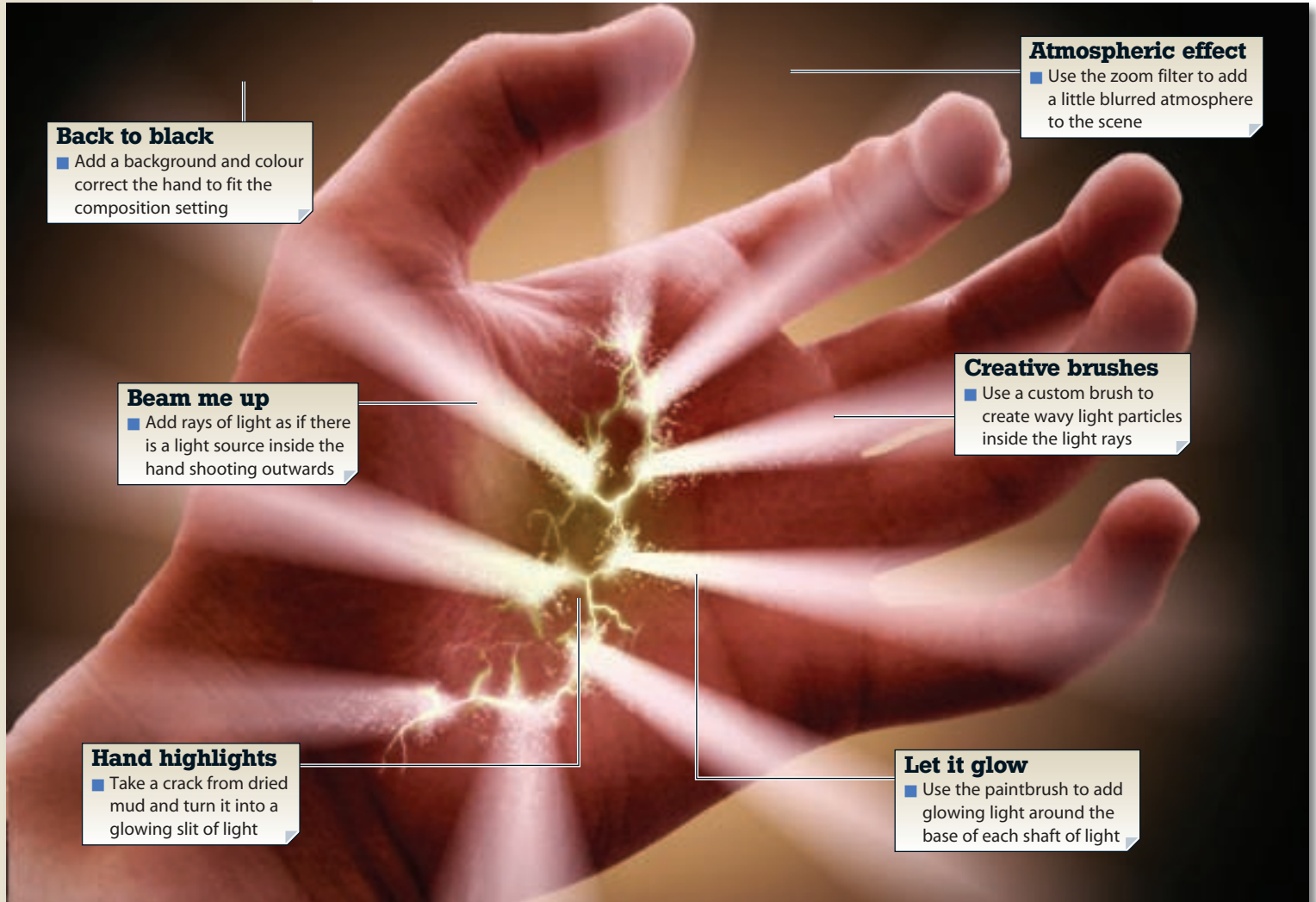
### 08 The final effect

With the bottom layer still selected, go to Layer > Layer Style > Inner Glow and add the following: Blend Mode: Overlay, Opacity: 100%, Solid Color: White #FFFFFF, Technique: Softer, Source: Edge, Choke: 0%, Size: 24px, Contour: Cone – Inverted, Range: 80%



### 09 Changing the size

As the effects are relative to the size of the text, changing the size will ruin them, so if the intended use is for print, save it as an EPS and reduce the size in QuarkXPress or InDesign. Even simpler, if the text is intended for screen-based media, just rasterise and reduce to the desired size.



#### Back to black

- Add a background and colour correct the hand to fit the composition setting

#### Beam me up

- Add rays of light as if there is a light source inside the hand shooting outwards

#### Hand highlights

- Take a crack from dried mud and turn it into a glowing slit of light

#### Atmospheric effect

- Use the zoom filter to add a little blurred atmosphere to the scene

#### Creative brushes

- Use a custom brush to create wavy light particles inside the light rays

#### Let it glow

- Use the paintbrush to add glowing light around the base of each shaft of light

## The brief

### On the CD

Tutorial files:  
hand-finished.psd  
hand.jpg  
cracks.jpg

### Tutorial objective

Create cool-looking light ray effects in Photoshop

### Time required

50 minutes

### Skill level



# Replicate stunning light rays in Photoshop

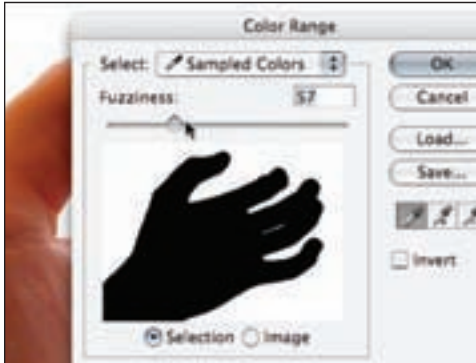
Turn two mundane images into a stunning Photoshop creation for your website using the power of filters

STUNNING LIGHTING EFFECTS, the likes of which grace the big screen in many high-budget films, needn't be out of reach for the budding web designer. Photoshop is the king of all graphics applications, and is the essential composition tool for creating your web graphics. We're going to flex the strong arm of Photoshop and put it to good use in creating our light ray tutorial with just two images. We'll use an image of a hand, which will require us positioning a more suitable

background, while the second image will be that of a cracked mud floor. This floor will give us the basis for extracting a crack, which we will turn into a glowing crevasse as though light is emanating from inside the hand.

The rest of the composition will be created out of fills, filters and painting areas of glowing light onto the document. This stunning effect can be used whenever you need to use a bit of glowing-light drama within your sites.





## 01 Begin with the background

To start the tutorial, open the image hand.jpg from the cover CD in Photoshop. The background for this hand is a bit plain so go to the Select menu and choose Colour Range. Click on the white area, then set the fuzziness to 57 as shown in the screen shot above and click OK.



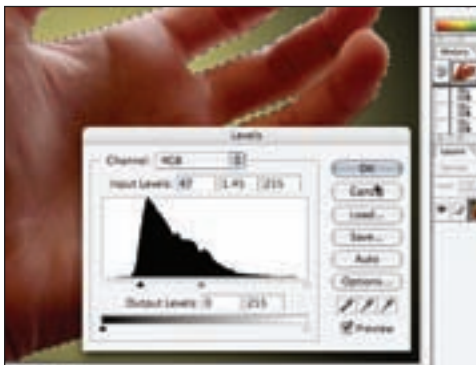
## 02 Colour matters

Choose Select > Modify > Expand. In the pop-up window, expand the selection by one pixel. Choose a light-gold colour as the foreground and black as the background. Select the gradient tool, change it to the radial gradient in the options, and select foreground-to-background.



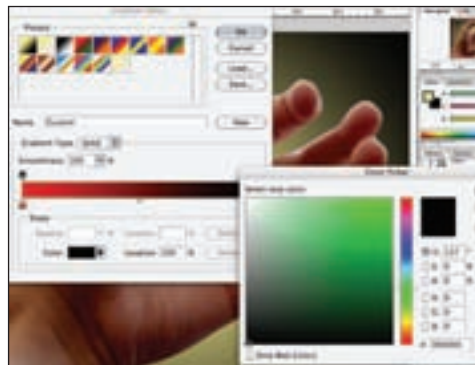
## 03 Apply the gradient

Drag the gradient tool from the centre outwards to fill the background. Choose Select > Select Inverse. Press Ctrl+U to open the Hue/Saturation settings, drag the saturation down to -48 and click OK. This stops the hand from being oversaturated, but it's a little pale.



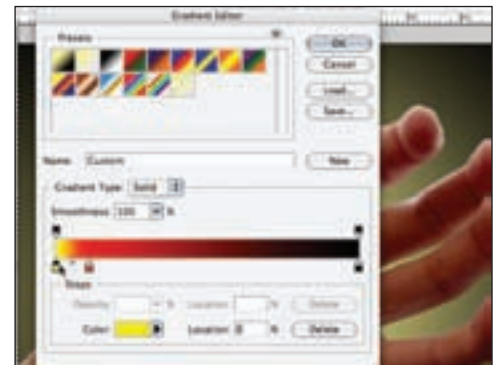
## 04 Adjust the levels

Adjust the levels by pressing Ctrl+L to open the Levels pop-up window. Drag the black input slider towards the centre until it is at 47, then drag the mid-point input slider up towards the black until it is 1.45. Now click OK. Press Ctrl+U again and drag the saturation down to -14.



## 05 Create another gradient

Press Ctrl+D to deselect the hand. Click the gradient tool then click the gradient colour bar in the options at the top. In the gradient editor that opens, click on the fourth gradient from the left to edit it. Click the green colour and click the colour square below. Change the green to black.



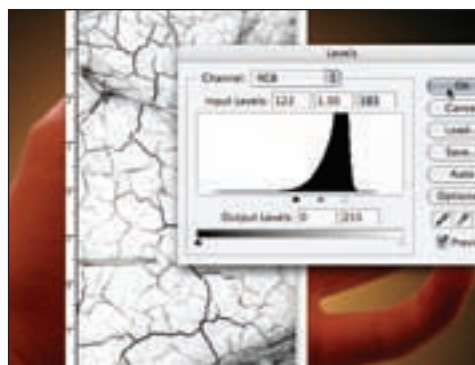
## 06 Sweeping colours

Drag the red stop towards the centre as shown, then click just underneath the gradient at the left-hand edge to add another stop. Change the colour of this new stop to yellow as you did with the green. Click OK to close the gradient editor. In the layers panel add a new layer.



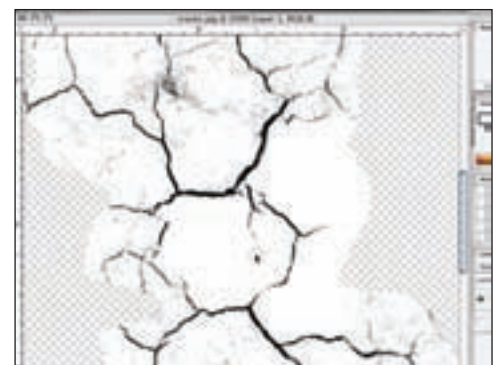
## 07 Brighten the palm

Drag the gradient from the centre outwards so that you have a radial gradient again. Now change the layer blending mode to 'linear light', the opacity of the layer to 30% and the fill to 40% in the layer palette. From the cover CD, open the image cracks.jpg.



## 08 Desaturate image

From the Image menu, choose Adjust > Desaturate. Now Press Ctrl+L to open the levels and drag the input levels so that they match those shown on the screen. Click OK to accept the changes and then change to the Lasso tool from the toolbar.



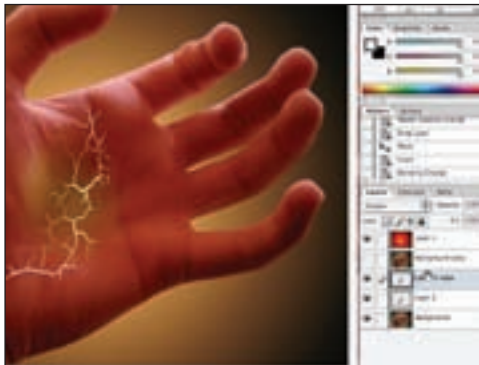
## 09 A cracking image

Now use the lasso tool to grab a nice section of the cracks on the floor and choose copy (Ctrl+C) and paste (Ctrl+V) to copy the section to a new layer. Now zoom in and use the paintbrush (with white as the foreground colour) to paint out the speckled area.



## 10 A bit of rough

Painting out all of the rough areas will take the longest part of this tutorial, so don't be alarmed if this takes you a good 15 to 20 minutes. When it's done, with the Move tool drag the layer over to the hand document and drag it below the red, yellow and black gradient layer.



## 12 Erase the edges

Switch to the Eraser tool and turn the opacity down to around 40%. With a soft-edged brush, erase around the edges of the crack to get rid of any excess image. Copy the layer by dragging the layer to the New Layer icon in the layers panel. Select Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur.



## 14 The right rays

Continue selecting areas around the crack until you build up the selection as shown in the screenshot above. Make sure white is the foreground colour and then click on the Gradient tool and grab the foreground-to-transparent gradient to fill the selections as shown above.



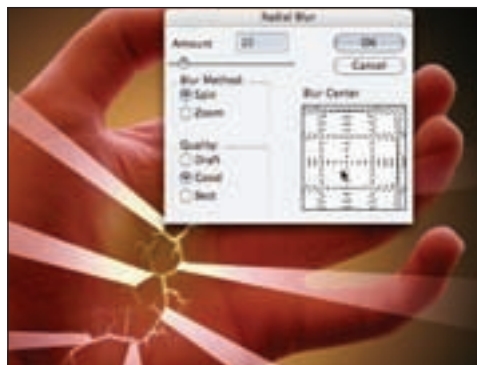
## 11 Palm positioning

Press Ctrl+I on the keyboard to invert the image then change the blending mode to Screen in the layers panel. From the edit menu choose Transform > Distort. Move the corners around on the screen until your cracks follow the direction of the screenshot above.



## 13 Blur the layer

Add a four-pixel Gaussian Blur to the copied layer. Now add a new layer above this one and switch to the Polygon Lasso tool. Click and add points to make the shape shown in the screenshot above. When that's done, hold down Shift to add more shapes as shown.



## 15 Blur the image

Press Ctrl+D to deselect the light rays. From the Filter menu choose Blur > Radial Blur. Move the zoom centre to be the centre of where the light is escaping from. Leave the blur radius on 10 pixels and click OK. If it doesn't look right, press Ctrl+Z to undo and try again.

## Technique

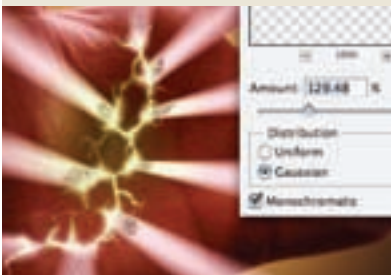
## Simulating atmosphere

To create realistic-looking light rays, Photoshop can be used to generate atmospheric effects in the beams



## Spotlights

Click on Layer 3, one of the layers with light rays. Choose Select > Load Selection and choose Layer 3's transparency. Create a new layer and use the paintbrush to add a spot of white to the base of each of the light rays.



## 2: Make some noise

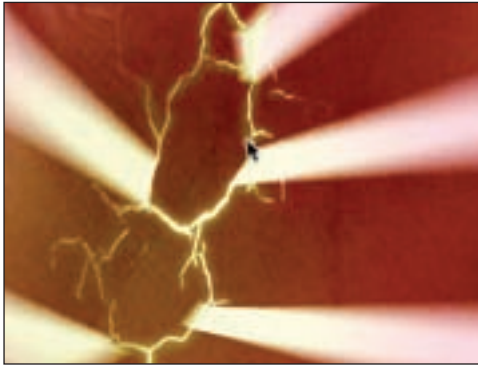
Press Ctrl+D to deselect. Go to Filter > Noise > Add Noise. Make the noise monochromatic and drag the slider up as shown here. Press OK. Noise can only be added when there is some content on the layer first.



## 3: Zoom blur

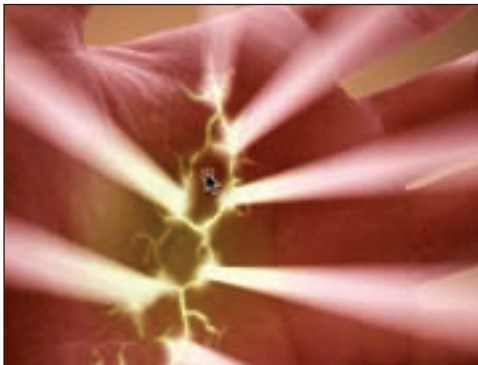
Go to Filter > Blur > Radial Blur. Change the blur to Zoom Blur and drag the slider to 100. Move it to the centre of the hand and Apply. Change the layer blending mode to Overlay then use Edit > Transform > Scale.





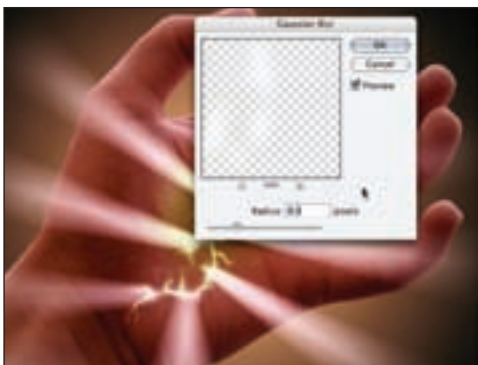
## 16 Hand highlights

Select the Paintbrush tool, making the brush small with soft edges. Change the opacity of the brush to 30% and use yellow as the fill colour. Select layer 1, which should have the yellow, red and black gradient on it. Paint in some yellow highlights around the cracks as shown.



## 17 Let it glow

Create another new layer and position this directly below the gradient layer. Use white as the foreground colour and use about a 30-pixel soft-edged brush with opacity of the brush set to around 30% again. Now paint in glowing sections around the base of the light rays.



## 18 Go Gaussian

Go to the Filter menu and choose Blur > Gaussian Blur, and add a five-pixel blur to the glowing layer just to soften the edges of the glow up a little. Click OK and then add some light spots to the centre of the glows to make them show up a little more in the centre.

## In detail

## Let in some light

There are some nice creative touches that can be added by simply using brushes, such as creating particles of light

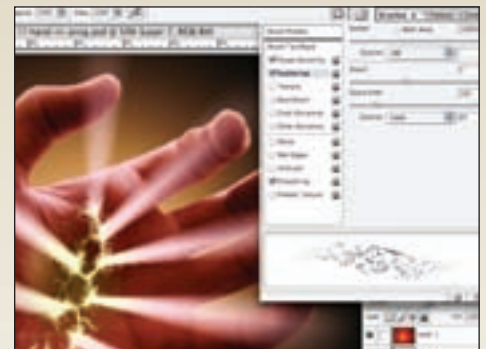


CREATING YOUR OWN custom brushes is quite easy to do in Photoshop with the Brushes palette. Being able to design the brushes you use will give you far more control over how the final image looks, and you'll be able to ensure that they have a professional finish. Click on the brushes palette and select a five-pixel soft-edged brush. Click on the Scattering option in the Brush Presets column. Turn the 'Scatter' up to 1000, the 'Count' up to 7 and 'Count Jitter' up to 19%. Add a fade of 1 to the control.

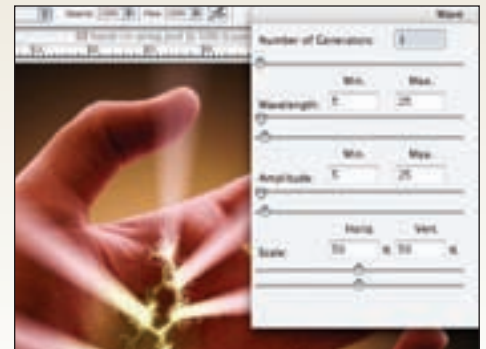
Create a new layer in Photoshop just below the top gradient layer of yellow, red and black. Draw circles with your new paintbrush at the base of each of the light rays then draw straight up each light ray. Use a soft-edged eraser to just remove the edges of the light particles by erasing with a low opacity, such as 30%. This will help to taper the particles, particularly towards the top of the light rays.

The 'fairy dust' light particles are really starting to take shape now, but to make them a little more random, go to the Filter menu and choose Distort > Wave. Here, change the number of generators to one, the wavelength to a max of 25 and the Amplitude to a max of 25. Take the Horizontal and Vertical scale down to 50% and then click OK.

This helps a lot but can look too wavy. If you go to the Edit menu and choose Fade Wave it will look even better. Take the fade back to 50% and choose 'soft light' as the blending option. This is looking almost perfect now – the final step is to change the layer opacity down to around 70% and the light particles are now complete.



Create custom brush settings to paint the light particles onto your image more effectively



The wave filter is a very powerful distortion tool – even quite low settings can greatly change an image



## 19 Copy the hand layer

Copy the hand layer by dragging it into the New Layer icon in the layer panel. Now add a five-pixel Gaussian Blur, change the blending mode to Overlay and set the opacity to 70%. This gives the hand more definition, fitting in with aesthetic look of the composition.



## 20 Slide down the saturation

With the copy of the hand layer still selected, press Ctrl+U to open the Hue/Saturation and then take the saturation slider down to around -47. Click OK. The only thing left to do now is to save the document to conclude our tutorial on creating light rays in Photoshop.



# Tech Support Photoshop

Quell your worst Photoshop fears with our expert insights – you'll be getting truly arty with your images before you know it!

Q

## Picture perfection

I spend loads of time editing my digital camera photos to shrink them down in size and compress them into lightweight JPEGs. I've created an action that will do the job, though it limits me to turning each of the images into a specific file size. If I decide I want to convert my images to a different dimension I need to create a new action. Have you any tips on resizing groups of images more quickly?

from [www.russellbrown.com/tips\\_tech.html](http://www.russellbrown.com/tips_tech.html). Simply download the script and pop it into Photoshop's Scripts folder (in much the same way you'd install a plug-in). You can then access this handy image processing utility from Photoshop's Scripts menu.

CS2 users will find Dr Brown's Image Processor already installed. In Photoshop CS2 go to File>Scripts>Image Processor. You can also access it from Adobe Bridge



Scripts add functionality to Photoshop. Resize multiple files in seconds using CS2's nifty Image Processor script

## Professional image editors use layer masks because they are permanently available

A

Actions are indeed handy ways to speed up tedious tasks. A similar way to speed things up is to take advantage of Photoshop's scripting abilities. You may have shied away from the Script menu in the past because it sounds too much like computer programming! Fortunately there are others who are happy to write and share scripts, like the Photoshop evangelist Dr Russell Brown. He wrote a script called Dr Brown's Image Processor 2.3 that will happily deal with resizing a large folder full of images. It even allows you to change the format of your files en masse. CS users can access the script

by choosing Tools>Photoshop>Image Processor. This brings up a useful dialog box with a variety of image editing options. Section 1 of the dialog box enables you to choose the Source folder full of files you need to resize. Section 2 is where you specify a Destination folder for your edited images. In Section 3 you can choose which file type you want to convert your images to. You can save them as a JPEG, a PSD or a TIFF.

Each file type option also allows you to specify the final size of each image you choose to convert. Section 4 of the Image Processor even allows you to

apply any of Photoshop's actions to the images. Once you've set up your options, click Run and the Image Processor will open all the files in the source folder, resize them and pop them in the destination folder.

