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SOFTWARE+TUTORIALS
INSIDE BACK COVER

www.webdesignermag.co.uk

web designer

 DREAMWEAVER  FLASH  PHOTOSHOP

ISSUE 119

CREATE STUNNING PLAYABLE PRELOADERS

Build a Flash preloader that will
keep your visitors hooked

BACKGROUND NOISE

Create a buzz for your online
home with promo desktops

GET PERSONAL

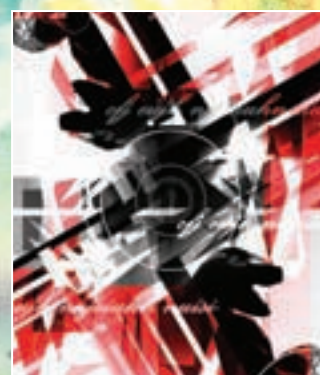
How user profiling is giving
a friendlier face to ecommerce

HOW TO...

- Construct scrolling galleries in **Flash**
- Make edgy web graphics in **Photoshop**
- Add email support to your pages with **Dreamweaver** and **PHP**
- Discover **SWiSH Max's** vector capabilities

AMAZING ABSTRACT ARTWORK

Draw funky
pattern-based
designs with
Photoshop

**NEW
CREATIVE
eCOMMERCE**

10 pages devoted to the
business end of dot
com development



OUR experts

LINING UP THE FINEST MINDS IN WEB DESIGN FOR YOUR ONLINE EDUCATION



Jason Arber

DO IT LIKE A DESIGNER WITH A LOOK AT LAYING OUT

As creative director of new design collaborative Children of Finland (www.childrenoffinland.com) and contributor to popular web portal www.pixel-surgeon.com, Jason is the perfect chap to instruct you on the dark art of design.



Rachel Andrew

IT'S GOOD TO TALK. RACHEL ADDS EMAIL TO YOUR SITE

A doyenne of the Web Standards Project, Rachel is a regular contributor to the pages of *Web Designer*. Combining her expert knowledge of all things Dreamweaver and skills as a web developer, she explains how to evade messy mark-up.



Nick La

SET SCROLLING TO STUN!

Although a graphic and web designer, Nick La is also well versed in the art of vector illustration (www.n-designstudio.com), and this issue he combines his Flash finesse with a dash of Photoshop to help you create the ultimate scrolling gallery.



Mark Shufflebottom

TURNING PAINFUL PRELOADERS INTO RETRO GAMES

Mark is the man *Web Designer* turns to for Flash expertise, and as a media course teacher at Bournemouth University he's well-versed in making it a cinch to create stunning interfaces and elements for your web designs.

COVER ARTIST

Our cover illustration this issue was created by Marconi, a digital artist hailing from Rio de Janeiro. Check out his brand new website at <http://cloning.com.br>, where you can explore his funky graphic print and t-shirt designs in more detail.

Welcome



There's nothing worse than hitting a dead end when you least expect it. In many ways this month's *Web Designer* is all about avoiding such a fate.

Whether you're a creative thinker or considerate Flash developer, sitting down at the drawing board and finding that ideas for your latest online project aren't forthcoming is an anxious time for the best of us – especially if dreaming up exciting new concepts isn't your forte. Actually building the darn thing can sometimes seem like a breeze in comparison to bringing innovation into the design process, so what's the answer?

Our excellent lead feature on page 22 goes a long way to answering that question, with Pixelsurgeon.com's Jason Arber examining how webslingers can draw inspiration from worlds beyond the web. The face of a modern Internet is so cosmopolitan now that the cutting-edge content behind it must reflect art, fashion, multimedia, popular culture, and even architecture, so it never hurts to open your eyes a little wider. Despite being more likely to close them in disgust when encountering a particularly slow URL, we move on more swiftly to reveal the art of better preloaders on page 58. Slowcoach progress bars that invariably give you that "Why's it always me?" feeling are a thing of the past with Mark Shufflebottom's retro-gaming flavoured exercise. Inspired

by the old Commodore 64 space invader sequences you blasted through as the tape drive chugged into life, we reckon this is the perfect precursor to next issue's fully loaded Flash gaming extravaganza.

Elsewhere, Nick La tackles a fabulous scrolling portfolio inspired by a site in our latest extended Gallery, while we welcome back our new-look ecommerce section on page 93. The latest dot com news, industry articles, plus an insightful mini-feature on identity profiling is all there alongside a revamped hosting listing.

Behind The Scenes has us nipping back to the bar to share a 'cheeky one' with Mook's creative director, Tom Evans, as he reveals the making of the gorgeous new Peroni site, before Nick Spence suggests how university graduates can make their new media careers become a reality.

You don't have to be web design mad to read here, but it helps...

Mark Billen
DEPUTY EDITOR

Editor's picks

Just a few of the main reasons why *Web Designer* 119 shouldn't be missed...



22-31

Start thinking outside the box with Jason Arber's look at gaining an inspired eye



72-77

Promote your talents with stunning desktop wallpapers that will get any URL noticed



93-103

A designer view of online business in our new and improved ecommerce roundup

gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



GET INTERACTIVE

This tells you about what to click and do



CLOSER LOOK

Highlights the way certain elements appear



MOVIE SEQUENCE

Animation, video and cool stuff to watch



HEAR THIS

Gives you a clue to any audio elements



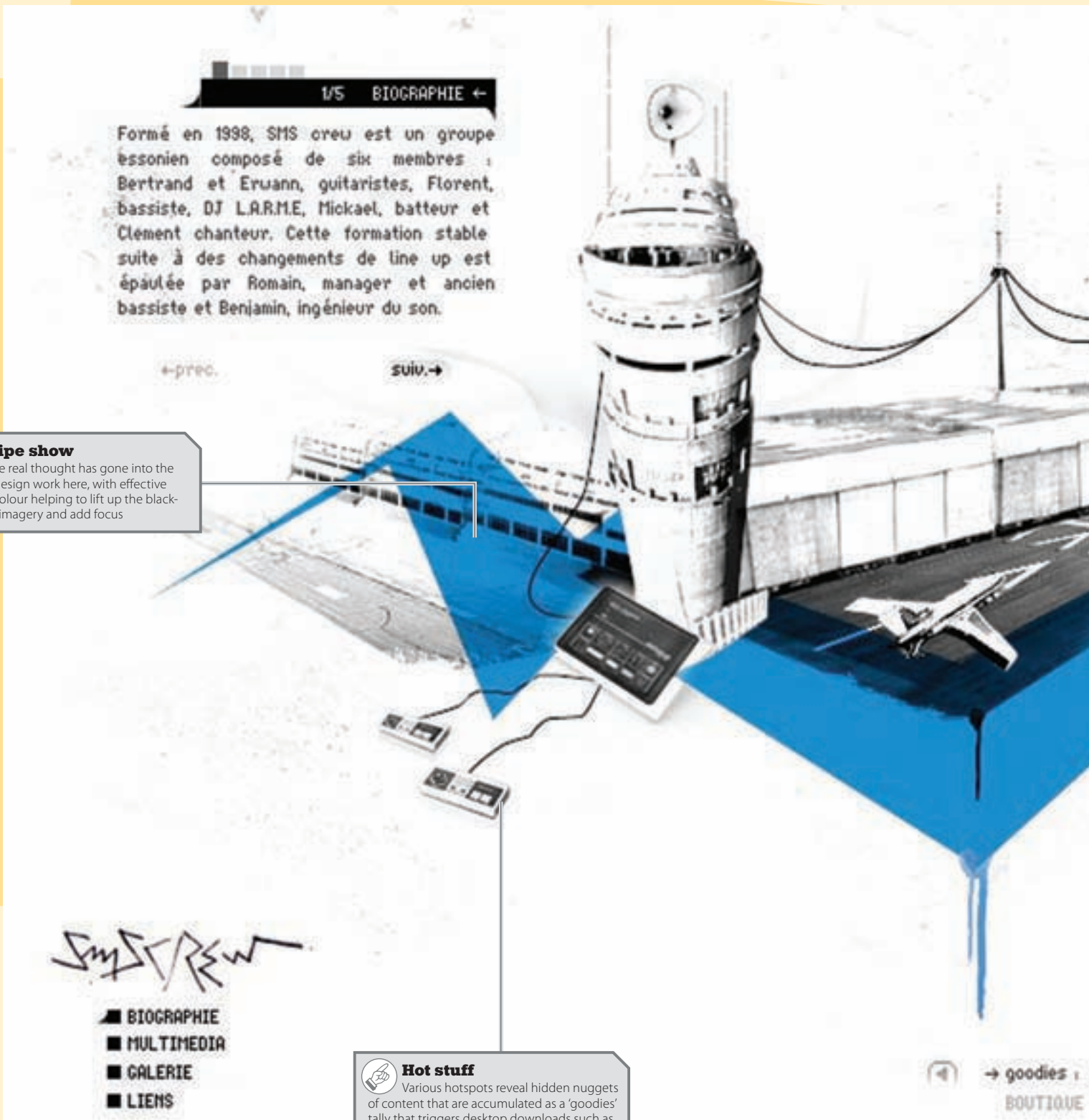
Stripe show

Some real thought has gone into the graphical design work here, with effective flashes of colour helping to lift up the black-and-white imagery and add focus



Hot stuff

Various hotspots reveal hidden nuggets of content that are accumulated as a 'goodies' tally that triggers desktop downloads such as SMS Crew-branded wallpapers



OUR NEW-LOOK GALLERY is here to fire and inspire your web projects by showcasing the hottest URLs around. As the perfect introduction to where your browser should be, please make sure you support every exhibit by paying them a visit and checking out what makes them tick

**GOT IT?
FLAUNT IT!**

If you know of an exciting website or have perhaps built one you regard as being mighty fine then tell us about it. We're always interested to hear about great URLs or stunning site launches so don't be shy, drop us a line at webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk



Audio excitement

The site also excels in the audio department, with a barrage of silly audio clips constantly babbling away or triggered by the other interactive elements



Live action

A couple of videos of the band playing live have been nicely embedded into the multimedia page, adding a welcome insight into the band's highly charged performances



Divert the eye

The way that the interface unfurls itself from a photographic montage could be a clever way of distracting users while the subsequent content loads into the page

SMS Crew

[www.smscrew.com]

Designed by: Les 84 Motion & Design

This site may well represent the raucous sound of French metal band SMS Crew, but it actually exhibits real touches of design finesse. Composed of only a few sections offering biographies and video clips, the compact interface unfolds itself from a collage of monochrome photographic montages to striking effect. Aircraft hangers, runways, and electric guitar-wired telegraph poles are all thrown together to achieve a wholly original and quirky style.

gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



Please the eye

The examples of graphical design work are nothing short of stunning, with larger versions available for viewing on www.deviantart.com



Scripted

Alex appears to use JavaScript to make the panel layers that frame the main page content float down the site as you scroll, creating a startling yet practical look

Virtual Hitman Design

[www.vhm-design.com]

Designed by: Alex Cherry

Here we have the portfolio site for web and graphic designer Alex Cherry, which also doubles up as a link page to his galleries on deviantART. What makes this long vertical scrolling showcase so nice is that everything has been achieved with only HTML, so not a slice of Flash in sight. The template manages to frame the awesome visual work on show with some seriously cool side panels that remain static as you scroll, with a fair bit of JavaScript doing the business.



Fine folio

The sheer amount of sumptuous graphic work is almost too good to be true. Having so many vibrant pieces to showcase really lifts this portfolio beyond the norm



Boxing clever

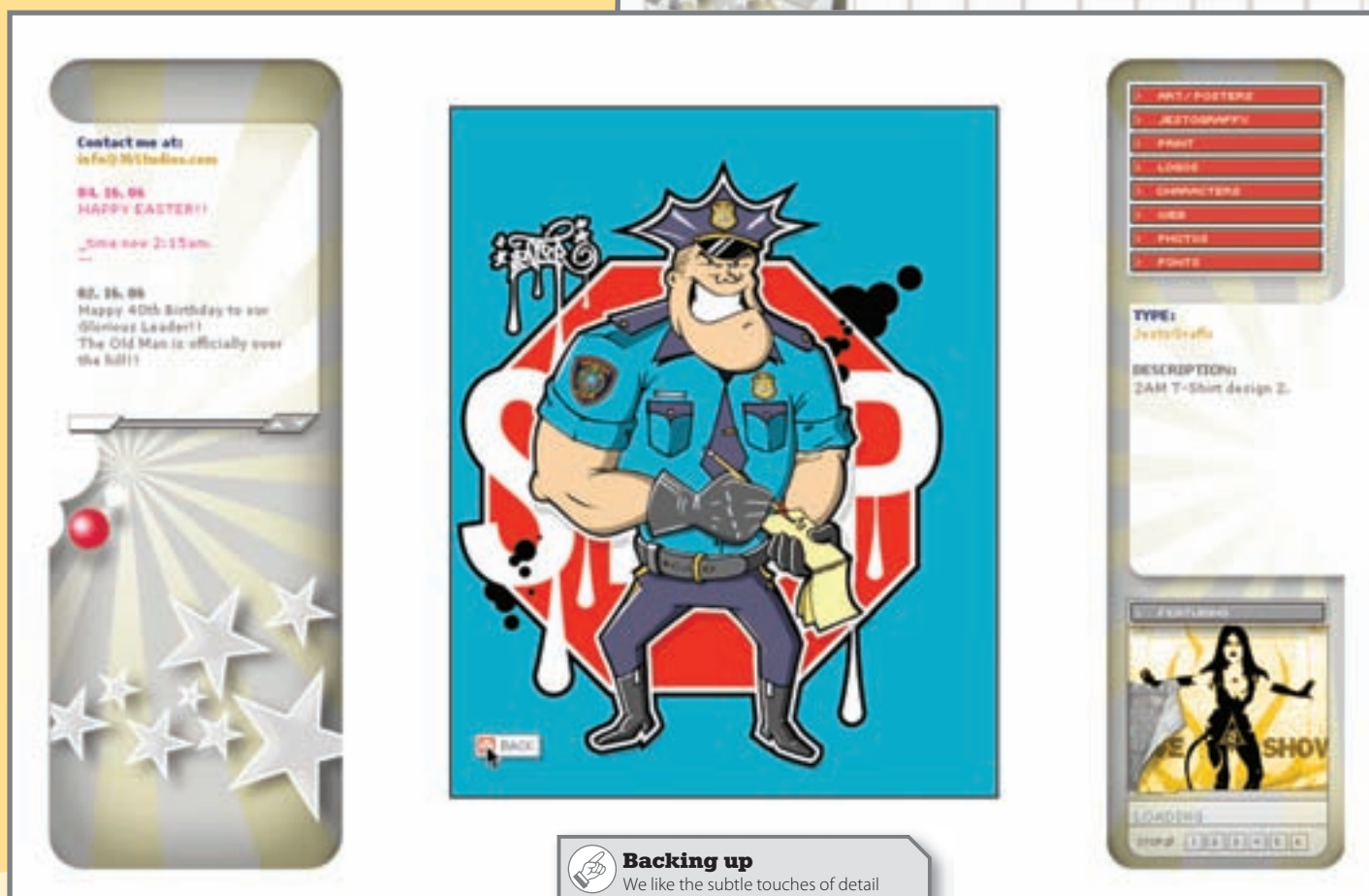
Clickable thumbnail menus for the different types of work have been built from XML components and function very well as the main source of navigation

J6 Studios

[www.j6studios.com]

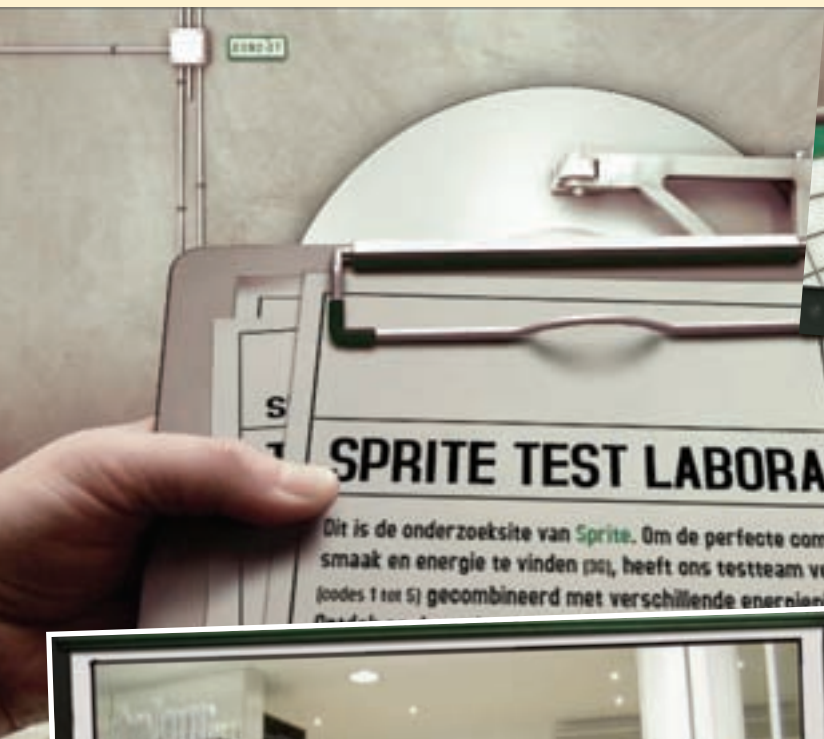
Designed by: Tim Jester

All we get to go on as far as the man who's behind this funky portfolio is concerned is a splash screen attributing the work to 'JESTER'. Strange that more credit for the innovative Flash interface and barrage of stunning design work isn't forthcoming, but in many ways that helps to put more emphasis on the eye-candy. XML-powered thumbnail menus offer a superb selection of print, poster, web, and photography that suggests a multi-skilled design talent that's rarely seen.



Backing up

We like the subtle touches of detail associated with this site, such as the hovering 'back' buttons that attach themselves to the cursor when you view items of work



Sprite Test Laboratories

[www.sprite3g.be]

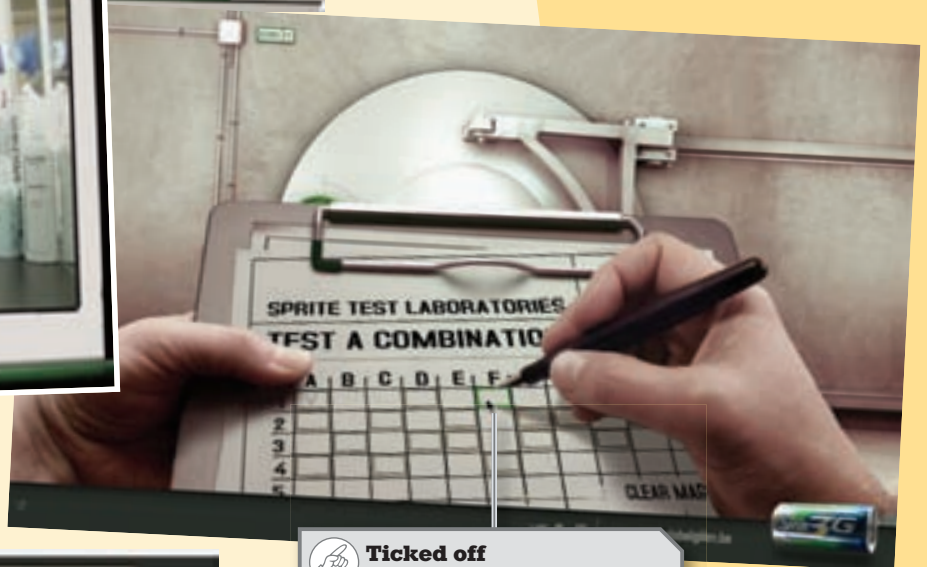
Designed by: Group94

A blatant promotional mini-site for Sprite's new 3G drink, this Belgian URL comes with a choice of Dutch or French translation. However, it pretty much has universal appeal with a comedic take on product testing that pits the visitor within the virtual walls of an experimental laboratory. As you tick your way through a clipboard map, you encounter various characters that when clicked launch hilarious movie clips of their demented reactions to Sprite's latest creation.



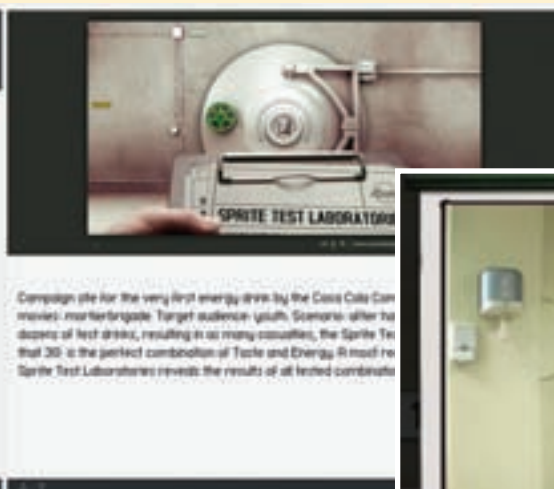
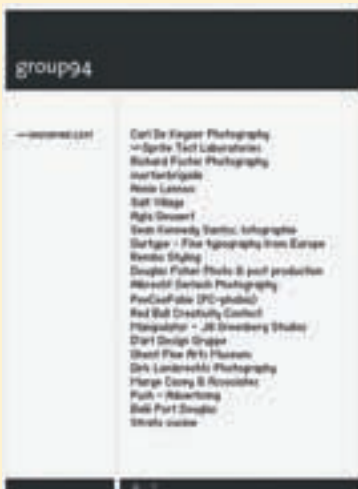
Drink sensibly

Movie clips of hyperactive test subjects are littered round the virtual laboratory, suggesting some seriously over-the-top reactions to drinking Sprite 3G



Ticked off

Using a clipboard checklist is a clever way to add a navigation system to this site. Each tick box on the form takes you to a new location where further content is lurking



Campaign site for the very first energy drink by the Coca Cola Company: marketleader. Target audience: youth. Scenario: after the dozens of test drinks, resulting in so many casualties, the Sprite Test 3G is the perfect combination of Taste and Energy. At most the Sprite Test Laboratories reveals the results of all tested combinations.





Spinning around

Each and every one of the expertly illustrated battle cards can be flipped around 180 degrees so both ends can be examined in all their glory



Comic crusader

A keen eye for graffiti art and comic book illustration has clearly been at work designing each of the cards on show. We don't know why or what for, but so what?



Juke boxing

Music as diverse as The Dust Brothers and Survivor's 'Eye of the Tiger' from Rocky III is beamed out as you explore, presumably to stoke up the battle vibe



Grafik Battleground

[www.grafikbattleground.com]

Designed by: Sebousan

We have no qualms admitting that no one in the Web Designer office has the foggiest about what this odd French site is really for. However, that doesn't stop it being attractive enough to warrant an informed guess. Grafik Battleground appears to be a kind of virtual top trumps for the graffiti generation, with sets of beautifully illustrated Flash cards presented for perusal. Each of the creations can be flipped to reveal an army of cartoon characters that will presumably go head to head.



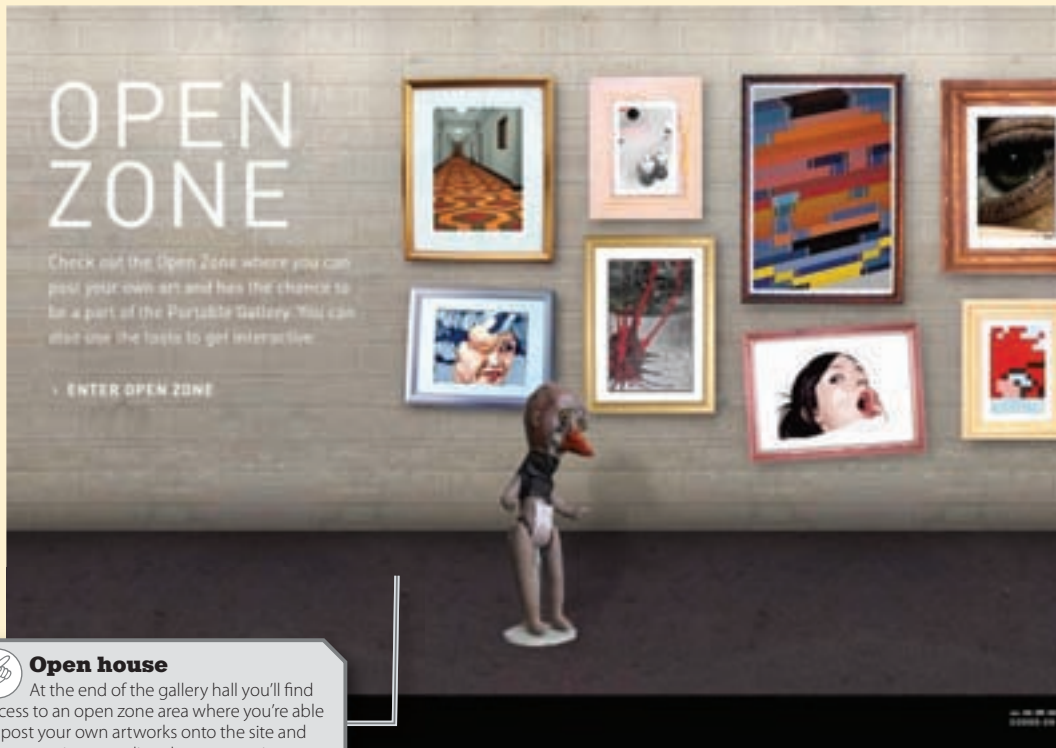
gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



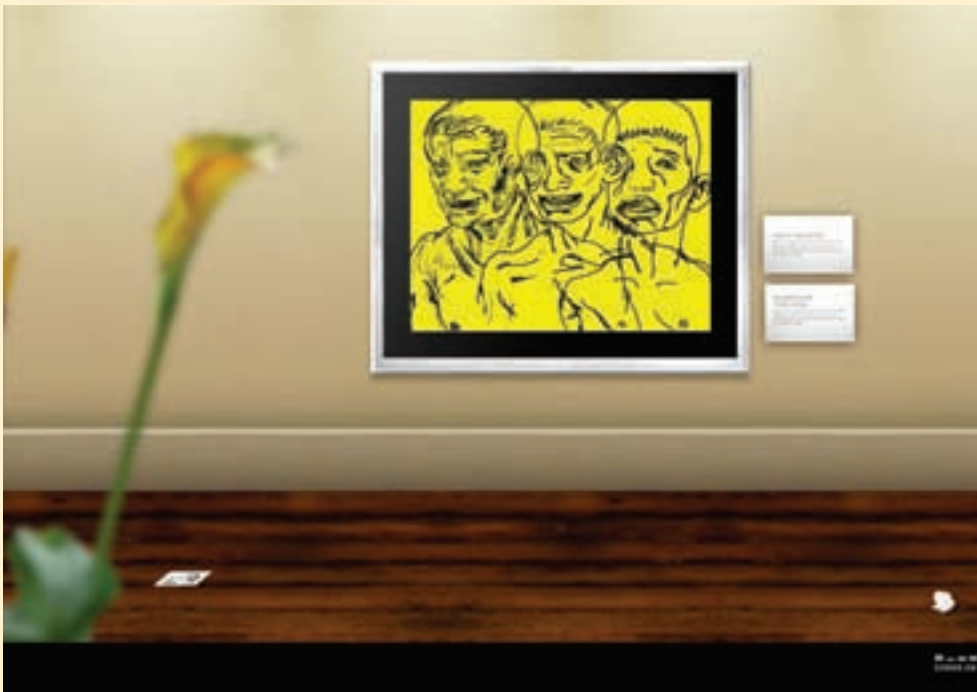
Hit the beat

In the background we're treated to some suitably chilled-out tunes that actually complement the experience very well and cleverly avoid being too repetitious



Open house

At the end of the gallery hall you'll find access to an open zone area where you're able to post your own artworks onto the site and play a part in expanding the community



Keep it real

The use of photographic backgrounds adds genuine realism to the Portable Gallery, and would surely look superb on the gorgeous LCD screen of Sony's pint-sized console

Portable Gallery

[www.pspartgallery.com]

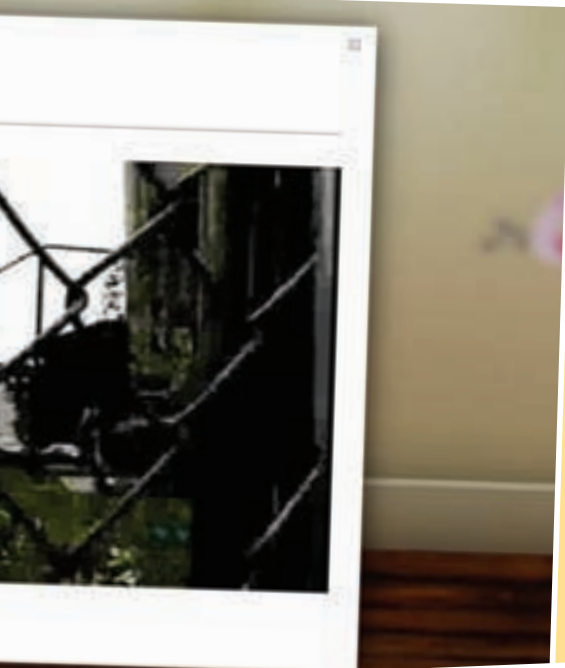
Designed by: Jonas Lindberg

Here we have an admirable attempt to inject a spot of culture into Sony's fine portable games console, the PSP. This side-scrolling virtual gallery appears to be optimised for viewing via the handheld's browser and features a great parallel motion effect that is augmented by blurry foreground images that whiz past periodically. Authentic backdrops also yield interactive objects for you to discover, while clicking on the exhibits launch bigger presentations and information about the work on show.



In the frame

Clicking on the framed exhibits launches windows with larger versions of the art on show, while selecting the plaques provides pop-up boxes containing additional info



Information junkie

Various items are strewn around the gallery floor which when clicked reveal scrunched up receipts, ID cards and all manner of ephemera associated with the site



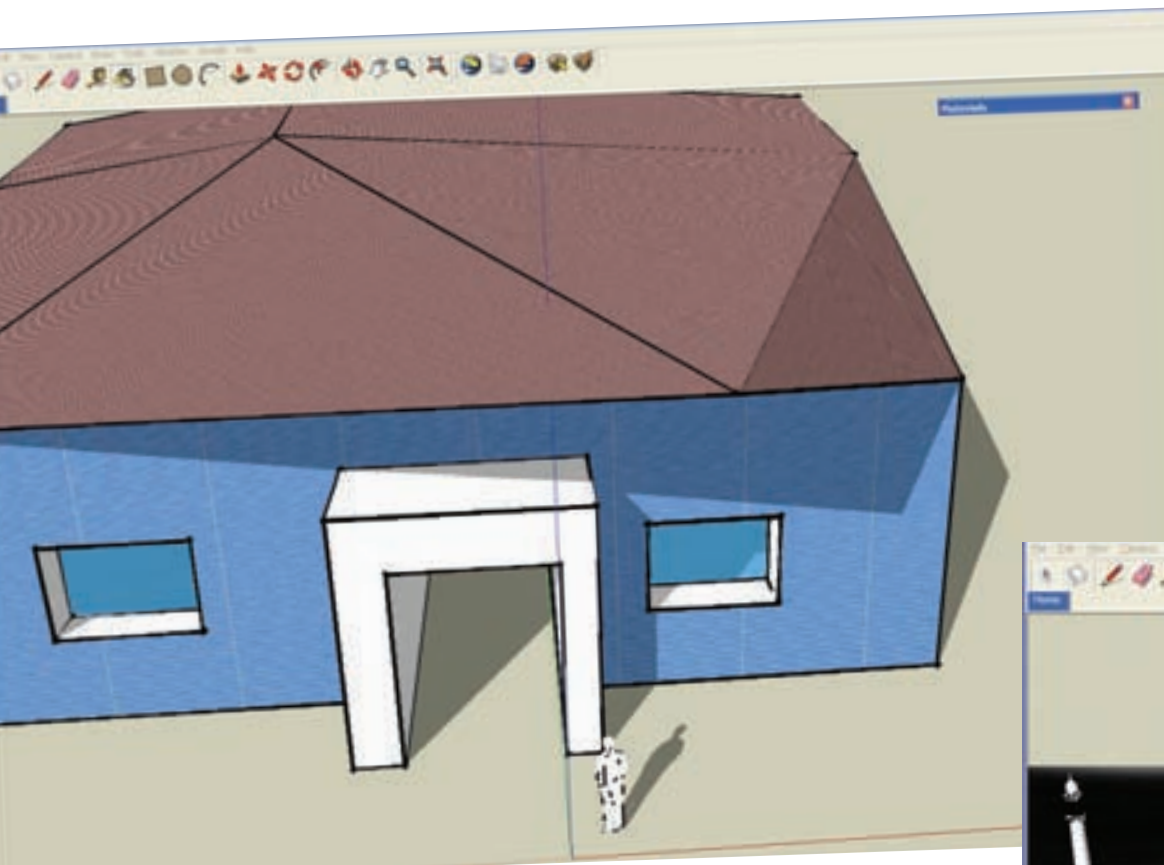
Adding depth

The clever parallel scrolling effect that is achieved as you move from one end of the gallery is cleverly heightened by the out-of-focus images lined along the foreground

**LIKE IT?
BUILD IT!**
Create this look yourself
See page 66

bulletin

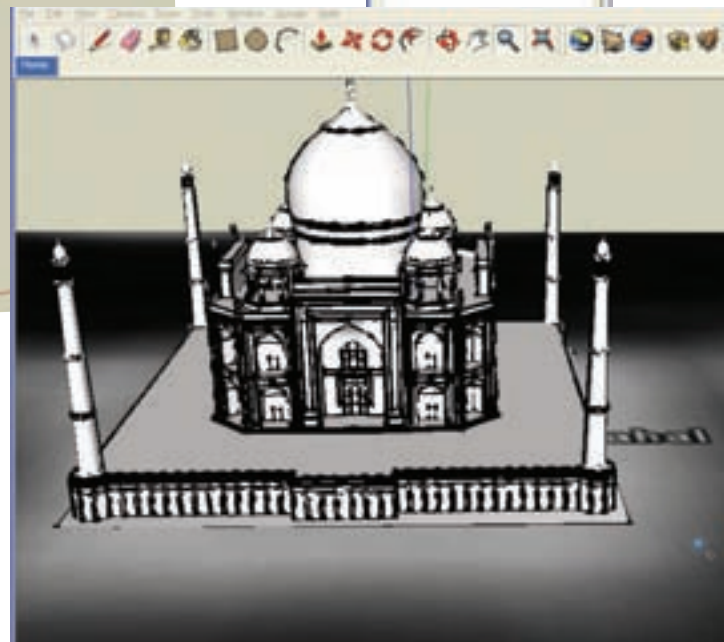
HOT NEWS FROM THE WEB DESIGN WORLD



Through the power of Google Earth, you could show off 3D designs in situ



Your 3D shapes can be simple or very complex



A new dimension

GOOGLE GOES 3D WITH SKETCHUP, INTEGRATING THE FREE MODELLING PROGRAM WITH THE SCARY BIG BROTHER POWER OF GOOGLE EARTH

NEED 3D ON your website – and need it now? Google's latest free application could save the day. SketchUp is a free download that makes it easy to create simple 3D images.

It makes building 3D objects like working with Plasticine: just draw a shape, then extrude it into 3D, pull it and distort it, punch holes in it, and rotate it every which way.

Like the Picasa photo software before it, SketchUp began life as a pay-for application. But when Google bought the company behind the code, it soon became free for anyone to use. With plenty of features – including the ability to add real-time shadows to a model – SketchUp is a powerful piece of design software, with a very simple set

of user interfaces and 3D tools. You can share any object you create with any other SketchUp user through its public shape library. Shapes can be added to your own models, so you don't have to create your own trees or fences.

Google has made SketchUp more than just another 3D design programme. It also takes

“You can quickly take a SketchUp model and add it to Google Earth then share the model's URL with the rest of the world”

advantage of another of Google's acquisitions, Google Earth. If you're building or running a site linked to a place, you can quickly take a SketchUp

model and add it to Google Earth, then share the model's URL with the rest of the world. Anyone using Google Earth will be able to see your 3D model just where it should be. Instead of a plain old map of your client's premises, they can become a realistic model in an accurate 3D world (full of satellite photos).

If you need more than the basic system, SketchUp Professional adds more features, and works with other 3D platforms. You'll only really need this if you're going to be working with complex CAD data – for most 3D applications the free version is more than good enough! If you're planning on putting 3D graphics on the web, download SketchUp and add it to your web design toolbox. <http://sketchup.google>



With a clean new look and optional add-ons, many of your users will adopt the IE



Mozilla's Firefox has gained a small but stable percentage of the browser market

Lucky seven for Microsoft

THE BROWSER SKIRMISHES ARE BACK AS DESKTOP STALWART INTERNET EXPLORER APPEARS IN A BETTER BETA VERSION

WE MAY NOT be back in the heady days of the browser wars when Microsoft and Netscape launched a new browser virtually every week, but things are heating up, with the next versions of both Internet Explorer and Firefox starting to take shape. Microsoft has finally released a second beta of IE7, after two technology previews.

Although the previews were intended solely for web designers and developers, things are different with Beta 2. The first consumer download of Microsoft's next-generation browser is likely to turn up on quite a few desktops. With significant CSS improvements, not all sites will be able to cope with a new browser – especially when the old CSS workarounds won't work with Internet Explorer 7. If

you've not tested your sites with IE7 yet, it's important to start now – before your users download the code and start complaining about your site!

Firefox 2.0 isn't even in alpha testing yet, but the development team are starting to finalise its features. One promised enhancement won't see the light of day. Places, a replacement for the good old bookmarks system, won't be in the roadmap. Bookmarks have been around a long time, and attempts to replace them with links to online services (like Flock's connection to Del.icio.us) haven't been completely successful. It looks like we'll be stuck with the old Favourites for some time yet. . .

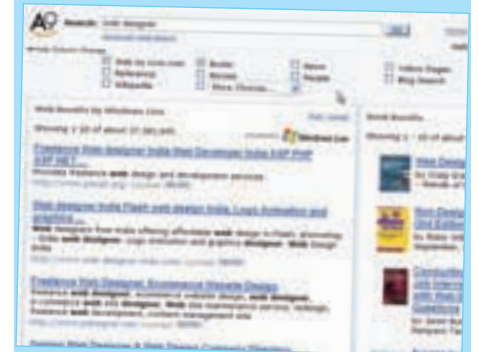
For more on these latest browsers, head to www.microsoft.com/ie and www.mozilla.com/firefox.

NEWS in brief



ASP.NET FOR NOWT

Want to work with ASP.NET? Microsoft has decided that its experiment with giving away the Express versions of its development tools was a success, and instead of charging \$49 for each application will keep them free. This includes its Visual Web Developer Express 2006 web application development tool – so feel free to throw away that copy of FrontPage! <http://msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio/express/vwd>



AMAZON DROPS GOOGLE FOR WINDOWS LIVE

Have the search wars finally broken out? The struggle for search turf has taken another turn, with ecommerce giant Amazon switching its allegiance from Google to Microsoft's upstart Windows Live Search. Microsoft's revamped search presence is just part of a whole new suite of websites and applications with the Live brand that it plans to launch over the next couple of years. www.amazon.com



FLASHY PSP

The web is everywhere; you'll even find browsers in handheld consoles. Sony has slowly added more features to the browser built into its wireless PSP, which even includes an RSS reader. The latest OS release, 2.7, has built in a Flash player so you can now deliver animated web apps to the PSP. Who needs expensive game discs when you can play Flash games? <http://psp.connect.com>

Make it personal

AN INNOVATIVE ANGLE ON WEB ADVERTISING SEES CUSTOMERS STARRING IN THEIR OWN COMMERCIALS

BUILDING COMPELLING web advertising is a complex task. San Francisco-based web agency Personiva has a unique and different approach to web advertising that takes advantage of the social nature of the web – and of the many popular social networking websites – to spread a corporate message. It's an approach that could change the way we think of adverts.

With a client list that includes Hewlett Packard (the home of Personiva's latest video advert), Levi's and WarnerBros, Personiva's applications let users upload photos and personal information to customise a video advert. Face-recognition software adds their picture to the animation, and their images and words become part of the advert. Unlike TV or paper advertising, this is an interactive process, and users can fine-tune the results, picking music and changing colours, before producing the advert they want.

If you've visited MySpace or any community-based blogging site, you'll have seen how quickly memes and viral content spreads across blogs and profiles. Personiva's customisable movies are designed to be linked to and shared, moving across websites and carrying an advertising message to more than just the originating site. Personiva's service is an interesting approach to the problem of advertising on the web, and it plays well with the browsing habits of today's Internet users. www.personiva.com



bulletin



Laszlo joins the Dojo

WEB 2.0 FAVOURITE OPENLASZLO ADDS AJAX TO ITS FLASH

WEB 2.0 MAY BE buzzword-compliant, but it's also a set of technologies and design techniques that can make your sites and web applications more user-friendly – and more attractive and retentive. One of the more popular Web 2.0 frameworks is OpenLaszlo. This uses a combination of Adobe's Flash with JavaScript and server-side XML to deliver user interfaces that stay on one page.

Although Flash is popular, it's not the only way of building next-gen websites. Laszlo Systems, the company behind the open-source OpenLaszlo platform, announced that it would license a set of AJAX (Asynchronous Java And XML) libraries from

the Dojo Foundation. Using the Dojo Toolkit, along with code that OpenLaszlo will be contributing to Dojo, developers will be able to build and deploy applications that will work using Dynamic HTML in the latest browsers without needing Flash, so sites will work on PDAs and Linux machines as well as PCs and Macs. The same code will run in the existing Flash runtime, so you can deploy more than one version of your site to support more users.

"This is what open source is all about – combining communities and resources to enable a better solution and foster lasting change," said David Temkin, founder and CTO at Laszlo. www.openlaszlo.org

TOP Downloads



FLEX YOUR FLASH POWER

<http://labs.adobe.com>

Get started with the latest set of Flash tools from Adobe's new Lab site. You'll get the next version of the Flash player and a whole new set of design tools by downloading the free Flex 2.0 Beta 3 release, which claims to help you create rich Internet applications and improve their effectiveness.

TIDY UP YOUR CODE

www.microsoft.com/downloads

Want a better font for your HTML and JavaScript coding? Microsoft has just released its new Consolas programming font. Designed for Windows Vista, you can be using it today, not next January when Vista finally appears! Head to the Microsoft Download site and search for 'Consolas Font Pack'.

Back to the future the evolution of a site

Adobe www.adobe.com

THE AGENCY: In-house design by Adobe.

INFO: Adobe Systems was founded in 1982 by John Warnock and Charles Geschke with the plan of developing the PostScript language.

INDUSTRY STANDING:

With Adobe's takeover of Macromedia, it is now "better placed to push the boundaries of the digital universe," in its own words. Adobe's pervasive software has changed the way we design and communicate.



▲ MAY 1996

Already showcasing web designers and web design

▼ JUNE 2000

A professional look for life near the end of the dot com bubble



▲ MAY 2006

Now embellished with the fruits of the Macromedia merger, and built using Flash and Cold Fusion

HOT stuff

Give your studio setup a shake-up with this month's desirable double-act

TOON ARMY The Duudleville Tales

Price: **£16.95** (includes postage)

Web: www.helloduudle.com

Here's a bit of lovely eccentric bedside reading from the imagination of Jon Burgerman and Sune Ehlers. *The Duudleville Tales* is a fold-out storyboard crammed with the kooky characters who inhabit the Hello Duudle universe, and each copy comes with a set of stickers and an original hand-drawn signed and numbered drawing by Jon or Sune themselves. Get your hands on one of these sharpish – the first *Hello Duudle* tome sold out quickly, and for under 17 quid including postage it's cheaper than the latest John Grisham (and looks far better pinned up on the wall).



DOCK 'N' ROLL SanDisk Sansa Speaker Dock

Price: **£40**

Web: www.sandisk.com

Usually associated with memory cards, SanDisk's speaker dock is surprisingly stylish, with a white casing not entirely unlike a certain audio player. It's designed specifically for SanDisk's range of MP3 players and includes attachments for docking the various models, but an audio input on the rear allows you to connect any device – be it a PC or iPod – and have the sound pumped through the dock's diminutive yet powerful speakers. Owners of SanDisk players will obviously get the most benefit since they can also sync their devices through the USB connection as well as playing music, but the price is so low that even if you don't own one this is still worth a look.

profile

CATCHING UP WITH TODAY'S TALENT

Simon Collison **Agenzia**

AGENZIA'S LEAD WEB DEVELOPER AND CSS ENTHUSIAST TALKS FRESH TECHNOLOGY, HIS FIRST BOOK AND FOX'S CLASSIC BISCUITS



You went from artist to web developer. How did that happen? Do you ever miss it?

I try not to miss being an artist. Things were going really well for me before I got the web design bug, so I sometimes wonder if I'd have been the next Damien Hirst. Mind you, carving up cows was never my thing. In 1999, I set up an arts organisation to promote young artists, which really took off. It grew increasingly hard to manage everything alongside my own art career, so I finally bought a computer with a view to producing my own printed material and setting up a couple of databases. Then I had the idea of producing a website, and began to dabble with HTML. I was hooked. Two years and a lot of hard work later, the website was huge and attracting plenty of attention. That was when the folks at Agenzia decided to "have a word with me", and before I knew it I was a full-time web developer learning CSS, PHP and JavaScript at a very fast pace.

What advice would you give a web developer who wants to get started in the business?

Be a responsible designer. Make your websites accessible, usable, lightweight – and build them with web standards. Do things the right way, and you'll have the integrity you need to sell yourself and be taken seriously. To make a name for yourself, you need to do something fresh, so look ahead at hot new technologies (such as Ruby On Rails, Django, Ajax) and learn them fast. Amass a broad range of skills and a decent portfolio even if this means doing sites for free. Being proficient in HTML and CSS won't be enough for an agency that wants people with fresh skills.

Who really inspires you these days?

Too many web designers to mention, but I'll pick a few. Cameron Moll (www.cameronmoll.com) and Jason Santa Maria (www.jasonsantamaria.com) are consistently excellent designers who really know their stuff – especially the use of graphics and



At www.jonburgerman.com, a bright, graphic layout suits the quirky illustrations



Colly Logic: "My site is the one place where I can do what I like, so I exploit that"

typography for the web. Another is Veerle Peiters (<http://veerle.duoh.com>), who revealed the latest incarnation of her blog and blew me away – it certainly put all us blokes to shame. In general, I just love to see fresh, standards-based web design no matter who creates it.

"Being proficient in HTML and CSS won't be enough for an agency that wants people with fresh skills"

Your first solo book, *Beginning CSS Web Development*, hits the shelves in August. What's your aim with this?

I wanted to write the book I wished I'd had when I began learning about web standards. Four years ago, relevant online resources were sparse, and only a handful of books were covering CSS adequately. The methods and reasoning developed at such a rate that most information was out of date very quickly. I took myself down so many cul-de-sacs and wasted so many hours learning by my mistakes. This can be easily avoided now that the web standards dust has settled, and there is less contradictory information. The book is aimed at novices, but I have had three pros read the drafts that couldn't believe how much they learned from it. CSS is so deep that very few really get to grips with all of its quirks, and this book should be the ideal reference.

With its emphasis on real-world design I think it'll be perfect for pro-active developers who need to know how the theory applies to the three-column corporate website they need to build by Tuesday. As you can probably tell, I get excited about CSS. Without it, I'd have become frustrated and would have given up web design to become a forest ranger. I really want a Jeep.

What's your favourite biscuit?

Fox's Classic – it has that honeycomb binding that hits you mid-bite. Very good for dunking, as it'll take at least eight seconds before it falls into the tea.

Visit Simon at www.collylogic.com



Another feather in Simon's cap is the band site www.poptones.co.uk, which is one of his favourite projects to date

Message board

HOW TO CONTACT MESSAGE BOARD:
EMAIL: webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk
POST: Web Designer, Richmond House,
33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth,
Bournemouth, BH2 6EZ

Share your web discoveries and disasters with the wider world in our message board. We want your feedback!

Ode to code

Hello, *Web Designer* team. A few months ago, before the new look of *Web Designer* and before Imagine Publishing took over the magazine, there was a coding section, which was one of the main reasons I subscribed to the mag in the first place, way back since issue 88.

However, after the new look, I checked the magazine and the coding section had gone. I then realised that it had been put into the magazine *Web Developer* (formerly *Practical Web Projects*), so I changed my subscription to *Web Developer*. But then the month I was meant to get the issue Highbury went bust, and then I found out that Imagine Publishing was no longer continuing *Web Developer*. So will the coding section be returning to the magazine?

Mark

Mark, you don't say which code you're after in particular, but *Web Developer* covered ASP, PHP and HTML. Although we're covering HTML and ActionScript with Dreamweaver and Flash at present, there are plans afoot to bring in more hardcore coding tutorials when relevant. So we're glad you've stuck with us through this rather rough time, and hope you enjoy the new look of the mag. If there are particular elements you'd like to learn more about, do let us know either via email or through the various channels on the forum.

Lingo levelling

I am a loyal reader of *Web Designer* magazine. First of all, thank you for publishing such an amazing magazine. I am trying to build a website that has both Chinese and English versions like www.mozilla.com/firefox, where when you scroll down to the bottom of the page one of the options is to view the website in Chinese (www.mozilla.org.cn/firefox). I want to know what I need in order to publish Chinese characters on the web. What software will let me type Chinese characters, and will also be able to display Chinese characters on web browsers? At the moment I use Dreamweaver, Flash, Adobe Photoshop and ImageReady.

Philips



Defining your job role as a designer will mean that clients take some accountability for their mistakes!

MAIL OF THE MONTH

DIY disasters

Have you noticed that web hosts are getting more aggressive in advertising and promoting do-it-yourself website-building software? Am I the only web designer who's just a little annoyed at these supposed confirmations that anyone can build and manage their own website?

In the last two weeks, I've had one client completely delete their entire website (by accident), one client delete all of the pages that I had built for her (by accident), and one client who had said she just needed me to build templates – only for her to contact me every two minutes with web design questions. How should I deal with this problem? Should I refuse to take on any clients if they are going to do it themselves later?

Allison Kessler, creative director, www.2designweb.ca

You've certainly had bad luck with your clients, Allison, and that simply underlines the reason that many DIY website options are not a viable long-term solution for inexperienced developers. Would you think about putting together an aftercare package, so your clients could choose to pay for full site maintenance for six months or a year? Although it sounds harsh, we think you should make it quite clear how much support you will offer for the price paid, as otherwise you could be hassled indefinitely. It's difficult to be tough with clients, especially when you have developed a rapport, but your continued expertise and advice is something for which you need to charge in some way or other. Whether you accept commissions for templates is entirely your choice (money is money, after all!), but you need to be firm about where your job as web designer ends. From the great feedback on your site you're doing something right, though!

Hi, Philips. That's an interesting question, and one that we've not come across before. Language support is certainly a problem on the web and is something that we've cursed when attempting to view the gorgeous foreign URLs in the past. Some older browsers will prompt the user to install a text converter or language pack, whereas some will understand and display the characters natively. Another problem is that without embedding any exotic fonts you're using in your content, you're relying on the end user to have the same ones loaded locally.

If your problem is due to the fact that you need a Chinese word processor, try TwinBridge's Chinese Partner (www.twinbridge.com), which enables you to input Chinese characters into Windows apps to create multilingual documents. There's also lots of useful information on the Min Multimedia site at www.minmm.com/minc/how_to_write_chinesec.php. This could be an intriguing idea for a future feature and is certainly one for our forum, so let us know how you get on, Philips!