Q

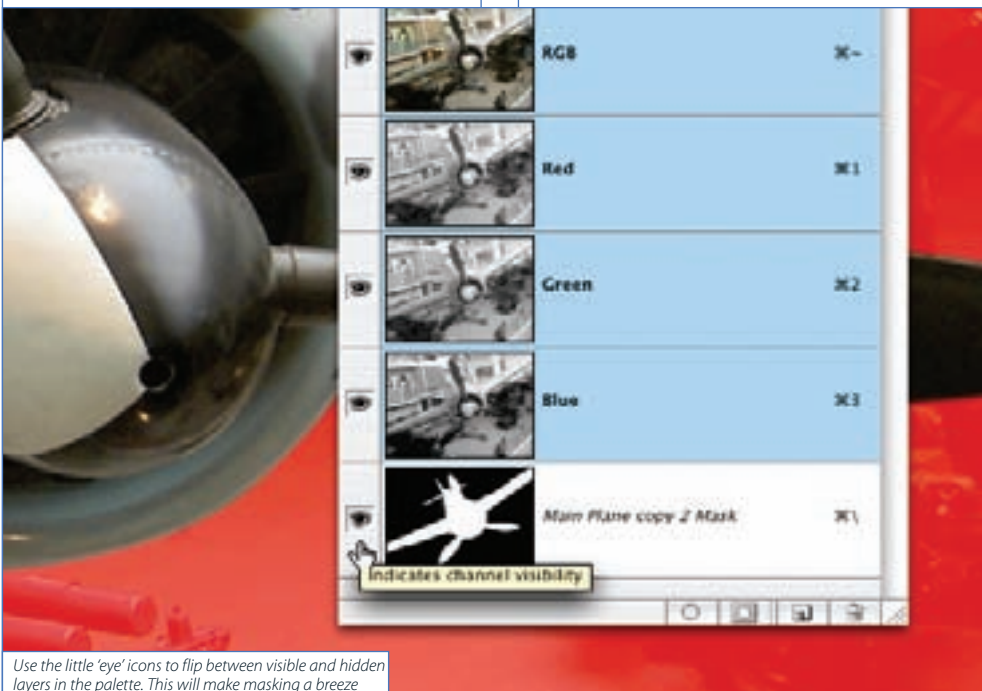
## Layer vs quick masks

I do a lot of creative image editing where I cut out people from one picture and place them in another. To tidy up the edges of my selection I tend to use quick masks, although I've dabbled with layer masks, too. I like the fact that quick masks let you see both the area you are selecting and the area you are removing on screen at the same time. To see the pixels that layer masks have hidden, I need to temporarily disable the mask. Is there a way of getting a layer mask to behave more like a quick mask, so I can see hidden layer mask pixels while I'm editing?

A

Many professional image editors use layer masks instead of quick masks because the former are permanently available. Once you've edited a quick mask and deselected the marquee, the mask is gone for good. A layer mask, however, will stick around. You can access the layer mask at any time and use a black brush to hide more content, or a white brush to reveal hidden pixels.

At first glance, quick masks are easier to use because you can see both the hidden and visible content at the same time. The hidden (or masked) content is indicated in red. As you edit the quick mask to isolate your chosen subject you can see exactly which parts of the layer will be included and which parts will be

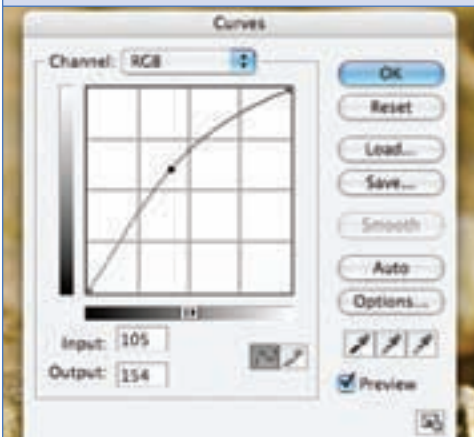


Use the little 'eye' icons to flip between visible and hidden layers in the palette. This will make masking a breeze

## Expert advice

### ■ Don't cancel a thing!

When you're making changes from within a dialog box, it can soon get frustrating having to keep clicking the Cancel button. However, there is a better way. Hold down the Option key (Mac) or the Alt key (PC) and then take a look at the Cancel button. Lo and behold, it's turned to a Reset button. Click this to reset the dialog and pretend nothing ever happened.



excluded. With a layer mask you are flying blind. You only see the non-masked pixels on the layer, while the rest is made up of the chequerboard texture that indicates layer transparency. To tidy the edges of your chosen subject you have to paint with a white brush until you reveal some unwanted pixels, then swap to the black brush to mask them out. This can be a hit-and-miss affair, and seeing the masked pixels would definitely speed up your workflow.

However, you can make a layer mask behave like a quick mask. Let's say you need to isolate an aircraft from its museum background. Duplicate the layer to edit. On the top layer create a selection as normal using a tool like the Magnetic Lasso. Click the Create Layer Mask icon. The black-and-white layer mask will appear next to the layer's thumbnail. The unselected areas of the layer will become transparent, though at this stage you'll still see the museum background from the unedited layer below. Head to the Channels tab. As well as the usual RGB channels, you'll see a hidden mask channel based on the layer



*Manipulating your cutout the right way will give you the flexibility of a quick mask with the permanence of a layer*

mask you created. Activate this by turning on the 'eye' icon. The unselected background area will appear in red, just as if you were using a quick mask.

You can click the layer mask next to the layer thumbnail and edit it as normal, but you have the added benefit of seeing masked pixels become red, as well as being able to see the unwanted background and the object on the screen at the same time. If you turn off the layer below, the selected object will be visible against a transparent background, letting you add any new background you like.

## Technique: Autumn leaves

Q

I want to create a romantic autumnal scene with leaves being blown around. I've found a great leaf brush tip, but am having trouble making it look like lots of different leaves. How can I turn one into many?

A

We presume that you discovered the leaf-shaped brush tip from the Brushes Preset picker. It has been designed to create leaves of different size and rotation, but the colours of each leaf are whatever the Foreground colour is set to.



### 01 Use a top tip

Select the Brush tool and scroll down the list of brush tips in the Brush Preset picker. There are a couple of leaf-shaped brush tips near the bottom of the list. We went for 'Scattered Maple Leaves'. Do a test spray to see the brush's default settings in action.



### 02 Get the jitters

Choose autumnal Foreground and Background colours. Click on the Brushes palette icon in the Options bar to edit the tip's behaviours. This is where you can change attributes like Scattering. Click Color Dynamic and set Foreground/Background Jitter to 100%.



### 03 Let us spray

Spray the edited brush tip. The leaves will now change colour, alternating between the Foreground and Background. The leaves will be semi-transparent, so duplicate the layer a few times to increase the strength of the leaves and give more visual impact.



# Tech Support Photoshop

Q

## Smart attack

I've been experimenting with Smart Objects in CS2, and like the fact you can scale a layer down, carry on editing the project and then scale the Smart Object layer back up again with no quality loss. From what I've read you're also supposed to be able to duplicate a Smart Object layer lots of times, then update all the layers in one go by editing the original layer. When I edit the original Smart Object layer in the Layers palette only that layer changes. All the duplicated Smart Object layers stay untouched. How can I get this cool-sounding feature to work?

First, create a Smart Object. Select a layer in the Layers palette and choose **Layer>Smart Objects>Group into New Smart Objects**. Look at the layer thumbnail in the Layers palette. You'll see a little icon indicating that this is a Smart Object. You can duplicate this Smart Object layer by dragging its thumbnail onto the Create a New Layer icon. To edit and update all of the Smart Object copies in one go, click on any of your Smart Object copies in the Layers palette and go to **Layers>Smart Objects>Edit Contents**. Alternatively double-click on a Smart Object layer. A



Use the selection modification tools to expand the Magic Wand tool's marquee and get rid of fringing

## A powerful way of removing fringes or colour is to modify the selection marquee

A

When you turn a layer into a Smart Object, Photoshop creates a secret and separate file that it refers to when it needs to remember what the contents of the layer originally looked like. The mistake you've been making is to edit the first Smart Object layer that you created in your main Photoshop document instead of changing the file that contains the Smart Object's original contents. Here's how to edit and update multiple Smart Object layers in one go.

dialog box will pop up. Click OK. A new file will open containing the contents of your Smart Objects layer. Notice that it has a strange .psb file extension. You can edit this file in any way you like and when you've finished editing the .psb source file save and close it. The changes you made will be updated in every Smart Object layer in your main project.

Q

## Fed up of fringing

I'm working on a project that involves removing a bland blue sky and replacing it

with something more dramatic. I'm using the Magic Wand tool to select the unwanted blue pixels in the image. When I delete the selected sky and add a new background I can still see hints of the old blue sky around the edge of foreground objects. How can I get rid of these unsightly edges?

A

The problem you're facing here is fringing. You could try increasing the Tolerance setting to make it more hungry for every pixel of sky. However, this is likely to cause the tool to eat into the edges of your foreground objects and erode their outlines.

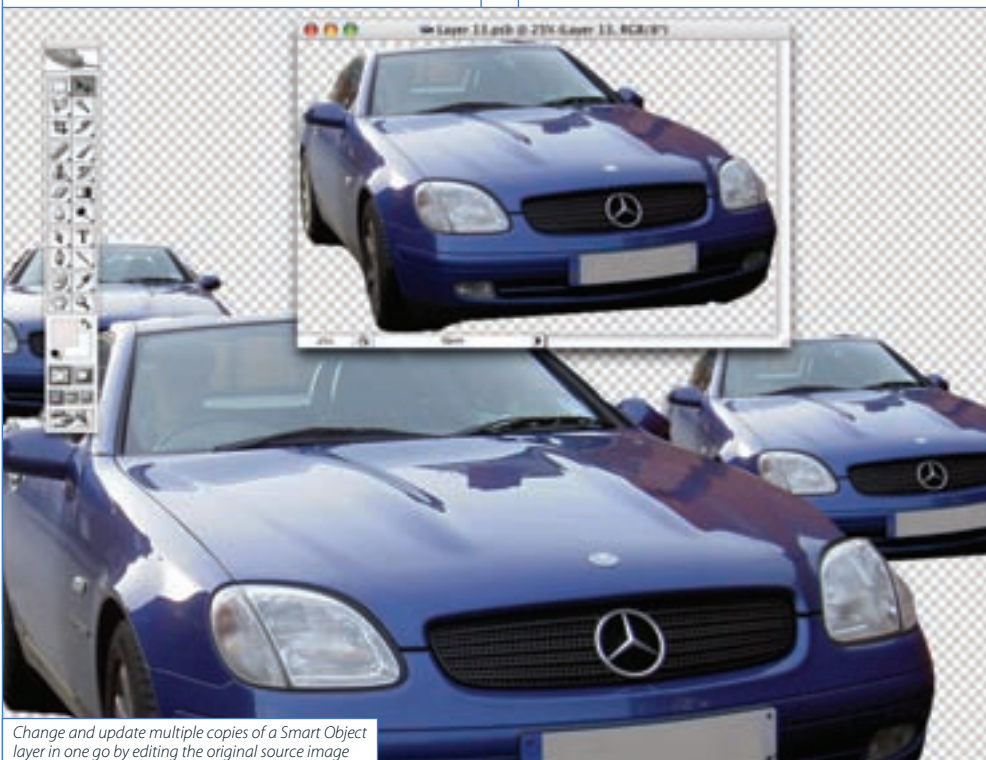
A powerful way of removing remaining fringes of colour is to modify the selection marquee. Make your selection as normal using the Magic Wand. If there are parts of sky lurking in holes between the leaves of a tree, make sure you turn off the Contiguous option in the top Options bar so that Photoshop finds every isolated pixel of unwanted sky. Press the Backspace key to delete the selected sky. If you see a fringe, press **Cmd+Z** (Mac) or **Ctrl+Z** (PC) to undo the deletion. You should see that the marquee selection line has returned.

To make the marquee grow so that it eats into the remaining fringe of pixels, head across to **Select>Modify>Expand**. You can specify the number of pixels that the marquee needs to expand by to ensure it includes the entire unwanted fringe of colour. This is a great way of ensuring that unsightly outlines are selected and removed.

Q

## Marvellous monochrome

I'm a very keen portrait photographer and I especially like to work in monochrome. I can get Photoshop to turn colour shots to black and white, but how do I tweak my



Change and update multiple copies of a Smart Object layer in one go by editing the original source image



## Expert advice

### ■ Clashing preferences

If you run two versions of Photoshop (like CS2 and Elements 4.0 for example), then you might find that CS2 will refuse to open. This is due to a clash of preference file settings. But not to worry, it isn't a permanent hassle. You can solve the problem by holding down Ctrl+Shift+Alt (PC) or Cmd+Shift+Option (Mac) when you open CS2. You'll see a dialog box appear that will ask you if you want to 'Delete the Adobe Photoshop Settings File'. Click the Yes button and the package will open, though you need to be aware that you will lose any of your saved workspaces.



shots to get a decent monochrome shot that has a good range of blacks, midtones and whites?

A

Folk probably think that to turn a shot to black and white they need to go to Image>Mode>Greyscale. This technique will work, but it limits your creative options. If you go to Image>Adjustments>Desaturate you get an identical-looking monochrome image, but you can add a hint of colour later to create a cool or warm monochrome shot. Simply removing the colour information is not enough to get a well-balanced monochrome shot. The shadows often aren't black enough and the highlights are grey instead of white. Luckily, it's a simple matter to create a striking black-and-white image with a good tonal range. Convert your shot to monochrome.

Now go to Image>Adjustments>Levels to open the Levels window. We've split our example image into two sections. On the left you can see the histogram for the image that we desaturated. Note that there isn't much graph info contained in the highlight section – this shows that the



Restore washed out whites and get striking blacks by playing with the Shadow and Highlight sliders in the Levels window

monochrome image doesn't have bright enough highlights. To sort out this type of problem drag the white highlight slider to the left. This remaps the brightest pixels to a value of 255, which is pure white. Pure black is 0, and you can make the darkest parts of a shot blacker by dragging the black slider towards the right. After a couple of tweaks with the histogram you can soon get a well-balanced shot with black blacks and white whites.

## Technique: Give it some personality

Q

Any tips on how to go about adding a sense of personality to inanimate objects? It would help me with my illustrations, as I find it hard to give character to static studies such as cars and buildings.

A

Thanks to Photoshop's pixel-pushing powers it's possible to quickly bring inanimate objects to life. The Liquify filter enables you to keep your image looking photo-real while distorting solid objects to make them smile or frown. Here's how we made this letterbox look happy to collect your mail!



### 01 Suitable source

Open your source image. Choose an object that has the potential to have its existing components converted into a recognisable facial feature, like this letterbox's 'mouth'. We shot the letterbox face-on to the camera to make our image-editing task easier.



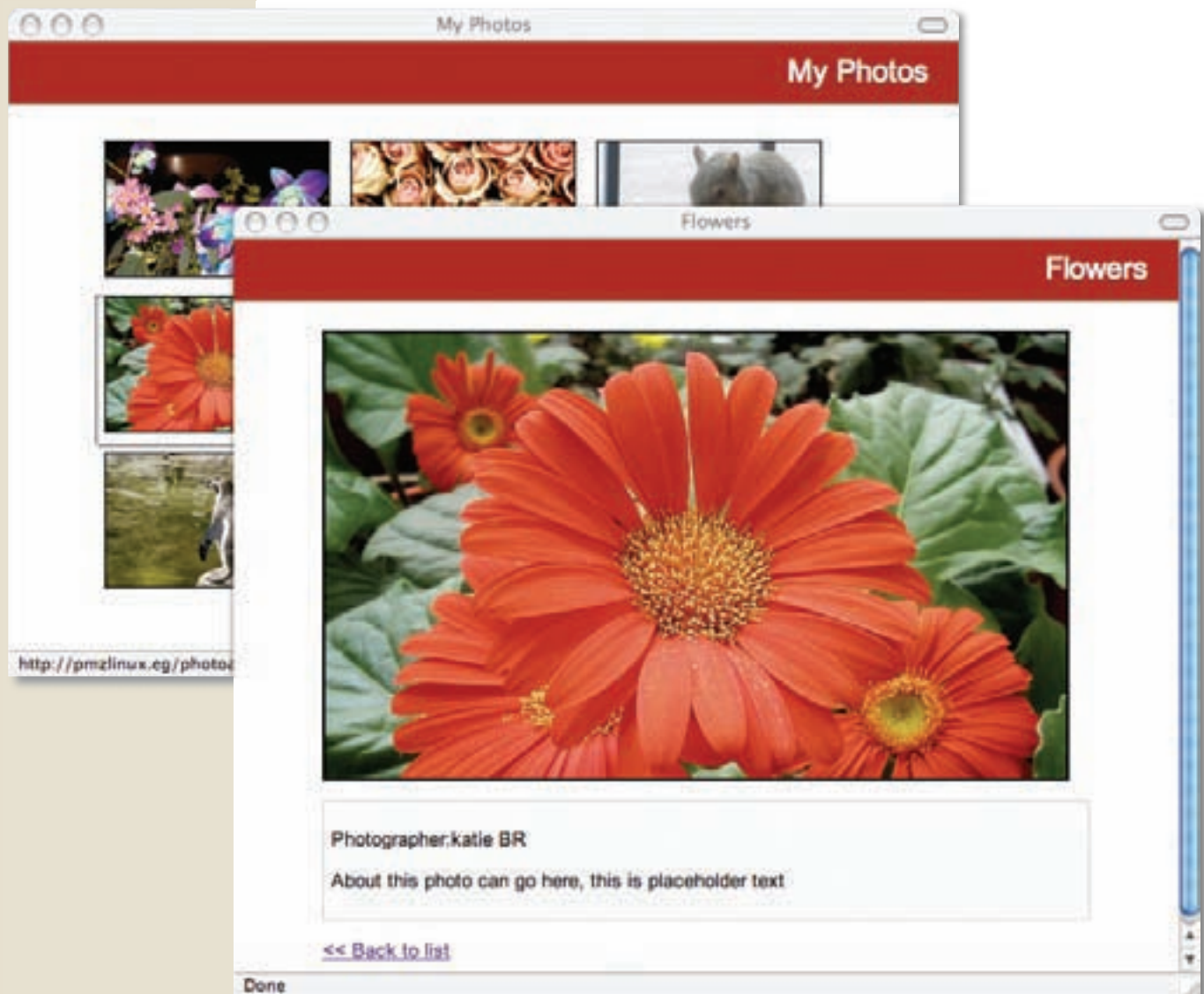
### 02 Loving the Liquify

Go to Filter>Liquify. Select the Forward Warp tool from the toolbar. In the Tool Options pane, make the Brush Size large enough to cover the area you need to manipulate. Reduce the Brush Density so that you need to perform several strokes to move your chosen pixels.



### 03 Smile, please!

Try to restrict your warping to the area with the facial feature (the 'mouth', in this case). Warping other parts of the image will draw attention to the fact that the image has been liquified. If you push things too far use the Reconstruct tool (R) to retrace your steps.



## The brief

### On the CD

Tutorial files:  
photoalbum\_code.zip

### Tutorial objective

To create a photo album site using a CSS layout

### Time required

90 minutes

### Skill level



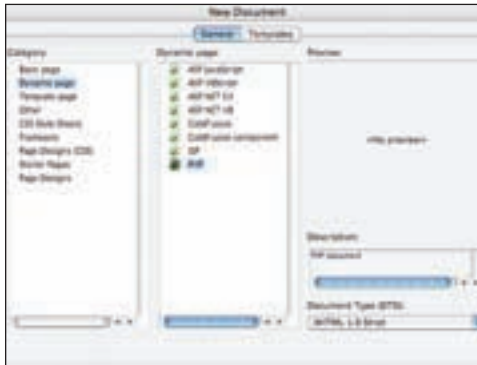
# Build a photo album using Dreamweaver

Use Dreamweaver to display photos using a CSS layout, then use the PHP and MySQL Server Model to display photos from a database

DISPLAYING PHOTOS OR images is a requirement on many sites – whether you have photos of events your organisation has been involved in, photographs you have taken and want to show off, or images you are offering for download you will need to display them attractively to your users.

Here we will look at a method for using an unordered list styled with CSS to display your images. Here, we've created a simple CSS layout to display this list, but you could drop it

into any site design. We go on to discover how to use PHP and MySQL and the Dreamweaver Server Behaviors to display the images from a database. This means that you don't need to create individual pages for every photo that you have or update the site every time you add an image. Just add the image details into the database and PHP will do the rest! You could use the images in different ways, such as sending them as e-cards or allowing people to upload new images.



## 01 Create a new page

In Dreamweaver, create a new document by selecting File > New. In the dialog that opens, select the category of Dynamic Page > PHP. Under Document Type select XHTML 1.0 Strict then click OK to create the document. Save this new PHP page into your site as index.php.



## 02 Start with a header

We are now going to create a simple header area, so in Design View type the title of your album and make it a Heading 1. Keeping the heading selected, open the Layout Pane of the Insert Toolbar and click 'Insert Div Tag'. In the box next to ID type header.



## 03 The content area

Click OK to wrap the heading with a div with an ID of header. We can now create a similar section in which we will add the main page content. Click 'Insert Div Tag' once again – this time select to insert at insertion point an ID with the name 'content'.



## 04 The photo listing page

The home page will display the photos as thumbnails; selecting a photo will take you to a page to view a full-size version of the photo. We will display the thumbnails as an unordered list. Delete the dummy content and then click the Property Inspector unordered list button.



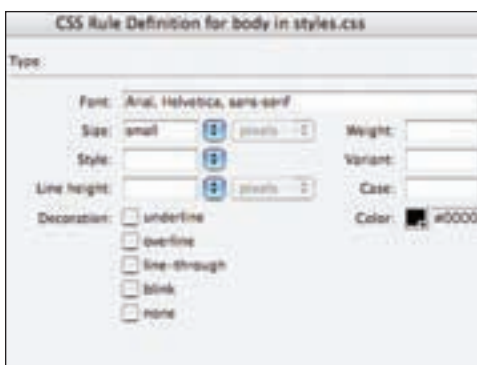
## 05 Insert an image

Insert your first thumbnail image as the first item in the list. The Image Tag Accessibility Attributes dialog should display – you can enter Alt text here to describe the image to users who do not see it. Click OK to insert the image and Alt text to the document.



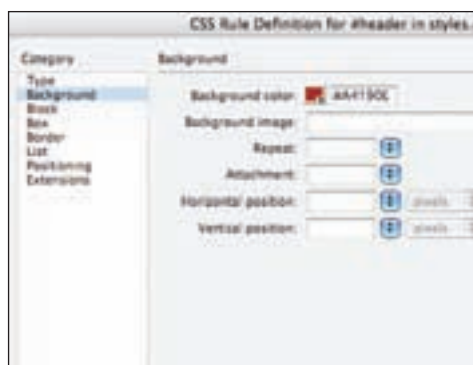
## 06 Linking together

With the image selected, add a # in the Link field in the Property Inspector to create a dummy link; we'll link these properly when we create our PHP and MySQL display. Add two more images to give us something to work with when we start to create the CSS.



## 07 Get stuck into the CSS

In the CSS Panel click New CSS Rule, select Tag then choose Body. Choose to create this in a new stylesheet file and save the stylesheet as styles.css. Create default rules for the body that affect the whole document; set the font to Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif, size small.



## 08 Styling #header

In the Box category set padding and margin to 0 (same for all) – this removes the space around the layout. Click OK then create a new CSS rule for the Advanced selector #header. Give it a background colour of #A4190E, a solid, 1px top border of #AC5C54, bottom border #6C1009.



## 09 Set up the main header

Create a new CSS Rule with the advanced selector #header h1. In the Type category we have made the heading white and set the size to 160%. In the Block category set text align to right; in Box set margin to 0 and then use padding to create some space.



## Technique

### Set up to use PHP and MySQL

To use PHP and MySQL on your site you'll need to set up Dreamweaver to use the PHP and MySQL Server Model



#### 1: Choose a model

A Server Model in Dreamweaver is the combination of application language and database. We're going to use PHP, which in Dreamweaver means using MySQL as the database, so select PHP MySQL.