GRAND DESIGNS



Grand designs

BECOMING A GOOD WEB DESIGNER IS ABOUT FAR MORE THAN IMAGINATIVE LAYOUTS AND KNOWING YOUR CODE. **JASON ARBER** EXPLAINS HOW TO STAY ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF CREATIVITY

Do you ever stop to think about what being a designer actually means? Most people, including designers themselves, only have a vague, hazy notion of what design really is. Certainly, dictionary definitions don't help ("purpose, planning, or intention that exists or is thought to exist behind an action, fact, or material object"). They're usually bland and impersonal descriptions of what many of us do for a living – or would love to do given an opportunity – and design is actually the opposite of those attributes. It's alive, vibrant and highly subjective.

The subjectivity of design is something we'll discuss in more detail later, but anyone who's experienced an awkward client who insists against all reason that they want their website to be blue ("because it's my daughter's favourite colour") knows that the arena of design feels like it's up for grabs by anyone. You don't often find people wrestling a spanner from a plumber and showing them how to fix a sink, but it's surprising how frequently that happens to designers.

It's because the definition of design appears to be so fluid – the equivalent of eating spaghetti with chopsticks – that many designers don't have the confidence to draw a line in the sand.

CREATIVE LICENCE

The first thing to understand is that without some kind of context or qualification the word design on its own is meaningless. It's an umbrella term for a number of different disciplines that may or may not overlap. Just as it's easier to define what Impressionism is, rather than art as a whole, zeroing in on a specific set of skills helps to clarify matters.

Clearly, what a print designer does is substantially different from a motion graphics artist, even though there is a certain amount of crossover. But by looking at the things they do have in common, it becomes easier to understand the mysterious nature of design and how become a better, more well-rounded designer. Can you be a designer without having the fabled spark of creativity? I think by universal

agreement the answer is no. Certainly, it's possible to learn the rules of design by rote: when to use JPEGs in a web design and when to use GIFs or PNGs, applying the rule of thirds to layouts, and so on. But design is about problem-solving, about finding elegant answers to tricky issues, about coming up with a tangential bright idea that flips things around. And for this, you need creativity.

Creativity can't be taught, but it can be nurtured and honed, and thankfully, most people are creative to greater or lesser degrees. Think of creativity like a muscle that needs regular exercise; without it, your creativity could shrivel while the other big ideas will kick sand in its face at the beach.

But giving your creativity a six-pack stomach is not necessarily hard work. It can be as simple as looking at each job afresh and not relying on tricks, styles and

FEATURED ARTIST

The imagery for this feature was produced by a collaboration between Australian artist Justin Maller and designer Heiko Klug. Both have associations with www.depthcore.com, where Maller is in fact creative director, and this joint effort was achieved by marrying together 3D forms produced by both parties. You can learn more about Maller by checking out his graphic portfolio at www.superlover.com.au



Web portals like Pixelsurgeon draw together ideas from various creative mediums

GRAND DESIGNS



“ZEITGEIST INSPIRATION IS A KIND OF INVISIBLE HAND THAT GUIDES NOT ONLY YOUR WORK, BUT THE WORK OF OTHER DESIGNERS AS WELL”

techniques you’ve used in the past. A good example of this approach can be found with the musician and singer Tom Waits, who explained why he played less guitar and piano on his later albums: “Your hands are like dogs, going to the same places they’ve been. You have to be careful when playing is no longer in the mind but in the fingers, going to happy places. You have to break them of their habits or you don’t explore, you only play what is confident and pleasing. I’m learning to break those habits by playing instruments I know absolutely nothing about, like a bassoon or a waterphone.”

If that sounds like your approach to design, perhaps it’s time to experiment in areas you’re not familiar with, such as photography, video, designing a custom typeface or breaking out the pencils and going analogue for a while. It’s all about loosening things up and getting a different angle or perspective, coming up with a design solution at which you might not otherwise have arrived.

FIND YOUR MUSE

There are two kinds of inspiration: direct inspiration and zeitgeist inspiration. Direct inspiration is flicking through a magazine, finding a font you like and filing it away in the back of your mind for later use. Zeitgeist inspiration, on the other hand, is a kind of invisible hand that guides not only your work, but the work of other designers as well. It’s responsible

for the trends that ebb and flow through design. Zeitgeist literally means Time Spirit, and is your subconscious mind picking up on all the current creative vibes and applying them to your design solutions. Did you wonder why you started using gothic fonts in your logos all of a sudden, or why Web 2.0 layouts seem suddenly hip and happening? That’s zeitgeist at work.

Direct inspiration is a tricky thing, however, because there is a blurry and indistinct line between being inspired by something and copying it outright. Virtually all creative endeavours can find a precedent somewhere, and taking something and making it your own is an important part of the evolution of design. However, the web in particular has made it extremely easy to find a site you like, steal the code, swap out the logo and republish it as your own design. It’s impossible to slice and dice that scenario so that it’s anything other than lazy, unimaginative theft. The community of designers on the Internet is surprisingly small and close-knit, so there’s every chance that you’ll be found out. So my advice would be: don’t do it.

The secret to successful direct inspiration is in combining influences. Like a master chef taking a pinch of this and a dash of that, and creating something that is greater than the sum of its parts. It’s a skill that requires practice. It works in tandem with another ability that’s worth developing and refining,

TOP STYLES

DON’T RULE IT OUT IF IT DOESN’T COME IN CODE. HERE’S HOW SOME TRADITIONAL MEDIA INFLUENCES HAVE IMPACTED WEB DESIGN

WEB PIXEL ART

Pixel art has its origins in the first basic graphics paint packages where images were edited at the pixel level. The images were used in early video games, and because they could be compressed to small sizes using GIF compression found a new home on the net. Sites such as Habbo Hotel (www.habbo.com), Supertotto (www.supertotto.com) and eBoy (www.eboy.com) popularised the format and were hugely influential in defining the look of many websites. Although not quite as popular on the web as it once was, pixel art has influenced smaller screen-based devices such as PDAs and mobile phones.

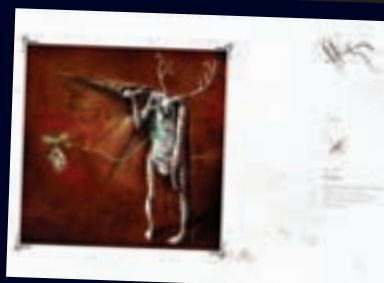


PRINT SWISS STYLE

Graphic design originating from Switzerland in the 1920s and 1930s had a particularly pared-down, technical style, matching the country’s industries. Swiss designers tried to create an anonymous, personality-free voice resulting in a clean look with rigid grids and sans-serif fonts. This influenced graphic design in the 1960s and again in the early 21st century as designers began to see the value of white space in websites, and technologies like Flash and CSS-P gave them new ways to lay out pages.

ART SURREALISM

The Internet has had a liberating effect on artists, giving them a platform to reach millions of people. The influence of artists such as Czech animator Jan Svankmajer has been widespread. As well as inspiring fellow artists such as Tim Burton, Terry Gilliam and The Quay Brothers, Svankmajer has inspired an influential group of artists and designers to create unique web experiences. Oleg Paschenko from Russia has built a website, Conclave Obscurum (www.conclaveobscurum.ru), described as a private artistic project, “which is neither a commercial portfolio nor a collective art exhibition.”



FASHION & CULTURE THE FACE

Eighties fashion bible *The Face*, now sadly defunct, set the tone and style for virtually all the online fashion magazines on the net today. Its mixture of cutting-edge graphics, care of Neville Brody, and edgy photography from Juergen Teller created a look and feel that was both effortlessly cool and possessed the awkwardness of disenfranchised youth. Online magazines such as Head (www.headmagazine.co.uk) and agencies such as Japan’s Adapter (www.adapter.jp) have tried to capture this approach and shape it for the web.

SITES THAT CITE

TAKING A LESSON FROM PRINT DESIGN CAN BE INNOVATIVE IN ITSELF. ONE STEP BACK, TWO STEPS FORWARD...

Recife keeps web-based fonts to an absolute minimum, only using them sparingly for links and regularly updated text

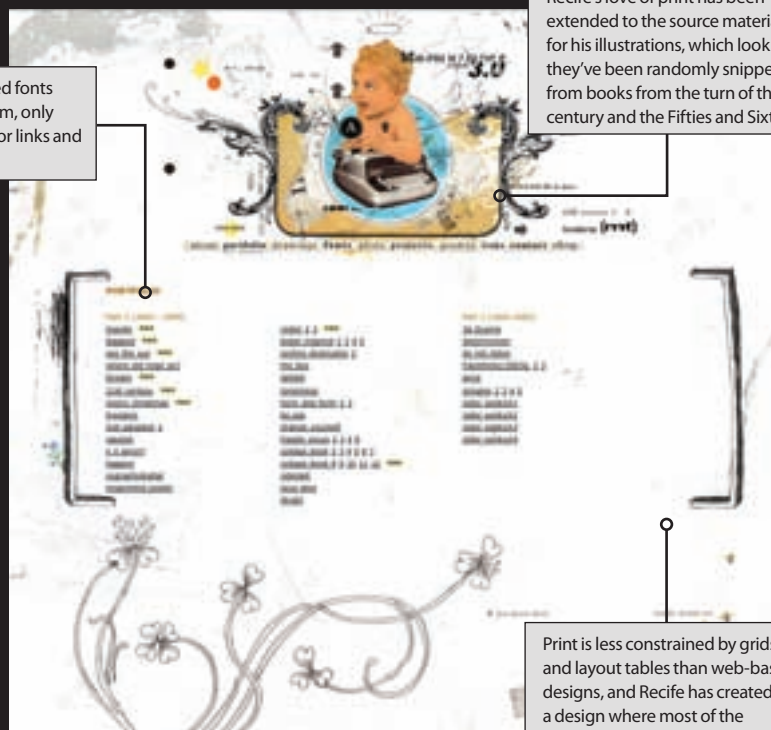
Recife's love of print has been extended to the source material for his illustrations, which look like they've been randomly snipped from books from the turn of the century and the Fifties and Sixties

MISPRINTED TYPE

URL: www.misprintedtype.com

Author: **Eduardo Recife**

Eduardo Recife's wonderfully lo-fi website, *Misprinted Type*, is clearly influenced by the world of print, especially the grunge era experiments from the late Eighties and early Nineties in design and typography by David Carson. The publications he designed, such as *Beach Culture* and *Ray Gun*, smashed traditional notions of design and influenced a new generation of creatives.



Print is less constrained by grids and layout tables than web-based designs, and Recife has created a design where most of the elements feel randomly placed



Navigation through the site is by clicking on the left and right pages, which takes you to the previous and next spreads

C-Heads emulates the physical glossy magazine experience, right down to having double-page spreads complete with a shaded fold right down the centre

C-Heads also explores the ability of websites to deliver a multimedia experience by including a music track

C-HEADS

URL: www.c-heads.com/english/

Author: **Christine Guggenberger, Sigrun Guggenberger, Emanuel Sporsec**

C-Heads is one of a new breed of website that takes its inspiration from print publishing. Printing and distributing a physical magazine is an expensive business, so the answer is to create a magazine on the web. But rather than change the format, this uses Flash to recreate the paper-based experience.



The OFFF festival showcased all things digital, offering workshops and exhibits

understanding what's right for a given job. Designing a website for a hot young punk band that looks like a newspaper website or filling an accountant's website with dynamic Flash animations and grungy typography might be the right thing to do, but chances are it's not. Inspiration and creativity require shaping and funnelling, and that comes from understanding the job you have to do.

Mike Tunney from Analog4 (www.analog4.com) agrees. "Design to me is not bells and whistles or the latest style that is over-used and most often applied to a client that it doesn't really fit. Design the vehicle for communication. It should solve your client's problem... If it doesn't, then your design – no matter how pretty or slick – was unsuccessful." In all cases, the problem is the filter through which your creativity should flow.

KNOWING THE CLIENT

Although no one really wants to admit it, dealing with clients is a crucial skill and is certainly a part of being a better designer. Fostering good relationships can make the difference between a job going smoothly and crashing on the rocks in a spectacular fashion.

The key is communication, which is more than letting them know when they can expect to see the next set of revisions or emailing them to say hi once in a while. It's also about education and managing expectations.

A poorly written and vague brief can be an early and crucial indication that perhaps the client themselves don't know what they want. This is the sort of issue that can come back to haunt you if it's not tackled early on in the design process. Shockingly, it's not unheard of for clients to use designers as a kind of sounding board, constantly rejecting ideas and layouts while they quietly hone their requirements

on the hoof. If you're not charging your client by the hour for stuff like this, it can be an incredible and expensive drain on your time.

Children of Finland's Raoul Sanchez (www.childrenoffinland.com) has experienced this problem first hand. "I have had briefs in the past that have almost literally said nothing at all about the client's requirements, save for 'we want something other than what we have now'. When a brief is less vague, but still poorly written and thought out, I try to 'thrash things out' in written format, rather than visually.

In some cases, I've worked up very basic scamps, showing possible layout variations and element placement, but I never go further than that without a very good idea about what a client wants and also a signed-off agreement regarding assumptions or requirements."

This sentiment is echoed by Jonny Ford from Finger Industries. "Our own experience shows that if you present a client with several options or designs, many will invariably go for the one you put in as a filler after you'd run out of proper ideas." He adds, "They've come to you for direction – they may not be visually aware – and it's the designer's responsibility to manage the client."

A meeting or an email or two, where you try and tease the information out and shape it into something meaningful, can be absolutely critical. As well as saving you time and money, you'll often find yourself with an appreciative client, especially if you've taken the trouble to

"WHILE YOU MAY HAVE THOUGHT THAT BEING A DESIGNER WAS SIMPLY BEING CREATIVE, WHAT IT REALLY MEANS IS LIVING AND BREATHING DESIGN"

READ ALL ABOUT IT

THE WEB IS OPINIONATED, UP-TO-DATE AND USUALLY FREE, BUT IT WON'T FILL UP YOUR IKEA BOOKSHELVES. HERE'S WHAT WILL...



BASTARD CHOOSE MY IDENTITY

Written by: Christian Ernst, André Rösler, Lars Harmsen & Ulrich Weiss

Publisher: Actar

ISBN: 8496540154

Typography, photography, graphic design and text get mixed in this book, which talks precisely about the current 'bastardization' of cultures. What happens when the world fuses into a global village, when cultures mix, traditions dissolve, and something new arises? In search of cultural identity and cultural bastardizing, the authors fly around the world visiting the hot spots of globalization, such as Mexico City, LA, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Dubai in just 21 days. An odd, mixed-up book in the best, inspirational sense.



TASCHEN'S 1,000 FAVORITE WEBSITES

Written by: Julius Wiedemann

Publisher: Taschen

ISBN: 3822825867

It might be a few years old and completely lacking any kind of context, but for dipping in and out of in search for a quick inspirational fix, this small, chunky volume is hard to beat. What it lacks in depth it makes up for in volume as it skims the Internet looking for the best in website design.



Finger Industries' site uses manga-influenced animation integrated into the site navigation to entertain visitors

explain the different options and solutions. "Whenever there is a breakdown in communication, the project goes south fast," warns Canadian web designer Kevin Airgid (www.airgid.com), in an extract from his book, *Web Designer's Success Guide*. Airgid continues: "Some clients can be micro-managers, asking you to change the design until it looks like a pile of horse puke, other clients can give you no direction at all yet hate everything you produce. The only constant factor in this equation is you."

However, you shouldn't always begrudge a demanding client, because they can often push you into producing something better than you might have without a bit of prodding. By trying unexpected or random things, the results can surprise both you and your client.

CRUCIAL EDUCATION

Education has a crucial part to play in the design process. In the narrower sense of design qualifications, a good degree or diploma course can be an excellent place for personal development, both to nurture skills and for students to gain valuable experience with different disciplines.

A well-run course can help foster important support systems, industry contacts and prepare students for the life of a professional designer. If the letter and emails that cross my desk are anything to go by, some universities and colleges are failing miserably, with students unable to create engaging curriculum vitae or point potential employers in the direction of a portfolio or any examples of their work. Encouragingly, some courses, such as those run by Hyper Island (www.hyperisland.se) in Karlskrona, Sweden, continually produce creative students who are equipped with the correct skills to survive in the world of design, where there are often more graduating students than there are jobs to go around.

Hyper Island's courses are work-oriented programs and apply "teaching and learning approaches that are directly relevant to working life." In addition to the industry-focused coursework, Hyper Island stresses the importance of work placements, and the aim "is for students to gain experiences and knowledge generated in commercial productions and further develop their skills and personal qualities." This balance between coursework and commercial considerations, fostered by Hyper Island and other similar institutions of learning, is the perfect way to develop personal creativity and professional sensibilities.

But education shouldn't stop with a structured syllabus. It's also the responsibility of postgraduates and designers who

have never set foot in a university to develop a questioning mind, always receptive to new ways of doing things. Examples of design and creative thinking are everywhere and it's just a matter of opening your eyes and discovering them anew.

Many successful designers collect found objects, horde old books, pack scrapbooks full of magazine cuttings and postcards or cover every available surface with vinyl toys and knick-knacks from Japan. They experiment with music, dabble in DJing or see as many live bands as they can. They collect obscure DVDs by cult directors, visit art galleries and exhibitions or surf the Internet looking for cool stuff.

It's a vibrant melting pot of experiences, visuals, concepts, theories, and approaches that can be drawn upon when looking for design solutions. In turn, this collaborative approach encourages experimentation. Heard of Flash or Ajax or Ruby on Rails? Why not see what it can do for you? Seen an exciting video at OFFF or Resfest? Why not try to create something for your own website, or suggest a viral campaign in the next design meeting?

DESIGN COMMUNITIES

For people who are regularly glued to their monitors at every available moment, designers are a sociable bunch and love any opportunity to share a beer with a fellow designer or

"THE SECRET TO SUCCESSFUL DIRECT INSPIRATION IS IN COMBINING INFLUENCES, CREATING SOMETHING GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS"

GRAND DESIGNS

READ ALL ABOUT IT

FEED YOUR DESIGN ASPIRATIONS WITH A LITTLE LIGHT READING
PENNED BY CREATIVES THAT HAVE FOUND THEIR NICHE



CD-ART

Written by: **Charlotte Rivers**

Publisher: **Rotovision**

ISBN: **2880467454**

Music and design seem to go together like chips and mushy peas and there are countless volumes dedicated to record sleeves and CD covers. This book by Charlotte Rivers is the latest and explores some unusual and experimental approaches to packaging design, including handmade approaches and unconventional and unexpected materials.



METALHEART: DIGITAL ART EXPLOSION

Written by: **Andreas Lindholm and Anders F Rönnblom**

Publisher: **Laurence King**

ISBN: **1584230894**

Metalheart is a book about digital design and the remarkable power of the pixel. It started as a project in the late Nineties when Swedish designers Andreas Lindholm and Anders F Rönnblom sent a CD containing fonts and 3D typefaces to a selection of designers for digital experimentation. They asked the designers to use and abuse their alphabets and send them back artworks for publication in this book.

If you can get to Sydney's Semi-Permanent festival for 7-8 July, you'll be in the company of some of the world's top creatives



hang out online. Websites such as BD4D – By Designers For Designers – (www.bd4d.com) organise regular events all over the world with the express aim of bringing together like-minded creatives to share ideas and demonstrate work.

SUMMER LIVIN'

The summer months are often filled with design conferences, such as Spain's OFFF (www.offf.ws), or Semi-Permanent (www.semipermanent.com), organised by Design Is Kinky (www.designiskinky.com), and these are a great way to meet designers from all over the world. For the more technically minded, you could try Carson Workshops (www.carsonworkshops.com), which runs web design and development events in the UK and across the Atlantic, boasting first-class experts in the fields of Ajax, CSS and other cutting-edge Web 2.0 technologies.

For designers who really can't tear themselves away from their computers, online forums, portals and communities are the best way to stay in touch with the world of design. Some sites are tightly focused, such as A List Apart (www.alistapart.com) or CreativeBits (www.creativebits.org), or much broader in scope, such as Pixelsurgeon (www.pixelsurgeon.com) which mixes design news and interviews with tech, music, movies and games topics. Even social news websites such as Digg (www.digg.com) and social

bookmarking website del.icio.us can be great sources of design news and inspiration. And if you really can't afford the time to check out other websites, consider Podcasts as a great way of staying up to date with current creative news. Try Diggnation (www.revision3.com/diggnation), The Week In Technology (www.twit.tv), Web Design Podcast from Boagworld (www.boagworld.com) or AudioSurgeon (www.audiosurgeon.co.uk) as starting points.

Some Podcasts, such as DesignCast, which is available via iTunes (www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts), have video enclosures, allowing you to see designers make fools of themselves and explaining why presenting is perhaps best left to professionals...

CREATIVE TEAMWORK

While many designers work best solving problems by themselves, for most designers bouncing ideas around in a team can produce more great concepts than attempting to do the same thing individually. It doesn't always follow, however, that tipping a bunch of people into a room for a brainstorming session will automatically come up with goods. There are a couple of things you can do to maximise the chances of creating some great ideas.

Firstly, the mix of people is important. Variety is the spice of life and a brainstorm is no exception. Experience has shown that secretaries are just as capable as anyone else at coming up with original notions, so don't exclude anyone who wants to be involved.

A successful brainstorm needs someone to lead it, to guide the conversations, to dismiss the bad ideas and encourage the good ones. Someone should also be making notes because there's nothing worse than coming up with some great stuff only to forget it once you're out of the meeting.



Portfolio sites are where web artists can push the boundaries. Take a look at sites like www.mutanthands.com

Finally, don't let brainstorming go on too long because they can quickly become stale and the most creative of minds can start wandering. Lengthy meetings on a Friday afternoon are rarely a good idea as thoughts turn to post-work beers.

Design is addictive. It's like a drug; but where the analogy breaks down is that this is actually a good thing. The best designers actually find themselves rolling design-related issues in their minds all the time. Kleber's Tom Muller, who also runs a side project called Ximeralabs (www.ximeralabs.com), explains, "You won't grow just jumping from one commercial project to the next, and spend your evenings drinking pints with your mates while watching football. You have to work on it. Create your own little projects. Not because you have to, but because you want to."

Muller continues: "We would generally spend seven days a week in the studio – working on our own little projects, (re)designing our sites, creating little movies, etc. Those are the things that make you a better designer. For me design isn't just a job, it's a part of what I am."

BEYOND THE BRIEF

So, although you may have thought that being a designer was simply being creative with a brief, what it really means is living and breathing design: always being open to fresh influences, no matter where they come from, whether it's from art, music, movies, or something you found in the street. By developing these personal building blocks of creativity, you are also constructing the foundations for a totally subjective method of coming up with design solutions. Subjective means unique to you.

And if design is finding the best solution to a problem, then being a designer is solving it in an inspired and idiosyncratic way. Now go create something. **END**

TRIPPING OUT

SHAKE OFF THE WEB DESIGNER'S AGORAPHOBIC AIR AND EXPERIENCE THE PHYSICAL WORLD WITH OUR PICK OF THE MOST INSPIRING HANGOUTS



DESIGN MUSEUM

Location: **Shad Thames, London**

URL: www.designmuseum.org

Although this website is a poky window, spawning additional pop-ups to access more content, the museum itself is a fantastic place for browsing. Small enough to digest in one go, but with enough fascinating exhibitions and displays, it's an enlightening way to spend an afternoon. There's an exhibition covering subjectivity in design on until this September.



MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Location: **11 West 53rd Street, New York**

URL: www.moma.org

Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art, established in 1929 by a trio of patrons including Abby Rockefeller, boasts one of the finest collections of modern art to be found anywhere in the world. Now reopened again after a two-year renovation (during which the collection was inconveniently relocated to Queens), the museum is expensive with a \$20 admission charge, but the stunning works on display are worth every penny.



TATE MODERN

Location: **Bankside, London**

URL: www.tate.org.uk/modern

Created out of a cavernous disused power station, the Tate Modern is one of the few venues in the world capable of displaying large-scale works of art. With an exhaustive permanent collection of modern and contemporary art going all the way back to Fauvism at the turn of the last century, this incredible gallery is both wide-ranging and free to get in.



HARAJUKU

Location: **Harajuku Station, Shibuya, Tokyo**

Harajuku is where Tokyo's youth hangs out. Although it has become something of a tourist attraction, it's still the place to visit to see the day-glo teens, street performers, bands, cosplay girls and white faced goths. It's a visual assault unlike anything else in the world.

BEHIND THE scenes



The menu format is an innovation in itself, and its smooth action brims with stylish detailing

Peroni Nastro Azzuro

Traditional beer marketing is being replaced with the three-dimensional wonders of the Internet. **Thomas Woodgate** goes for cheeky pint on the all-new Peroni Nastro Azzuro website

RESPONSIBILITY IS A WORD used often when talking about today's drinking culture, as well as when discussing the often-abused use of the Internet. However, the new Peroni Nastro Azzuro website is looking to buck the trend with a combination of style and elegant adult appeal, utilising the digital medium in the process.

Peroni's new website, www.peroniitaly.com, was recently unveiled as part of its £4m UK campaign,

which is adding a new dimension to traditional beer marketing. The creative campaign marks a turning point for integrated advertising, bringing a new level of design and production values to the site. With the classic Italian movie *La Dolce Vita* paid homage to on the site, it was one of Italy's most stylish creations that sparked a love affair with all things Italian in 1960. Bringing this styling to Peroni's re-marketed beer was design agency Mook.

The beer itself was re-launched in March this year with a new style bottle and positioning, and Tom Evans, creative director at Mook, was keen to point out that the flavour of the site was to mirror this style and re-branding. "Peroni is that latest style icon from Italy – when it comes to self-expression, effortless style and flair, nobody does it better than the Italians," explains Evans. "Think Armani, Gucci, Prada. We would rub off onto Peroni through its Italian credentials and everything Peroni does should reflect the Italian passion for detail and quality." The site design focused on the need to optimise quality

and craftsmanship, much like any great fashion brand. Upon entering, the site is divided into different sections. The Campaign details information on the new advertising campaign, including the TV and print advertisements, as well as facts behind the scenes of the commercial. Heritage gives users the chance to watch chief brew master Roberto Cavalli tell the Peroni story, dispersing interesting facts along the way about the crisp beer. The iModa podcast series are a

"Everything Peroni does should reflect the Italian passion for detail and quality"

collection of audio interviews with some celebrated influencers and celebrities from fashion, design, football and food. These are available for download via iTunes and Peroniitaly on a bi-monthly ten-minute segments (text versions will also be included on the site). The Directory has been developed to include insights into what's hot in fashion, events, restaurants, bars and gadgets. The Competitions area opens



Expertise in a number of apps was needed; Maya 7 was used to build this tempting creation, while the embossed glass was manipulated in Photoshop

Reinforcing the Italian heritage meant bringing in fashion, culture and a classic cinematic influence

the chance for all site visitors to win something exciting, such as branded memorabilia and some stylish Peroni Nastro Azzurro too. The Extras section enables users to download The Sapphires' re-recorded 'Baby It's You' soundtrack; visitors will be able to navigate their way to screensavers and desktop images as well. The aim of its online portal is to "redraw the boundaries between the worlds of advertising and digital media", with the intention of challenging its competitors in the beer industry.

PAINSTAKING ATTENTION TO DETAIL

The creative team's attention to detail is staggering; and although the terms style/passion/quality are already in place, the team are hopeful that 'award winning' will soon be added to this repertoire. The team consisted of eight people and took around two months to produce, while a team of three are tasked with keeping the site up-to-date and fresh. One mandate the team was given and one that they feel they have achieved is to create the best themed web presence in the market, one that's visited repeatedly and offers real content. Many actors and artists talk of empathy when looking to capture a certain mood, and the team at Mook took this belief under the wing when fashioning



shooting these three scenes in one day in Cape Town, South Africa, using a timeslice rig of 70 Canon digital SLR cameras. Although these cameras were on the rig- and laser-aligned, the footage was shaky and needed extensive post-production work. "Each frame had to be stabilised by hand and aligned with the frames either side of it to produce a smooth movement," explains Evans. This painstaking work

one, and the results are certainly a testament to the digital medium. "Technically, the project was very innovative, but innovation is a lonely place to be as there's nothing to refer to or anyone to help," explains Evans. Not all went without a hitch; the production gave the Mook team plenty of headaches with the timeslice footage proving particularly difficult. The new BitmapData object in Flash Player 8 was used for the animation, but issues occurred with it including memory leaks and browser crashes, which lead the team implementing thorough logging systems to catch all the problems and work around them.

With updates expected throughout the year, especially the monthly updates of the iModa podcast, the team will continue to have its hands full maintaining the site. *Web Designer* has got a thirst now, so we're off to indulge in a little Italian flavour ourselves, and what better way to enjoy that than with the latest copy of the magazine in hand? A match made in heaven...

"Technically, the project was very innovative, but innovation is a lonely place to be"

the site. "He's a 28-year-old bloke with a good job and lives in a loft apartment. He's social, mobile and optimistic about what the future will hold. He's a shaper and believes his fate lies in his own hands; he's style-conscious and media-savvy. He's fed up with the strait-laced approach to marketing and wants something new," says Evans when talking about the site's target audience. Evans and his team took the style-conscious approach of Italian influences and looked to infuse it into the site. The team's aspirations for the site centred on creating something that was stunning, unique, innovative, daring and the embodiment of Italian style. "Mook is in the business of innovation – it's what clients come to us for," believes Evans.

The impressive bottle was created using Maya 7 using a still of the bottle from a print ad which was then traced and revolved to create the basic shape seen on the site. The embossed glass detail was added with a displacement map, which was created in Photoshop and projected onto the bottle. The labels were added after being scanned in from actual labels from the beer bottle. The 3D text was designed in Illustrator and imported into Maya 7 using the new Illustrator Object tool; this gave the team easy options for depth and bevel to achieve the desired effect. Finally, a matte finish was achieved by shading all type with a lambert material. The scene was rendered in three 'passes': one was the background (with shadows); the second was content panels and typography, and finally, the bottle itself. The team identified three key *La Dolce Vita* timeslice scenes: the fountain, the bar and the paparazzi airfield scene. The team set about

included colour correction and waterfalls, and rocks were also built and rendered for an authentic feel. The water droplets provide particular depth to the scene and these were created with Maya's particles. The motion footage was then exported as PNG sequences using Shake. Many Flash Players Sounds were used throughout for added effect, again with minimalist precision that has become synonymous with the site. With so much to admire, the team identifies the site's creation as a wide and challenging

Video content is integrated neatly into the site's framework





Will work FOR FOOD

Think you can challenge the best in the business? If you're ready to prove your creative prowess and enter the real world of working in web design, Nick Spence has a few words of advice on how to get yourself noticed

THE STEP FROM STUDENT TO FULLY FLEDGED web design guru is more than ever a short one. As technology improves you can now do in hours or days what might have taken months to perfect in the past. Creating stunning websites is no longer the reserve of the few, with new skillsets available to anyone willing to learn.

As technology marches on, potential employees increasingly demand skill levels and experience previously gained only over time. This is in part due to improvements in software applications but also an ever-keen focus by educational institutions on producing real-world ready business-orientated students.

Interactive content is on the increase after a period of perceived conservatism following the dot com boom and bust. Now even the most established traditional companies are offering adventurous content-rich websites. Viral marketing and viral advertising – relatively new word-of-mouth ways of brand awareness – are on the up. Recent research by the Interactive Media in Retail Group (IMRG) suggests a staggering £26bn will be spent online in the UK in 2006, with Internet shoppers typically spending up to £1,000 each this

year. Broadband is king, delivering a wealth of information and entertainment in new and exciting ways. People are increasingly choosing to spend their leisure time online rather than watching television. Bandwidth issues are fast becoming a thing of the past with an array of competing companies offering formally supersonic speeds as standard. Online animation and full-motion video is on the increase. Rich media, 3D content, increased interactivity and general fun and games are all to be had at a click of a mouse. All this and the promise of Web 2.0 just around the corner.

So the good news is that the industry is pretty buoyant, with many of the firms surveyed by *Web Designer* expanding and actively seeking new, sometimes raw, recruits as well as those with all-important experience. It's a great time to be graduating, with many more potential job opportunities on offer. However, you need to know and avoid the pitfalls of a profession that is increasingly demanding and in which it is still notoriously difficult to initially find work.

Molly Parsley of award-winning global interactive agency AKQA (www.akqa.com) reflects on the current industry optimism. "AKQA has definitely got its eye on graduates, so



For Mook (www.mook.co.uk), good design skills and strong creativity are a must in the web industry



Fhlame (www.fhlame.co.uk) may be taking on some graduates depending on when the team moves to its new offices, as space is currently an issue

much so that we're seeking them out so we can get them in front of attendees at Cannes. We've already heard from some attendees that they will hire them on the spot." AKQA, in collaboration with the Cannes Lions Advertising Festival, put together the Future Lions (www.futurelions.com) competition showcasing the best in student work under the banner Hire Them Before They Steal Your Job: Meet The World's Most Forward-Thinking Students.

GET THE EDGE

Bridging the gap between college life and a career is the key to success. The demands are similar but different requiring a higher level of discipline, commitment and passion than during your time at college.

You may be self-motivated and accustomed to working on self-initiated projects long into the night, but landing your dream job is also about being a team player. Matt Miller, art director at UsTwo Design Studio (www.ustwo.co.uk) knows too well the potential difficulties the studio faces in finding the right candidate. "We have found that recruitment is one of the hardest parts of running a company. We have built this company up as a tight family-type unit and it's essential we recruit people who fit into the team." If you're not sure of your responsibility in the company then ask; poor communication can be another drawback when joining a close-knit team.

Initial looks can be deceptive, and the relaxed, sometimes laid-back, impression given by some web design and new media companies is far from the truth. The art of creativity is still very much a business. The sector is chock-full of big and small design companies all bidding for the same or similar sources of work. Be prepared to work at your craft. If you're serious about wanting a job in the industry you should

succeed. Like everything good in life, you need to work at it. Hours can be long and frustrating, so fitting in and knowing your role in the creative process is vital. Projects, no matter how creative, are governed by money and time restraints often set in stone by the client. Miss a deadline or go over budget and you create major headaches for you and your colleagues. Your commitment to the team effort extends to keeping an open mind, learning new skills, and being open to constructive criticism. Greg Jarrett of Fhlame (www.fhlame.co.uk), a renowned online advertising and marketing agency, knows what they are looking for: "Hard working, humble people with a thirst to learn new skills, a mature attitude to take critical judgement of their work, this is usually the hardest block for young creatives to get over, especially developing a good understanding of the balance between creative work and commercial concerns." Tom Evans, creative director of Mook (www.mook.co.uk), is looking for similar values. "Good design and creativity is a given. Outside of that we look for maturity, passion and dedication."

Learning new skills doesn't end when you leave college; technology is changing at a pace so demands on your talents are increasing almost daily. Getting your foot in the door might depend on you knowing the ins and outs of a new piece of software, so keep abreast of industry trends. Late last year Adobe acquired its former main rival Macromedia in a multi-billion dollar deal. The new combined software giant promises great things, so it pays to keep track of current industry trends. Quark too has just radically updated its old desktop publishing mainstay QuarkXPress to version 7.

Download trial versions and public betas of the latest applications, as it pays to keep in touch and master new applications or time-enhancing updates and new features.

"Your commitment to the team extends to keeping an open mind, learning new skills, and being open to constructive criticism"

YOU'RE HIRED!

CHRIS HASSELL

Director and co-founder of Ralph
www.ralphandco.com

DS. Emotion's digital arm has become Ralph, a standalone digital agency. A varied client list has included Franz Ferdinand, Nickelodeon and Orange.

"We're always on the lookout for quality graduates. Even those taken on as 'juniors', we don't expect them to be junior for long so we expect people to have a very proactive approach to their work. A personal interest in the their job, and the industry as a whole is always a good sign. How did many of your existing employees gain work with us? Most of them came directly through word-of-mouth and recommendations from both sides. This is the best way for it to happen. As for employee skillsets, strong development skills in Macromedia Flash are still very hard to find, so ActionScript coupled with backend programming skills, ASP, PHP, XML are always great to see on a CV."

MATT MILLER

Art director, UsTwo Design Studio
www.ustwo.co.uk

Matt Miller is one half of the dynamic duo that heads up UsTwo Design Studio, a London-based multi-discipline studio with a passion for interface design.

"Since starting UsTwo, we have found recruitment to be one of the hardest aspects of the job. The company has been built as a family unit; almost all the members of the team are old friends. So one of the most essential things for us when recruiting is that people dovetail into our team. We look for designers who are not only talented, but who can also demonstrate real passion and enthusiasm for design.

Talent, along with knowing the relevant software inside out and the ability to work long hours, are all vitally important, but above and beyond this it's passion that really makes a designer stand out. Two of our most senior designers started out doing unpaid work experience, and each used the opportunity to impress. In doing so they carved out jobs for themselves."

Will work FOR FOOD

“Good design
and creativity
is a given.
Outside of
that we look
for maturity,
passion and
dedication”

Tom Evans
Creative director,
Mook

Ralph (www.ralphandco.com) is the team behind the excellent Franz Ferdinand website



Equally, not all studios rely on the latest software and you may find yourself needing to learn old software or fulfil the somewhat antiquated requests from clients concerned about user compatibility not being up with the latest online advances.

KEEP IN TOUCH

With over 13 years' experience across print, advertising and digital, working with many big brand names along the way, Greg Jarrett of Fhame sees software application multi-tasking as a vital factor in a new graduate's success. "Software-wise, must-haves are Photoshop, Illustrator and Flash. Bonus, video editing and 3D work. We are seeing a big move into motion graphics and video in terms of digital marketing so we are gradually increasing our skills in this area." Because time is money, use any down time between college and employment to continue your education. You could find yourself in the advantageous position of joining a company knowing more about the latest software applications than your fellow workers.

Several of Greg Jarrett's colleagues have come through word-of-mouth recommendations. Networking is an anathema to some but it often works; the old adage 'it's not what you know it's who you know' is clearly true. Keep in contact with student buddies, especially those who share the same goals and ambitions. Down the line they could be in a position to introduce and recommend you to a potential employer. Some may even find themselves in positions of authority and make decisions on whom they hire and fire. A good tutor will have

good contacts, including many ex-students and potential employees. It pays to ask around, so let it be known you are keen and looking for work. Companies rarely come looking for you, so you need to make sure they know you are there.

Jonathan Hitchen is head of department for the BA (hons) Graphic Arts at Liverpool School of Art & Design. His students are renowned for the quality of their work and finding jobs in many of the top creative companies across the UK. Jonathan sees great value in knowing as much as can about your prospective employer. The Internet is a great tool to research and prepare questions. "If you're fortunate enough to get an interview when they ask 'Any questions?', make sure you have some ready. Ask about a particular campaign; sound and look keen without going over the top." If you get the opportunity, talk about your favourite websites and designers and what inspires you, as a little passion can go a long way.

Birgitta Hosea, author of *The Focal Easy Guide To Flash 8* (www.easyguidetoflash.com) believes you need to see the wider picture to grab that dream job. "You need to show a good understanding of effective visual communication, usability and graphic design principles. Software skills on their own are not enough. You also need to show that you can plan, be well-organised, deliver to deadlines and communicate effectively." Although some like to hide their talents and remain modest, another key to a successful job application is selling yourself. Simple things like eye contact, good grooming and good manners will not

WORK THE WEB

SPARE THE SORE FEET AND TRAVEL TIME AND FIND YOUR IDEAL JOB ONLINE WITH OUR USEFUL LINKS DESIGNED TO GET YOU CLICKING



JUMP FORWARD

www.jumpforward.co.uk

Help, advice, free listings and online portfolios make Jump Forward a good place to start your job search. Register for free and search jobs, placements, briefs, and courses, get seen by submitting reviews and join the skill-specific forums. Gain exposure to media houses and businesses by building a simple online portfolio. It recently passed the 2,000-member mark with new upgrades and enhancements promised.



NEWTODAY

www.newstoday.com

"Announce your job opportunity to over 447,000 potential employees," runs the blurb on this popular worldwide destination for the creative community. Although the bulk is US-based, there are plenty of listings for UK-based web designers, interactive designers, Flash developers, Mac operators, artworkers and the like. Newstoday also provides thousands of links to sources of inspiration and designer news, making it an invaluable stop.



DESIGNSTUDIOPEOPLE

www.designstudiopeople.com

DesignStudioPeople are typical of the recruitment agencies for the design and advertising industry found regularly in the trade and specialist press ad pages. Aiming to develop long-term relationships with both clients and candidates, DesignStudioPeople offers both temporary and permanent recruitment opportunities. You can search your desired criteria by job classification, location, contract type and salary, with job opportunities listed on the home page.

UsTwo (www.ustwo.co.uk) designed and built the Human Machine Interface for Ford's Geneva Motorshow



"If you are applying for a digital position, and don't have a really strong online portfolio, the battle is lost"

Greg Jarret, Fhlame

go unnoticed. Discussing your portfolio work in a clear and concise way is an advantage. If you can't talk about your best work and believe in it, how will your prospective employer be able to see the potential in college and self-initiated work? Whether your portfolio is traditional or online, showcase only your best work – better a dozen good pieces than dozens of inferior efforts dragging down the quality as a whole. Chris Hassell, director and co-founder of digital agency Ralph (www.ralphandco.com) agrees. "Send through quality samples of work, and a clear, brief CV with your skills and what role you're looking for, obviously. Don't waffle on for ages about what you've been doing at college or uni."

PITCH PERFECT

Highlighting interactive motion graphics, especially in a 2D format such as print, can be fraught with problems, so if you must, grab screenshots from the most attractive and stimulating ones. Greg Jarrett of Fhlame adds: "Graduates are free to send CVs together with either a showreel for motion work or an online portfolio with their digital work. If you are applying for a digital position, and don't have really strong online portfolio, the battle is lost." So work on your online portfolio. Remember: it best represents your skill levels and potential. Little point then in advertising your wares to the world if your website looks like it was last updated in the last millennium. Get seen and submit your work and site to online creative portals; you will get viewed by your contemporaries and hopefully potential employees. Enter competitions and anything else that will raise your profile.

As well as keeping track of new applications and software advances, keep a keen eye on the latest trends in web design and new media sectors. It pays to keep informed, enlightened and inspired via the Internet, specialist and trade publications. These are also useful resources for traditional job-seeking

with ads found at the back of many weekly and monthly publications. Online communities such as Newstoday (www.newstoday.com) run the essential Employment Channel, listings details of vacancies in the creative sector. Other websites offer more informal forum postings and insider feedback on some of the better-known studios. Blogs too are worth having a look at, often highlighting news trends and potential job opportunities before more traditional sources.

Consider freelancing to gain experience. It will show to employers that you are serious about your profession and help build up published work. Many people at a push can work from home or find temporary studio space, while some design studios offer freelancers a home. It's useful to put these stints on your CV to gain the required experience many companies require before you even set foot through the door. Freelancing can even give you the confidence to start your own studio; now is as good a time as any start your own business!

Work experience is another option. Some companies list on their websites when positions are available or go through favoured colleges and universities. It may seem like a hard slog with little initial financial award but it can lead to permanent placements. Ask around, and try to find companies who offer useful placements. Third-party agencies can find you work, but again try word of mouth to seek out the better ones. A quick head count of people approached for this article revealed that there is no secret formula for landing a job in such a competitive industry. Some companies prefer to be contacted via letters, emails, showreels and portfolios. Some favour a more abstract approach, something that makes you stand out above others. What is universally required is a solid reliance on good skills, great ideas, passion, and the ability to listen and learn and ultimately work to budgets and deadlines as an active member of a team. Tick those boxes and you're well on the way to landing that dream job. **END**

YOU'RE HIRED!

MATT WARDLE

Creative director, Black & Ginger
www.blackandginger.com

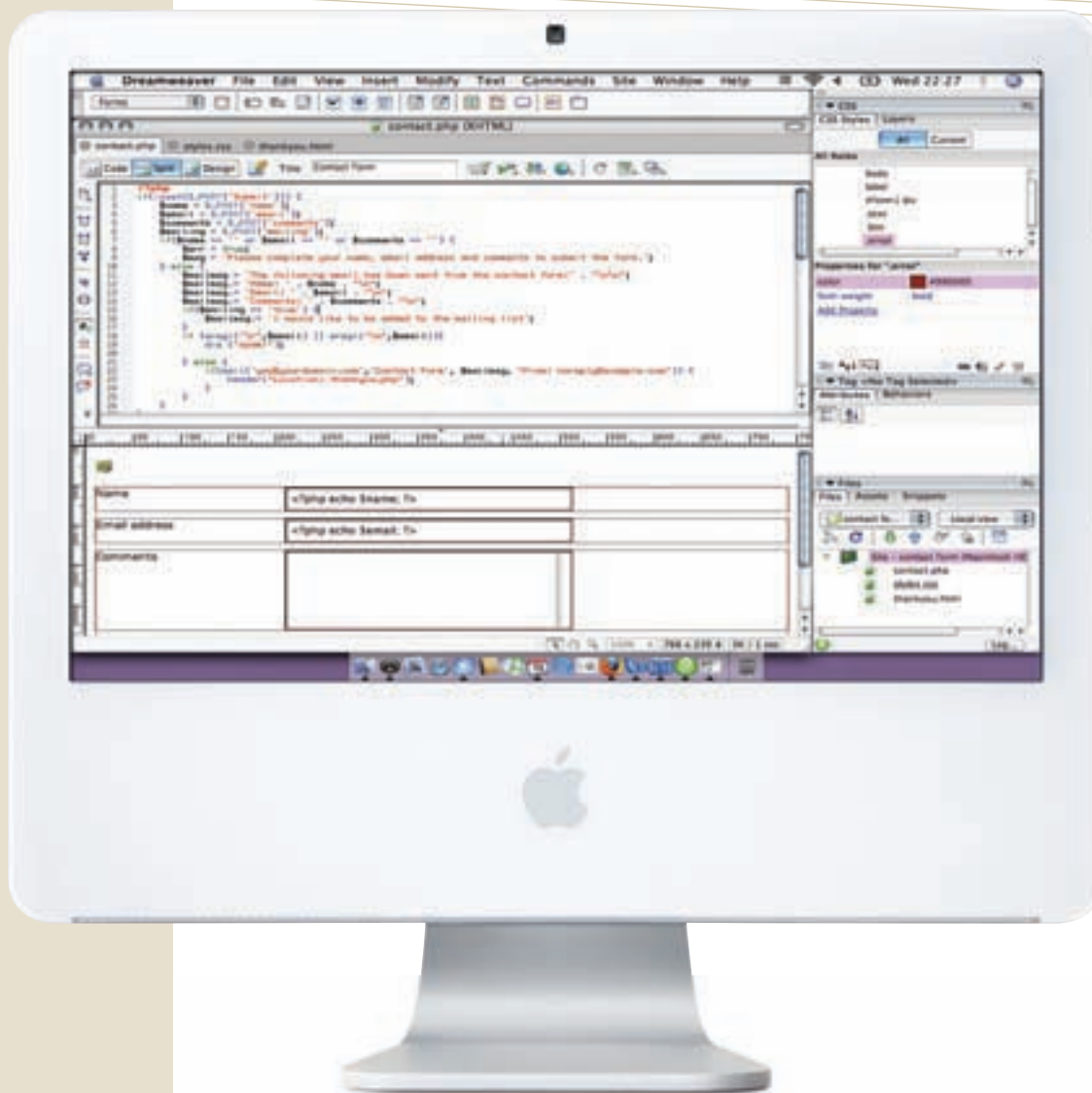
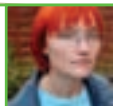
"We will be looking at a placement this summer, that will bring our total up to five in the studio; any more and I will have to get an industrial-sized shoe horn. Graduates should approach us NOT with a 'Dear Sir/Madam'! I cannot understand why anyone would apply for a position in any job without doing their groundwork. Who they should address, what makes them tick, do they drink like fish and party all night or enjoy a nice bit of Mozart and warm milk? And if it's the latter, best look for another agency. Your portfolio might be outstanding, but if you get off on the wrong foot it's almost a dead no-no. None of the guys working for us sat a formal interview; we go for a beer, have a chat, look at the work and usually make a decision then. In terms of potential employees we are looking for IDEAS! We would employ an ape if it came up with good ideas."

JOHN AYLOTT

Director, Fourleaf Ltd
www.fourleaf.co.uk

"We never actually aim to recruit graduates as such, however, we look at every person who emails us and if they look interesting then we'll consider them. Typically we find that main issue with graduates can be that of mindset. They might have great design skills, for example, but aren't very switched on as to how the industry works and what's involved. Being a good designer isn't really enough – you've got to be a team player, be articulate about your work. If you can't do that with us then it's doubtful you could do it with a client if need be."

Typically we like a simple email to introduce themselves with a CV and most importantly examples of their work. GCSEs and A-Levels aren't really that important if you're good at what you do. But also, remember to be interesting and unique. You're not applying for a job with a bank, so don't start your email with 'Dear Sirs'. A great one I got recently had as a subject line "will work for food", which I thought was great."



Build an email response form for your website

The brief

On the CD

Tutorial files:
Contact.php,
Styles.css,
Thankyou.html

Tutorial objective

Create a form using Dreamweaver and the PHP Server Model

Time required

One hour

Skill level

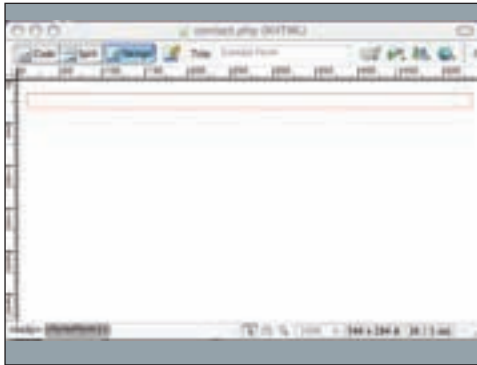


Using a contact form allows your visitors to get in touch easily, and you can create your own form using Dreamweaver and the PHP Server Model

USING A CONTACT form on your website can be preferable to simply publishing your email address, as it prevents your email address being picked up by spammers who crawl websites looking for email addresses to add to their lists. In addition, if there are specific things that someone needs to tell you for you to answer their query, you can add these questions as fields within the form and make them required for the form to be submitted. In this tutorial we will create

an attractive form using the CSS tools within Dreamweaver 8, addressing accessibility by using the accessibility options within the Dreamweaver form dialog boxes.

We will then post the form to a script which will email the contents to your email address. To test this form locally you will need to have a web server installed running PHP, and to use it on a live site your website hosting provider will need to have PHP installed.



01 Create the form

Start by opening the page in Dreamweaver to which you want to add the form; I am working in a new document so that you can see the form code clearly. Save the page as PHP (my example will be called 'contact.php'). Using the Form Pane of the Insert Toolbar, insert a form.



02 The form action

When we add our PHP code to email this form we will be adding it to this page, so the form needs to submit to itself. Select the form and with the Properties Inspector set the method of the form to POST and the action of the form to your page filename, in my case 'contact.php'.



03 Accessibility preferences

Before we add any fields, check that Dreamweaver is set up to prompt you for the accessibility preferences for the form fields. To do this, open Dreamweaver Preferences, make sure the checkbox for Show Preferences for Form Objects is checked and click OK to confirm this.



04 Add a div

We are going to position the form elements without using a table, so I am going to place each form label and text field inside a div element. Click inside the form and then click Insert Div Tag on the Layout Pane of the Insert Toolbar. Delete the placeholder text.



05 Creating a text input field

Click inside the div and then use the Forms pane of the Insert Toolbar to insert a text field into the form. A dialog box will display, so enter 'Name' as the Label and select to attach the label with the 'for' attribute. Click OK, and the form field and label will be entered.



06 The text input properties

Select the text input field and in the Properties Inspector change the name of the field to 'name'. You will now need to switch into Code View and find the label for this field. Change the value of 'for="textfield"' to 'for="name"', as the value of the 'for' attribute must be the same as the ID.