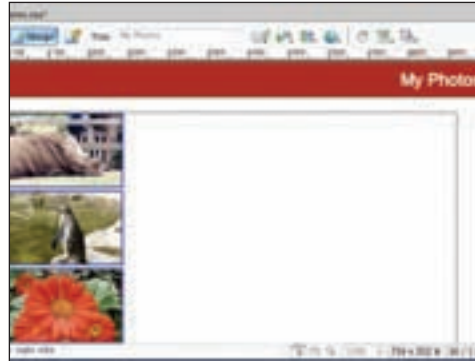
#### 2: Your testing server

You need to be able to view your PHP files through a server. If you have PHP and MySQL running on your local computer, select 'Edit and test locally...' then browse to the location of the files on your machine.



#### 3: View the files

Indicate where the files can be viewed by the web server – this is a URL you enter into a browser to see your site. The likely URL is <http://localhost/yourfolder/> if you have put the files in the home directory.



#### 10 The main content area

Create a new CSS Rule for #content. This area will display naturally under the heading, so simply add a top margin of 20 pixels and left and right margins of 60 pixels to create some space between the content and edge of the browser window and the heading and content.



#### 12 Line 'em up

Rather than display one after the other on a new line we want our images to display across the page. We can change how the list displays to achieve this. Create class .albumlist li and in the Block category set display to inline. Click OK to see the display change.



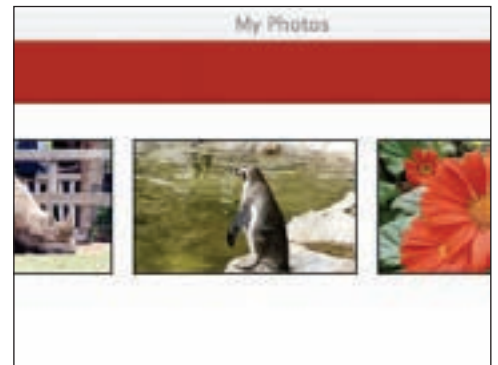
#### 14 Adding images from MySQL

Create a database in MySQL named dbPhotoAlbum and add a table named tblPhotos with fields, photoID (primary key), photoFile, photoThumb, photoTitle, photoCredit and photoText. All the fields apart from photoID and photoText can be varchar(100). PhotoText should be TEXT.



#### 11 Creating a class

Currently, our thumbnail images are displaying as a bulleted list. To remove the bullets, create a class named .albumlist. In the Box category set margin and padding to 0. Then, in the list category, set the list type to none and apply this class to the ul of the album list.



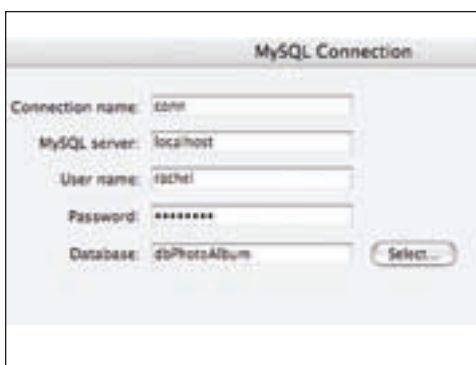
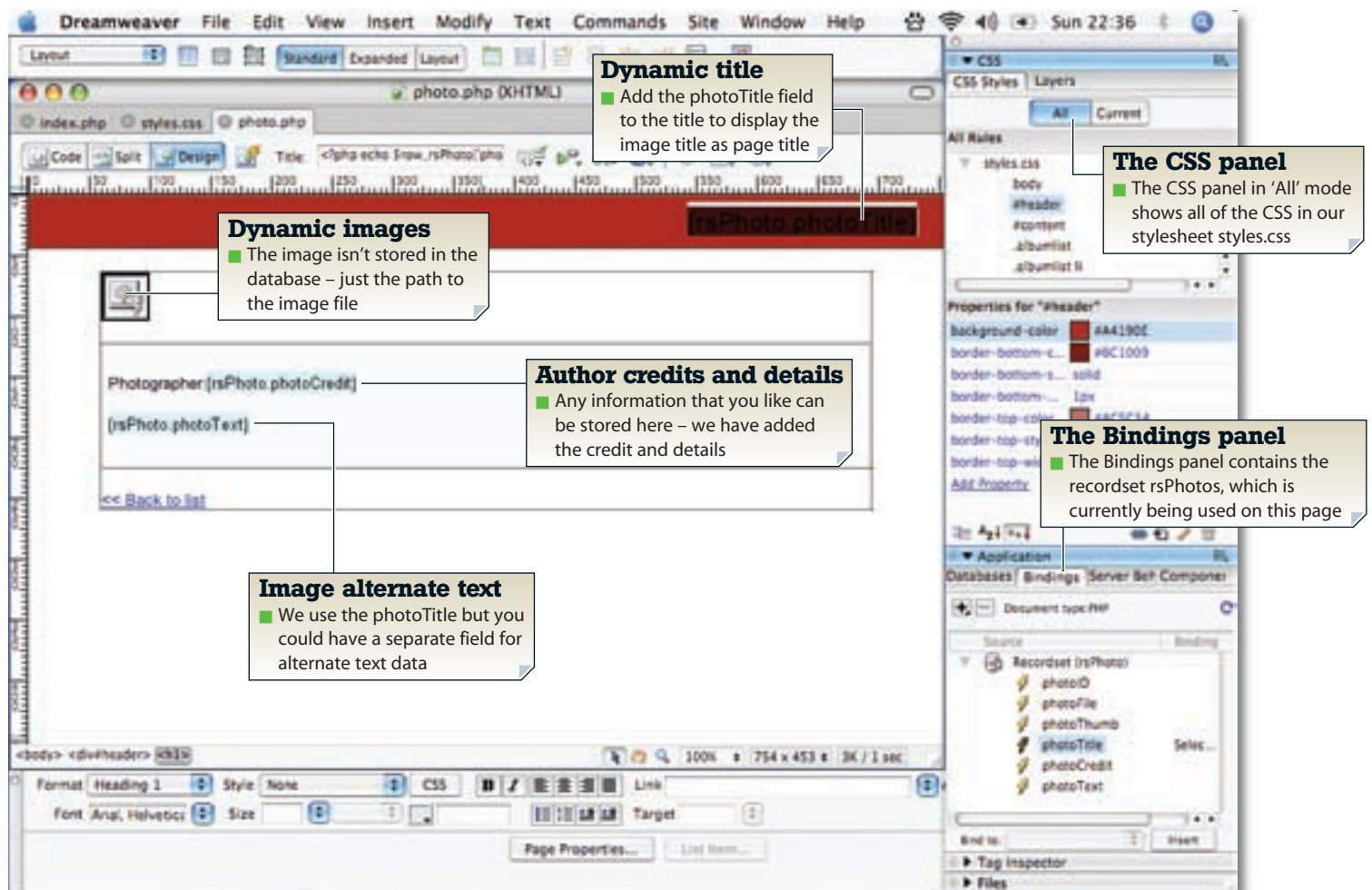
#### 13 The images

Create a new class .albumlist img and give it a 1 pixel solid #000000 border then set the margin to 5 pixels. This will give the images in the list a border and also some spacing between them. Click OK, save your documents and view the page in a browser.



#### 15 Insert the images

Insert images using: INSERT INTO tblPhotos (photoFile, photoThumb, photoTitle, photoCredit, photoText) VALUES ('orchids.jpg', 'orchids\_sm.jpg', 'Orchids', 'trc\_lit', 'About this photo can go here, this is placeholder text'); Put in the name of the image and thumbnail (one line for each photo).



## 16 Connect to the database

Back in Dreamweaver, in the Databases Panel click the + and select MySQL Connection. Complete your server details and choose the dbPhotoAlbum database. Click OK and you should be able to expand the connection and see the tables and fields in the Databases Panel.



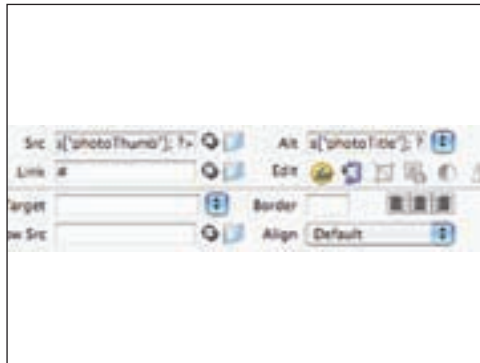
## 17 For the recordset

In the Bindings Panel, click the + and create a recordset named rsPhotos. Select photoID, photoThumb and photoTitle from tblPhotos. Click Test to see those fields for each row of your records. Click OK to create the new recordset, which should appear in the Bindings Panel.



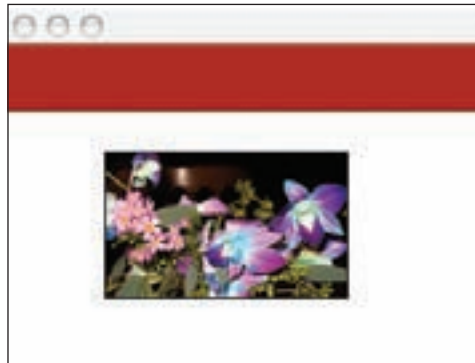
## 18 Add dynamic images

Delete all but the first of your images, select the final image and click the folder icon next to the SRC field in the Property Inspector. In the Select Image Source Dialog click Data Sources at the bottom of the window. Your recordset will then be displayed, so select photoThumb.



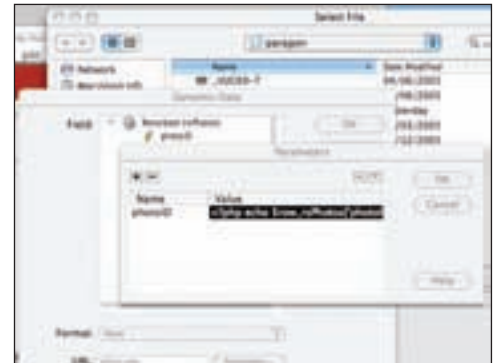
## 19 Dynamic alternate text

Click OK, then in the Src field in the Property Inspector add `img/` before the opening PHP tag (`<?php`) to write out the path to the image. In the Alt field add: `<?php echo $row_rsPhotos['photoTitle']; ?>`  
This displays the title of the photo as the alternate text.



## 20 Browse to your page

Check your page in a browser – you hopefully will see one image displayed which will be the first image that you added to your database. Check that the alternate text is the title of the image. If this doesn't work, make sure that your webserver is set up to parse PHP.



## 21 Link to the full image

With the image selected, click the folder next to the URL field in the Property Inspector and click the Data Sources button. In the Dynamic Data dialog type `photo.php` in the URL box, click Parameters, enter `photoID` under Name, tab to 'value', click the lightning bolt and select `photoID`.



## 22 Check the QueryString

Click OK on all the boxes to create the link on your page. If you now check in your browser you should see (by hovering over or clicking on the image) that the image links to a page that doesn't exist yet named `photo.php` with a QueryString link of `photoID=1`.



## 23 Create a Repeat Region

We want to display all of the thumbnails, so select the `li` tag that wraps the image. In the Server Behaviors Panel click the +, select Repeat Region in the dialog, select to show All Records then finally click OK. Save, and view the list of images in a browser.



## 24 Ready for the close-up?

We now need to create the page that displays the large version of the photo. Create a new page as `photo.php` and attach the stylesheet `styles.css`. Insert the header and content divs as before without adding a heading or page title at this point, as we will create these dynamically.



## 25 A new recordset

Create a new recordset in the Bindings panel named `rsPhoto` using `tblPhotos`. Select All columns and filter on `photoID = URL Parameter photoID`. This is the parameter we are passing from our mainlisting page that we need to pick up on this page. Click OK to create the recordset.



## 26 Drop in some dynamic data

Delete the placeholder text in the header div, and with your cursor still in the header expand the Recordset in the Bindings Panel, select `photoTitle` and click Insert. With the text selected, make it a level 1 heading. Drag the `photoTitle` field from the Bindings Panel to the Title field.



## 27 Adding the photo

Delete the placeholder content from `#content` and select Insert > Image. Click Data Sources and then choose `photoFile` from the list. Click OK then add `img/` before the PHP code in the Property Inspector. You also need to add the title to the Alt field, as on the last page.





## 28 The image and author details

Below the image, add the other details. First type 'Photographer:' then select the photoCredit field in the Bindings panel and click Insert. Hit Return then select the photoText field and click Insert. Then add a link to take the user back to the main page after viewing the photo.



## 29 Stick to the rules

We can now add some rules to style the main photo display. Create a CSS class named .largeimage and in Border give it a two-pixel solid black border. Click OK to create the class then select the main image and apply the class to it using the Property Inspector.



## 30 Style the details

Create a class named .details. Give it a one-pixel solid black border in #CCCCCC and a background colour of #F9F9F9. Add 0.4 em of padding to the class in Box. Click OK, select the credit and text paragraphs, click Insert Div Tag and wrap the selection with the class .details.

## In detail

# Editing CSS in Dreamweaver 8

How you can use the CSS features of Dreamweaver 8 to make quick and easy edits

IN THIS TUTORIAL we have been mainly using the CSS Rule Definition dialogs to create our CSS, these dialogs have been a feature of Dreamweaver for many releases and should be familiar to you. Dreamweaver 8 contains new features for editing and working with CSS, which can be very useful to your workflow.

One useful feature to get to know is the Unified CSS Panel. This Panel brings together editing features previously found in Dreamweaver in one CSS editing environment. At the top of the CSS Panel you can use the Mode Button to select to view all of the styles in your document or just the current styles that apply to the element you have selected in the Document Window. Once you have some CSS style rules defined, you can use the extra functionality of this new CSS Panel to make working with CSS easier.

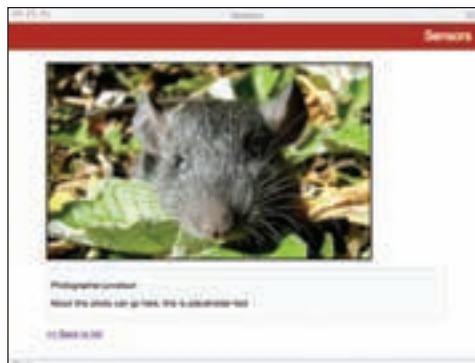
The new CSS Properties pane of the CSS Panel enables you to view and edit styles already applied to your document. This is a powerful tool that will help you to speed up CSS development by giving you quick access to the rules. If you are in All Mode, clicking on any CSS selector in the CSS Panel will display its properties in the CSS Properties Pane. You can then edit directly in the Pane. If you are in Current Mode, the top part of the CSS Panel displays the properties for the current selection. If you click on any of these Properties the About Pane will tell you in which rule this properties is set while the Properties Pane will give you the properties for that rule to view or edit. This means that you do not need to open the CSS Rule Definition dialog to tweak margins on an element, for example.



The CSS Panel in All Mode; click on any CSS selector in the CSS panel to bring up its properties, which can be directly edited

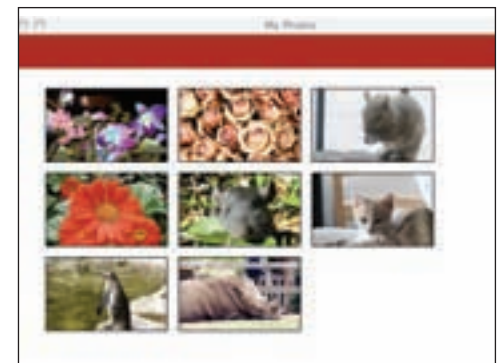


The CSS Panel in Current Mode; you can explore the properties and make tweaks to rules without opening the Rule Definition dialog



## 31 View your creation

Check your work by viewing photo.php?photoID=1 in a browser. Assuming you have a record with a photoID field of 1 in your table, your page should display the photo with the title as the level 1 heading and page title and the details of the photo below.



## 32 The completed application

You can now click your link underneath the photo to return to the main album listing page. Click any photo and you should be taken to its larger display image along with its details. This simple application saves the requirement of creating multiple photo pages.




## The brief

### On the CD

**Tutorial files:**  
Extensions Site  
checkform.mxp  
index.html

### Tutorial objective

Increase the power of web forms and offer visitors more flexibility

### Time required

45 minutes

### Skill level



# Increase the power of forms using extensions

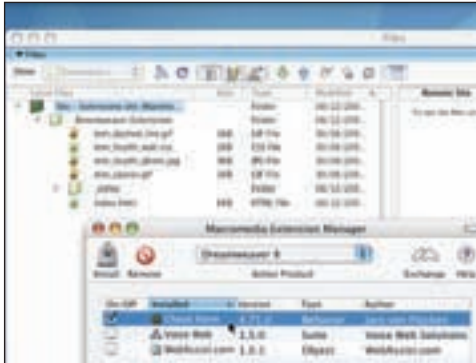
Forms are an integral part of site-building, but now extensions can make them even more versatile. We show you how using Dreamweaver 8

WE ALL KNOW how important it is to have fully functioning forms on a site project. After all, these are often the key way in which we gather data and process things such as orders placed via an online venture. However, forms have a rather clunky image and also tend to be one of the duller areas of web design, thanks partly to a rather laborious design process.

Forms are progressing though, and thanks to Dreamweaver 8 and a natty little extension from Yaromat

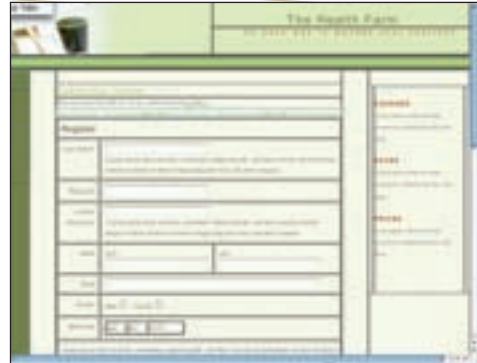
([www.yaromat.com](http://www.yaromat.com)) you can now create forms that not only look good but also function with a little more vim. Indeed, using this powerful add-on it's possible to make your forms far more efficient and offer up much more functionality.

Better still, you can achieve this without even getting your hands dirty when it comes to coding. Simply install the extension via Dreamweaver's Extensions Manager, relaunch the program and you're ready to go. Here's how it's done...



## 01 Getting under way

You first need to install the relevant extension (see the Technique boxout overleaf). If you're running Dreamweaver 8 already, you'll need to quit the program before an extension will become active and usable. Use the Extensions Manager to check correct installation.



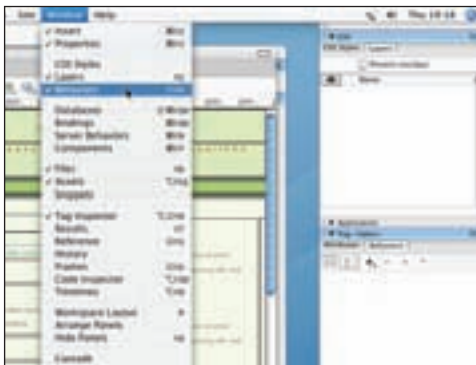
## 02 Create the form

You'll need to have a page containing a form, which will be the basis for the checking process carried out by the extension we've installed. Open the file (we've created a form on the example page 'index.html') and add any extra form fields that may be needed using the Forms toolbar.



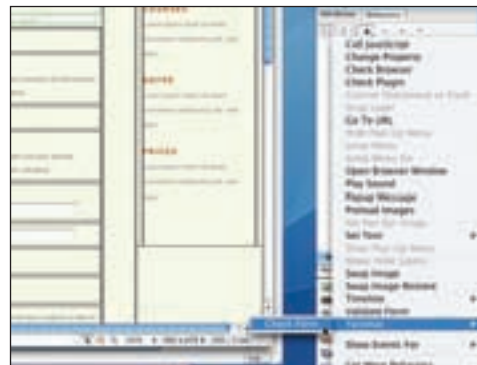
## 03 The thin red line

Make sure that any content you insert into the form is placed inside the thin red line, which outlines where the form sits on the page. Anything placed outside will be missing from the checklist, so be sure to click this option before you start filling in the text fields, menus, etc.



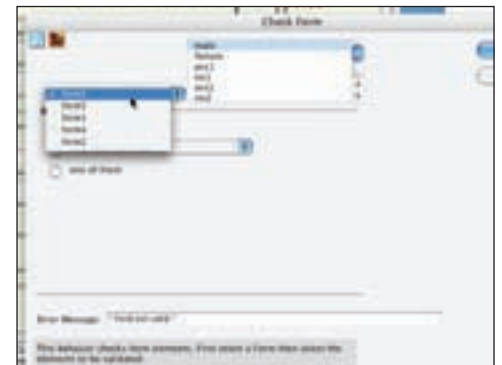
## 04 Using behaviors

With a completed form layout in place, go to the Window menu and select the Behaviors palette option if it's not already open. You'll see it over on the right-hand side of the interface. It sits immediately next to the Attributes tab in the list of palettes located here.



## 05 Pick an option

Click the small '+' button at the top of the palette, and a pop-up menu will appear that contains many different Behavior options. Following installation of the Yaronat form-checking extension you'll see this option at the foot of the menu. Select the Check Form option as shown.



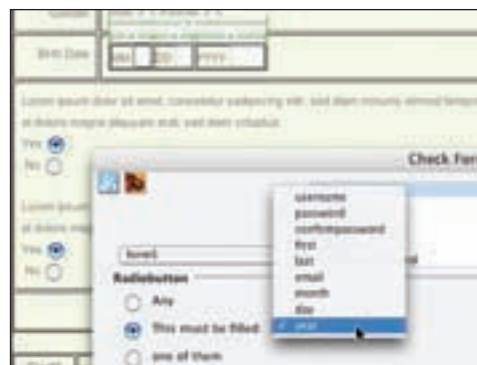
## 06 The form and fields

With the Check Form dialog box open, you can start to check all the various form elements on the page. The drop-down menu selected shows there's more than one form on this page. Different form selections will cause the fields to change depending on the content within them.



## 07 Set the rules

Now you just need to work through the forms in your page using the menu selections to specify which way a form needs to be filled in so it can be validated successfully. If you wish to alert the form filler to an error in your page, select 'This must be filled' for elements like radio buttons.



## 08 Create an alert

Text fields with info about customers can be validated in the same way. For example, here we need to gather a client's birth date details. Select the Field option from the drop-down and assign it a 'Must be filled' validation setting. The visitor will get an error if they try to bypass it.



## 09 A simple reminder

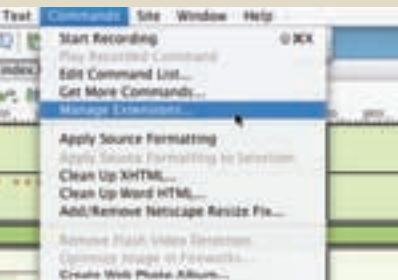
You can then go to the bottom of the dialog window and, using this text field as shown, enter an alert that relates directly to the text field of other form elements contained in the page. Having said that, try to remind the visitor politely – don't shout abuse at them!



## Technique

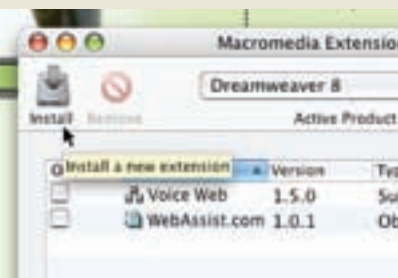
### Install your extension

Before any Dreamweaver extension will work, you'll first need to install it into the free standalone Manager software



#### 1: Launch the program

Go to the Command menu in Dreamweaver 8 and select Manage Extensions to launch the Extensions Manager, a standalone accompaniment to Macromedia products. It's also in the Macromedia Programs folder.



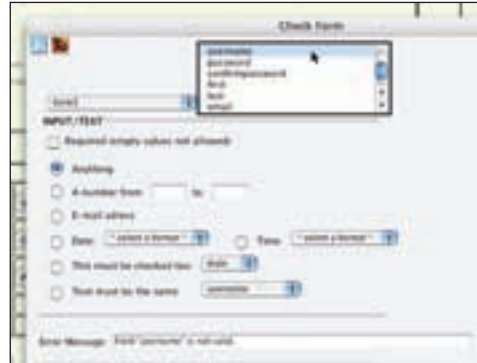
#### 2: Adding or removing

With the Extensions Manager open you can see extensions already loaded, and add or remove others. Click the Install icon at the top left to add the one used in this tutorial. Remove items using the icon on the right.



#### 3: Ready to go

Now navigate to the Extension file in our Tutorial Files folder, select it and hit 'Open'. Extensions always come with the '.mxd' filename extension, which helps you make sure you're adding the right thing.



#### 10 Try another field

As you select different elements in the form, such as the username field shown here, there will be different sets of validation rule options to select. This obviously means you can decide what needs to be included and what can be bypassed by people filling in various parts of the form.



#### 12 Time-saving tricks

There's nothing worse than someone submitting a form and not providing the correct contact info. This system lets you select the email option and ensure the person sending the form has included a valid email address including the '@' symbol, eg jonsmith@emailtest.com.



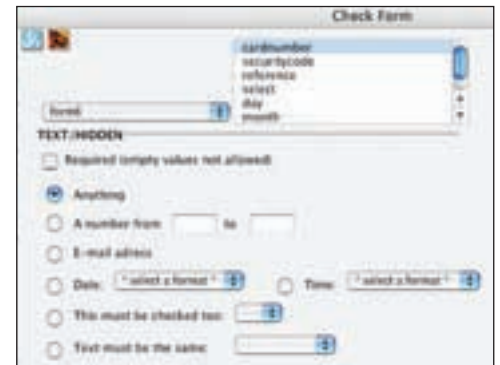
#### 14 Make things easy

When you put together the form content, the Properties palette at the foot of the Dreamweaver interface is perfect for giving the various elements unique names. This not only makes complex/multiple forms easier to keep track of, but you'll also easily spot fields that need to be validated.



#### 11 Getting the details

This feature is even more useful when it comes to visitors entering passwords etc. They can be told to input specific details – for example, a number between one and ten. You can make things as simple or sophisticated as you like depending on the importance of the information.



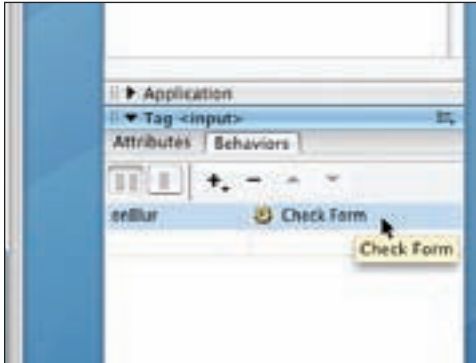
#### 13 Safe and secure

Online credit card transactions is another area where it's crucial to get info such as card type, number and an expiry date or security issue number. This can be double-checked using the Check Form extension, which will vastly reduce the chances of incomplete form submissions.



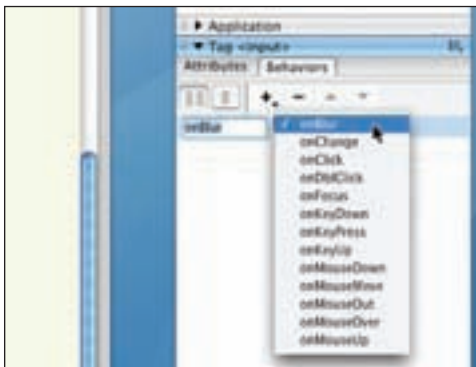
#### 15 Ready to go

Work through the various component parts of the form and add the different validation options open to you until the whole thing has been covered. When you're finished, click on the OK button in order to add the behavior to the completed form page.



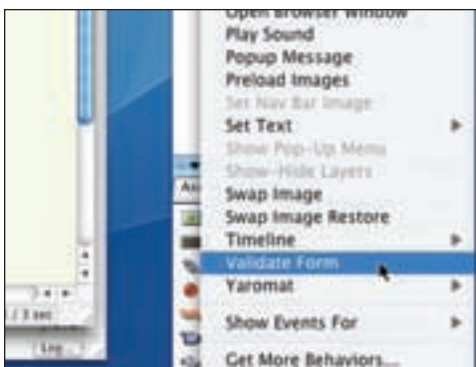
## 16 The new behavior

On completion of the form validation process you'll see that on the right-hand side of the interface, under the Behaviors tab, there's a new element added to the palette as shown above. Simply double-click on this area if you need to edit or amend any of the information.



## 17 Further instructions

On the left of this tab there's an OnBlur command. This should be left in the default setting, because this tells the page to throw up an error for any missing validation once the page user tries to send the info. This is the moment of decision: has the form been filled in correctly?



## 18 Another useful option

Of course, if you don't want to start installing extensions, Dreamweaver does have a basic version of the same thing, which is in the Behaviors menu directly above the Yaromat option. However, it doesn't offer the same options as those that we've covered in the last few steps.

## In detail

# Making the most of validation

The simple but effective Yaromat validation extension can increase the power of your web page forms

THERE'S NO DOUBT that most sites will need to utilise forms at some stage, because this is the best way of getting information and feedback from visitors. Not only that, but the humble form has been used for ages as a reliable means of obtaining ordering data such as credit card info.

By using the Yaromat extension and the Behaviors palette in Dreamweaver, the potential of this process is increased immensely. The Behaviors palette has long been there, but you'll only realise how useful it is when you start experimenting – form validation is just one aspect of its many facets. You can assign behaviors to all manner of elements within a web page, then carry out simple customisation techniques to make the built-in features even more powerful.

Adding behaviors basically inserts snippets of JavaScript which give instructions to a web browser on how to react when it reads the info. So, alongside getting a page to throw up validation errors, you can also integrate behaviors which will highlight other problem areas in a page or produce extra effects such as opening new browser windows without having to go behind the scenes and tinker with the code.

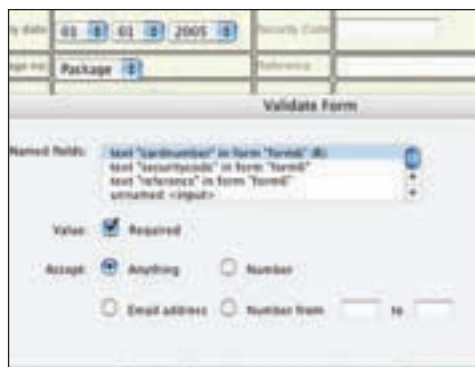
Create a test page and try adding different elements to it such as text and graphical elements. Then, by selecting various elements, see what sort of behaviors become available from the palette on the right of the interface. You'll soon be increasing the power of your pages by combining this palette with add-ons such as Dreamweaver extensions. You can also get extensions for Fireworks and Flash, meaning the whole Macromedia software collection can be powered up more than ever.



Using form validation can ensure that only those with permission are able to access areas of your website such as member zones

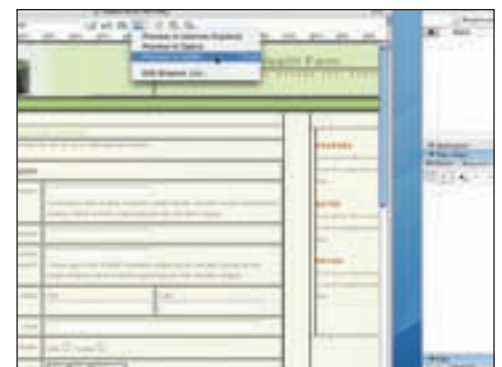


Form validation also guarantees that you have every important detail such as credit card type and other security considerations



## 19 Take your pick

The Dreamweaver version of the process is also perhaps a little less user-friendly and doesn't offer the same simplicity of operation as the Yaromat extension. It's fine for simple forms, but if you've created complex multi-form pages the Yaromat will be much more useful.



## 20 Time to check

When you've added the validation fields to your form, it's worth checking the page in a web browser before going live to ensure it performs as expected. If things don't work as planned, select the element in the form and double-click in the Behaviors palette to do more tweaking.

# Tech Support Dreamweaver

Don't allow Dreamweaver disasters to overwhelm you. **Rachel Andrew** is on hand to help you put the pieces back together again

## Q **Classy styling**

I've started to use CSS for layout as well as for styling text, but I'm confused as to the difference between a class and an ID – if both can be used to add CSS to an element, when should I use class and when ID?

**A** The difference between the two, in short, is that an ID may only be used once within a document, whereas a class can be applied to multiple elements within a document. For example, you might create a class that applied a two-pixel black border to an image. As you might have multiple images in a page that would all require a border, you would use a class. An ID uniquely identifies an element in the document, so you might use an ID on a part of a layout – for example your navigation – that only appears once on each page.

Dreamweaver can help you with using classes and IDs appropriately. If you use

## Q **What's in it for me?**

As I hand code I didn't think there was anything in Dreamweaver for me, but I've recently come across lots of people who say they use Dreamweaver "but only in Code View". What are the benefits of using Dreamweaver as a hand-coder and what features might be helpful to my workflow?

**A** Since the release of Dreamweaver MX, Dreamweaver has become a more fully featured code-editing environment, and many developers use Dreamweaver exclusively in the Code View. When you open a document you can choose to view it in Design View, which gives a visual representation of the document as it will be displayed in a browser, Code View, which is a code editor, or Split, which gives you the code in one pane and the Design View in another so you can see the effect of changes you make.



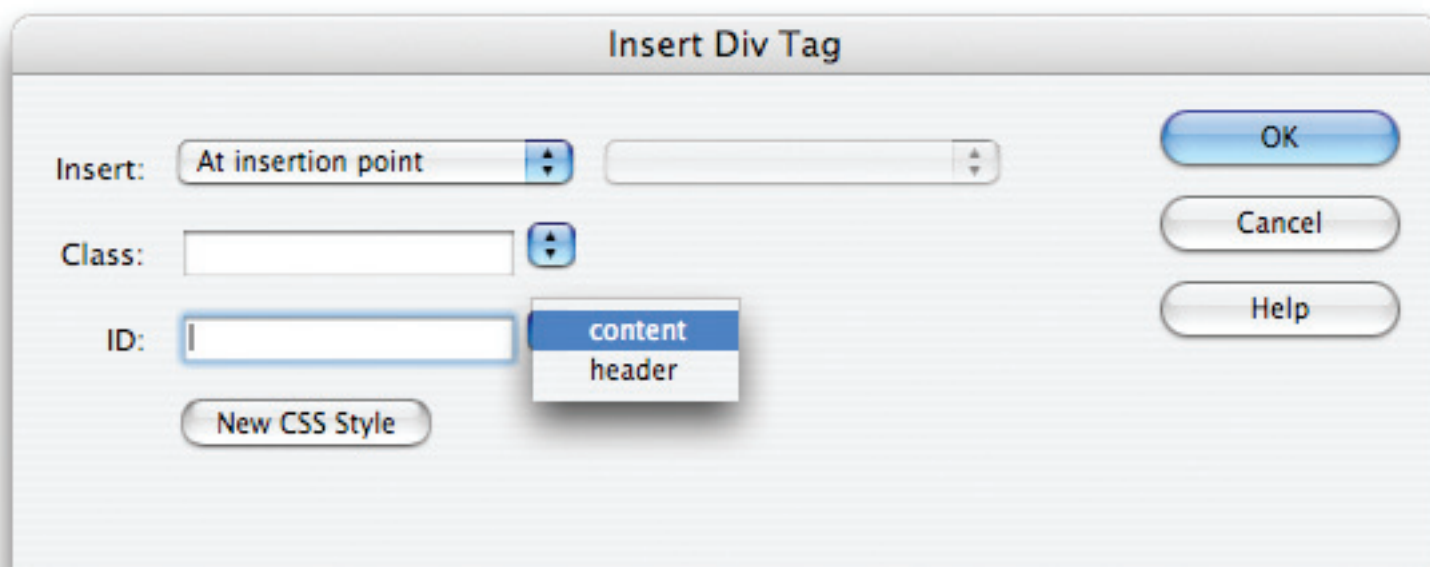
When working in Code View Dreamweaver is a powerful coding environment with functionality such as code hinting to help you

are all useful to you whether you use Design or Code View. In addition, the code-editing environment itself has many useful features. Code Hints help you to remember the correct tags. In Code View, start to type an (X)HTML tag and a list will appear with the possible tags, which you can select from rather than continuing to type. Auto-Completion means that Dreamweaver will automatically close your tags for you. In Dreamweaver 8 is a new Code Collapse feature enabling you to collapse down chunks of markup, so you can concentrate solely on the bit you are working on. The various features are fully customisable in the Preferences so you can work in the way that best suits

**“ Since the release of MX, many developers use Dreamweaver exclusively in the Code View ”**

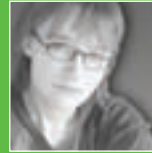
the Insert Div Tag button on the Layout Pane of the Insert toolbar and insert a div with an ID that's in your stylesheet, you'll only be able to select that ID once in a document. If you insert a div with a class you'll be able to use it as often as you like.

You can use most of the features in Dreamweaver when in Code View. For example Snippets (reusable bits of code which are available to all of your sites), the (X)HTML Validator, Site Management functionality and search and replace tools



When inserting a div tag, Dreamweaver 8 will only allow you to use the same ID once in a document





## Your expert

Rachel Andrew is a director of web development company [edgeofmyseat.com](http://edgeofmyseat.com) ([www.edgeofmyseat.com](http://www.edgeofmyseat.com)), and is currently a member of the Web Standards Project ([www.webstandards.org](http://www.webstandards.org)). With years of webmaster experience, she has co-written a number of books for Glasshaus ([www.glasshaus.com](http://www.glasshaus.com)) on web development, the most recent of which was *Dreamweaver MX Design Projects*.

## Expert advice

### Visualising CSS layouts

When creating a layout using CSS rather than tables it can be confusing trying to remember how the different ways of positioning elements will affect that element and those around it – never mind the effect that adding margins or padding has on your layout!

Dreamweaver 8 has a feature that helps you to visualise how the different CSS rules come into play by adding backgrounds to positioned elements. To see this in action go to **View > Visual Aids > CSS Layout Backgrounds**. You should then see each element in Design View take on a coloured background.



you. Dreamweaver is a good choice for hand-coders – you might be surprised at the number of features available to improve your workflow.

### Q Table trick

I'm a bit confused as to whether tables in HTML are completely bad or whether there are times it would be appropriate to use them? I can't image how you would go about displaying something that is in spreadsheet format using just CSS.

A Yes, it would be a nightmare to style something in spreadsheet format using CSS! This kind of data is what (X)HTML tables are designed for, as it is tabular data. If you are building a site and have some data that you could easily store in a spreadsheet in rows and columns, you should use a table to mark it up on your page. Dreamweaver makes table markup quick and easy and can help you to make tables accessible to all users by presenting you with dialogs to enter attributes to explain the contents. Insert a table by selecting **Insert > Table** for the Insert Table dialog. If your table has headings along



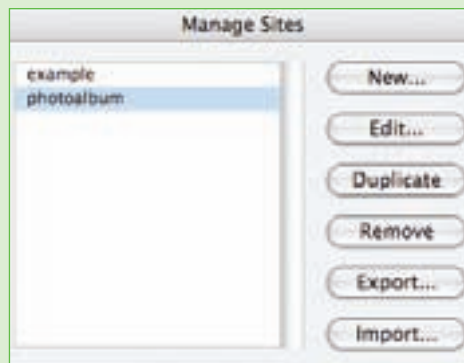
The Insert table dialog gives you many additional attributes to complete – these make data tables more accessible to users

the top or side select the correct Header type, as using heading elements for the headings helps people to understand the data. You can also add a caption and summary. The summary will not display in the browser but is read by devices such as screen readers to help explain the context for the table and what data it contains. ■

## Technique: Backing up your site definitions

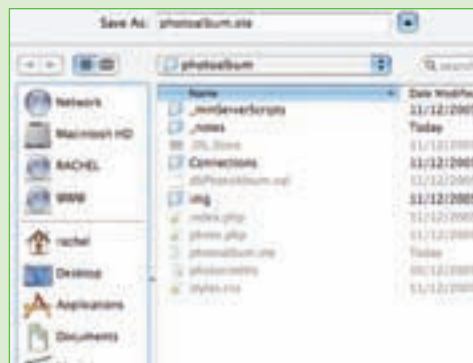
Q I had a large number of sites set up in Dreamweaver and although I have backups of all my site files, when I had a problem with my hard drive earlier this year I lost all of the sites I had set up in Manage Sites. Luckily I had all of the FTP details filed away but it still took ages to enter all of the sites back into Dreamweaver. Is there a way to back up this information in case anything like this happens again, or if I want to move the sites?

A Dreamweaver MX and onwards has a utility that will back up your site definitions. This utility enables you to create a file for each site, which can be imported back into Dreamweaver should anything happen to your computer. Don't forget that this just backs up the information stored in Dreamweaver about the site – it doesn't back up the site files (your HTML, CSS and images) themselves.



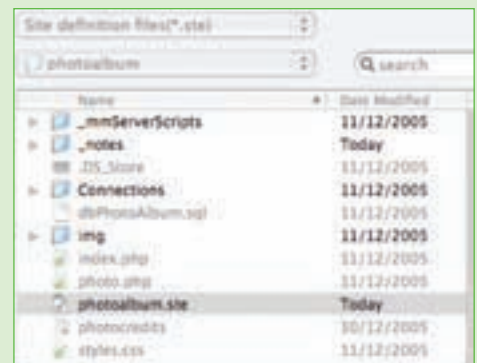
### 01 Open the Site Manager

In Dreamweaver, open the Manage Sites Dialog by selecting **Site > Manage Sites** (or from the Files Panel in the pop-up list). Once the dialog is open, select the site definition that you want to back up from the list. Click **Export...** to export the selected site definition.



### 02 Export definitions for a site

Dreamweaver will ask you to select a location in which to save the file, so select a location and click **Save**. You could either save the definition inside the local site folder and back them up with your files or create a folder in which to store all your Dreamweaver site definitions.



### 03 Import a site

To import a site, open **Manage Sites**, click **Import** and browse for the .ste file that you created when exporting the site. Click **Import** and your site will appear in the list – as long as the files are there you should now be able to use the site as before.

**Your expert**

An advanced web design instructor and award-winning web consultant in Orlando, Florida, **Andrew Schillinger** has been involved in web development and design for nearly a decade. His specialties include everything from Flash to PHP, XML, AJAX and CSS.

**The brief****On the CD**

**Tutorial files:**  
explosion.fla  
explosion.swf  
index.html and more!

**Tutorial objective**

Use Flash 8's new and improved features along with ActionScript

**Time required**

One hour

**Skill level**

# Design an explosive banner using Flash 8

Explore the power of Flash 8 with newly implemented filters and alpha strokes along with such mainstays as gradients, MP3s and ActionScript

WHAT DOES FLASH mean to you? Flash is the most pervasive web content creation tool around. Millions of designers and developers worldwide use Flash. Some use Flash for animation, such as Cartoon Network's *Hi Hi Puffy Ami Yumi* and *Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends*, while others use Flash for sharing data and content, such as the Macromedia Exchange ([www.macromedia.com/cfusion/exchange/index.cfm](http://www.macromedia.com/cfusion/exchange/index.cfm)). In this explosive new project, we combine Flash

8's new filters, gradient control and stroke opacity along with sleek text, fast motion, a loud explosion and a dynamically created star field (via some simple ActionScript) to create a banner that goes supernova – users will want to see it again and again! For those of you new to Flash, get ready to take the helm of the most advanced web tool out there. And to those who are veterans of web animation, get ready to learn a few new tricks to enhance your skills.



## 01 Set the stage

After opening your copy of Flash 8, click the Size button in Properties (Ctrl+J) to resize the stage. We resized our stage to 700 x 150, changed the background colour to #333333 and frame rate to 30fps. The increased frame rate will keep our explosion from looking choppy.



## 02 Choose your font wisely

As we will be setting our explosion in space, a sci-fi font such as Flipside is the perfect choice. Many sites on the web offer free fonts, so choose a font that fits your project. Clean fonts work best for corporate sites, while fun fonts are great for portfolio pieces



## 03 Improved gradients

Where Flash MX 2004 limited the colours in a gradient to eight, Flash 8 sets the limit at 15. We're using nine. Break (Ctrl+B) your text and apply a Linear gradient with these grey tones in this order: #FFFFFF, #0A0A0A, #707070, #808080, #A8A8A8, #636363, #616161, #EBEBEB, #000000.



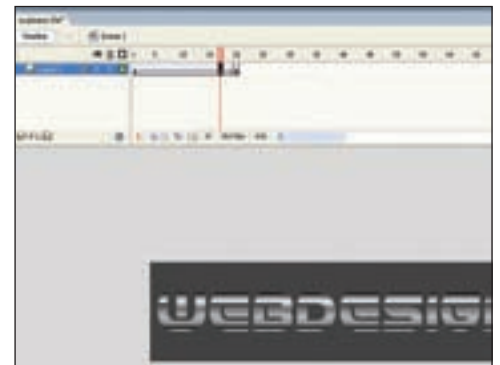
## 04 Gradients, transform!

Using the Gradient Transform Tool (T), rotate the gradient for each letter by 90 degrees. Flipside, like other sci-fi fonts, may contain multiple shapes per letter. These must be transformed too. Use the tool's slider to expand the gradient to the size of the entire letter, not just the shape.



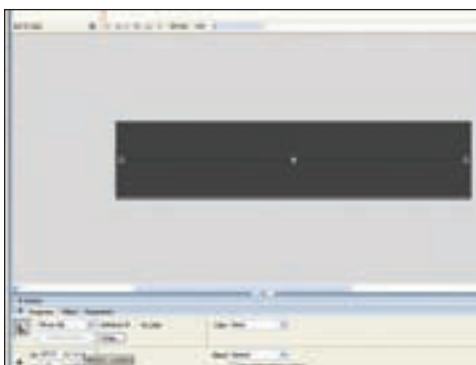
## 05 Make a symbol of your logo

We'll now apply a tween to the text to make it look as though it's rotating up. Leaving the text as is – we could apply a shape tween (because the text is broken apart), but the shapes will corrupt. Instead, hit F8 to convert the text to a symbol.



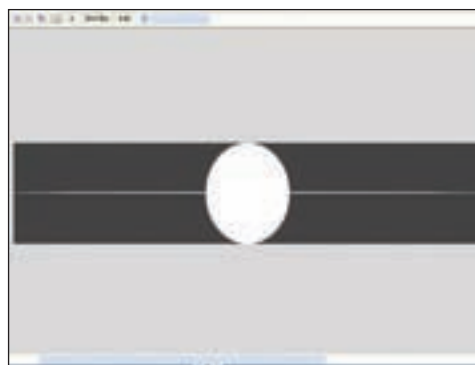
## 06 Set up the tween

Double-click anywhere on the stage to go back to the stage. Go to frame 20 and hit F6 to create a keyframe. As in traditional animation, keyframes are primary points of action: any change in motion or size. Flash fills in the between frames (twens) to complete your action.



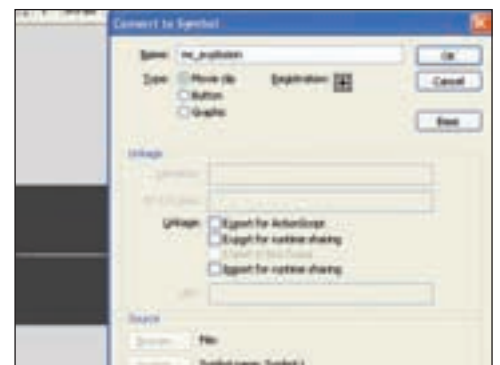
## 07 Lay down your logo

We want our text to appear as though it's rising from the horizon. On the first frame, either use your Free Transform Tool (Q) or go into the property inspector and set your text's height to 1.2 pixels. Just make sure that the width stays the same.