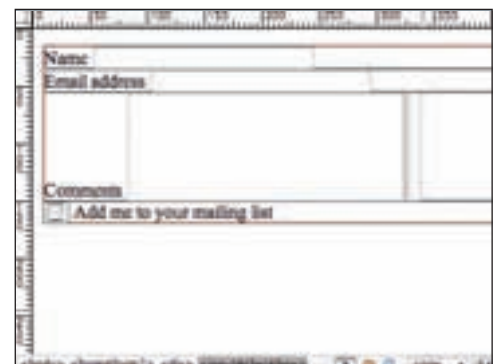
07 Drop in the email field

Repeat the process of the last three steps, adding a div and a new text input field – this time named 'email' to capture the user's address. Change the label for attribute in the Code View after adding the field. Our next step will be to add a textarea for the user's comments.



08 Add the comments box

Add a third div tag and insert a textarea using the Insert toolbar. Give this a label of Comments. In the Properties Inspector name it 'comments' (change the for attribute to 'comments' in Code View). Staying in the Properties Inspector, set Char Width to 30 and Num Lines to 6.



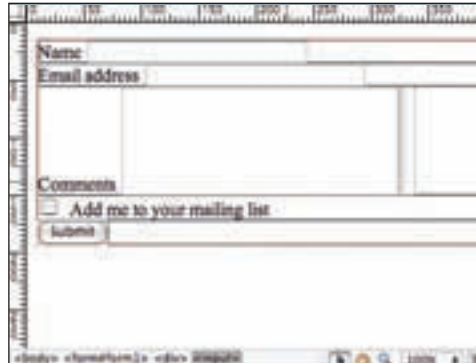
09 An opt-in checkbox

To be able to add users to a mailing list you need to have their permission to do so. Having a checkbox on your form they can tick to give you their consent is one way to do this. Add another div and then insert a checkbox with a label of 'Add me to your mailing list'.



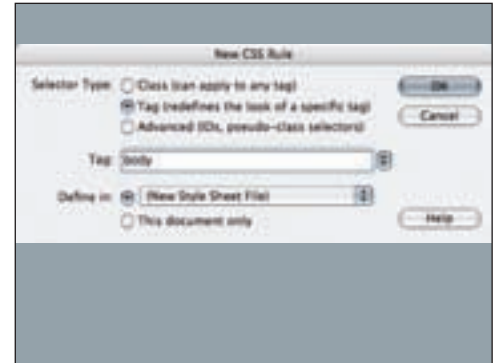
10 The checkbox value

Select the checkbox and in the Property Inspector set the name to 'mailing' and the checked value to true (if the user has checked the form this will be in the form POST). The default state should be unchecked as this is opt-in. Don't forget to edit the label for attribute to be 'mailing'.



11 The submit button

The final form element we will need to add is a submit button. Once again insert a div and then inside the div insert a submit button. The submit button does not need a label tag so select 'No label tag' in the dialog. In the Properties Inspector give the button a value of Submit.



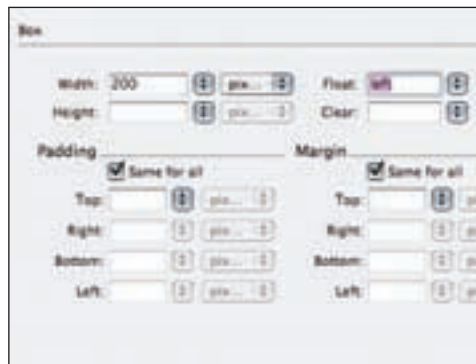
12 Adding a stylesheet

Create your stylesheet by opening the CSS Panel and clicking New CSS Rule. Select to create a rule for a Tag and select Body. Create this rule in a new stylesheet file and Dreamweaver will prompt you to save the file when you click OK.



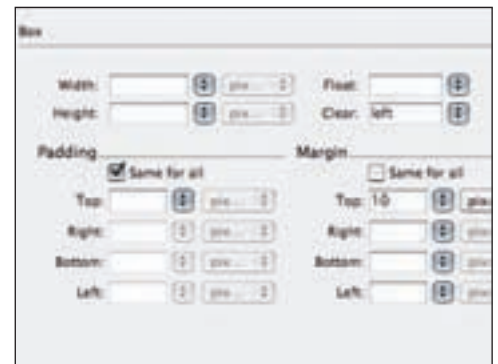
13 Styling the body

After saving your stylesheet, in the CSS Rules dialog add style for the body setting the font style, colour and the background colour. If you are working on an existing site to add a contact form then you may skip this step and add your rules to an existing stylesheet already attached.



14 Style the form labels

We want all of our labels to line up, so to achieve this create a new CSS Rule for the label tag and set the label to float left with a width of 200 pixels. Click OK to create this rule and you should see the form fields all line up along their left-hand edge.



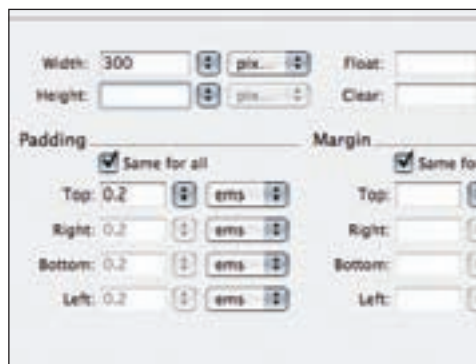
15 Styling the containing divs

To make sure our form fields remain on new lines, create a New CSS Rule for #form1 div. This addresses any div within the form with an ID of form1. In the Block category set the Clear property to left and then give the div a top margin of ten pixels to create some space.



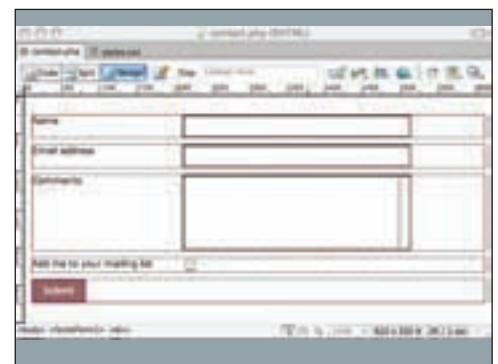
16 Style the text input fields

Create a new CSS Rule, this time choosing to create a class. Name the class 'text'. We are going to create rules that affect text input fields that have a class of 'text' applied to them. In the Dialog go to the Border category and create an inset two-pixel border.



17 Width and padding

Now go to the Block category and choosing 'same for all'. Give the field 0.2 ems of padding. Set the width of the field to 300 pixels. Click OK to create your rule for .text. To apply the rule to your field select the fields and use the class dropdown in the Property Inspector.



18 Style the Submit button

Create a new CSS Rule for the button, creating a class named 'btn'. In Border give the button a two-pixel solid border, in the Block category give 0.2 ems of padding, choose a background and button colour and OK. Apply the class to your button using the Property Inspector.



19 The completed form

If you preview your form in the browser you should see the effect of the styles you have created in the completed form. We now need to complete the form by writing the script that will enable users of the site to send you an email by completing the form.

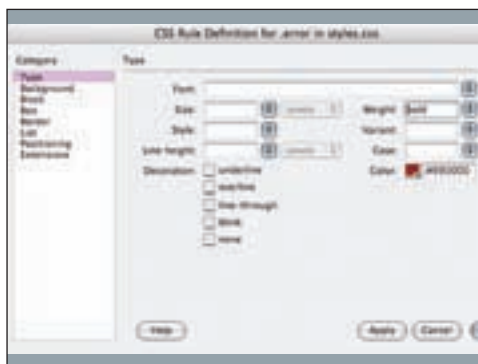
```
1 <?php
2 if(isset($_POST['name'])) {
3     $name = $_POST['name'];
4     $email = $_POST['email'];
5     $comments = $_POST['comments'];
6     $mailing = $_POST['mailing'];
7 }
8 $err = true;
9 $msg = "Please complete your name, email address
10 and comments to submit the form.";
11
12 <?DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN"
13 "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">
14 <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">
15 <head>
16 <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=
17 utf-8"/>
18 <title>Contact Form</title>
19 <link href="styles.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" />
20 </head>
```

21 Check the form is completed

We don't want to let a form through if the user hasn't completed the fields. Add the following code:

```
1 if($name == "" or $email == "" or $comments == "") {
2     $err = true;
3     $msg = 'Please complete your name, email address and
4     comments to submit the form.';
5 }
6
```

This code creates a message on incomplete forms.



23 Styling the error

In the last step we gave p a class of error, in Dreamweaver create a new CSS Rule for the class 'error', making the error message red and bold so that it stands out and the user can see that the form has not submitted and what they need to do to complete it.

```
1 <?php
2 if(isset($_POST['Submit'])) {
3     $name = $_POST['name'];
4     $email = $_POST['email'];
5     $comments = $_POST['comments'];
6     $mailing = $_POST['mailing'];
7 }
```

20 Posting the form

Switch into Code view and go to the very top of the document – above the DOCTYPE. Add the following:

```
1 <?php
2 if(isset($_POST['Submit'])) {
3     $name = $_POST['name'];
4     $email = $_POST['email'];
5     $comments = $_POST['comments'];
6     $mailing = $_POST['mailing'];
7 }
8
```


We check with this code to see if the form has been posted, if so write the contents to variables.

```
1 <?php
2 if(isset($_POST['Submit'])) {
3     $name = $_POST['name'];
4     $email = $_POST['email'];
5     $comments = $_POST['comments'];
6     $mailing = $_POST['mailing'];
7 }
8
9 $err = true;
10 $msg = "Please complete your name, email address
11 and comments to submit the form.";
12
13 <?DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN"
14 "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">
15 <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">
16 <head>
17 <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=
18 utf-8"/>
19 <title>Contact Form</title>
20 <link href="styles.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" />
21 </head>
```

22 Display the message

To display the message we created in the last step find the place in the document just before the opening form tag, and add the following PHP code to display the message if \$err == true.

```
1 <?php
2 if($err == true) {
3     echo '<p class="error">'. $msg . '</p>';
4 }
5
```



24 Testing the error message

View the form through your web server in a browser. Do not complete any of the fields, or leave one of them blank, and then click the submit button. The page will now refresh and display the error message that you entered in bold red text to alert the user to the problem.

Technique

Pre-filling the form on error

If a user has tried to send a form with insufficient info, we can fix it so their text stays put when they get the error

```
1 <?php
2 if(isset($_POST['Submit'])) {
3     $name = $_POST['name'];
4     $email = $_POST['email'];
5     $comments = $_POST['comments'];
6     $mailing = $_POST['mailing'];
7 }
8
9 $err = true;
10 $msg = "Please complete your name, email address
11 and comments to submit the form.";
12
13 <?DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN"
14 "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">
15 <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">
16 <head>
17 <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=
18 utf-8"/>
19 <title>Contact Form</title>
20 <link href="styles.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" />
21 </head>
```

1: Losing data

If the user submits the form missing one field they will lose the data they entered and will have to complete the form again. We wrote the data into variables, so can write it into the fields.

```
1 <?php echo $name; ?>
2
3 value="<?php echo $email; ?>"
```

2: Add the data

In Code View find each field and add a value="" to the mark-up. Between the quotes for the value you need to use PHP tags then echo the value of the relevant variable.

```
value="<?php echo $name; ?>"
```



3: Prefilled data

Add the value for each of your text and textarea fields and then try submitting with just one form not completed. The data from the other fields should remain in the text fields after the form has been submitted.

```
<?php
if(!is_array($_POST)) {
    $name = $_POST['name'];
    $email = $_POST['email'];
    $comments = $_POST['comments'];
    $mailing = $_POST['mailing'];
    if($name == '' or $email == '' or $comments == '' or $mailing == 'no') {
        $err = true;
        $msg = 'Please complete your name, email address and comments to submit this form.';
    } else {
        $mailing = 'The following email has been sent from the contact form.';
        $mailing .= 'Name: ' . $name . "\n";
        $mailing .= 'Email: ' . $email . "\n";
        $mailing .= 'Comments: ' . $comments . "\n";
        $mailing .= 'I would like to be added to the mailing list.';
    }
}
```

25 If the form is completed

If the form has been completed we'll send it to an email address. Go back to the code at the top of the page and find the closing curly bracket after the \$msg is created. After this bracket type 'else' then an opening curly bracket, hit return and add a closing curly bracket.

```
if($err == true) {
    $err = true;
    $msg = 'Please complete your name, email address and comments to submit this form.';
} else {
    $mailing = 'The following email has been sent from the contact form.';
    $mailing .= 'Name: ' . $name . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'Email: ' . $email . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'Comments: ' . $comments . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'I would like to be added to the mailing list.';
}
```

26 Create the email

Between the brackets we can create our email text by adding the following code, building up a string called \$mailing:

```
$mailing = 'The following email has been sent from the contact form.' . "\n\n";
$mailing .= 'Name: ' . $name . "\n";
$mailing .= 'Email: ' . $email . "\n";
$mailing .= 'Comments: ' . $comments . "\n";
$mailing .= 'I would like to be added to the mailing list.';
```

```
if($err == true) {
    $err = true;
    $msg = 'Please complete your name, email address and comments to submit this form.';
} else {
    $mailing = 'The following email has been sent from the contact form.';
    $mailing .= 'Name: ' . $name . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'Email: ' . $email . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'Comments: ' . $comments . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'I would like to be added to the mailing list.';
}
```

27 Check for mailing preferences

We need to indicate if our user wants to go on the mailing list. Check if \$mailing == true with the following code.

```
if($mailing == 'true') {
    $mailing = 'I would like to be added to the mailing list.';
}
```

This statement will only add the text if mailing = true.

In detail

Working with strings in PHP

How we have worked with strings of text and variables in PHP code to create an email message



WHEN WE CREATE our email message in this tutorial we are creating and adding to a string using PHP. When working with any server-side language you will work with strings a lot, creating email messages such as this one or printing out data to the screen.

We create a string in PHP in the way we did to start creating our email:

\$mailing = 'The following email has been sent from the contact form:'

Now the variable \$mailing contains the text within the single quotes. If we echo \$mailing to the page it will write out that exact text. If I then want to add some additional text to the string, as in the case of the email where I want to add the lines of data containing the name, email address and comments text, I need to concatenate my existing string with the next string of text. To do this I can use:

\$mailing .= 'The next string'

The .= means 'add this string to the end of the existing string'. If I just use an equal sign then the text of the new string would overwrite what was already in \$mailing rather than adding to the end of it.

If you just want to join two string together you simply use a period (.):

\$msg = 'String One and ' . 'String Two';

You may have noticed at the end of lines in the email I have added . "\n\n". This will add a line break to the end of the line so that when the message is read in an email as plain text the line breaks are added and the message doesn't run together as one block of text.

```
<?php
if(!is_array($_POST)) {
    $name = $_POST['name'];
    $email = $_POST['email'];
    $comments = $_POST['comments'];
    $mailing = $_POST['mailing'];
    if($name == '' or $email == '' or $comments == '' or $mailing == 'no') {
        $err = true;
        $msg = 'Please complete your name, email address and comments to submit this form.';
    } else {
        $mailing = 'The following email has been sent from the contact form.';
        $mailing .= 'Name: ' . $name . "\n";
        $mailing .= 'Email: ' . $email . "\n";
        $mailing .= 'Comments: ' . $comments . "\n";
        $mailing .= 'I would like to be added to the mailing list.';
    }
}
```

We created a string to display an error message and then used echo to print it out to the page

```
$mailing = 'The following email has been sent from the contact form.';
$mailing .= 'Name: ' . $name . "\n";
$mailing .= 'Email: ' . $email . "\n";
$mailing .= 'Comments: ' . $comments . "\n";
$mailing .= 'I would like to be added to the mailing list.';
```

The email message is created by adding several strings together and adding new strings to the end of the message

```
if($err == true) {
    $err = true;
    $msg = 'Please complete your name, email address and comments to submit this form.';
} else {
    $mailing = 'The following email has been sent from the contact form.';
    $mailing .= 'Name: ' . $name . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'Email: ' . $email . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'Comments: ' . $comments . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'I would like to be added to the mailing list.';
}
```

28 Check for odd data

You need to take care that people are not trying to use your forms to send spam, so as a quick check look for newline characters in the email field:

```
if (ereg("r", $email) || ereg("n", $email)) {
    die("spam!");
} else {
```

Read up more on protecting forms at: www.securephpwiki.com/index.php/Email_Injection.

```
if($err == true) {
    $err = true;
    $msg = 'Please complete your name, email address and comments to submit this form.';
} else {
    $mailing = 'The following email has been sent from the contact form.';
    $mailing .= 'Name: ' . $name . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'Email: ' . $email . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'Comments: ' . $comments . "\n";
    $mailing .= 'I would like to be added to the mailing list.';
}
```

29 Send the email

We can now send our email, add the following code to the form:

```
if(mail('you@yourdomain.com', 'Contact Form',
    $mailing, 'From: noreply@example.com')) {
    header("Location: thankyou.html");
}
```

Replace you@yourdomain.com with the email address you would like the form contents to be emailed to. This will send the mail and redirect the user to a thank you page.

Insert toolbar

- The Forms Pane of the Insert Toolbar enables the insertion of form elements to the page

CSS rules

- The CSS panel gives you quick access to the CSS rules that you have created

Split view

- With Dreamweaver in Split view you can see both the Design view and the PHP code you are writing

PHP code

- This PHP code processes the form when it is posted and sends the final email

PHP marker

- Custom PHP that Dreamweaver doesn't understand displays as a PHP marker icon in Design View

File panel

- In this email tutorial we create three files, the form, the thank you page and a stylesheet



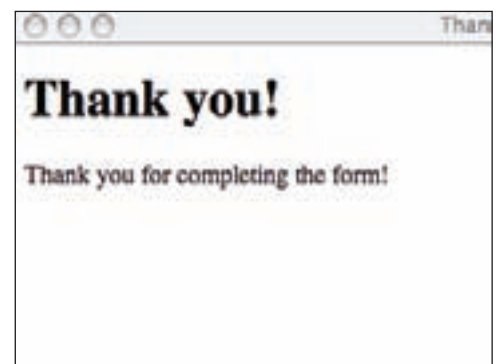
30 The thank you page

Create a new page within Dreamweaver as part of your site and save it as 'thankyou.html' (or whatever you have called your redirection on email page). Add some text to this page to let the user know that their email has been sent and what you will do now, such as contact them.



31 Test the form

You should now be able to view your form in your web browser and complete the form fields. When you submit the form an email will be sent to your specified email address and then you will be redirected to the thank you page that you have created.



32 If the email doesn't arrive

If you're working locally, check you have a mailserver set up to be able to send mail with PHP. If you are working on a live server, check that the address you're using is allowed to send mail – some hosts require that the to or from are from the domain registered with your account.

Tech support Dreamweaver

Our Dreamweaver expert **Steve Jenkins** goes another round with your coding problems to find the knockout solution

Q

Smart linking

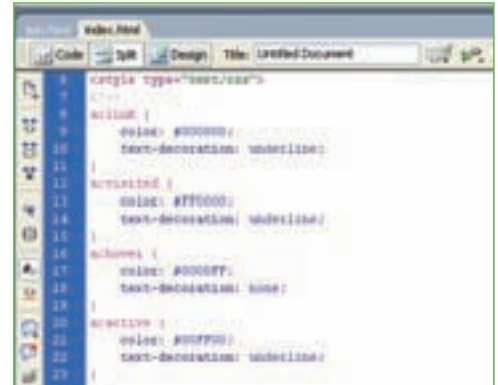
While browsing the web I have noticed a lot of sites have a different slant on the standard text link. Some have text links without any underlines, while others have a sort of rollover effect, ie, when the cursor is placed over the link it changes colour. I would like to incorporate at least one of these techniques – if not both – into my site.

A

The answer to this poser lies in the realms of the web designer's favourite little helper, CSS. The simple option is for Dreamweaver to add the various style codes to the current page via Page Properties found on the Modify menu.

text links, while adding `a:visited {color: #333333;}` determines the colour of the link once it has been visited. To add the hover effect (where the link changes colour when the cursor is placed over the link) simply add the following `a:hover {color: #666666;}`.

To create a colour for the link that is currently active add `a:active {color: #999999;}`. Finally, to select an underline style, eg, no underline, the help of the text-decoration tag is needed. Add text-decoration after each piece of link code, eg, `a:link {color: #000000; text-decoration: none;}`, using none equals no underline. To only show an underline on selection



Make sure to experiment with the colours to achieve the maximum impact with the theme of your site

I have created and text that I have written myself. But I would like to protect my content and images from unauthorised use. What do you suggest?

A

Unfortunately, there is no foolproof solution, but there are plenty of options to help protect the content of a website. To indicate that the content of the page is copyrighted the following code can be placed between the HEAD tags.

```
<META NAME=COPYRIGHT  
CONTENT=Copyright 2006 www.mysite.  
com All rights reserved.
```

Simply add your website address or company name in place of **www.mysite.com**. In addition, add a copyright notice on every page to inform visitors that the content is protected.

For physical protection, the right-click function can be disabled. This will ensure that the Save option found on the right-click menu is not available. Head to <http://javascript.internet.com/page-details/disable-images-click.html> to download the code. This only offers limited protection, but will deter the casual visitor. To add additional protection to images the inclusion of a watermark is a good idea. If a visitor wishes to use one of your images in their original state they will need to contact you first.

Alternatively, the copyright information can be embedded into the image itself by using a digital watermarking program. This will make the copyright information invisible to the naked eye. Another simple solution, if using tables, is to add the image as a background image. The only way to guarantee protection is to remove the content altogether.

“ There are plenty of options to help protect the content of a website ”

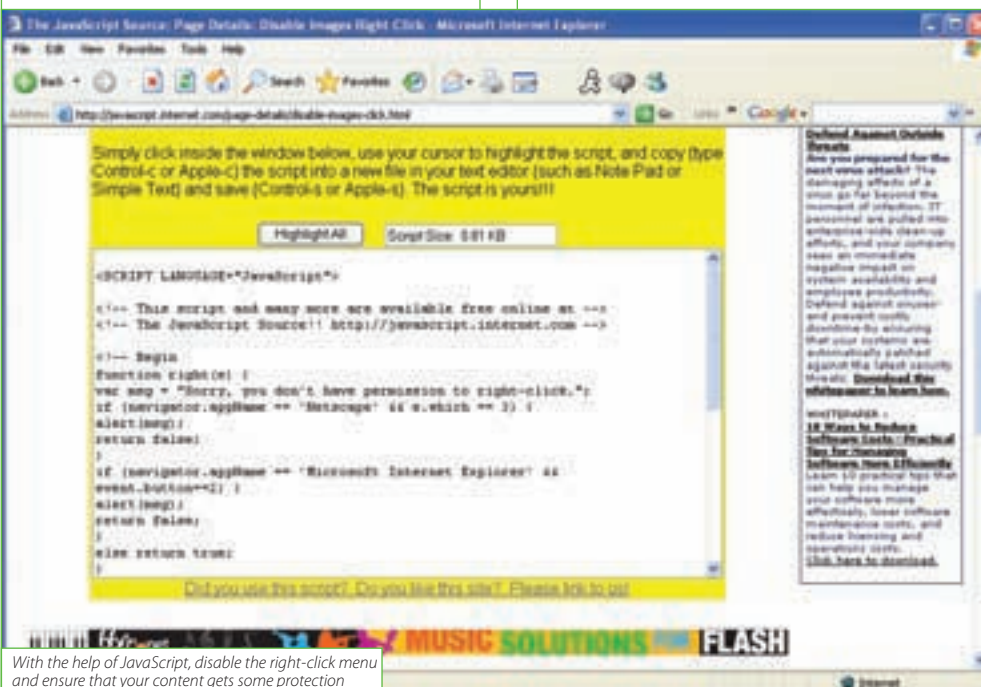
Under the Links category lies a selection of options to change the colour of the links in their various states or to select an underline style. This option is ideal for the single-page approach, but fails miserably if applying a style across a site. The answer here is to create a new stylesheet and attach or link to all the pages within the site. The code is simple enough, `a:link {color: #000000;}` dictates the colour of any

of a link, text decoration should equal underline under `a:hover` while the rest should be none. Reverse this action to hide the underline on selection of a link.

Q

The right moves

I have spent a long time creating my web pages and the majority of the content has been exclusively created by myself. This includes photographs I have taken, images



With the help of JavaScript, disable the right-click menu and ensure that your content gets some protection

If you have a problem, and no one else can help, send it in to the *Web Designer* team! We'll do our best to print your problems on our pages, but we cannot reply personally to every email.

SEND YOUR QUERIES TO:
webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk



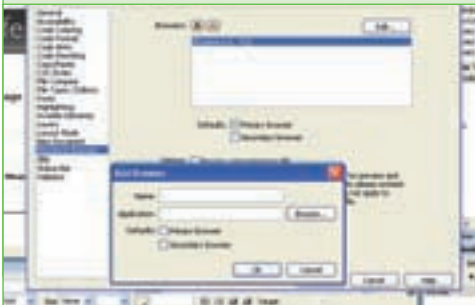
Your expert

Steve Jenkins is a keen designer and developer who started creating websites after attending Bournemouth University, and loves tackling the most testing of Dreamweaver problems. He has been a keen Dreamweaver advocate since the heady days of version three, creating a wide range of sites for clients and for personal use. To see a sample of Steve's work take a visit to www.thesouthend.co.uk

Expert advice

■ Setting preferences

As you would expect, Dreamweaver has a whole set of default preferences in place. However, these will not be applicable to every user's method of working. To view and modify any of the Preferences first head to the Edit menu. By default the General category is on offer which includes the option to show/hide the Start page. Editing options are also available including the option to set the Spelling dictionary to English (British). Other useful categories include Preview in Browser, ideal for setting up different browsers for testing compatibility.