## 08 Now for the explosion!

Before Flash 8 we'd have had to design our explosion in Photoshop and import it in. Instead, we'll use the Oval Tool (O) to draw two ovals. Make a big circle-like shape about 210 x 150 and make a super-elongated shape about 700 x 5 as shown above.



## 09 Return of the symbol

We'll use Flash 8's new filters to make this shape look more like a star going supernova. But to do that, we need to convert these shapes to a movie clip symbol. Hit F8 and return to your main (root) stage. But don't drag the explosion out just yet.



## Technique

## Flash's colours and gradients

Before Flash 8, gradient control was limited: strokes did not have alpha and gradient properties. Not any more...



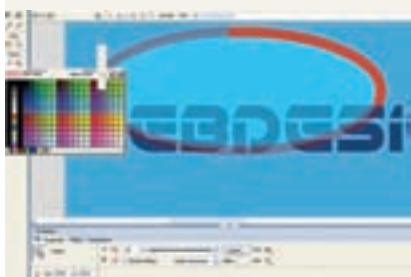
## 1: More colour

Flash 8 increases the amount of colours it can include into gradients from eight to 15. This allows you to create advanced graphics, be it more realistic metal effects (like our text) to animated shadows, water or fire.



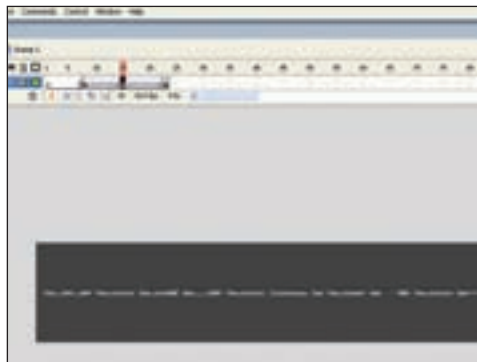
## 2: Gradated strokes

In Flash 8 you can add advanced gradients to your strokes for previously impossible effects, such as this explosion ring. Or, break apart some text, add a stroke and add an advanced gradient for a psychedelic effect.



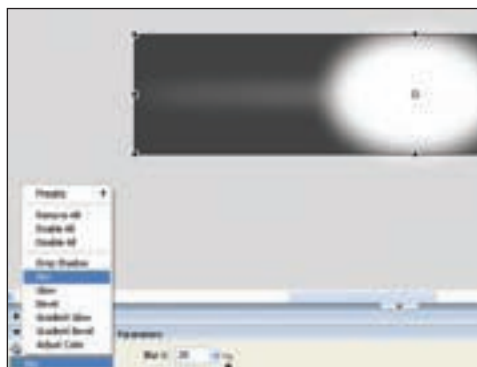
## 3: Stroke opacities

Also new to Flash 8, alpha (opacity) strokes enhance your effects. This means you no longer have to convert strokes to movie clip or graphic symbols in order to fade them out (such as for ripple effects).



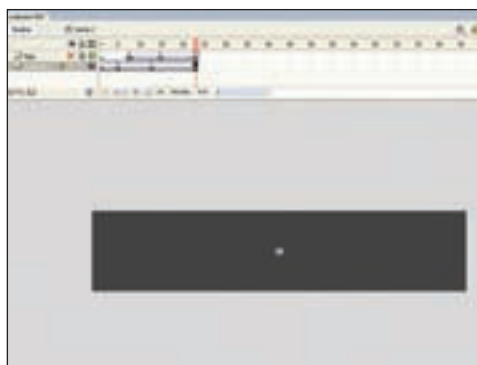
## 10 Add some finesse

We need to decrease the amount of frames our logo takes to increase its height to go along with the explosion effect. Move the last keyframe from 20 to 5. At frame 20, hit F5 to keep the logo from popping off the stage throughout the rest of the movie.



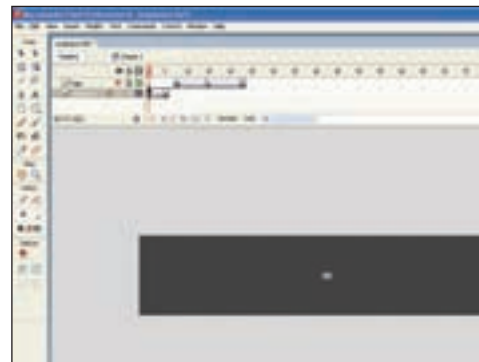
## 12 Blurry explosion

In your Properties palette, create a motion tween for these frames and then select frame 5. Select the Filter tab in the Properties palette and then click the Add Filter (the +) button. Select Blur from the drop-down menu and set the Blur X and Y to 25 and the Quality to High.



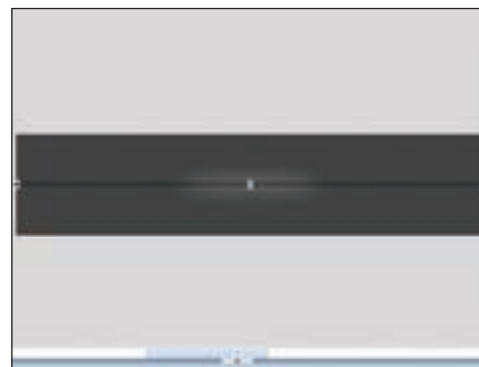
## 14 Save early, save often

Too many developers lose their work because they forget to save or have not saved for some time. A good rule of thumb is save after every major alteration to your movie. At frame 23, add another keyframe and shrink the explosion to 4 W x 1.5 H. Don't forget to save.



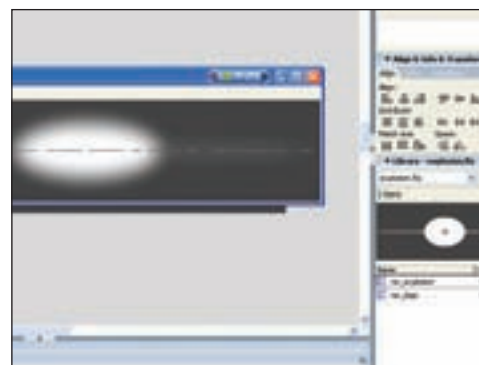
## 11 Bring on the explosion

Now, drag out the explosion from the Library (Ctrl+L). Experiment with how many frames to expand out the explosion. We chose five frames for ours. At frame 1, set the explosion movie clip's width and height to 10% of your stage (in our case that's 7 x 1.5).



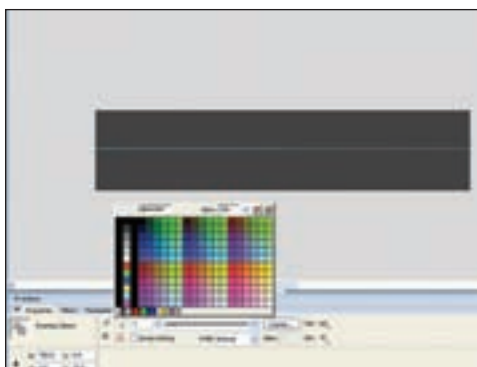
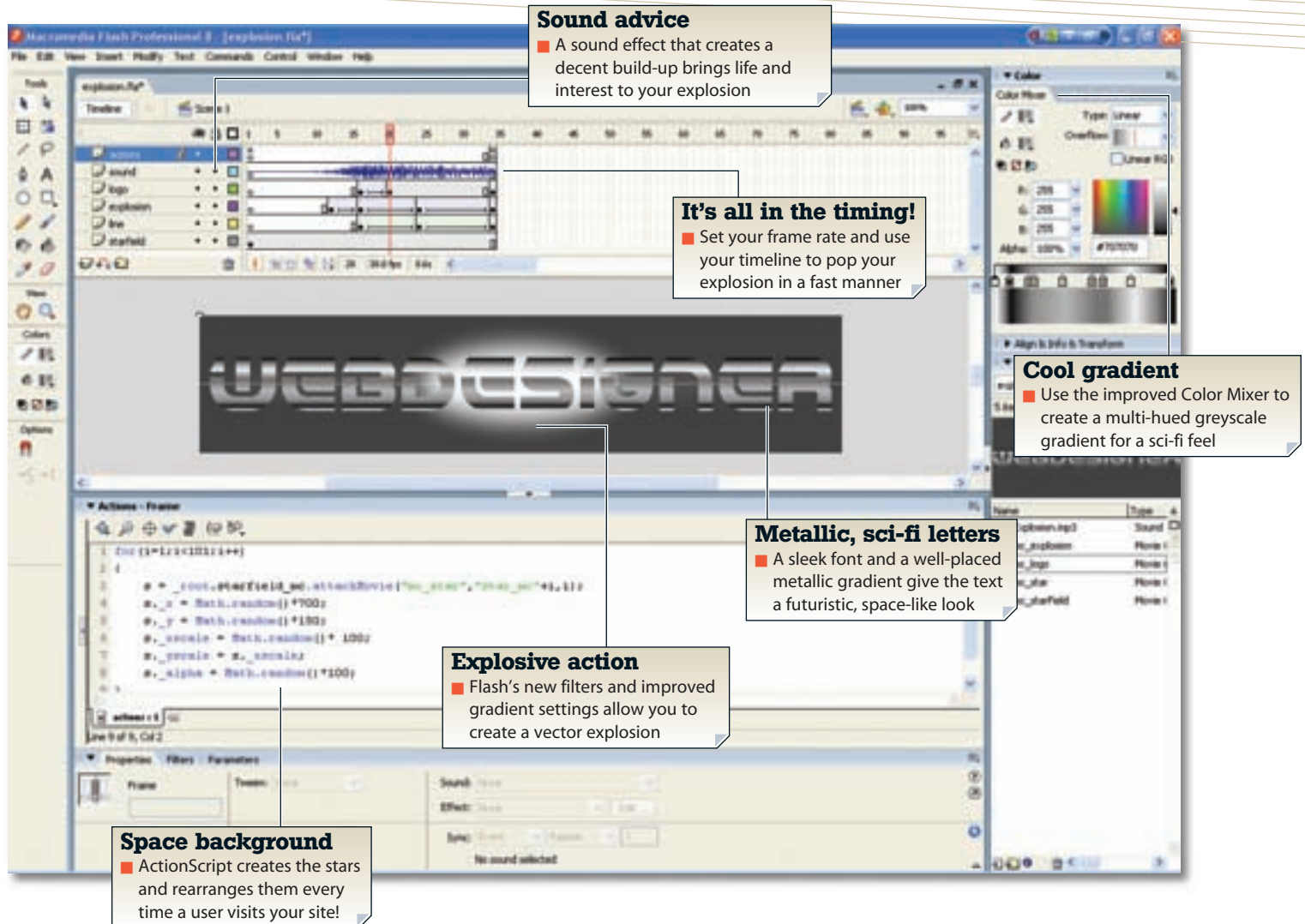
## 13 Fast entrance, slow exit

Our explosion takes five frames (1/6th of a second) to explode in, giving it a great bang effect. We'll let it fade out a bit slower as the logo expands. At frame 13, hit F6 to create a new keyframe and shrink the text height down to 4px.



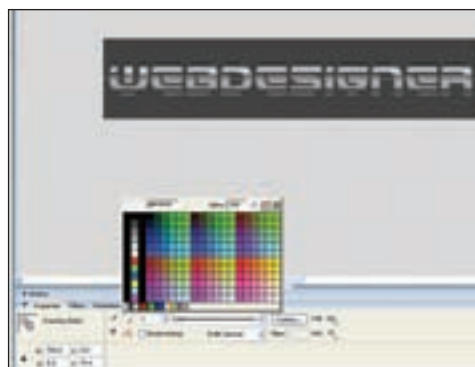
## 15 Test our movie

We've made some progress with our web banner. We've made some cool-looking text look like it's rising from a star going supernova. So let's check it out to see if we're happy so far. Hit Ctrl+Enter to view your movie. It's certainly nice, but it's lacking some pizzazz.



## 16 Line it up

Create a line that shows up after the explosion and is just behind the text. Create a new layer and place a keyframe (F6) on frame 5. Draw out a white 1px line that spans the width of your stage. Place keyframes on frames 13 and 23 and create a shape tween.



## 17 Alpha strokes?

At frame 5, open the colour palette. In previous versions of Flash, we'd need to make the line a movie clip to affect its transparency. Flash 8 allows us to set opacity (alpha) and gradients to strokes. Set the alpha to 0%. Make the alpha 33% in frame 23.



## 18 Make it stop!

Check out your movie (Ctrl+Enter). Now to add the final pieces: stars, sound and for the explosion to stop. Create a new layer above the others and name it Actions. Place a keyframe (F6) in your last frame. In your Actions Palette (F9), place a stop command (Hit Esc, then s, then t).



## 19 Audio impact

To make the explosion work for your site, we need an explosion sound. FlashKit.com offers Flash designers free and pay-for sounds and loops (just make sure you follow the licence agreement of any sounds you use). The explosion sound we use is free of any obligation or fee.



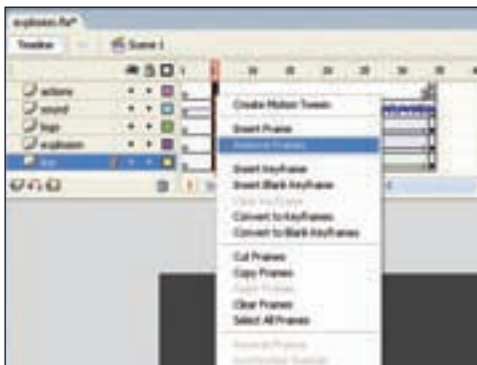
## 20 Bring in the sound

Go to File > Import > Import to Library or Import to Stage, or hit Ctrl+R to import your MP3. Unlike visual objects, both options save the MP3 to your library. Select your sound in the Library and hit the play button in the preview window to listen to it.



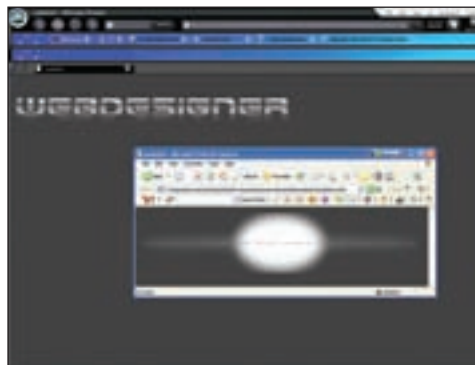
## 21 Link the sound

Create a new layer just under Actions and name it Sound. In the Properties Inspector, choose your sound from the Sound drop-down list. You'll see its wave signature in your sound layer. Adding blank frames (F5) to the Sound layer will show you how long the file runs for.



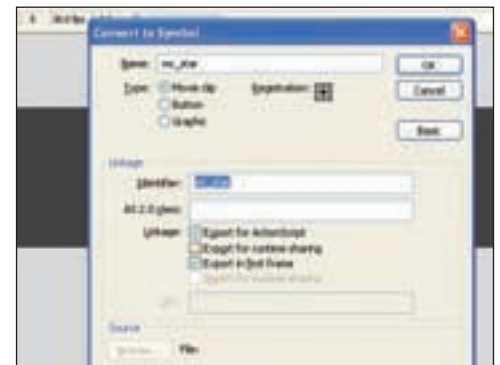
## 22 Sync the sound

The next step will take some experimenting before you're happy. Start by moving your explosion to when the bulk of your sound begins. You may need to add frames (F5) or remove frames (Shift+F5) to align it to the right. Hit Enter and Ctrl+Enter to test out the synchronization.



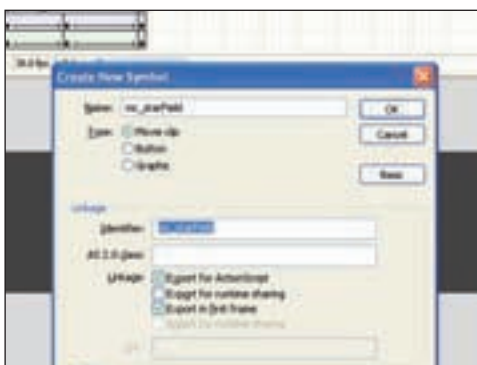
## 23 Test, test, test!

We set our frame rate to 30fps for smoother animation, but that comes at a price; low-end machines might not display the animation correctly or in sync. Test your movie in different browsers by hitting F12 and copying the address to a variety of browsers.



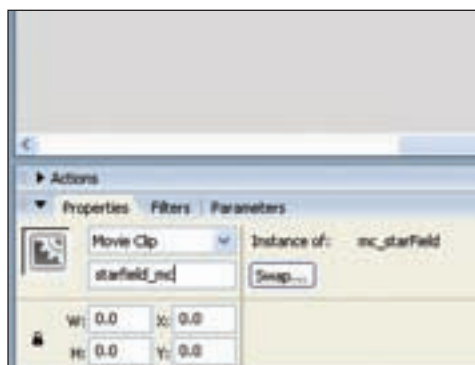
## 24 ActionScript: the final frontier

To create a dynamic star field in the background, create a 3px circle and convert it to a movie clip (Ctrl+F8). Make sure you check the Export for ActionScript box. Then remove that movie clip from the stage - we'll only access it via ActionScript.



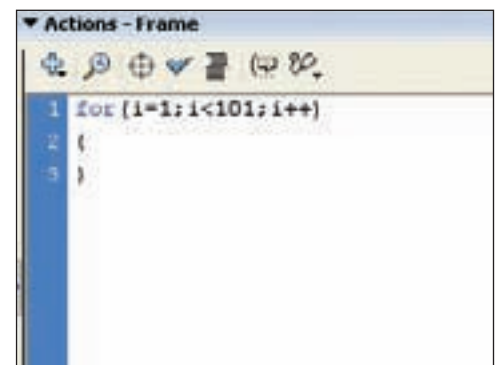
## 25 Make some space

To ensure the stars remain behind our animation, we'll need to create an empty movie clip below all our other layers. Hit Ctrl+F8 to create a new movie clip. Call it mc\_starField and select the Export for ActionScript box, as we will be referring to it in our script.



## 26 Place your space

Create a new layer beneath the other layers. Drag mc\_starField from your Library and position it in the top left corner of your stage. In the Instance Name box in your Property Inspector, type starField\_mc. The Instance Name is how ActionScript accesses items on your stage.



## 27 And... action!

We only have one star in our library (mc\_star), but we want 100 stars to make our space look realistic. So, the first thing we do is create a loop. Type: `for (i=1; i<101; i++){` This tells Flash to count upwards from 1 to 100.

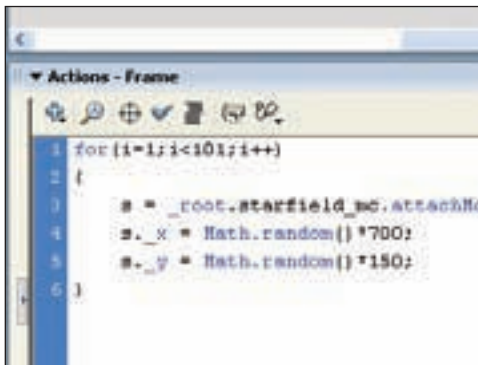




## 28 Don't panic

To attach our star, type:

```
s = starfield_mc.attachMovie("mc_star", "star_mc"+i, i);
starfield_mc is the empty clip we placed in step 26.
attachMovie("mc_star") is how we attach our mc_star
movie. "star_mc"+i is the new name for each star.
```

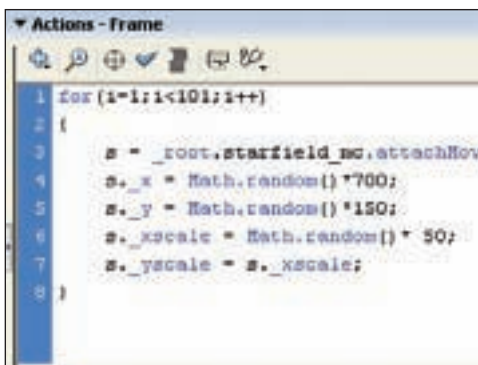


## 29 Rearrange the stars

Testing your movie, you'll see just one star; the hundredth star is eclipsing the 99 others. Flash will randomly move the stars by typing:

```
s._x = Math.random()*700;
```

```
s._y = Math.random()*150;
```



## 30 Different-sized stars

Test your movie. The stars are all the same size. Using `Math.random()`, we'll scale the stars down: `s._xscale = Math.random()*100`; randomly sets the stars' widths from 0.00 to 3.00 (their original size). `s._yscale = s._xscale`; ensures the stars remain circles.

## In detail

## Want a piece of the ActionScript?

New to ActionScript and feeling daunted? No problem! Here we'll lift the lid on the code used in this tutorial

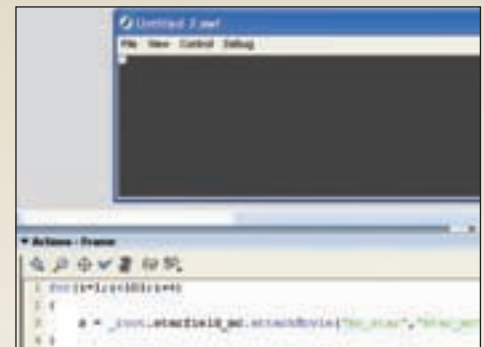


TO CREATE THE star field backdrop, we used the code listed in detail within steps 28-32. To someone new to ActionScript, this may look daunting. But no worries, as here we'll delve into the creation of the stars. For starters, we create a loop for that counts from 1  $i=1$  to 100  $i<101$ . The `i++` tells Flash to keep counting until it reaches 100.

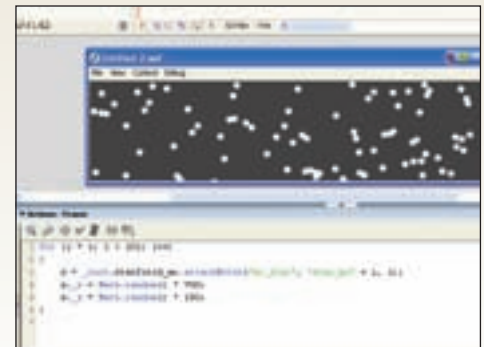
Each time Flash loops once, the next line `s = starfield_mc.attachMovie("mc_star", "star_mc"+i, i);` attaches our star (`mc_star`) onto its own layer. We use the variable `s` to access the star later on. In step 26, we place the empty movie clip (`mc_starfield`) on the stage and give it an instance name of `starfield_mc`. The instance name is how ActionScript is able to manipulate objects. So, if `starfield_mc.attachMovie` means attach a movie to the `mc_starfield` clip, then `attachMovie("mc_star", "star_mc"+i, i)` means attach the movie called `mc_star` and rename it to `star_mc1` or `star_mc2` or `star_mc` + the number of whichever loop we are in. That last `i` places the newly created star on its own layer so that each star can be independently manipulated. That's what the next four lines do:

```
s._x = Math.random()*700;
s._y = Math.random()*150;
s._xscale = Math.random()*100;
s._yscale = Math.random()*100;
```

The `Math.random` method returns a number between 1.0 and 0.0 with a nearly infinite decimal place. As a result, we need to multiply the random number by our parameters: width (700), height (150), scale (100% is the biggest we want our stars) or alpha/opacity (an object can't have more than 100% opacity).



With no `_x` or `_y` values set, all 100 stars in our explosion backdrop occupy the same coordinates, which is no good



Without scaling and putting down the opacity, the stars look too uniform, like ping-pong balls rather than celestial bodies



## 31 Twinkle, twinkle

In the night sky, some stars shine brighter than others. Let's use `Math.random()` once again.

```
s._alpha = Math.random()*100
```

We set the alpha between invisible and solid white. This will make your logo explode onto a field of stars.