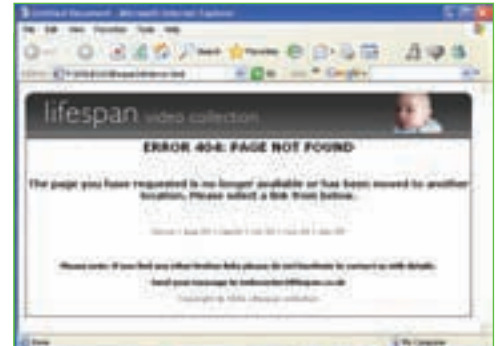
Q

Error fix

Checking through my website the other day I found that several of the links were no longer active. By default, the web browser displays a standard Page Not Found error message. Although this is an adequate solution I would like to give my site a touch of class and provide my own custom error message, thus giving visitors a range of personalised information and links.

A

Creating your own custom error message is essentially a two-part process. The first step is to create a page that contains all the elements that you want to appear in the custom error message page. To start with, create a new HTML page in Dreamweaver or use a template that you have created previously. Then add any necessary images, text and links. When creating a custom error page it is a good idea to create your own custom message. This should contain a message along the lines of 'The page you have requested is no longer available or has been moved to another location. Please select a link from below'. If the page has been deleted you need at least a link back to the home



Create your very own custom error message to ensure that your visitors get the complete site experience

page. If the page has been moved a link to the new location is ideal.

Once the page has been created the next step is to upload it to your FTP server (in the main directory is fine). Your FTP server will probably have a .htaccess file located in the root directory. This needs to be modified to include the following: ErrorDocument 404 http://www.mysite.com/404error.html. The address should be changed to include the absolute location of your error page. If the file does not exist, create your own using a text editor or contact your ISP for more details. ■

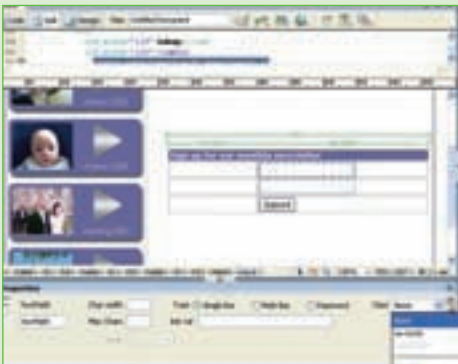
Technique: Creating custom forms

Q

My site has several forms that have the standard look and feel that you get with Dreamweaver. I would like to get a little more creative with the forms so that they blend in with the theme of the site or page. In addition, I would like to make sure that certain input fields are compulsory. Can you help?

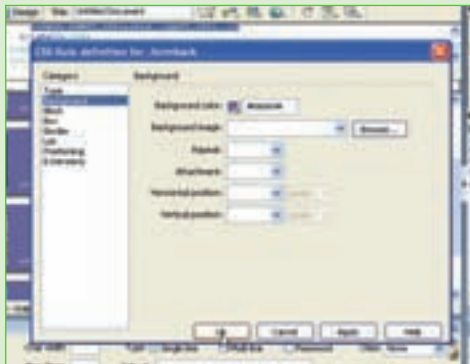
A

The standard form components for Dreamweaver are certainly a little dull, grey and workmanlike. However, with the use of CSS and Behaviours you will be able to get your forms looking and functioning as you want. Dreamweaver allows you to apply a style from an attached stylesheet. If the style you want is not available you simply create a new class to suit.



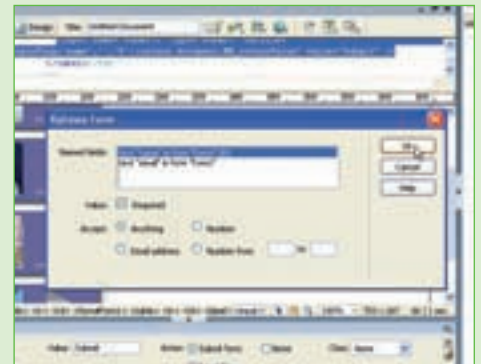
01 Text styling

Open the form page you wish to edit and make sure that the appropriate stylesheet is attached. To apply a text style to a field in the form, select the appropriate field followed by the style from the Class drop-down list in the Properties window.



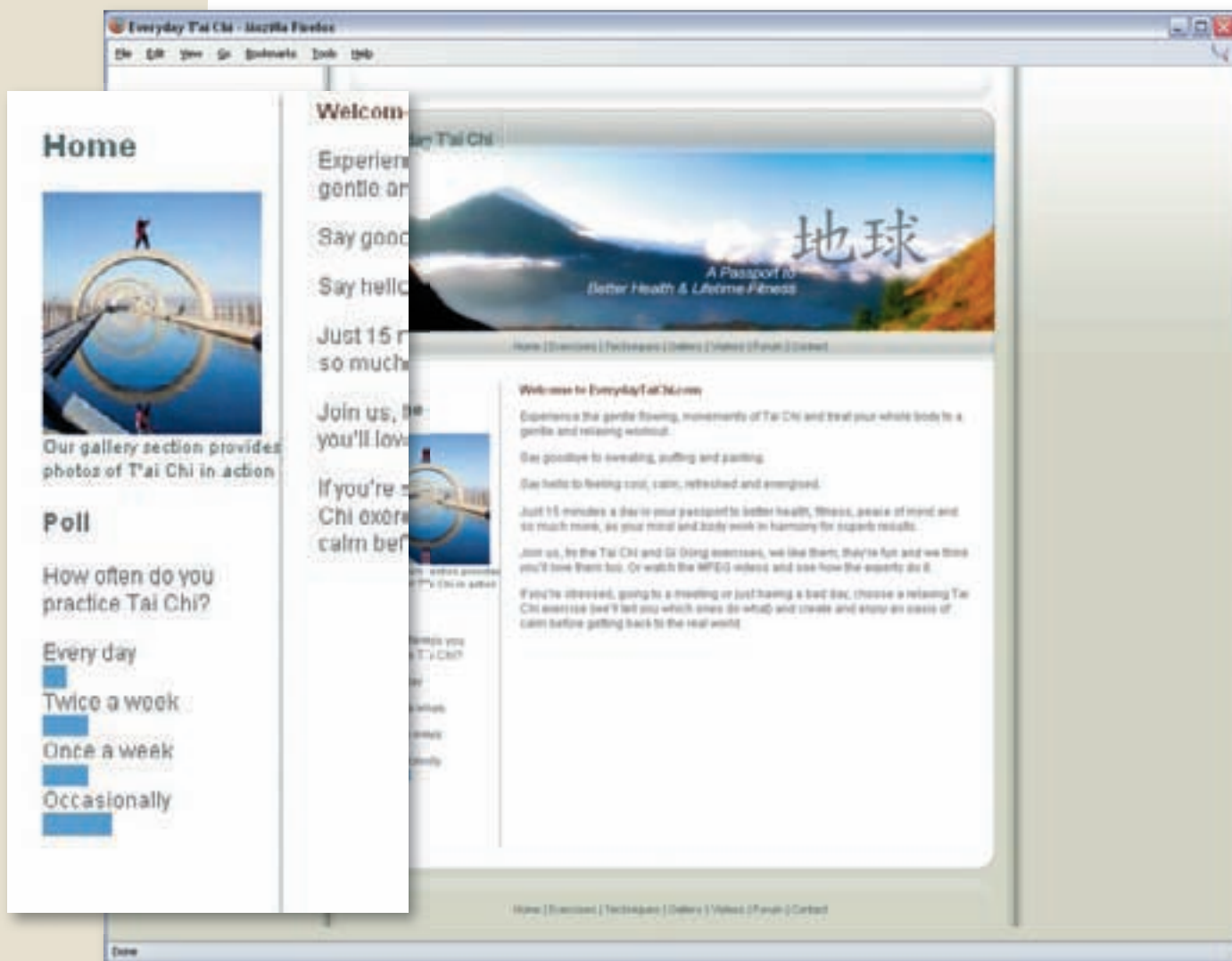
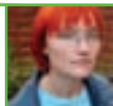
02 A class above

To give a form field a background colour as well as styled text you need to create a new class in the stylesheet. Click New CSS Rule, name the class and press OK. Select the Font, Size, Color, etc, before heading to Background. Select Background color and press Apply and OK.



03 Validate form

Open Behaviors (Window>Behaviors) and select the Submit button. Click the '+' button and select Validate Form to view available fields. Select a field and activate the Value: Required check box. This will ensure that the required info is entered before the form is submitted.



The brief

On the CD

Tutorial files:
N/A

Tutorial objective

Create a poll using Dreamweaver MX with PHP and MySQL

Time required

Two hours

Skill level



Add a website poll with PHP and MySQL

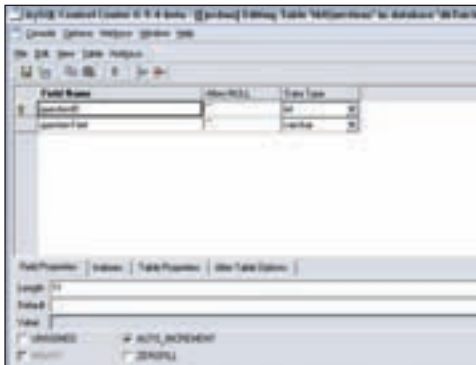
Although you've nailed a site together you need feedback from your visitors, so include a poll and monitor what your users really think!

PUTTING A POLL on a website gives your users a way to interact with the site, its developers and other like-minded people. The poll might be just for fun, or might have a use in helping to decide the direction of your site and what you offer, and will offer in the future, to visitors.

To develop a poll you need a way of displaying a question and the possible answers, plus a way to store the choices that people make. You will also want to display the results to

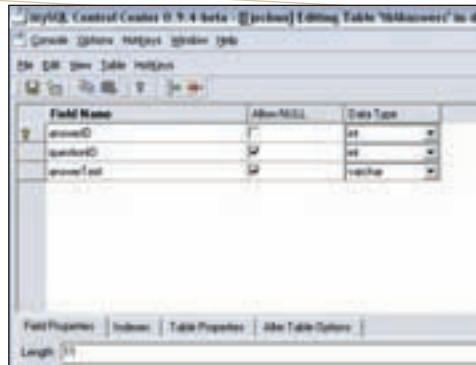
your users after they have voted and to prevent, as well as you can, users voting multiple times.

In this tutorial we will use PHP and MySQL to develop a poll with a database that stores the questions, answers and responses. If you need some help in getting started check the boxouts for links to sites that will help you install your development environment for working with PHP and MySQL in Dreamweaver.



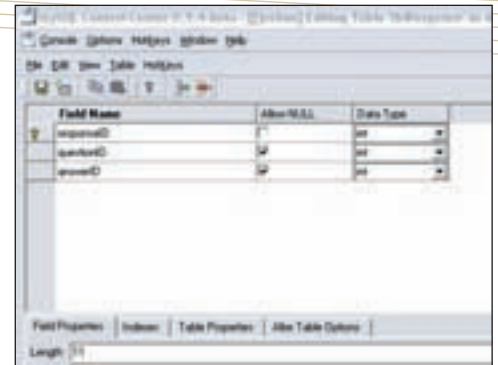
01 Create a table for the questions

With MySQL Control Center or another MySQL tool, create a table named tblQuestions with the fields: questionID, which is an int, should be set to 'auto_increment' and as the Primary Key; and questionText, which is a varchar size 255.



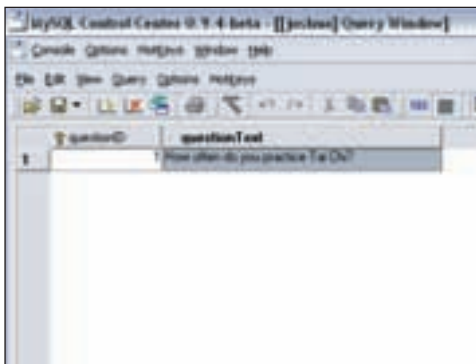
02 Table for the possible answers

Create a new table named tblAnswers, with a field answerID, which is an int, set to 'auto_increment' and is the Primary Key. questionID is an int and will contain the questionID for the linked question; and answerText, which is a varchar with a size of 255.



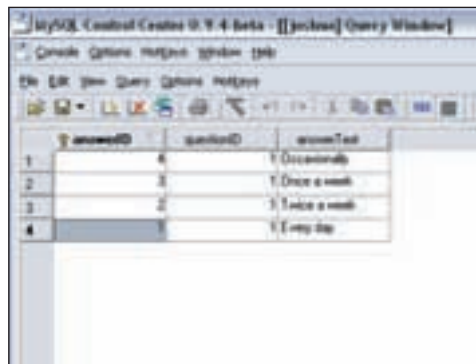
03 Storing responses

The table tblResponses contains the fields: questionID int, answerID int and responseID int, auto_increment Primary Key. A row in this table indicates a response from a user, questionID is the question they are responding to from tblQuestions, and answerID the answer they selected.



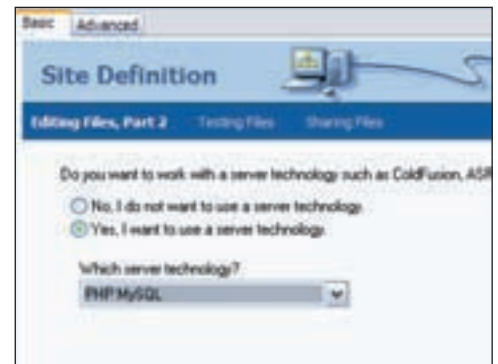
04 Add a question to the tables

We can now add a question to tblQuestions. Let's create a poll to see how frequently the visitors to our site practice Tai Chi. To create the new question, add a row to tblQuestions with the following inserted into the questionText field: "How often do you practice Tai Chi?"



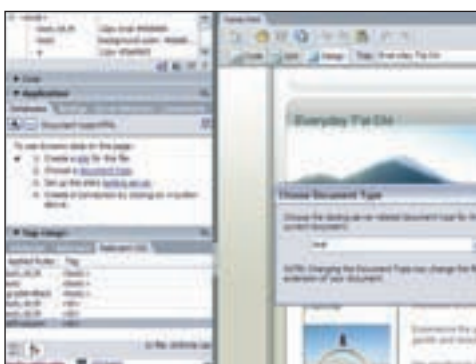
05 Add some possible answers

Add the possible answers to the question to tblAnswers. For each row that you add, questionID will be completed with the value of the questionID from tblQuestions – if you have just created the table this will be 1. Add some possible answers to the question, one per table row.



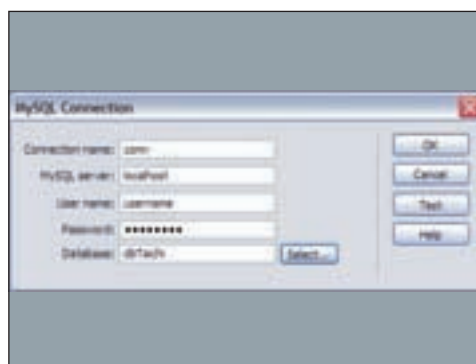
06 Set up the site for PHP

We need to set up our site in Dreamweaver to use PHP. You will need to have Apache, PHP and MySQL on your computer or local network. Edit your site in Dreamweaver and in the Site Definition wizard select to use a Server Technology, choosing PHP MySQL from the list.



07 Convert home.html to PHP

To display our poll on the home page we need to make the home page a PHP page. Open the home page in Dreamweaver. In the Application panel click the link choose a document type. Select PHP from the list. This will change your document from .html to .php.



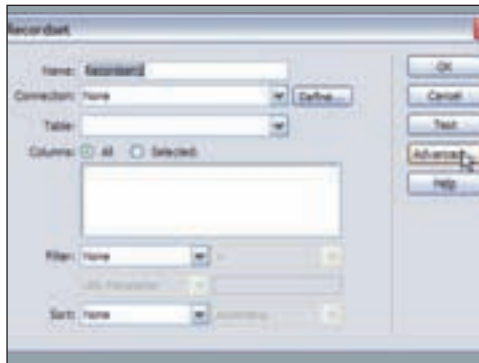
08 Connect to the database

In the Databases panel click the '+' and select MySQL. In the dialog box that opens complete the connection information for your database server and the database you have created. Click OK to create the database connection for your website.



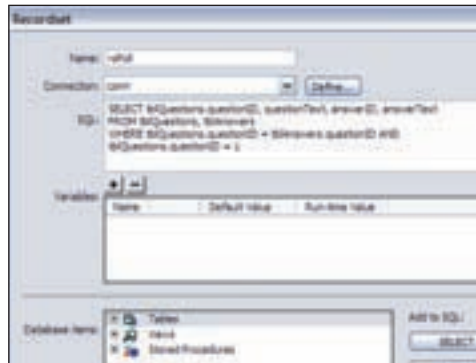
09 The poll on the page

We need to decide where to place the poll on our home page, a good location might be in the sidebar underneath the 'gallery' section text, because the poll is going to be a short question and a few answers. A longer poll might need a large place on the page.



10 Create the recordset

To create the recordset click on the '+' in the Bindings panel and select Recordset from the menu. The Recordset dialog will open. The recordset that we need to create will cross two tables however, so we will need to switch to the Advanced Recordset dialog to do so.



11 Getting advanced

In the SQL box, type: **SELECT tblQuestions.questionID, questionText, answerID, answerText FROM tblQuestions, tblAnswers WHERE tblQuestions.questionID = tblAnswers.answerID AND tblQuestions.questionID = 1.** You'll see the answers in questionID and questionText.



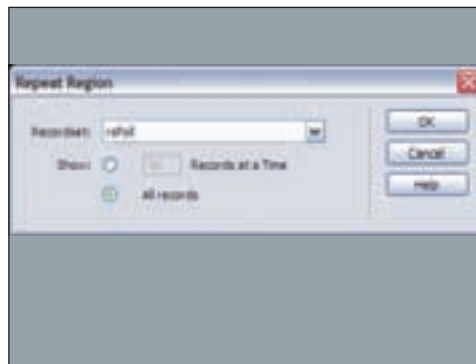
12 Use the recordset

Your recordset should appear in the Bindings panel, expand it to see the fields. We can now place the question onto the page by dragging questionText from the Bindings panel to the location we want to display it. A placeholder rsPoll.questionText displays in the location.



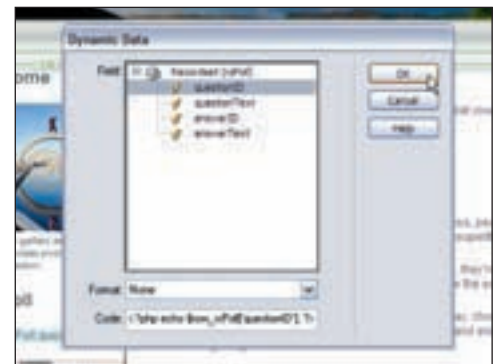
13 Display the answers

Insert a form into the page under your questionText placeholder and add a radio button. Name it answerID and in the Bindings panel select answerID and click Bind to bind the answerID to this radio button. Drag the answerText field from the panel next to the radio button.



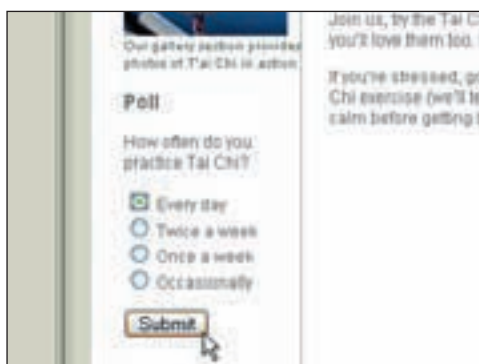
14 Repeat region

To display all of the possible answers to the questions, select your radio button and the question text. Once done, launch the Repeat Region dialog from the Server Behaviors panel menu. Choose to display All Records and then click OK to confirm.



15 Finish the poll display

To finish off the poll display we need to add a Submit button under the Repeat Region. Also add a hidden field, before the Repeat Region, with a name of questionID. In the Value field within the Properties Inspector. Click the lightning bolt and select questionID from the dialog.



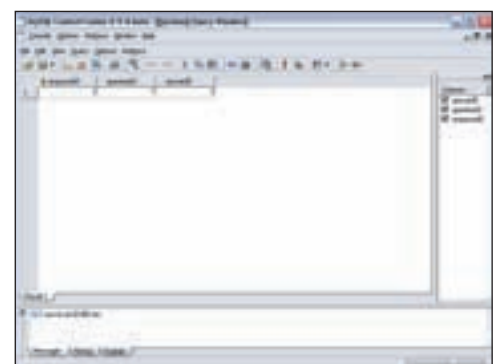
16 Wheel on the browser

View your site in the browser. You should see the question displayed with our possible answers underneath. If you View Source you should see that the radio buttons have a value of the ID of that record and that the hidden field contains the questionID as its value.



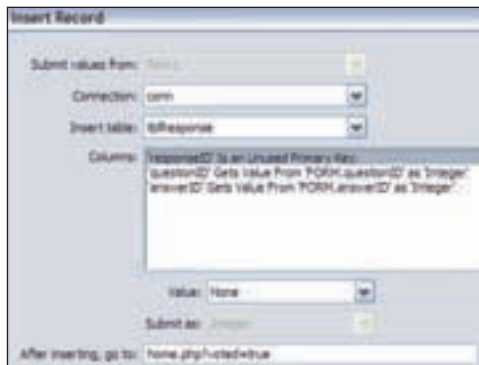
17 Submit the form

Back in Dreamweaver, select the form and set its action to home.php and the method to POST. Select the Connection conn; the table tblResponse and the questionID and answerID columns should map. After the insert you'll come back to the current page, home.php.



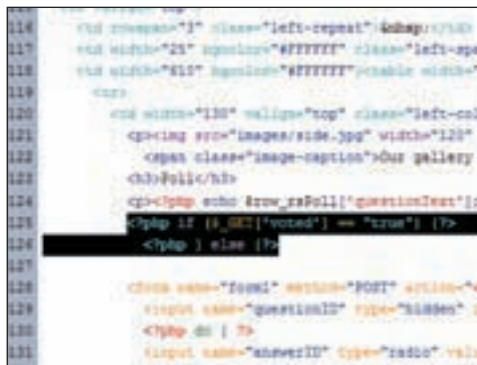
18 Voting in the poll

View the page through your server in the browser, select one of the options and press the Submit button. The page should appear to refresh. If you select All from tblResponse in MySQL you should see that you've voted in the poll with an entry inserted with this questionID.



19 Has a vote been cast?

After someone has voted we want to display the results. Open up the Insert Record behavior again and add a querystring with voted=true to the end of the home.php page, which is where the insert script redirects to. We can check for this to find out if the user has voted.



20 Get the results

It is far easier to handcode this section, so switch to Code view. Find the poll question code. After the question has been displayed add the following:

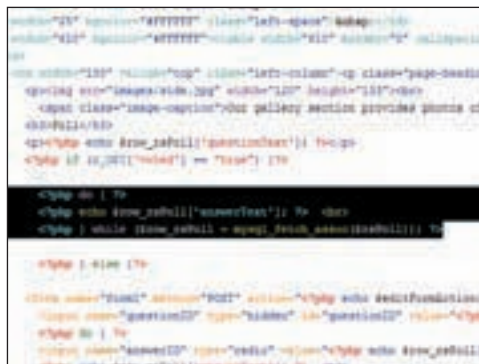
```
<?php if ($_GET['voted'] == "true") {?> <?php } else {?>
```

Then after the form add: <?php } ?>



21 Check in the browser

Your edit has worked if you come to the page without the querystring. You should see the poll displayed in the browser. If you vote the page should refresh with the querystring and you should only see the text of the question displayed under the heading for the poll.



22 Display the answers

In Code view, copy the following three lines of code after the line that checks whether voted = true: <?php do { ?>, <?php echo \$row_rsPoll['answerText']; ?>
 <?php } while (\$row_rsPoll = mysql_fetch_assoc(\$rsPoll)); ?> These will use the recordset for poll questions.



23 Count the results

After the bit of code that goes <? php do {?> add: <?php \$query_rsResult = "SELECT COUNT (answerID) FROM tblResponse WHERE answerID = " . \$row_rsPoll['answerID']; \$rsResult = mysql_query(\$query_rsResult, \$conn) or die(mysql_error()); \$n = mysql_fetch_array(\$rsResult); ?>

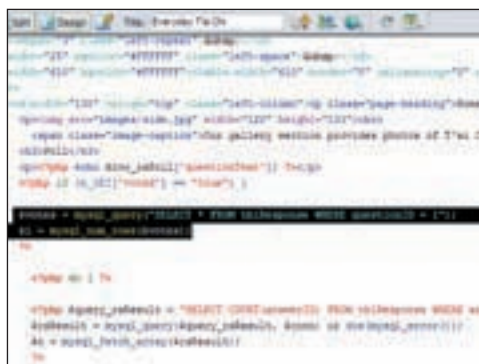
```
<strong><?php echo $n[0]?>
```

By doing that the code will create another recordset that will count up all of the results for the current answerID from the rsPoll recordset we created.



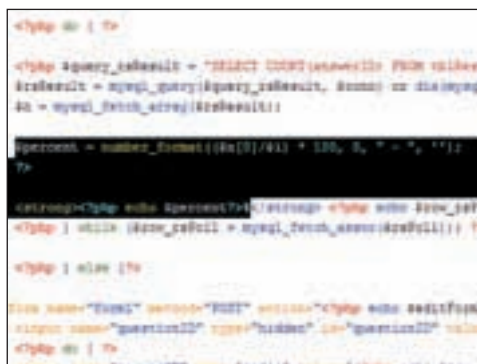
24 View the vote count

If you now view your page in the browser and cast a vote with the poll you should find that after voting the questions display again with a number before each one – this is the number of votes cast for that option. Cast a few votes to check it works.



25 Get the total

Add the following code to get the total number of votes: \$votes = mysql_query("SELECT * FROM tblResponse WHERE questionID = 1"); \$i = mysql_num_rows(\$votes); We need to get the total number of votes to calculate percentages of results.



26 Calculate percentages

Finally, calculate a percentage. In the loop after the line: \$n = mysql_fetch_array(\$rsResult); add the following: \$percent = number_format((\$n[0]/\$i) * 100, 0, ".", ""); Replace echo \$n[0] with echo \$percent and a & symbol to display this value.