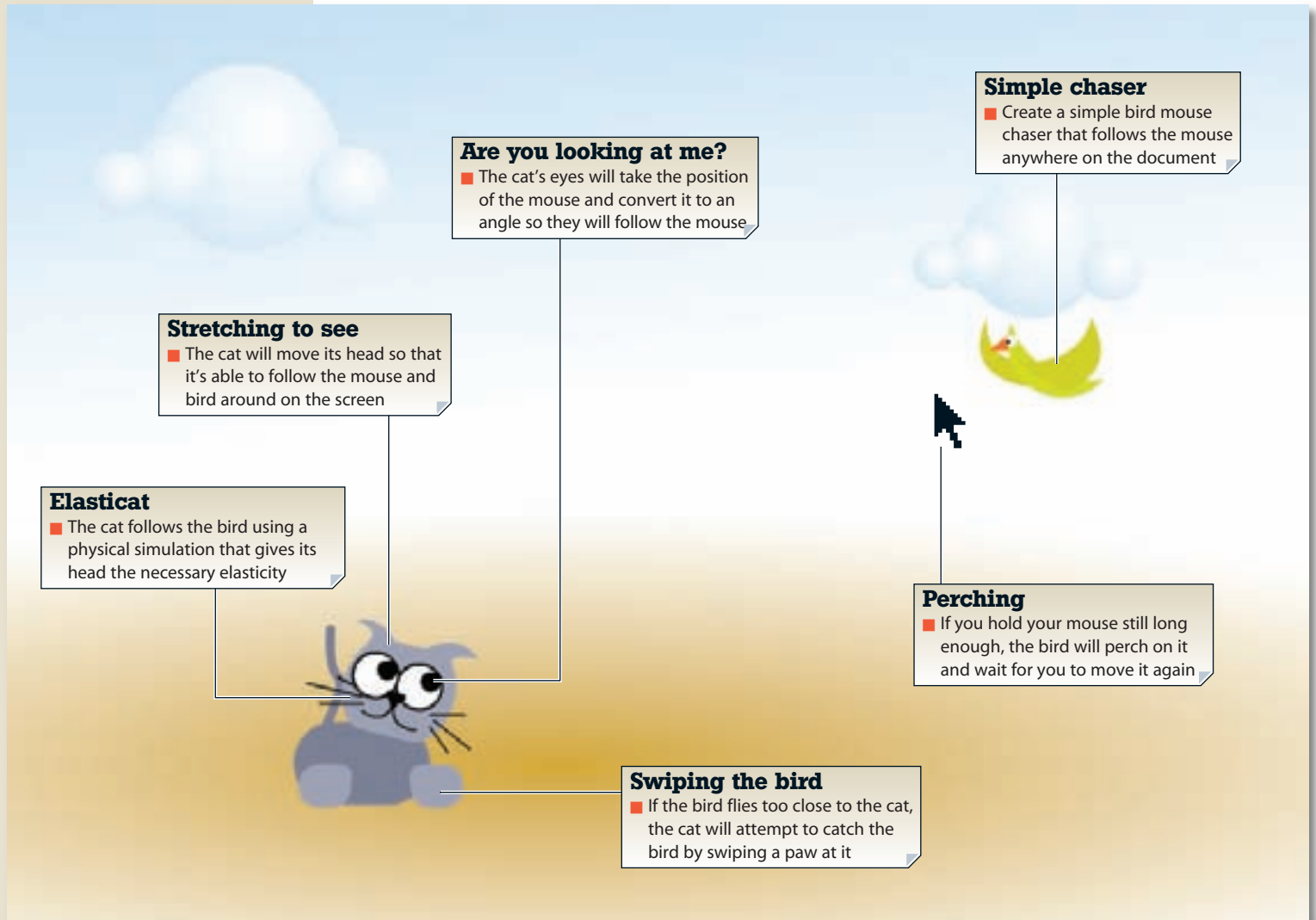
## 32 On the world wide web

Use this code to add your movie:

```
<object id="swfID" name="swfName" type="application/x-shockwave-flash" data="my.swf" width="610" height="150">
<param name="movie" value="my.swf" />
</object>
```



Mark Shufflebottom teaches on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth Uni, and has been a regular contributor to *Web Designer* for many issues. A former designer of *Practical Internet*, he now specialises in everything from Flash to 3D graphics and PHP.



## The brief

### On the CD

**Tutorial files:**  
mouse-chaser-start fla  
mouse-chaser-finished fla

### Tutorial objective

Use Flash to program an interactive mouse following animations

### Time required

40 minutes

### Skill level



# Create an animated mouse chaser

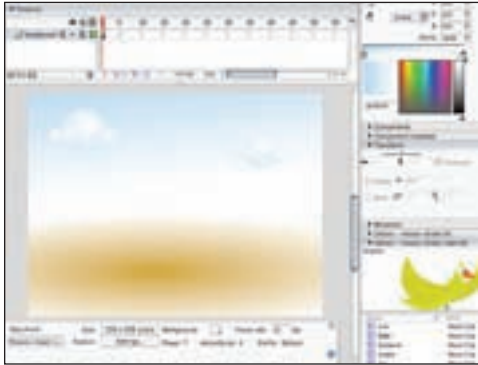
Breathe life into your web pages by using the power of Flash's ActionScript to create characters that react to the user's interactions

LAST MONTH WE took a look at injecting personality into a site by adding animated characters. This month we take the idea further by creating interactive animated characters that will react to your visitor's mouse movements on the screen.

At its heart this is a mouse chaser tutorial. We've all seen mouse chasers on websites – they can be fun, but often there's little point to them. Yet a carefully considered theme that fits in with the content can really give your site a lift.

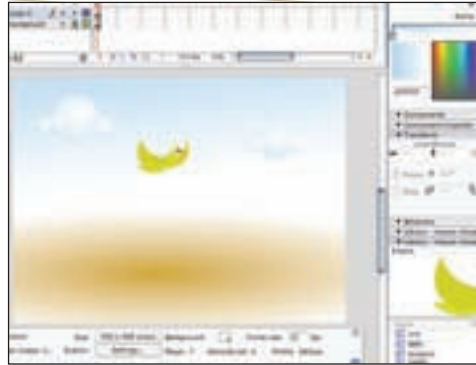
To make this a juicy tutorial that you can sink your teeth into, we're not going to give you just a simple mouse chaser but will also have a second character on the Flash document that will follow the mouse pointer and the bird with its eyes.

This second character is, of course, a cat, and we'll show you how to add a little elasticity to its head so it can see where the bird is flying. To finish off, we'll make the cat swipe for the bird if it gets within paw's reach.



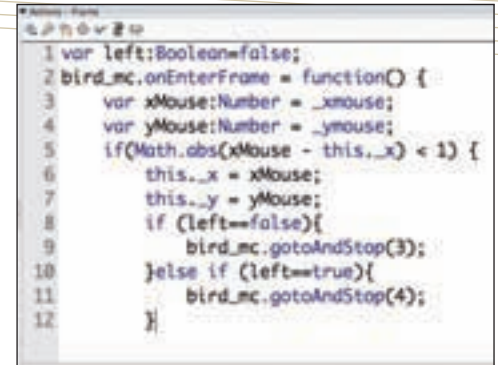
## 01 Starting the project

Start Flash, and from the cover CD open the file mouse-chaser-start fla, which contains all of the assets necessary to complete the project. If you look in the library you will see a symbol, 'bird'. Double-click the bird symbol and you will notice that there are four frames.



## 02 Open the symbol

The first two contain the animation of the bird flapping its wings, facing either left or right. This is the symbol 'bird anim' from the library. The next two frames are the bird resting in both directions. Return to Scene 1, create a new layer and then drag the bird symbol to this layer.



## 03 Start the code

Scale the bird down slightly to 70% using the Transform panel, then name the instance 'bird\_mc'. Now create a new layer, hit F9 to open the ActionScript Editor and add the code as shown. This tells the animation to come to a rest if the bird is within one pixel of the mouse.



## 04 Finish the code

Below the last code on the screen, add the code from line 13 onwards. This moves the bird towards the mouse pointer and divides the distance by six so there's an inertia lag. The remaining code works out which animation should play, based on which side the bird is to the mouse.



## 05 Test the movie

Hit Ctrl+Return on the keyboard to test the movie. You'll see the bird move towards the mouse; if it touches the mouse it will perch on the mouse pointer. This is where most mouse chaser tutorials end, but we know that *Web Designer* readers want to know more cool tricks...



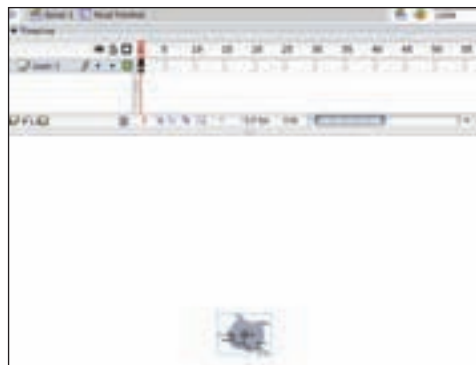
## 06 Create the cat

We're going to create a cat which will turn its neck to see where the bird is flying. We'll also detect the angle of the mouse and move the cat's eyes to follow it. Create a new layer and drag this layer below the layer with the bird on it. From the library, add the 'tail' symbol to the stage.



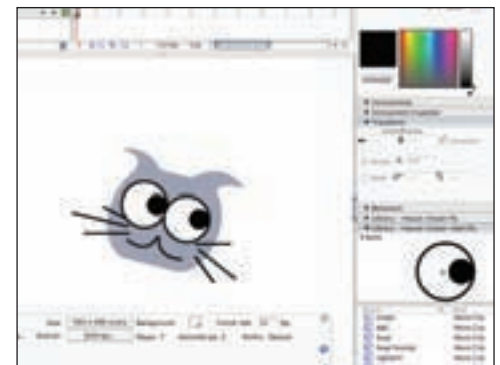
## 07 Creating the body

Use the Rectangle tool to create the body. Click on the 'Rounded Corners' option in the bottom of the toolbar and add 50-pixel corners to the rectangle, then draw the body shape as shown above. Delete any stroke there might be, then select the shape and press Ctrl+G to group it.



## 08 Creating the head

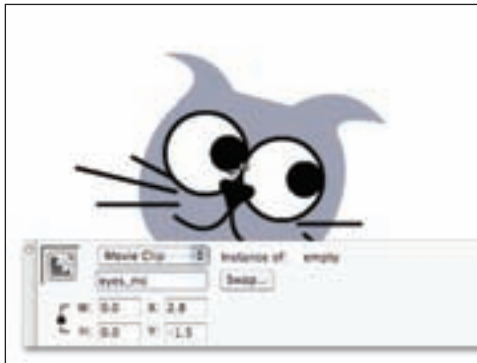
The head is a little more complicated to create. For this we need to make a new symbol, so press Ctrl+F8 to make the symbol, name it 'head finished' and make it a movie clip. Add the head symbol from the library to the new stage of the 'head finished' symbol.



## 09 Add the eyes

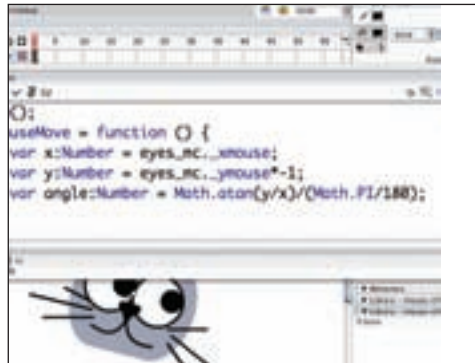
Create a new layer and zoom into the cat's head. From the library add the 'eye' symbol and place it on the head; copy and paste the symbol and place this next to it. Name the left eye 'eye1\_mc' and the right eye 'eye2\_mc'. Now drag the symbol 'empty' from the library onto the stage.





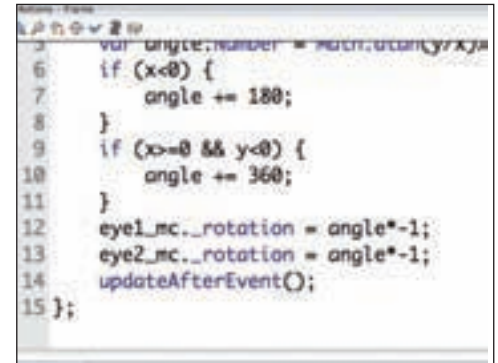
## 10 Name the instance

Place the 'empty' symbol (which should look like a white spot) so it's directly between the eyes. Name the instance of this symbol 'eyes\_mc'. Now create a new layer and create a nose between the eyes by altering the shape of a basic circle. This completes the graphics of the head.



## 11 ActionScript layer

Still inside the 'head finished' symbol, create a new layer to contain our ActionScript. Press F9 with layer 1 of the new layer selected and add the code as shown. This sets up a new handler for when the mouse moves, and works out the angle based on the x and y location of the mouse.



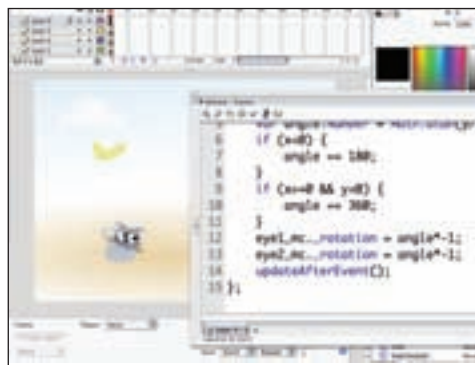
## 12 Finish the handler

Now add the remaining code from line six, which adds values of 180 or 360 to the angle variable to give a true 360° to the angle. The final section of the code takes the cat's eyes and rotates them so that they give the appearance of following the mouse pointer.



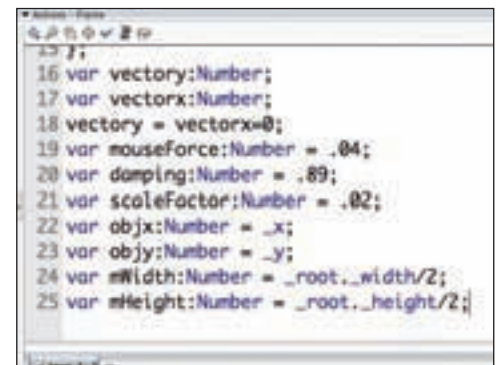
## 13 Add the head

Return to Scene 1, drag the 'finished head' from the library to the stage and place it on top of the cat's body. Name the instance 'head\_mc'. Now press Ctrl+Enter to view the animation so far. As you'll see, the cat's eyes follow the mouse and bird as they move around the screen.



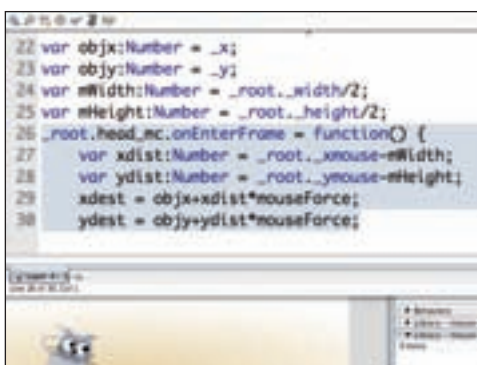
## 14 Craning the neck

The cat is starting to look much more realistic now as it moves around. If we wanted it to look even more realistic, the head would also move to follow the mouse. Double-click the 'finished head' symbol to edit it and select the ActionScript layer, pressing F9 to edit the ActionScript.



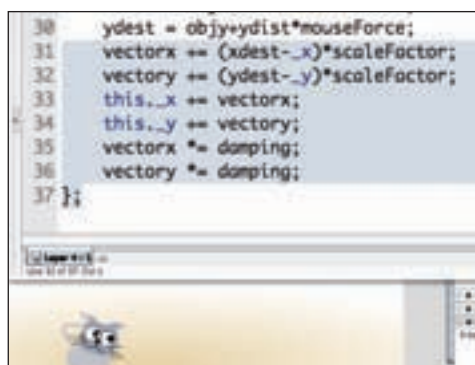
## 15 Variable action

Hit the Return key after the last code and enter lines 16 to 25, which set up some variables for helping us move the head. We want the head to act as though it's attached to the body and the mouse, so it moves towards the mouse but doesn't leave the body of the cat.



## 16 onEnterFrame function

The code from line 26 to 30 sets up the onEnterFrame function, which is actioned every frame that the movie is running. It checks the position of the mouse against the width and height of the movie and stores the result. This is then used to work out the destination of the cat's head.



## 17 Finish the function

The code from line 31 onwards will actually start to move the cat's head in the relevant direction, and the damping will stop it from getting to its destination at once. This will create fluid elasticity in the movement of the head as it bobs towards the mouse, while the eyes follow exactly.



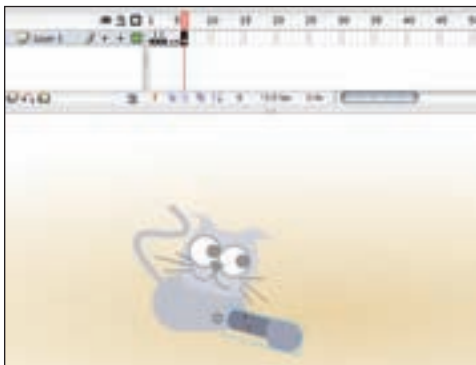
## 18 Test the results

Click Scene 1 and hit Ctrl+Enter to test the movie. Now you should see the cat's head bob around as he follows the mouse cursor and the bird. To see it work dramatically, drag the mouse to the top right of the Flash SWF, and the cat's head will bob upwards and then move back slightly.



## 19 Swiping the bird

To make the cat's movement seem even more realistic, we can give it arms so it can swipe at the bird as it gets within striking distance. Drag the 'arm' symbol to the stage and place it on the body. In the Modify menu choose Convert to Symbol and name it 'rightArm'.



## 20 Edit the symbol

Double-click the symbol on the stage to edit it. Add a keyframe on frame 2 and rotate the arm upwards as if the cat is about to swipe. Now add a keyframe at frame 3 and move the arm further out. Add a keyframe at frame 6, rotate and position as shown, then add a motion tween.




## 21 Finish the arm

Add a keyframe at frame 8 and move the arm back into the body, then motion tween this movement. Add a new layer, select frame 1, open the ActionScript Editor and add a stop(); command. Return to Scene 1 and give the arm the instance name 'right\_mc'.

## In detail

## Taking the project further

This project, like most, can always be improved upon, and here we provide you with a few pointers to take it further

 IN THIS TUTORIAL we created an animated mouse chaser that has interactions between characters on our site. There are plenty of ways in which this could be improved. As the cat swipes at the bird, an obvious animation would be to have a feather float gently to the ground. This would give the impression that the cat was close to catching the bird, but not quite close enough!

Another possible animation is that the cat actually does catch the bird! This could be done using:

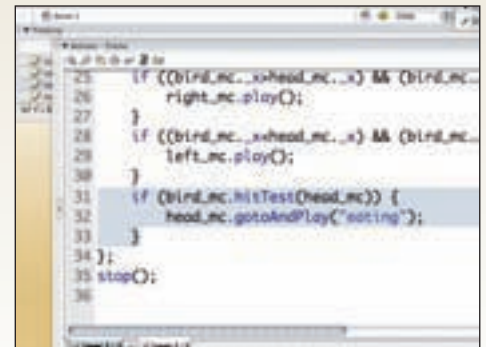
```
if (bird_mc.hitTest(head_mc)){
    head_mc.gotoAndPlay("eating");
}
```

This would need to be in an onEnterFrame script so Flash continually checks to see if the two have collided. The "eating" inside the brackets for the gotoAndPlay command would be a frame label with your animation on it. To get rid of the flying bird on the stage, use `_root.bird_mc.visible=false;`. This can be set back to 'true' when you want to bring the bird back on the stage. It's probably a good idea when resetting the bird to come back on, to move the bird's position away from the cat using `_root.bird_mc.x=-10;`. Again, you'll need to do the same with the bird's `_y` property.

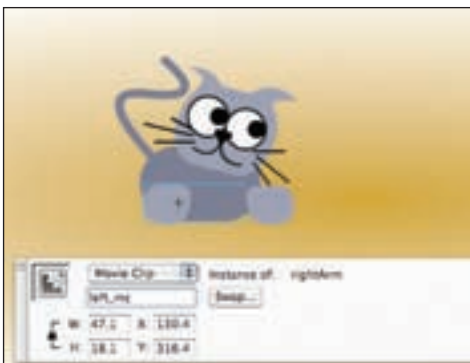
As you can see from this interaction, the whole project could easily be turned into a game in which you have to fly your bird through a maze of rooftops with hungry cats on the lookout for your hero. The bird could be safely guided through the screen, avoiding cats to get to some kind of reward. So, what started out as a relatively simple mouse chaser can easily escalate into a full-blown interactive game project!



Creating a frame label called 'eating' can contain an animation of the cat eating the bird

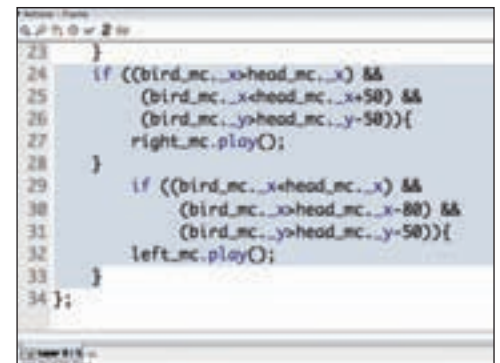


A little code placed in an onEnterFrame function will check whether the bird has touched the cat's head



## 22 Copy the arm

Copy (Ctrl+C) the arm that you have named 'right\_mc' and then paste it (Ctrl+V). From the Modify menu choose Transform > Flip Horizontal. Now choose Modify > Arrange > Send Backward. Rename the instance of this arm 'left\_mc' and position as shown.



## 23 Final script

Now select the ActionScript layer on Scene 1 and open the ActionScript Editor. Before the last closing bracket on line 24 hit Enter. Now add the code as shown from line 24 to 33, which will trigger the cat to swipe at the bird if it comes close to the body. Test the movie with Ctrl+Enter.

# Tech Support Flash

If you're defeated by Flash and its foibles, don't panic. **Mark Shufflebottom** is ready and waiting to lead you through the minefield

## Q Make a date

I was wondering how I would go about getting the current date passed into Flash. I have read about the date commands in PHP, which take the date from the server, and I take it that this could be passed back into Flash, but I'm not sure how to do it. Can you give the best advice on making the two talk?

**A** Although it is possible to get PHP to pass the information from the server to Flash, there is really no need to go to all of this trouble because Flash has a date object built into it. As such it is very easy to get the date and work with it. If you wish to get the current date then use this ActionScript to get access to the date:

```
var today:Date = new Date();  
var day:Number = today.getDate();
```

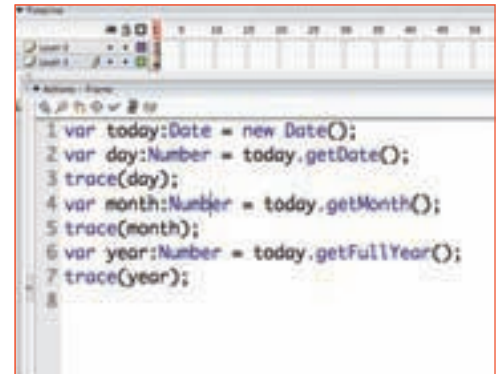
```
trace(month);  
var year:Number = today.getFullYear();  
trace(year);
```

As you can see, a new variable is declared and set up as a date object. Then new variables are declared for day, month and year and they get their value from the today date object and appropriately get the day, month and year.

It is also possible to get hours, minutes, seconds, milliseconds and time zones using the same process. As you can see, grabbing the date is a much easier and more straightforward process than you originally thought.

## Q Environmental issues

I'm trying to create a dynamic environment for my website, and I'm having a small problem I hope you can



*Getting the date is simple enough with Flash's built-in date object, so there is no need for external languages such as PHP*

add random rotation and transparency. Can you shed some light on the subject?

**A** This is actually very easy and I'm sure when you see the solution that the answer will click into place for you. All you have to do is set up two variables to hold a random number – you should already know how to do this from positioning your movie clip with a random position on the \_x and \_y. These variables need to be set to hold a random number between 0-100 for transparency and a random number between 0-360 for the rotation.

Once the variables have been created then all you have to do is apply them to your movie clip on the stage by calling the instance and then the relevant property to get either transparency using the \_alpha or rotation. Using, yep, you guessed it \_rotation. Here's the code listing:

```
var opacity:Number = random(100);  
var rotation:Number = random(360);  
star_mc._alpha=opacity;  
star_mc._rotation=rotation;
```

Obviously just replace the instance name of 'star\_mc' with whatever your instance name is and you will get the randomness that you are looking for.

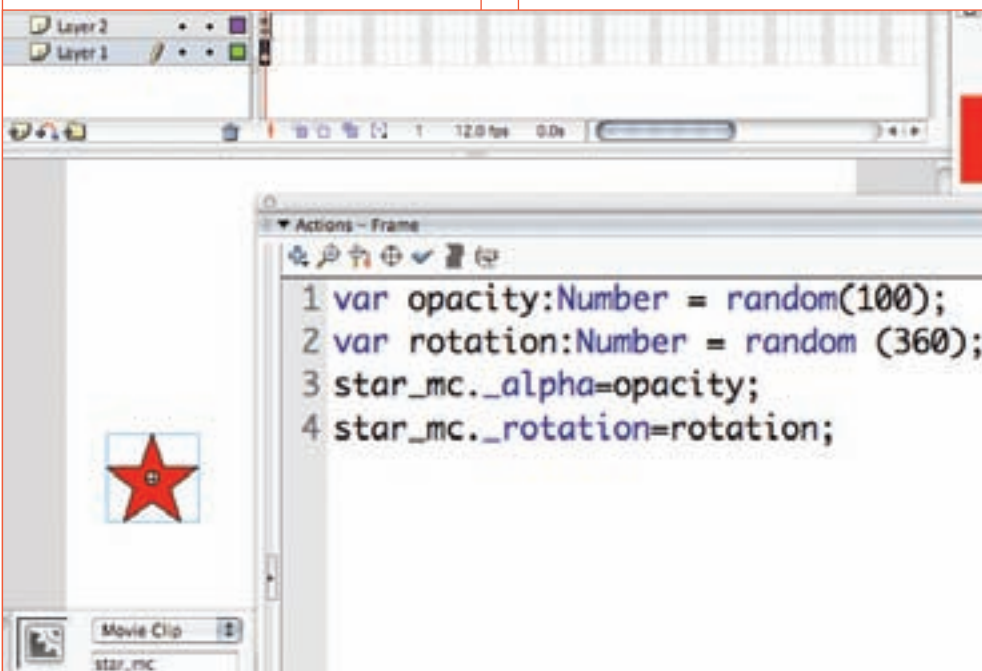
## Q Going loopy

I'm having difficulty getting a sound to loop in my Flash document. Every time it loops it seems to skip – I've even tried to fix the skipping by fixing the end and beginning of the soundclip to match. As far as I can tell it seems to be Flash that is

## “A good way to detect the platform your visitor is using is to check the screen resolution”

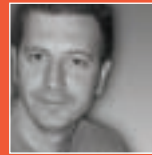
```
trace(day);  
var month:Number =  
today.getMonth();
```

help me with. I've managed to move movie clips to random positions through \_x and \_y but I am not quite sure how to



*Getting random rotation and transparency is easy when you call the right properties of the movie clip*





## Your expert

**Mark Shufflebottom** lectures on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth University, where he teaches the next generation of web designers advanced skills such as digital imaging, interface design and 3D applications. Mark is our Flash expert and, as well as writing some of our leading tutorials, he is on hand to offer advice and solutions to readers struggling with the complexities of Flash.

## Expert advice

### Text field names

When using dynamic text fields you will notice that there is the ability to add variable names and instance names to the text field. Which one do you add and why? The answer is one of legacy. The variable name is the way to display information using Flash 4 and 5 so if you need to publish back into these formats for older compatibility, use the variable name. The newer way to display dynamic content is to give the text field the instance name with the suffix of '\_txt'. This suffix merely gives text field specific script when adding content. To add content from your code you would use:

```
myText_txt.text=dynamic value;
```

A more common way, which allows HTML formatting of the text, is:

```
myText_txt.htmlText=dynamic value;
```



causing a skip between loops. Is there any way to eliminate that? Perhaps using `loadSound()` instead?

**A** The `loadSound()` command won't stop the silences from appearing, so there is no point in trying to store the sound separately from the Flash file. What that does tell me is that your sound is an MP3 file, as they are the only sounds that can be imported externally.

The problem appears to be that when looping MP3 files there appears to be slight milliseconds of silences at the start and end of the files. When looping over and over again this can become obvious, depending on the loop. Exporting from different sound editors does not seem to solve the problem and it appears to be part of the MP3 file format itself. An easy solution is to export your sound from your sound application in either WAV or AIFF format.

Occasionally a sound that is exported on certain bit rate settings will produce a click or a scratch between loops. A way to get around this is to change the



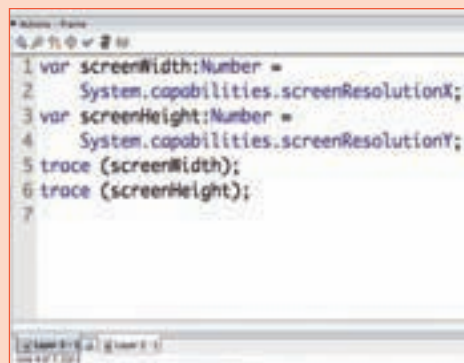
MP3 sound can cause problems when looping with clicks and spaces, use alternative formats and bit rates to alleviate the problem

bit rate of the export from the standard 16kbps to say 32kbps – that usually eliminates the problem. If you don't want the sound quality up that high then try 20kbps. If problems still remain, you could change the export from MP3 to a different setting. ■

## Technique: Get ready for the small screen

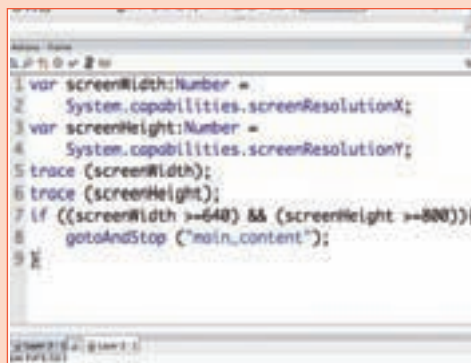
**Q** I am trying to create a website that is PDA- and phone-friendly using Flash. My site idea would be particularly useful for mobile users, so I'm trying to research as much about creating my site for these users as much as possible. I was hoping that I could detect the platform and then send users to a relevant page depending on the result. Would this be at all possible within the Flash environment?

**A** It is an excellent idea to build your site for a multitude of platforms. A good way to automatically detect the platform your visitor is using is to check the screen resolution of the host device. If the screen resolution is below that of the minimum screen resolution of a computer (640 x 480), it must obviously be a small-screen device. Here's how to check the resolution.



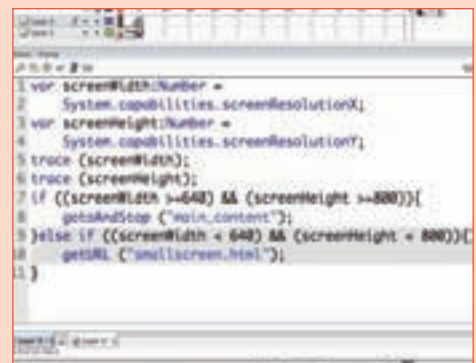
### 01 Find the resolution

Right at the beginning of your Flash document, before you add any content, add the code shown above. This code takes the resolution of the screen, storing the x and y coordinates in the `screenWidth` and `screenHeight` variable. This is printed in the output window.



### 02 Test the movie

If you hit `Ctrl+Enter` you'll see that the screen resolution will be placed in the output window. We need to create a statement to check this. Add the next lines of code as shown above – this sends the playhead to a frame label called 'main\_content' if the resolution is over 640 x 480.



### 03 Final test

Add the last section of code as shown, which states that if the resolution is below 640 x 480 (the minimum computer screen resolution) then it must be a small-screen device. The browser is pushed onto a different URL, where an optimised version of the site can reside.



Rob Clymo is the editor of *Website Maker*, one of the UK's longest-running magazines dedicated to creating websites. He's worked extensively as a freelance writer and web designer, contributing to some of the most well-known design magazines in the UK.



## The brief

### On the CD

Tutorial files:  
index.png

### Tutorial objective

Use the power tools in Fireworks 8 to build sophisticated menus

### Time required

40 minutes

### Skill level



# Use Fireworks 8 to master pop-up menus

Rock-solid navigation is the key to a good site, but with Fireworks 8 it's easy to combine simple functionality with slick graphical button content

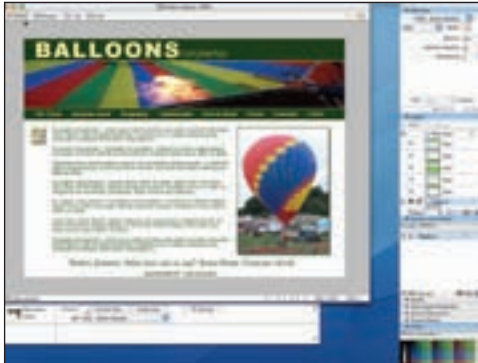
MACROMEDIA HAS LONG placed strong emphasis on using its software packages in tandem, enabling you to jump from one app to another with ease. In that respect, HTML authoring package Dreamweaver, along with Fireworks 8, lets anyone with a little patience create highly functional web pages featuring sumptuous graphics in the space of a few clicks.

In this tutorial we'll show you how easy it is to produce a pop-up menu in the Fireworks interface, complete with

ready-to-go JavaScript coding, then incorporate it into a web page under construction within the Dreamweaver interface.

What's more, you don't just get a basic setlist of features – Fireworks 8 enables you to construct lavish pop-ups and tailor their look and feel to match the design layout of your pages. While earlier versions were a little bug-ridden and produced pop-ups that tended to be unpredictable, today's Fireworks puts all that behind it. So let's get your menu under way...





## 01 Laying the foundations

Here we have our standard web page layout, which looks good enough and will do the trick – but by adding pop-up menus to the navigation bar options we'll be able to increase the navigational power of our project. Therefore, this will form the basis of the menu-building steps.



## 02 The tools needed

To create a pop-up menu – the option for which is in the Modify menu along the top of the Fireworks interface – you'll first need to create a 'Hotspot' or 'Slice' area within the layout. This will form the basis of your menu. The necessary tools can be found in the left-hand toolbar.



## 03 Spot the difference

Hotspots and slices offer similar ways of creating pop-up menus, but they do vary. The former enables you to draw over a specific area then add links to the hotspots as you create them. Slices let you do the same, but also allow graphics to be cut up into chunks for greater efficiency.



## 04 Drag and drop

We're creating a navigation bar containing a series of buttons that will all need pop-up menus, so we'll plump for the Slice tool. Select it from the toolbar on the left and drag it across the area you wish to form the basis of your menu. When you release it, the area will be highlighted.



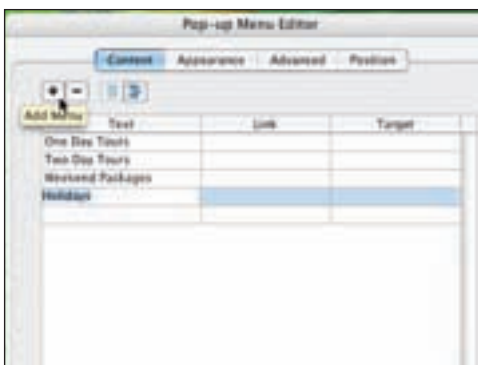
## 05 On the menu

With the area selected, go to the Modify menu and pick Add Pop-up Menu as shown. Ignore the other colour-shaded areas covering the main graphic in our file, as these are the background slices of what will become our finished web page. Your slice overlays them, anyway.



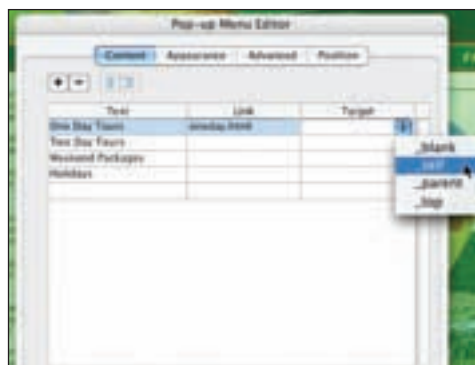
## 06 Behind the scenes

The Pop-Up Menu Editor opens to reveal the numerous options available when creating one of these JavaScript-based snippets. Of course, behind the scenes lies coding, but Fireworks lets you build without any knowledge of that – although you can tweak coding at a later stage.



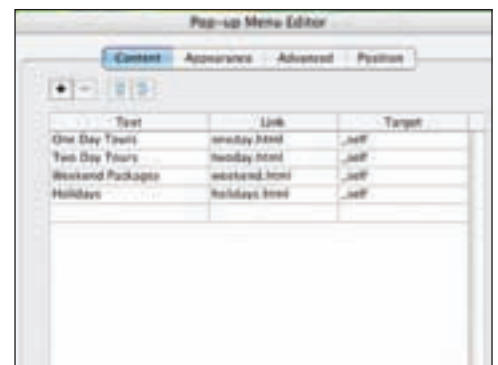
## 07 The menu options

The Content tab enables you to enter the ingredients of your menu options, so here we click on the '+' button each time a new text field is needed for a trip. Next, type your text into the field as shown. The small icons at the top indicate that you can add sub-menus here if needed.



## 08 Fine-tuning options

Each menu option will need a link destination specified, ie the page the person goes to when they pick that option. You'll also need to specify a target for this new page. The 'Self' option means the new page will open in place of the page they're viewing when using a web browser.



## 09 All the details

You need to work quite methodically and run through the same procedure for each menu option. Large menus can be a little tedious, but it's still quicker doing it this way than hand coding. When you're ready, click either on the Appearance tab at the top or Next at the bottom.



## Technique

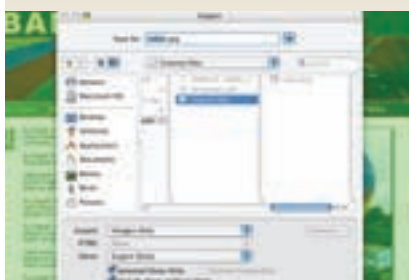
### Putting your design to work

It's important to export your page design correctly. Here's how to use the 'Export' functions in Fireworks 8



#### 1: The File menu

There are many ways of exporting some or all of the elements of your page design; you will find these in the File menu. If you're new to the program, the Export Wizard can walk you through it, but it lacks some flexibility.



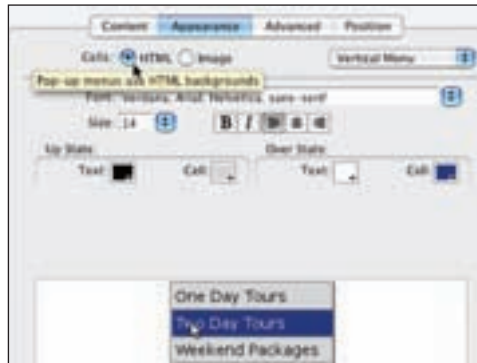
#### 2: Explore the options

Page layouts with lots of slices and chunks of solid colour along with digital images need to be handled differently. Select Export, and a window will appear with a host of choices for saving the various chunks.



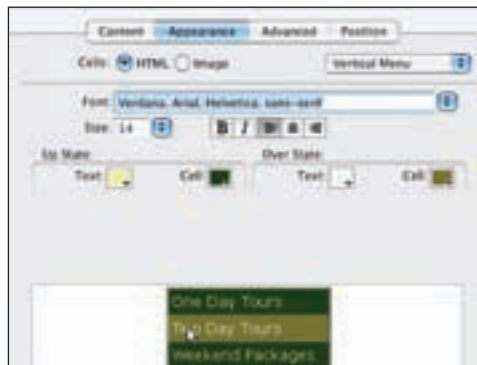
#### 3: Slicing it correctly

Our web page has digital pictures and solid colour, so export the chunks according to what's in each slice; slices with pictures should be exported as JPEGs and solid colour areas as GIFs, using the 'Optimise' menu.



#### 10 Time to create

This is where the fun starts. The Appearance tab enables you to style up the menu to match the design of your layout. Stick to the default HTML option to produce lean, functional code menus, or check the 'Image' radio button to go for a more extravagant set of menu styling options.



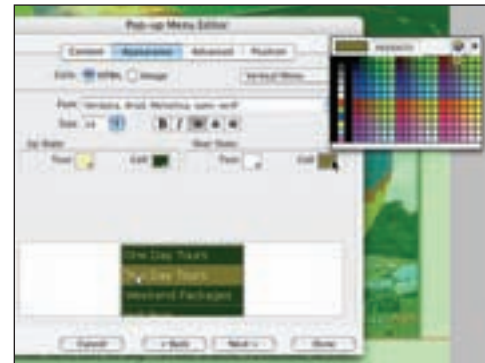
#### 12 A step further

It's feasible to finish your menu at this stage by clicking Done at the bottom of the dialog box. However, the last two tabs at the top of the window offer extra features that will allow more flexibility in both menu layout and the positioning of it in your finished web page.



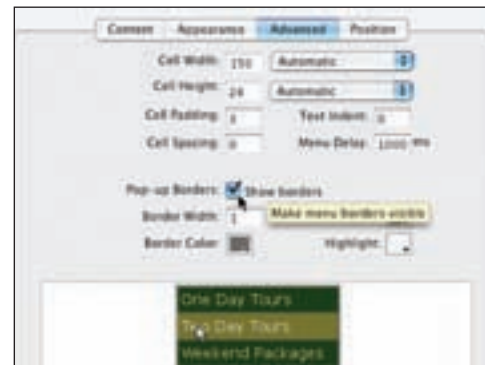
#### 14 Moving your menu

The final tab, Position, allows you to specify exactly how the menu will be displayed on your page layout. This can be tricky to perfect but it's worth practising. You select one of the four tab options at the top, then fine-tune using the X and Y coordinates. Sub-menus can be handled similarly.



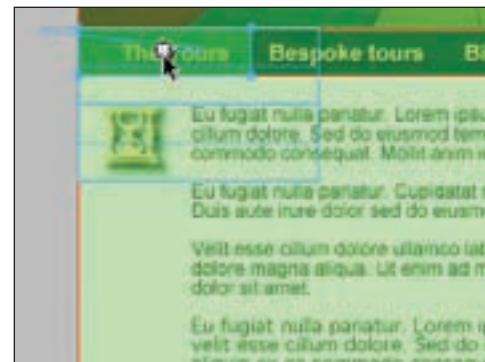
#### 11 Your style options

Try exploring the different styling options at this point. You can specify fonts and their formatting, along with the colour options for both text and the menu backgrounds. You can sample colours or simply pick them from the pop-up colour palette that appears.



#### 13 Some subtle tweaks

Clicking Advanced enables you to specify formatting for the cells that hold the menu text fields. They are fine in a default setting, but by experimenting with settings and previewing the changes you can decide what suits your design best. Uncheck 'Show borders' to remove framing.



#### 15 On the page

After clicking Done, Fireworks creates the pop-up menu automatically, based on the criteria you've supplied in the last few steps. It'll appear in the location of the slice or hotspot – depending which option you chose at the start. The framework will be displayed in blue outlines as shown.









# WEB CAREERS

Recruitment and training advice



*Keeping track of the new tenders that come through daily can be very time-consuming. Tracking services can be worth their subscription fees*

## Working for the public

**Dave Howell** discovers that working for central and local government can be a lucrative business for the savvy web designer

**T**he UK government is committed to placing as many of its services online as possible after publishing its 'Transformational Government Enabled by Technology' strategy ([www.cio.gov.uk](http://www.cio.gov.uk)). What this means for web designers is that you have a vast amount of new work that you can tender for. And with the EU also offering hundreds of new contracts each day, working for the public sector could keep you busy for years (and your pockets lined with contracts!). The UK government alone spends £25 billion a year on goods and services, but to get the public sector to spend some of this money with your business you'll need a new set of skills.

### Tender opportunities

Public sector contracts have specific rules that you have to follow to tender for a contract. It's a good idea to get a good knowledge of what kind of services the public sector buys and how it goes about this. The Supplying Government site at [www.supplyinggovernment.gov.uk](http://www.supplyinggovernment.gov.uk)

explains this in detail. It's still in development at the moment, but will be a superb resource for anyone new to public sector bidding.

The EU has rules about public sector contracts and how they are awarded. The current level for contracts is £99,000 for central government work and £150,000 for all other public sector contracts. Contracts are advertised daily and appear on the Official Journal of the European Communities (OJEU) ([www.ojeu.com](http://www.ojeu.com)) website. But a more accessible source of new contract information is on the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) site at [www.ogc.gov.uk](http://www.ogc.gov.uk). Contracts below these levels are sometimes advertised in the national press. Some contracts may not be advertised at all, so approaching public sector bodies directly is your best way of catching this work. This is where your network skills come in very handy.

Euro Info Centres (EIC) have also been set up throughout the UK by the European Commission to provide information and services for business. These include a full

## Web resources

Beat the tender contract pack with our links to help you get in first



**Business Link** [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)  
If you're brand new to tendering for public sector contracts, find a detailed overview of the process plus contact information on this comprehensive and user-friendly site.



**Supplying Government** [www.supplyinggovernment.gov.uk](http://www.supplyinggovernment.gov.uk)  
A new website that's still under construction is your first port of call to learn how the central and local government buy goods and services.



**Tracker** [www.tendermatch.co.uk](http://www.tendermatch.co.uk)  
Finding new contracts can be time-consuming in itself, but the Tracker site does some of that hard work for you. You'll have to pay for a subscription to use the service.



**European Tenders** [www.europeantenders.com](http://www.europeantenders.com)  
This site provides access to thousands of tenders as they appear. For less than £100 a year you can be among the first to see each new tender.

► library service of OJEU and Tenders Electronic Daily. For details of your nearest centre, contact the European Commission London Office on 0207 973 1992. Euro Info Centres are also listed on the EIC website at [www.euro-info.org.uk](http://www.euro-info.org.uk).

The tendering process can be arduous and an administrative assault course, but the rewards can be well worth it as Ciaran Catney, programme manager of Parity ([www.parity.net](http://www.parity.net)), who has experience of working in this sector describes. "The tendering process is always quite long and drawn-out for government projects. It can be up to 12 months from receiving notification that there will be a procurement to signing the contract – sometimes it's even longer. However, once you are in somewhere you tend to get a lot of repeat business, so it is definitely worth going through it. At the outset, you're likely to be against at least six other providers for the same work. You start by providing information on your company, such as financial information and case studies on past work. After that, if you make the shortlist you'll be invited to respond to a set of requirements. If your pitch is successful and you get to the final two or three suppliers, the final stage is to put together a prototype solution and give a presentation on it – and then hopefully you'll be selected!"

One of the sites that Parity recently completed was for the Charity Commission to set up Click, its new online service for charities. Click ([www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk)) is currently available to larger charities, allowing them to communicate with the Commission quickly and securely on a range of issues. The Parity team developed online forms for the Charity Commission that allows content to be replaced annually. "We needed to get a system up and running quickly, while also ensuring that the service was suitable for charities to submit their report each year," says Derek Nurse, project manager at Parity.