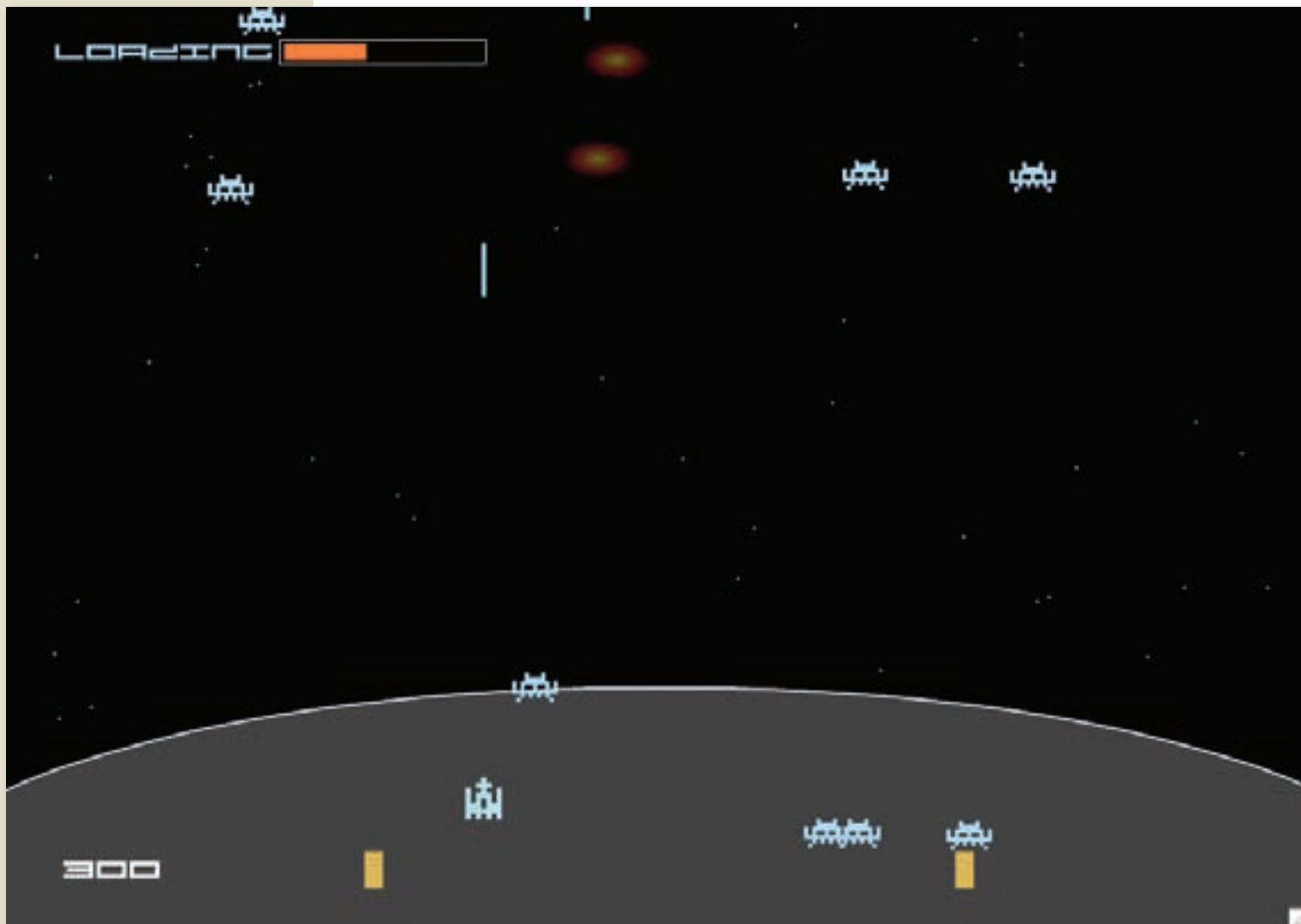


27 The poll

Your poll is now able to display a list of possible answers to a question, receive votes from visitors to your site and display the results of the vote in a percentage format after a user has voted. Check the boxouts to add more functionality to this simple poll script.



Mark Shufflebottom teaches on the BA Hons and MA Interactive Media Courses at Bournemouth University and has been a regular contributor to *Web Designer* for many issues. He likes nothing more than tinkering around with web code.



The brief

On the CD

Tutorial files:
Start.fla, Finished.fla

Tutorial objective

Build an old-school game as a preloader for a website

Time required

One hour

Skill level



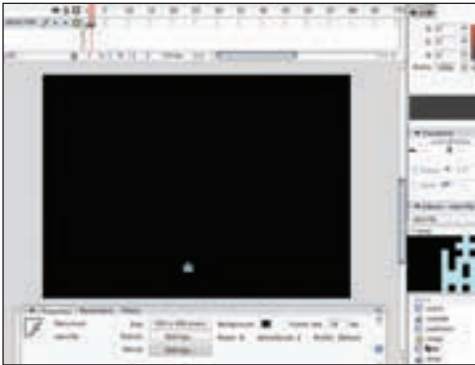
Add a retro game to your preloader

If you've got a site that takes longer to load than you'd like, why not entertain your browsers with an old-school arcade game?

FLASH IS BRILLIANT at delivering high-quality interactive websites, but one element of the site that is often overlooked is the preloader. Why waste the effort of creating a bog-standard loading bar with a pointless animation when you could already be engaging your visitors with highly interactive content?

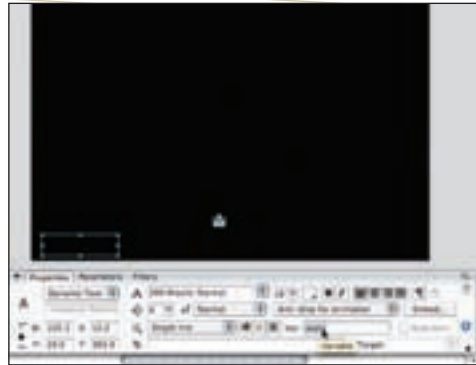
In this tutorial we will build an old-school arcade-style game that will keep the user entertained while the site loads.

The key to creating a game to use as a preloader is to keep the game graphics simple. If the users need a preloader to see a game that's supposed to be a preloader to the site, then you've failed. We're talking about the simple graphics found in the early days of arcade games, which can be slotted into a couple of kb at the start of your site. You also need your game to reflect the subject matter found in the site, so there are some tips on this in the tutorial as well.



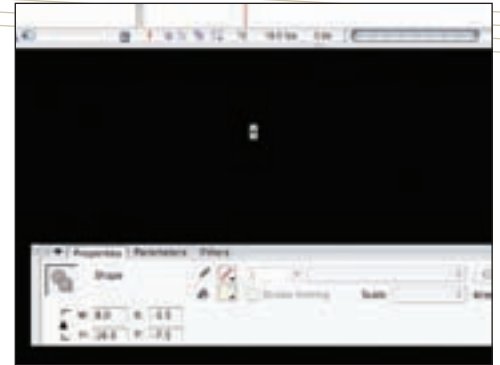
01 Open the file

From the cover CD open the file 'start.fla', which contains a few symbols in the library to jump-start the process. We are going to create the game first and the preloader second. Rename 'layer1' to 'game/interface'. From the library drag the symbol 'ship' to the stage.



02 Add the score

With the ship symbol selected on the stage, add the instance name of 'spaceShip'. Select the Text Tool and click in the bottom right of the stage. Make the text dynamic, select a suitable font and change the colour to white. Add the variable name of 'score'.



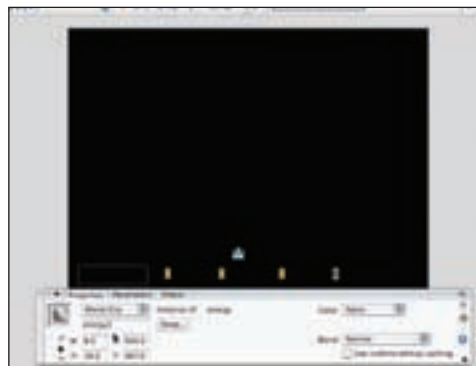
03 Make energy pods

Create a new symbol (Ctrl+F8) in the library. Name it 'energy' and make it a Movie Clip, then click OK. Now draw a small orange rectangle. Select frame30 and press F6 to add a keyframe, then select frame15 and press F6. Change the colour of the rectangle on frame15 to white.



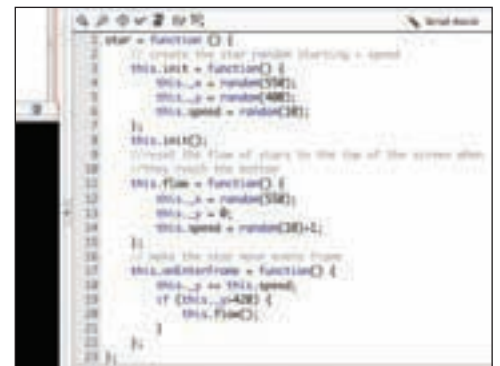
04 Add a tween

Click any frame between the first two keyframes, then Shift+click any frame between the second two. In the Properties palette add a shape tween. Click the Scene 1 icon just above the timeline to return to the main stage. Drag the energy symbol from the library to the stage.



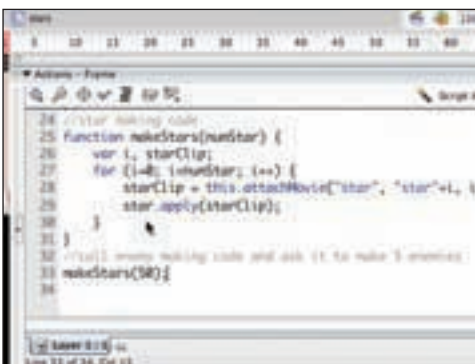
05 Instance name

Give the energy symbol the instance name 'energy0'. Add three more to the stage as shown and give them the instance name 'energy1', 'energy2' and 'energy3'. Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new symbol and name it 'stars'. Make sure it is a Movie Clip and click OK.



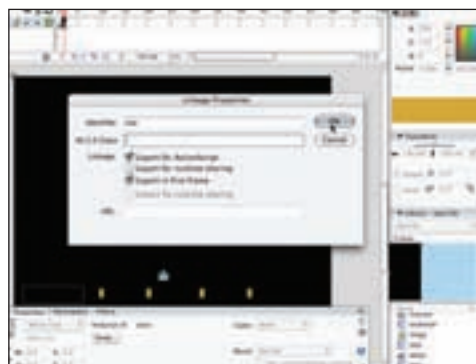
06 Add the code

Select frame1 of the stars clip and open the Actions panel. Add the code shown above, which places the stars at random positions on the stage using the init function. The onEnterFrame handler moves the stars down the screen, while the flow function resets the stars at the top.



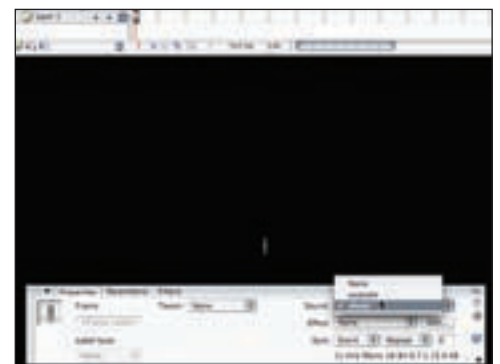
07 Duplicate the stars

Add the remaining code, which duplicates the star symbol in the library 50 times and applies the code we added to each star. Click on the Scene 1 tab to return to the main stage and add the 'stars' symbol. Position it at 0 pixels on the x and y location in the top left of the screen.



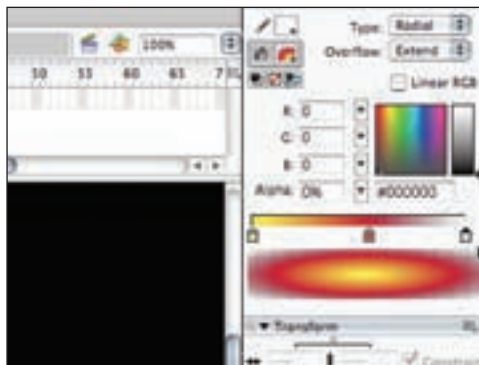
08 Back it up

With the stars symbol selected, choose Modify>Arrange>Send to Back. Name the instance 'stars_mc'. In the library, right-click the star symbol and choose Linkage. Click Export for ActionScript and name the linkage 'star'. This is the star that will be duplicated for the starfield.



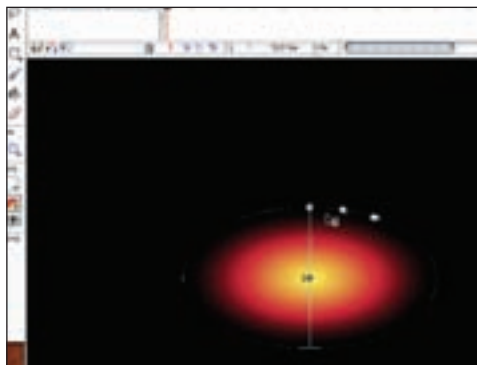
09 Create the laser

Create a new Movie Clip symbol in the library and name it 'laser'. Draw a small light blue line over the movie clip registration point. Add a new layer and in the Properties palette click on the sound drop menu. Choose Shoot from the list and then click back on Scene 1.



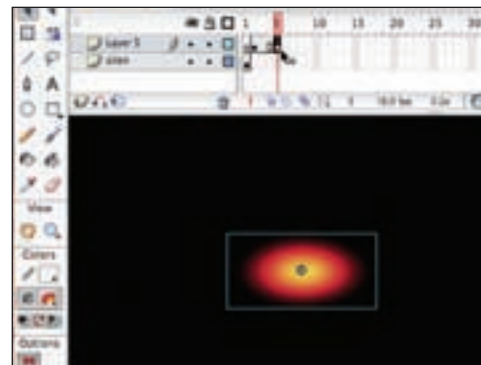
10 Laser effects

Drag the laser symbol to the stage and position it just off the stage to the bottom left. Name this instance 'laser'. Create a new Movie Clip symbol and name it 'explosion'. Draw an oval on the stage and choose a radial fill. Make the radial fill from yellow to red to transparent black.



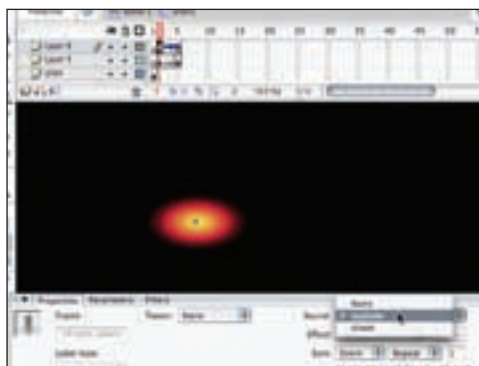
11 Apply the gradient

Use the Paintbucket to add the gradient to the oval shape, then switch to the Gradient Transform Tool and make the gradient fit the shape of the oval you created in the previous step. Double-click the 'alien1' symbol in the library, as we need to add the explosion to this clip.



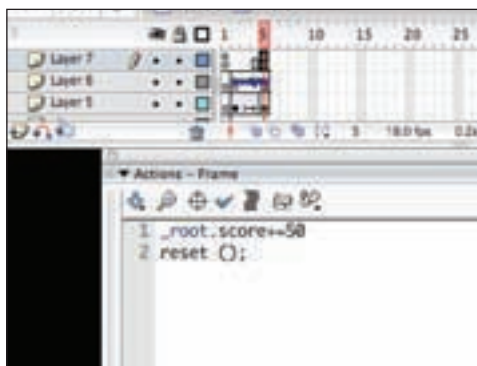
12 Add the explosion

Add a new layer above the alien and drag in the explosion. Place the explosion directly above the alien and then resize the explosion to the same size as the alien. Move the explosion keyframe to frame2 and add a keyframe at frame5.



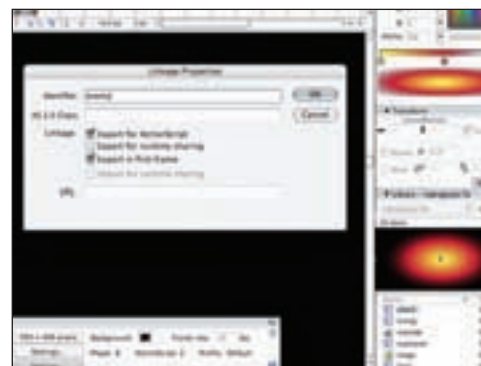
13 Alpha tween

Select the explosion on keyframe 5 and, in the Properties palette, change the colour drop menu to alpha with a value of 0%. Add a motion tween between these keyframes. Create a new layer and add a keyframe at frame2. In Properties, add the explosion sound to frame2.



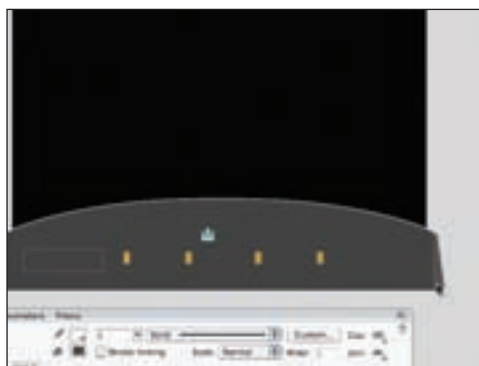
14 A little code

Add a new layer now, then select frame1 and open the ActionScript panel. Add a stop(); command. Select frame5, press F6 to add a keyframe and copy in the code above. The code on frame1 holds the alien until it is shot then the explosion will play and the score will go up.



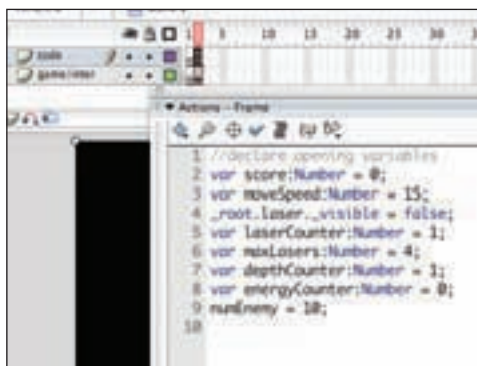
15 Link the enemy

Right-click on the 'alien1' symbol in the library and choose Linkage from the drop menu. In the pop-up menu, click the Export for ActionScript checkbox and name the linkage 'enemy'. Click OK then click the Scene 1 icon above the timeline to return to the main stage.



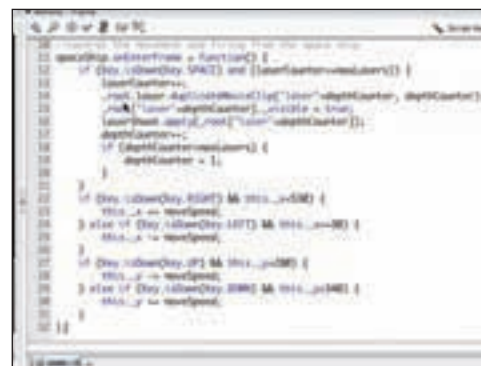
16 Into orbit

Select the Oval Tool and use this to draw an oval over the bottom third of the stage. Use the Tool to select the edges that are bleeding off the stage and hit delete to remove them. Select the planet shape then press Ctrl+G to group it. Go to Modify>Arrange>Send To Back.



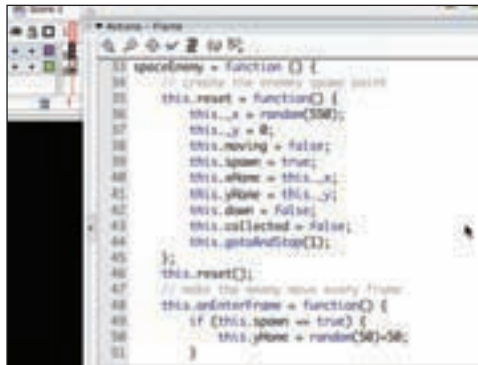
17 A new layer

Create a new layer in Scene 1 and rename it 'code'. Select frame2 and add a keyframe. Open the ActionScript panel and add the code as shown. This sets up variables that will be referred to during the course of the game, along with control elements such as the number of enemies.



18 Spaceship code

Add this code, which is the function that checks the user's input for the spaceship. It duplicates the laser if the space bar is pressed and positions it at the point of the spaceship. It also handles the ship's movement left, right, up and down, and stops it going off the stage.



19 Enemy code

This next code controls the spawn point of the enemies so that each has a position off the top of the screen. The z and y positions are stored in variables so that the enemy can move in the game. The function is called immediately then the onEnterFrame handler is set up.



20 Moving the enemy

The next code checks the x and y of the enemy and moves them to xHome and yHome. Once they reach that position the spawn and move variables are set to false. The if statement checks this, then generates a random number. Based on that they are given an attack strategy.



21 Collision detection

Add the code shown above; this code checks to see if all the energy has been collected or if the enemy hits the space ship and if so it pushes the playhead onto the next frame, which will be a Game Over screen. There is also a function that will be called to make the enemies.



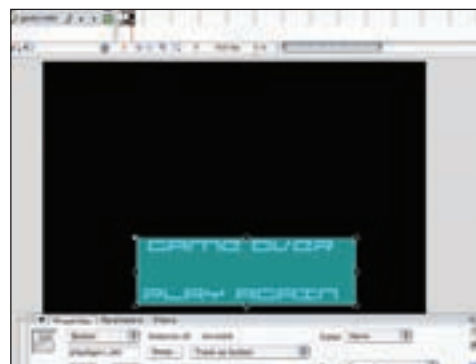
22 Shooting lasers

Add the next code to the ActionScript panel, which calls the function to make ten enemies. The next function pushes the laser up the screen until it is off the top, it then removes the laser. If at any point along the way it hits an enemy, the enemy movie clip explosion plays.



23 Test the movie

Now we can have a quick test and see the game in action. If you die the game will stop because we haven't built the Game Over screen on frame3. When you've finished testing, return to Flash. Create a new symbol in the library, make it a button and name it 'invisible'.



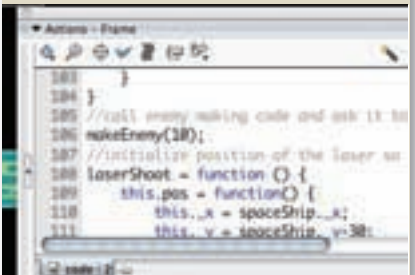
24 Start over

Select the hit state and press F6 to add a keyframe then draw a rectangle on the screen. Return to scene 1, select frame3 for both layers and press F7. Add the text as shown above and then drag the invisible button onto the stage and give it the instance name of 'playAgain_btn'.

Technique

Increasing the difficulty

This game could be taken much further and made more difficult, so here's how to make coding changes



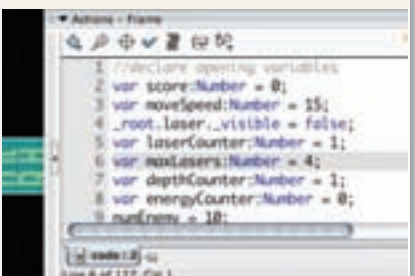
1: Increase the aliens

To add more aliens, simply change two variables. The first is the numEnemy variable on line 9 of the finished code. Increase the number in the makeEnemy() brackets on line 106 to the same number.



2: Attack more

To make the aliens attack with much more frequency change the random number in line 71 to 3. Now change the if statement in line 72 to read if the number is equal to either 1 or 2 then attack the ship.



3: Shoot less

The easiest change of all, though, is to make you shoot less. This is done by changing just one variable in the game code. Line 6 contains a variable maxLasers, change this to 1 or 2 for greater difficulty.



25 Playing again

Select frame3 of the code layer and add the code shown above. Now that the game is complete, next to create the preloader. Create a new symbol (Ctrl+F8), make it a Movie Clip and call it 'bar'. Click OK and we'll begin making our preloader bar.



26 Loading bar

Use the Text Tool to write the word 'loading' on the screen. Next to that draw a horizontal rectangle. Select the fill and delete it. Now add another layer and draw a smaller rectangle to one side. Select frame100 and press F6 for both layer to extend the timeline.



27 Shape tween

Select the keyframe of the small rectangle at frame100 and use the Transform Tool to reshape the rectangle to fill the gap. Add a shape tween between these keyframes. Return to Scene 1 and add a new layer, drag the 'bar' symbol onto the stage and name it 'bar_mc'.

In detail

Know your games

Not every game will work with your content. Here we delve into gaming history to find out what works



BEFORE YOU LEAP into adopting this simple shoot-'em-up for your site, take a moment and ask yourself the question: is this going to work with my content? If the answer is no, then don't include it just for the sake of it. It may distract visitors while your nifty interface loads, but if the content does not match the site content, visitors could just as easily decide the site is not what they were expecting and nip back to Google to check out an alternative site. However, just changing the game from aliens to something such as dangerous CO2 gasses attacking the atmosphere can be a potent message for an eco-friendly company.

Puzzle games are quite a good choice as they're very addictive and can easily be adapted to reflect the nature of the majority of websites. Quiz games can also be useful, particularly if your site is promoting awareness for a cause such as breast cancer, for example. By testing visitors' knowledge as they wait for the site to load, they can be challenged on the stigma and issues that surround the illness.

If you are looking for inspiration for your game, then there is no better place to look than at the old-school arcade games of yesteryear. A great way to check these out is to use an emulator, which allows the original game roms to run on your modern PC. A popular choice is 'MAME' which stands for Multi Arcade Machine Emulator. The game roms offer a fantastic way to see what could work for your site without spending hours developing a game that won't work with your site subject. It also allows you to see games which perhaps could be adapted to work for your subject.