"This new area of our website has involved a massive streamlining of our business processes, and will make it much easier for charities to submit information and get a speedy reply," explains Nick Allaway, the director of resources



The tender document you write could lead to more detailed discussions, where you can present more information about your plans to complete the assignment



at the Charity Commission. "Prior to Click going live, the process of submitting an annual report or changing any details was very laborious both for the charities and us. The systems Parity has put in place to set up online services will speed up these areas of our work dramatically, making us a more efficient organisation."

## Getting started

So, how do you actually go about tendering for a public sector contract? The key points to consider are that you must have the skills that the tender requires. Don't try to bluff your way into a contract. You'll fail to get the contract itself, but more importantly your reputation will be damaged – make sure you only go for the contract you know you can deliver on time and to budget. Tendering can be a very lengthy process, which can drain resources from your business, so balance the cost and time required to land the contract with the profit level you expect. The vast majority of work will go to design agencies, but if you're a lone designer there is nothing stopping you joining a team to get some public sector work under your belt, as Ciaran Catney at Parity describes. "Independent web designers should look to join a large company with public sector projects on the go to get the necessary experience. Only very tiny bits of work go to individuals – the interesting stuff goes to bigger companies. Working in this





Tenders can come from local as well as central government

way gives breadth of experience, understanding on how design fits in to the overall solution and understanding of the market that are needed to work successfully in the public sector.”

The tender document can be the most daunting aspect about working in the public sector. The key to successfully completing this is to prepare well. Make sure you have the bid specification to hand and have thought through how you will tackle the project. As well as

// You need to convince the tendering board that your company is capable of delivering the finished site //

showing how you’d complete the work, you need to convince the tendering board that your company is capable of delivering the finished site. Demonstrate your team’s skills by detailing other work that you have done, and give details of possible pitfalls throughout the project; this shows that you can think commercially. Don’t forget that because of the Freedom of Information Act, which came into force in January 2005, the content of your tender can be seen by your competitors, so indicate clearly any commercially sensitive information in your tender. You may also want to ask for a non-disclosure agreement to be part of the tender process. More information can be found in Harold Lewis’ book *Bids, Tenders And Proposals*



The tendering process can be long and difficult, but the long-term benefit to your business can make all the hard work worthwhile

(ISBN: 0749443693) and at the DTI website ([www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk)), where you can obtain copies of *Tendering For Government Contracts*.

Gary Walder, account director at Carlson Marketing ([www.carlsonmarketing.com](http://www.carlsonmarketing.com)), who has been heavily involved with a new planning portal for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, offered this advice: “Virtually all our public sector projects involved the tender process – either open or closed. Our experience so far is that a central procurement function will issue the invitation to tender, which will contain all the details required for generating a response.

“These can be time-consuming if you are new to the process but after a couple of times through you are able to recycle some of the elements. In the main they are looking at your suitability and capabilities in the area involved and will often ask for details of previous, similar projects and references for the clients involved. Other information includes team member background and pricing rates.”

Working in the public sector is certainly not like anything you will have experienced before.

But if you approach these projects just as you would any web design brief, with the view to producing the best site for the audience it’s aimed at, you’ll be able to negotiate the tendering process and then produce a site that will not only gain you a pay cheque, but also extend your portfolio.

Once you have some experience in this sector you’ll find that the next tender is much easier. You’ll be able to complete the tender documents faster, but more importantly, you’ll be able to point to previous work you have done in the sector that puts you ahead of the competition, which can be fierce. Hundreds of lucrative new public sector contracts are announced each day. Don’t miss out. ■

## Interview

David McGirr, creative web director at Illumina Digital [www.illumina.co.uk](http://www.illumina.co.uk)



As creative director, David is responsible for all design and development for Illumina’s clients. He has been designing websites and building application interfaces for clients for more than ten years, working with names such as

Microsoft Network and Universal Music. David has led the creative aspects of a variety of Illumina’s projects for the BBC, National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, British Museum, DCMS and the DFES. He has also worked on Teachers TV Online and developed a pilot for the Royal Shakespeare Company based on current productions of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

**Can you outline the differences in working for the public sector and an ordinary commercial client?**

It’s a bit of a myth that there is any significant difference between private and public sector clients. Some are great to work with, while others are more challenging.

**Did you go through a tendering process for any of the public sector contracts you have worked on recently?**

Almost all of our work starts by going through a tendering process. Tendering in the public sector needs to be considered a long-term strategy because it can take a long time to get through the process and sometimes feels like it never ends.

To succeed you really have to stick with it, and don’t be disheartened. I’d recommend making sure you have a couple of tenders on the go at the same time. Over time you’ll get better at writing the documents and filling in the forms, so it won’t be such a burden. Also, you create a set of standard documents that you can use across all your pitches, not just government tenders.

**Have the public sector websites you have worked on had any unique challenges?**

There is a greater awareness and understanding of accessibility, and of course you need to be able to meet UK eGov technical standards. In our experience it’s not the clients that affect the design of a site it’s the users. As long as you keep the user at the centre of the process and have a robust production method you can succeed in the public sector.

**Is the public sector a lucrative area to work in?**

There is a lot of work if you have the correct credentials. Illumina Digital is essentially a learning company and has built up a fairly substantial list of public sector clients by delivering learning and continuous professional development. To make it lucrative we still need to be able to make a margin on our work. In general the day rates are lower than in the private/corporate sector, but we’ve managed to win some long-term contracts. So as long as we can continue to manage these projects well and we continue to deliver great-quality work then it will remain a lucrative area for us to work in.

**From a designer’s point of view, is working in the public sector creatively challenging or do you have to adhere to quite restricting guidelines?**

Yes, we have to adhere to guidelines, but if you go into this sector thinking that creating a usable and accessible website is restricting then don’t bother – go do some more tacky skip intro pages and crack on with the pop-up windows. Good design is about the user, it’s not about decoration. Design a site that’s fit for its purpose and you’ll always have clients.

**What advice would you give to a designer who wanted to break into the public sector?**

Don’t treat the public sector like it is any different from any other potential client group, because it’s not. It’s not a strange continent that speaks in tongues. You need to be able to produce work to time, budget and quality, and if you don’t you’ll be found out. It is a market sector that has some fantastic opportunities allowing you to work on some brilliant projects with enviable content.



# PICK THE PERFECT WEB HOSTING DEAL

FROM ECOMMERCE TO PERSONAL HOSTING, FIND THE HOSTING SERVICE THAT'S PERFECT FOR YOUR NEEDS WITH OUR COMPREHENSIVE ROUND-UP OF DEALS

PICKING A WEB host is a decision often left to the end of the web creation process. Let's face it, we've all been guilty of concentrating so much on the design of the site that we've ignored the importance of signing up for a good hosting deal. Hosting is of the utmost importance, though – after all, this is where your site will be housed, so it's imperative that you find a service that not only provides you with the services you need, but also with good reliability.

That's why we've scoured the net to find a selection of relevant deals that should help you ascertain the service that's perfect for you. The aim in compiling this guide is to allow you to see the different types of packages available and help you glean some idea of the costs you're likely to face.

While we haven't included every single deal offered by the firms listed, we have included the products we think are most relevant to our readers.

Our listings contain the categories we think will be most relevant to you. With this in mind, we hope we can help you pick the hosting deal that will suit you best – don't just jump in and sign up on the basis of the figures you see on these pages, though.

We recommend using the information below to pick out a handful of firms that cater for your needs. The next step is to contact each directly to discuss your requirements further.

## Keeping up to date

Although we try to ensure that all the information in our listings is up to date, the occasional error does creep through. If you would like to update your current details, drop an email to [webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk](mailto:webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk) with the information you would like changed.

### NAME AND URL

NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POP3 ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Home (Linux)	08708 503 305	£59.88	800MB	10GB	300	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Home (MS)	08708 503 305	£71.88	800MB	10GB	300	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Business (Linux)	08708 503 305	£107.88	2.5GB	20GB	700	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Business (MS)	08708 503 305	£119.88	2.5GB	20GB	700	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Professional (Linux)	08708 503 305	£179.88	6GB	50GB	1500	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Professional (MS)	08708 503 305	£203.88	6GB	50GB	1500	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123 reg ( <a href="http://www.123-reg.co.uk">www.123-reg.co.uk</a> )	Starter	0900 11 22 123	£19.08	100MB	1.5GB	15	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123 reg ( <a href="http://www.123-reg.co.uk">www.123-reg.co.uk</a> )	Starter Plus	0900 11 22 123	£35.88	250MB	3GB	25	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123-reg ( <a href="http://www.123-reg.co.uk">www.123-reg.co.uk</a> )	Starter Pro	0900 21 11 23	£47.88	500MB	5GB	35	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
2020Media ( <a href="http://www.2020media.com">www.2020media.com</a> )	Everyday	0845 166 7456	£100	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media ( <a href="http://www.2020media.com">www.2020media.com</a> )	PHP	0845 166 7456	£150	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media ( <a href="http://www.2020media.com">www.2020media.com</a> )	JAVA Tomcat	0845 166 7456	£175	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media ( <a href="http://www.2020media.com">www.2020media.com</a> )	Coldfusion	0845 166 7456	£250	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4D hosting ( <a href="http://www.4dhosting.com">www.4dhosting.com</a> )	Bronze Package	0845 166 8386	£40.00	10MB	500MB	2	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting ( <a href="http://www.4dhosting.com">www.4dhosting.com</a> )	Silver Package	0845 166 8386	£64.99	20MB	2GB	10	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting ( <a href="http://www.4dhosting.com">www.4dhosting.com</a> )	Gold Package	0845 166 8386	£79.99	50MB	2GB	50	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting ( <a href="http://www.4dhosting.com">www.4dhosting.com</a> )	Titanium Package	0845 166 8386	£149.99	500MB	5GB	500	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4D hosting ( <a href="http://www.4dhosting.com">www.4dhosting.com</a> )	Reseller Package	0845 166 8386	£299.99	1GB	10GB	1000	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue ( <a href="http://www.9netave.uk.net">www.9netave.uk.net</a> )	Starter	0870 8726560	£99	50MB	1.5GB	10	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue ( <a href="http://www.9netave.uk.net">www.9netave.uk.net</a> )	Professional	0870 8726560	£199	100MB	2.5GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue ( <a href="http://www.9netave.uk.net">www.9netave.uk.net</a> )	Corporate	0870 8726560	£399	500MB	5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BeamHost ( <a href="http://www.beamhost.co.uk">www.beamhost.co.uk</a> )	Home	0871 277 9827	£59.88	800MB	5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
BeamHost ( <a href="http://www.beamhost.co.uk">www.beamhost.co.uk</a> )	Business	0871 277 9827	£119.88	2GB	2GB	300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
BeamHost ( <a href="http://www.beamhost.co.uk">www.beamhost.co.uk</a> )	Economy	0871 277 9827	£239.88	5GB	80GB	1000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd ( <a href="http://www.christiantechology.co.uk">www.christiantechology.co.uk</a> )	Host Package	0870 742 0530	£55 inc VAT	50MB	1GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd ( <a href="http://www.christiantechology.co.uk">www.christiantechology.co.uk</a> )	Pro Package	0870 742 0530	£125 inc VAT	100MB	2GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd ( <a href="http://www.christiantechology.co.uk">www.christiantechology.co.uk</a> )	Base Package	0870 742 0530	£250 inc VAT	250MB	5GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Clara.net ( <a href="http://www.clara.net">www.clara.net</a> )	Clarahost Lite	0845 355 1000	£29.99 inc VAT	10MB	1GB	10	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clara.net ( <a href="http://www.clara.net">www.clara.net</a> )	Clarahost Advanced	0845 355 1000	£699	500MB	30GB	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CWCS Managed Hosting ( <a href="http://www.cwcs.co.uk">www.cwcs.co.uk</a> )	CWCS Entry Package	0870 703 1000	£120	750MB	5GB	10	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DataGate ( <a href="http://www.datagate.co.uk">www.datagate.co.uk</a> )	Exchange Hosting	08000 19 98 19	£120+	200MB	Unlimited	19	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DataGate ( <a href="http://www.datagate.co.uk">www.datagate.co.uk</a> )	Unix Shared Business Hosting	08000 19 98 19	£179.40+	150MB	2GB	50	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex ( <a href="http://www.datex.net">www.datex.net</a> )	Level1	0800 652 2110	£185	300MB	1.5GB	5	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex ( <a href="http://www.datex.net">www.datex.net</a> )	Level2	0800 652 2110	£259	400MB	2GB	10	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex ( <a href="http://www.datex.net">www.datex.net</a> )	Level3	0800 652 2110	£330	500MB	3GB	50	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex ( <a href="http://www.datex.net">www.datex.net</a> )	Level4	0800 652 2110	£369	750MB	4GB	80	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex ( <a href="http://www.datex.net">www.datex.net</a> )	Level5	0800 652 2110	£409	1024MB	5GB	120	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex ( <a href="http://www.datex.net">www.datex.net</a> )	Level6	0800 652 2110	£549	1500MB	6GB	200	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dedicated Servers ( <a href="http://www.dedicated-servers.co.uk">www.dedicated-servers.co.uk</a> )	Linux entry	0870 333 0365	£99/month	40GB	30GB	Variable	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Dedicated Servers (www.dedicated-servers.co.uk)	Windows entry	0870 333 0365	£199/month	40GB	30GB	Variable	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Reseller Unix	0870 7414151	£470	Unlimited	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Reseller Windows	0870 7414151	£587.50	Unlimited	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Enterprise Plan	0870 7414151	£105.75	100MB	2GB	20	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Commerce Plan	0870 7414151	£211.50	250MB	5GB	50	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Designer Plan	0870 7414151	£141	100MB	2GB	20	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Developer Plan	0870 741415	£305.50	250MB	5GB	50	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Windows Shared	n/a	£44.50	100MB	2GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Domain Forwarding	n/a	£14.50	5MB	100MB	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Unix Shared Starter	n/a	£19.50	50MB	1GB	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Unix Shared Standard	n/a	£44.50	100MB	2GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Unix Shared Premier	n/a	£79.50	200MB	3GB	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
eHosting (www.ehosting.co.uk)	Home & Business 200 Account	0161 236 2241	£49.99	200MB	10GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Kick Start Linux	0871 717 0390	£49	50	3GB	20	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Kick Start Windows	0871 717 0390	£75	50	3GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Standard Linux	0871 717 0390	£99	100	3GB	100	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Windows	0871 717 0390	£125	100	3GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Enterprise Linux	0871 717 0390	£199	250	5GB	250	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Enterprise Windows	0871 717 0390	£225	250	5GB	250	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Pro Linux	0871 717 0390	£399	500	10GB	500	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Eurofasthost.com (www.eurofasthost.com)	Soho	0800 3161 067	£99.00	100MB	3000MB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Business	0870 888 3600	£149.99	2GB	N/A	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Business Pro	0870 888 3600	£249.99	5GB	N/A	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Net Pro	0870 888 3600	£299.99	3GB	N/A	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Net Standard	0870 888 3600	£199.99	2GB	N/A	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Starter	0870 888 3600	£19.99	100	N/A	15	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Home	0870 888 3600	£49.99	500	N/A	100	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Home Pro	0870 888 3600	£69.99	1GB	N/A	300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Giacom (www.giacom.net)	Business Pro	0800 542 7500	£199	100	2GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hostextra (www.hostextra.co.uk)	Pro-Host	08702 501 500	£99.45	100	10GB	200	X	✓	X		X	✓	✓	✓	X
Global Gold (www.globalgold.co.uk)	Unix launcher	0870 004 4444	£78	50	5GB	5	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Global Gold (www.globalgold.co.uk)	NT launcher	0870 004 4444	£80	50	5GB	5	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HaiSoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft Perso	0870 080 4247	£14.90	100MB	1GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HaiSoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft Pro	0870 080 4247	£49.90	500MB	10GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HaiSoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft eCommerce	0870 080 4247	£99.90	750MB	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Free Starter Professional	0845 644 7750	Free	2.5GB	100MB	1000	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Starter Professional	0845 644 7750	£29.80	2.5GB	10GB	1000	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Home Professional	0845 644 7750	£89.99	10GB	50GB	10,000	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Business Professional	0845 644 7750	£129.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Reseller Professional	0845 644 7750	£299.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk)	Windows 2000 Unlimited Plan	0208 777 8881	£29.50-£499	100-5000MB	2-80GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk)	Resellers Plan	0208 777 8881	£200-800	2GB	30-50GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Silver	0808 180 1880	£79.50	150MB	3GB	5	✓	X	Option	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Gold	0808 180 1880	£139.50	300MB	5GB	10	✓	✓	Option	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Gold Plus	0808 180 1880	£189.50	450MB	10GB	30	✓	✓	Option	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Platinum	0808 180 1880	£359.50	600MB	20GB	50	✓	✓	Option	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Platinum Plus	0808 180 1880	£599.50	1.2GB	40GB	10	✓	✓	Option	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Email Plus	0808 180 1880	£49.95	50MB	N/A	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Lite	08712 773494	£14.99	25	1GB	5	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Starter	08712 773494	£23.49	50	1GB	20	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Standard	08712 773494	£52.49	100	1GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Professional	08712 773494	£68.99	250	1GB	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Business	08712 773494	£119.99	500	1GB	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Corporate	08712 773494	£199.99	1000	1GB	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Basic 50	0870 160 5555	£70	50	1GB	5	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Frontpage 50	0870 160 5555	£100	50	1GB	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Standard 200	0870 160 5555	£160	200	2GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Superior 500	0870 160 5555	£220	500	3GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 50	0870 160 5555	£100	50	1GB	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 200	0870 160 5555	£190	200	2GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 500	0870 160 5555	£260	500	3GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Entry	0115 917 0000	£79.50	600MB	7GB	300	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Business Professional	0115 917 0000	£199	5GB	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Business e-commerce	0115 917 0000	£499	5GB	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Reseller	0115 917 0000	£500	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merxweb (www.merxweb.com)	Starter	0845 838 2631	£59.88	150MB	3GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- Domain Name Registration
- Virus & Spam free E-mail solutions
- Dependable Shared Hosting
- Virtual Private Servers
- Flexible Dedicated Server Solutions

- 24hr Professional Support
- Windows 2003, Linux Redhat Custom, CFMX
- Hostway automated SiteBuilder
- Advanced SiteControl Administration
- Merchant Manager Ecommerce Solution

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Merxweb (www.merxweb.com)	Store	0845 838 2631	£95.88	300MB	5GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merxweb (www.merxweb.com)	Advanced	0845 838 2631	£119.88	450MB	7GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Email Only	0845 6120330	£11.75	25MB	1GB	5	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Standard Package	0845 6120330	£35.25	100MB	4.5GB	10	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Professional Package	0845 6120330	£58.75	250MB	8GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Expert Package	0845 6120330	£105.75	500MB	15GB	75	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	StartUp	0870 120 8888	£49.99	100MB	2GB	5	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	StartUp Plus	0870 120 8888	£89.99	200MB	5GB	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	Business	0870 120 8888	£149.99	500MB	10GB	25	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	Business Plus	0870 120 8888	£89.99	700MB	15GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	Designer	0870 120 8888	£239.88	1GB	20GB	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	Designer Plus	0870 120 8888	£479.88	Unlimited	30GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NetBenefit (www.netbenefit.com)	Unix	0870 264 2298	£180	100MB	2GB	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NetBenefit (www.netbenefit.com)	Windows 2000	0870 264 2298	£229	100MB	2GB	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Starter Package	0800 2987 214	£30	500MB	1GB	100	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Home Package	0800 2987 214	£60	1GB	5GB	100	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Developer Package	0800 2987 214	£100	4GB	10GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Commerce Package	0800 2987 214	£180	6GB	20GB	1500	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Reseller Package	0800 2987 214	£450	10GB	30GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netscalibur (www.netscalibur.com)	Netscalibur Web Unix	0800 072 0000	£324	100MB	5GB	1	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netscalibur (www.netscalibur.com)	Netscalibur Web Windows	0800 072 0000	£324	100MB	5GB	1	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Lite	08700 599 599	£29.90	200MB	1GB	1	£1.50	X	X	£1.50/mailbox	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Plus	08700 599 599	£49.90	400MB	2GB	5	£1.50	£1	X	£1.50/mailbox	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Advance	08700 599 599	£99.90	1GB	5GB	10	✓	✓	X	£1.50/mailbox	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Pro	08700 599 599	£199.90	3GB	15GB	50	✓	✓	X	£1.50/mailbox	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Enterprise	08700 599 599	£499.90	10GB	25GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Unix	08701 608602	£120	10MB	5GB	1	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Windows	08701 608602	£120	10MB	5GB	1	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Shared SQL Business 50	08701 608602	£300	50MB	25GB	1	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Shared SQL Business 100	08701 608602	£600	100MB	50GB	1	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Pay As You Host (www.pay-as-you-host.com)	Standard	0870 284 0287	£47.88	50MB	512MB	Unlimited	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Z account	0800 316 1006	£293.75	120MB	10GB	Unlimited	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
The Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Dolphin	0800 316 1006	£2,172.58	2x20GB	40-60GB	Unlimited	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
The Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Fully managed servers	0800 316 1006	£5,287.50	2x70GB SCSI	80-250GB	Unlimited	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SkyMarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Standard 1	0800 321 7788	£49	10MB	2GB	1	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SkyMarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Standard 2	0800 321 7788	£69	20MB	2GB	1	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SkyMarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Premium 1	0800 321 7788	£99	25MB	2GB	1	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SkyMarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Premium 2	0800 321 7788	£149	50MB	2GB	1	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Switch Media (www.switchmedia.co.uk)	Home	0151 236 9111	£53.88	500MB	4GB	100	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X
Switch Media (www.switchmedia.co.uk)	Business	0151 236 9111	£95.88	1.5GB	10GB	500	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Switch Media (www.switchmedia.co.uk)	Professional	0151 236 9111	£186	3GB	25GB	1200	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Parking	08707 65 63 64	£52.88	25MB	500MB	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Forwarding	08707 65 63 64	From £15	N/A	500MB	N/A	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Hosting	08707 65 63 64	From £7.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win50	0845 125 9500	£58.75	50MB	500MB	5	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win100	0845 125 9500	£117.50	100MB	1GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win200	0845 125 9500	£235	200MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Entry	0800 031 7800	£79.50	600MB	7GB	300	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Home	0800 031 7800	£99.95	1.5GB	10GB	500	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Soho	0800 031 7800	£149.99	3GB	15GB	1000	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Professional	0800 031 7800	£199.95	5GB	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	eCommerce	0800 031 7800	£499	5GB	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Standard	0870 050 0080	£39.95	50MB	1GB	5	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Standard Plus	0870 050 0080	£99.95	50MB	2GB	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Business	0870 050 0080	£79.95	100MB	3GB	15	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Business Plus	0870 050 0080	£159.95	150MB	4GB	30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Professional	0870 050 0080	£179.95	250MB	7GB	50	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Professional Plus	0870 050 0080	£299	500MB	10GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Standard Multiweb	0870 050 0080	£64.95	75MB	1.5GB	10	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Standard Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	£149.95	100MB	2.5GB	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Business Multiweb	0870 050 0080	£149.95	200MB	4GB	25	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Business Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	£299	250MB	5GB	40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Professional Multiweb	0870 050 0080	£249	500MB	7.5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Professional Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	£499	500MB	10GB	150	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zen Internet (www.zen.co.uk)	ActiveSpace	0845 058 9000	£100	50MB	2GB	0	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Zen Internet (www.zen.co.uk)	.NETSpace	0845 058 9000	£250	100MB	4GB	0	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X