Visit www.mame.net to pick up the MAME arcade emulator so that you can get inspiration from old-school arcade games

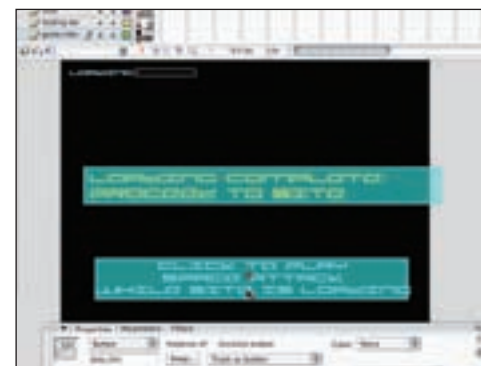


Changing the content slightly can easily change the thrust of the game, and this can be used to show off the content of your site



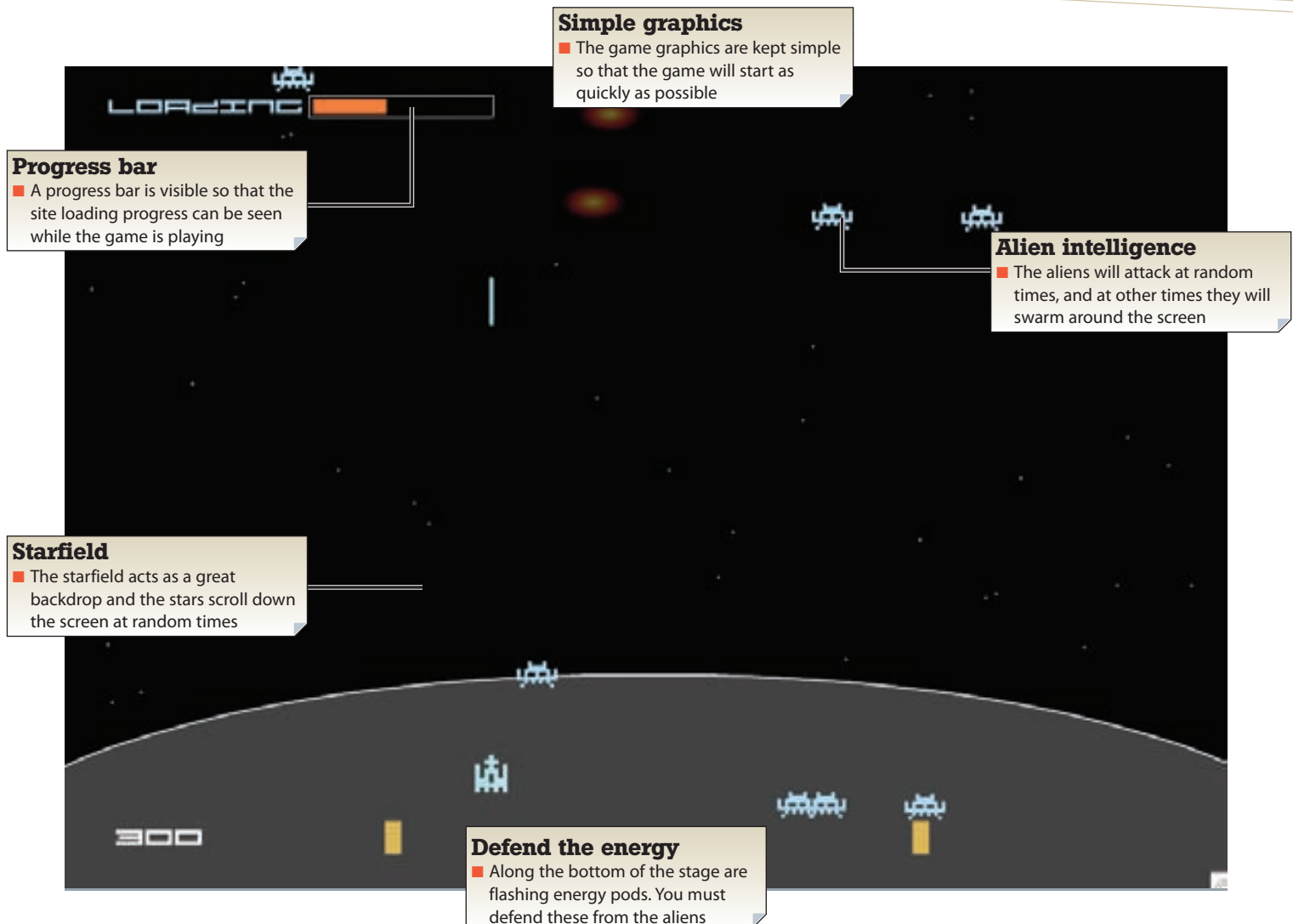
28 A new movie clip

Create a new movie clip symbol and name it 'complete'. Add the text as shown to the stage and add the invisible button to the stage, giving it the instance name of 'proceed_btn'. Add a new layer and add the code shown above which will take users to the main part of the site.



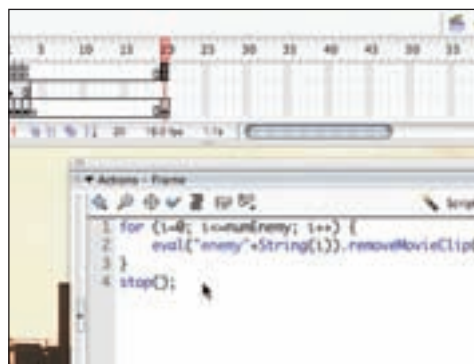
29 Add to stage

Return to Scene 1 and add the 'complete' symbol to the same layer as the loading bar. Name the instance 'complete_mc'. Now add the text shown to the 'game/interface' layer. Add the invisible button symbol to the text and name the instance 'play_btn'.



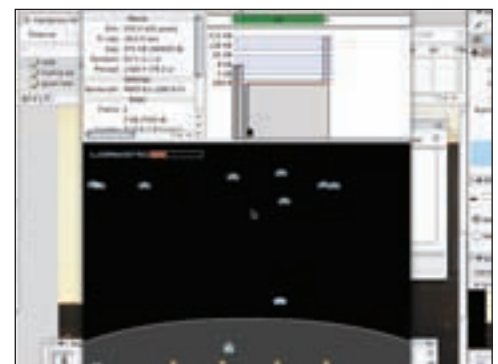
30 Add the code

Select frame1 of the code layer and open the ActionScript panel. Add the code as shown above. This holds the playhead here and lets the user play the game while loading. When the site has loaded, 'loading complete' appears and the user can jump into the site.



31 Add an image

Select frame20 of the code layer and add a keyframe. Select frame4 of the game layer and press F7, then select frame20 and add a keyframe. Add the image symbol from the library to frame20 of the game layer. Select the frame20 of the code layer and add the code as shown.



32 Save and test

Save the Flash file now and press Ctrl+Enter to test the preloader. Because you are not downloading from a net connection, press Ctrl+Enter a second time when the test appears. This second key press forces Flash to simulate your content downloading from a slow net connection.

Tech support Flash

Having a hard time with Flash? This month we solve back buttons, create masks with ActionScript and find the ASCII codes of button presses

Q iPaq it in

I have been working on creating an application for PDAs and I'm using the HP iPaq as my test platform. There are cursor keys at the base of the iPaq, as in most PDAs, and I just wondered if there was any way I could code for these buttons so that they could be used for interactivity. The PDA is only running Flash Player 6, though.

A This is a good question and I'm sure that we'll be seeing many more questions like this, as Flash is gaining a wider user base on mobile devices. When a key is pressed it generates an ASCII code, this ASCII code is unique to that key and therefore if you detect the correct ASCII code for the key, it can be used to add functionality to those keys. To find these codes for a standard keyboard you can look in the ActionScript dictionary. However, as this doesn't cover PDAs we can easily find out by creating a small piece of code. Add a dynamic text field to the stage and give it the variable name of 'displaytext'. Add a movie clip to the stage, it doesn't need to have any content. With the movie clip selected add the following actions to it:

```
onClipEvent(keyDown) {  
    _root.displaytext=Key.getCode();  
}
```

Now place this on your PDA and run the file. When you click the various buttons they will appear in the text field. The codes for the cursor keys will probably be 37 - left, 38 - up, 39 - right and 40

down, just like on a standard keyboard. Therefore to program functionality in Flash Player 6 add the following code to a movie clip:

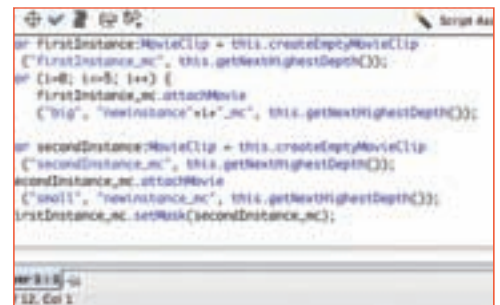
```
onClipEvent(keyDown) {  
    if (Key.getCode() == 39) {  
        this._x += 10;  
    } else if (Key.getCode() == 37) {  
        this._x -= 10;  
    }  
}
```

This will move the object ten pixels to the left or right when the left and right cursor key is pressed. It would be easy to add the functionality for up and down too. Because this detects the appropriate key presses you should be able to add the functionality that you require to this.

Q Dynamic masks

I have been creating a number of random interactive shapes that appear on the stage using linkage to make the random selection easier. I need to also add a number of random dynamic masks using the same method. The only problem is, I'm not able to add a mask. I've tried creating a mask layer above the ActionScript layer but to no avail, is there any way to add a mask?

A Because you are adding your movie clips to the stage by code, I suspect you are using the code createEmptyMovieClip function. These movie clips exist on levels and these levels are found at various levels. As this is the case then placing a



The stage is bare, but with the help of ActionScript you can populate it with plenty of instances from the library

layer above all other layers and making it a mask layer will not suffice, as you have found out. The levels are completely different to layers and as such levels exist at a higher location than normal layers. Once you have created your empty movie clip, if you are not doing so it would be a good idea to attach all your random elements to this one movie clip. This can be done using the following code:

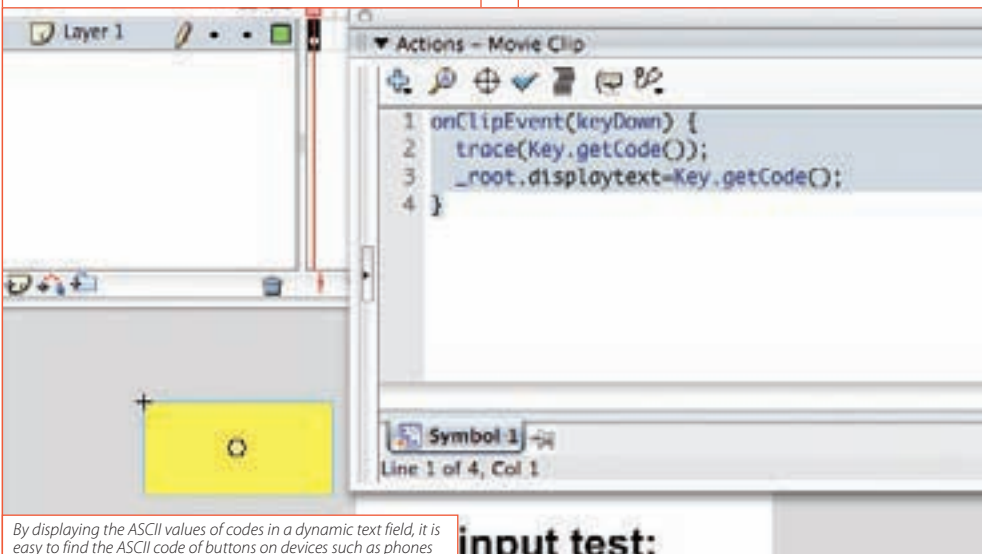
```
var firstInstance:MovieClip = this.createEmptyMovieClip("firstInstance_mc", this.getNextHighestDepth());  
for (i=0; i<=5; i++) {  
    firstInstance_mc.attachMovie("linkage", "newinstance"+i+"_mc", this.getNextHighestDepth());  
}
```

This would put five instances of the linked symbol into the firstInstance_mc which was created using the createEmptyMovieClip function. So these new movie clips are all found in one place. Now to create the mask, again as you are using linkage, do the same as at first using the createEmptyMovieClip function, here's an example:

```
var secondInstance:MovieClip = this.createEmptyMovieClip("secondInstance_mc", this.getNextHighestDepth());  
secondInstance_mc.attachMovie("linkage", "newinstance_mc", this.getNextHighestDepth());
```

The second line adds the mask shape linkage to the secondInstance_mc. The last part is to simply use one as a mask for the other. That is done with this line: `firstInstance_mc.setMask(secondInstance_mc);`

By the sound of your question, you probably have all of the code in place except this last part, which will therefore bring your project together.

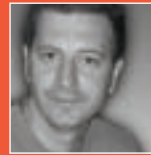


By displaying the ASCII values of codes in a dynamic text field, it is easy to find the ASCII code of buttons on devices such as phones

input test:

If you have a problem, and no one else can help, send it in to the *Web Designer* team! We'll do our best to print your problems on our pages, but we cannot reply personally to every email.

SEND YOUR QUERIES TO:
webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk



Your expert

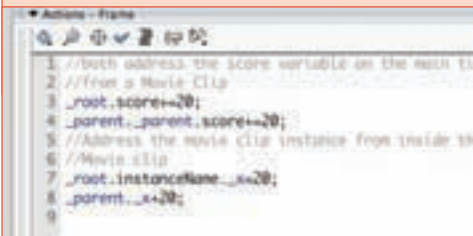
Mark Shufflebottom has been teaching on the BA and MA Interactive Media courses at Bournemouth University for the past five years, where he teaches 3D applications, interface design, online gaming, small-screen device production and, of course, all things Flash and ActionScript. Mark has recently won an international award at the BEA Festival in Las Vegas for the production of an interactive, real-time 3D narrative.

Expert advice

■ Communication techniques

In order to communicate effectively between code and instances, Flash has a number of ways of talking to instances that may be found on other timelines. If you have one instance nested inside another then use `firstInstance`, `secondInstance` to address it.

If, however, you have code in a Movie Clip and you want to talk to the main stage use `_root`. Some coders get confused and use `_parent` instead. This will only address the parent instance on the main timeline and not address the timeline itself. To do that using parent you would have to write `_parent._parent`. Knowing the right way to address your instances can save time in writing code.



Q Back button blues

I would like to code a back button for my site in Flash, as the back button on the browser doesn't always work with named anchors. I have made an effort but I don't have the hang of it. Any chance of your help?

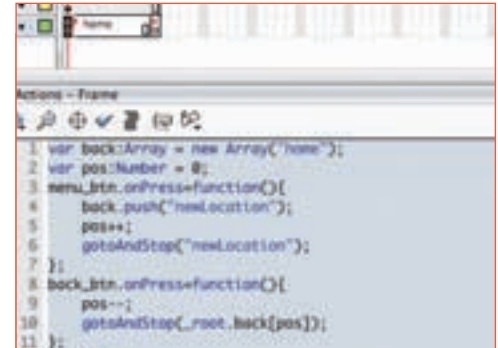
A This can be done using an array and the `array push()` command. By adding the areas of your site that have been visited all you need to do is take the current location and then -1 off the value to get to the last visited space in the array. It sounds more complicated than it actually is, here's the code necessary:

```

var back:Array = new Array("home");
var pos:Number = 0;
menu_btn.onPress=function(){
    back.push("newLocation");
    pos++;
    gotoAndStop("newLocation");
};
back_btn.onPress=function(){
    pos--;
    gotoAndStop(_root.back[pos]);
};
stop();

```

The first line sets up the array with the 'home' page of the website placed in



A back button is a useful addition to any Flash site. Be sure to use an Array to store the locations visited, as with a history in a browser

there. This is also a frame label on the first frame. There's a variable called `pos`, which will store the number of entries in the array, notice the first entry is 0.

Now when the menu button is pressed, the array gets the new frame label added to it and the `pos` variable is incremented by one. The playhead is moved forward to the new frame label. If the back button is pressed, the `pos` variable is reduced by one and the playhead is moved to the frame label stored in the 0 position of the array. ■

Technique: Buttons occupying the same space

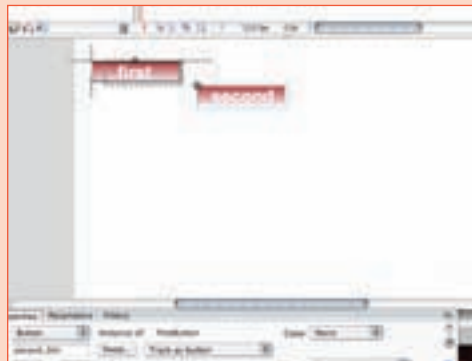
Q I have built an interface that uses a menu system along the top of the design. At different points, when the user has selected other content, I would like to replace the buttons with other buttons, but am not sure how to go about this. I tried to place one button over another button and then use the `swapDepths()` but I couldn't get it work. Please help!

A Alas, `swapDepths()` will only work for movie clips placed on the stage through linkage and code. If you place one button on top of another then the button underneath will not be selectable because the one above will always take precedence and it won't be visible. The easiest way to handle this is to move the timeline to another frame or turn the visibility of the buttons on and off. Here we'll look at the latter.



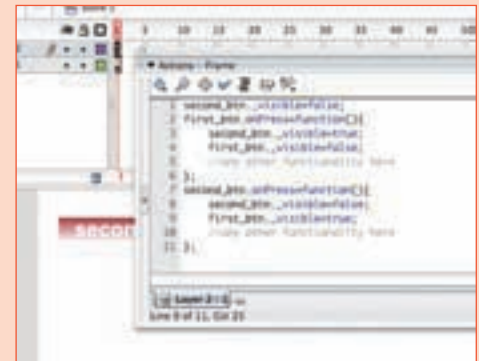
01 Create button

Create a new symbol in the library (Ctrl+F8). Name the symbol and make the behavior a button, then draw your button and add a text label. Select the 'hit' state of the button and press F5 to extend the timeline. Repeat the process in order to create the second button.



02 Add Instance Names

Drag the first button onto the stage and give it the instance name in the properties palette of 'first_btn'. Now drag the second button onto the stage and again give this an instance name, but this time 'second_btn'. Drag the second button directly over the first.



03 Control through code

Create a new layer and add the code above to the frame of that layer. Test the movie; this code makes the second button invisible until required and then it becomes visible. The first button is made invisible. When the second button is pressed, the code is reversed.



Nick La is a Toronto-based graphic and web designer. He is currently working at Dapasoft Inc., an IT consulting firm, as a multimedia designer. His work has been featured on many design portals and design magazines. Visit www.ndesign-studio.com for more.



The brief

On the CD

Tutorial files:
Flash file, PSD, docs,
exported PNGs and a
final SWF file

Tutorial objective

Learn to make a super-stylish
scrolling portfolio gallery

Time required

Up to five hours

Skill level



Design a parallax scrolling gallery

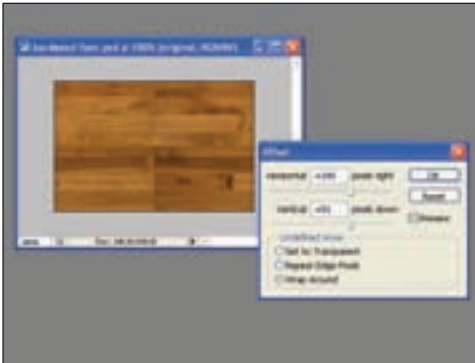
It's time to show off your creative archives online. Here **Nick La** shows you how to build a scrolling portfolio showcase site from scratch

IN THIS TUTORIAL you will learn how to make a Flash parallax scrolling gallery from scratch. Parallax scrolling is frequently used in 2D animation and games, where the background images and foreground images scroll at different rates of speed. This will create an illusion of depth, because the background images are moving slower than the foreground images.

Most of you have probably seen this effect online, but have you wondered how they do that? Well, it is actually

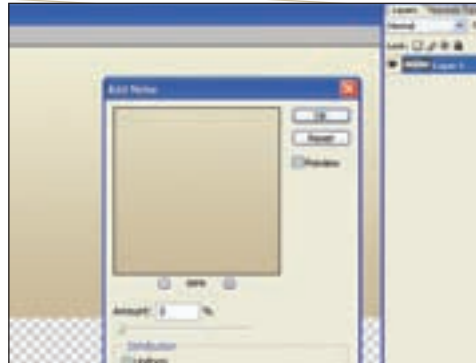
easier than you thought. Here I will show you how to do that from scratch with the tools of Photoshop, Flash, and some stock images. In the first part, you will learn how to use Photoshop to build the studio. Then, in the second part, you will learn how to write a simple ActionScript code to create the scrolling effect.

This tutorial requires some basic knowledge of Flash and Photoshop. If you're finding it difficult, open up the supplied sample files to check where you're going wrong!



01 Photoshop flooring

Fire up Photoshop and load the 280x182px floor pattern from the CD. Go to Filter>Other and Offset the image by half dimensions (set at Horizontal: 140, Vertical: 91, Wrap Around). Use the Clone Stamp Tool to touch up the cutting edges. Select All and go to Edit>Define Pattern.



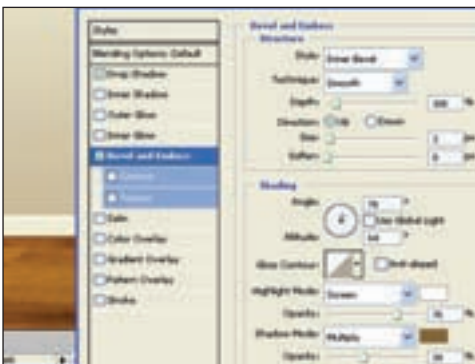
02 Create a wall from scratch

Make a new document (2520x250px). Use the Rectangular Marquee to make a selection about 80% of the document's height from the top. Fill it with a linear two-colour gradient (colour1: #eeebd4, colour2: #cabb99). Apply Filter>Noise>Add Noise (2%) to add some texture.



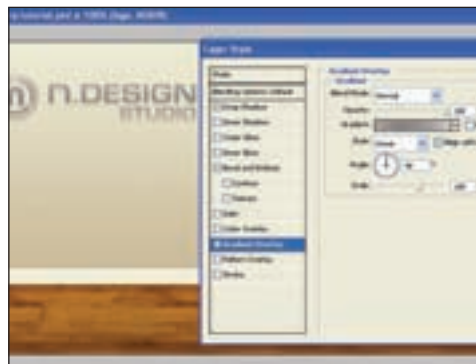
03 Fit the floor

Create a new layer folder and make a rectangle shape below the wall. Double-click the layer to activate Layer Style, and apply Pattern Overlay with the wood pattern. Click Snap to Origin to place the wood at the upper left corner of the layer. The pattern's big, so reduce it to 82%.



04 Floor trim

Select the foreground colour #f0ecd6 and make a rectangle above the floor layer. Apply Inner Bevel effect as shown (Size: 3, Angle =70, Altitude: 64, Shadow Colour: #856738, Shadow Opacity: 39%). Apply a Drop Shadow effect (Opacity: 27%, Angle: 90, Distance: 1, Size: 3).



05 Drop on the logo

Paste your logo onto the wall. To make it metallic, apply a Gradient Overlay (Angle: 90, colour1: #a9a3a3, colour2: #a9a3a3, colour3: #d7cfcf). Apply an Inner Bevel (Angle: -48, Altitude: 21, Opacity: 0) and a Drop Shadow (colour: #73552d, Opacity: 25%, Angle: 90, Distance: 4, Size: 4).



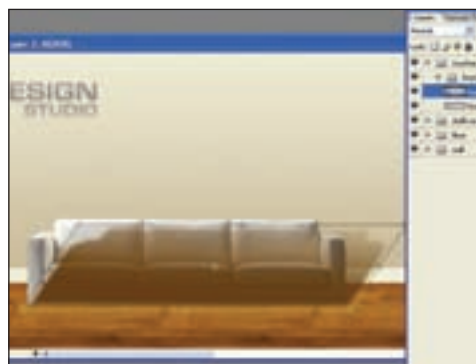
06 Stocking up

Now to add some stock images. Be sure to find images that are in front-view perspective and that blend with the scene. First, a couch. Cut out the background and paste it in above the floor layer. Make a new layer folder, name it 'couches' and drop in the couch layer.



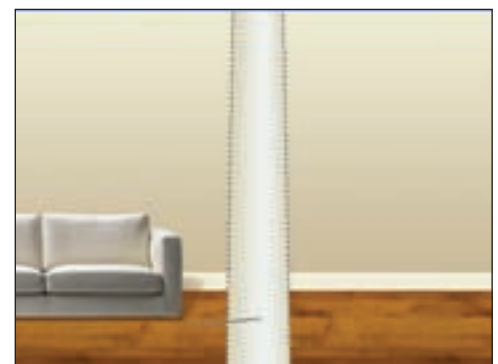
07 Sofa so good

Make a new layer. Hold down Ctrl/Apple and click on the couch layer thumbnail to load a new selection of the couch. Pick a muddy brown colour #683d0b and fill the selection with Foreground to Transparent gradient. Go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and add a blur of three pixels.



08 Transform shadow

With the shadow layer selected, go to Edit>Free Transform (or Ctrl/Apple+T). Hold down Ctrl/Apple and drag the top middle handle down to the right to create a cast shadow. Drag this shadow layer below the couch layer. Repeat step six through eight to make the side couch.



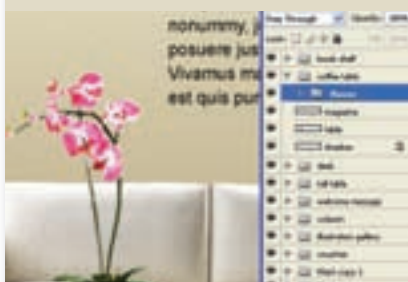
09 Building columns

Make a new selection as shown with the Pen Tool. Create a new layer and fill the selection with colour #eef0ec. Make another new layer for the column shade. Choose a darker colour #bab08f. Use the Gradient tool (Foreground to Transparent) and drag from the sides to the centre point.

Technique

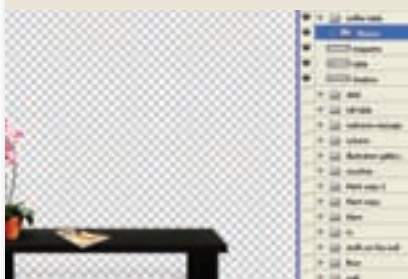
Top tips for web visuals

Here are several techniques that will help you work more efficiently when creating a Photoshop visual mock-up



1: Group layers

Instead of having a huge long list of layers, try organizing your layers into folders and sub folders. The advantage of this is you can collapse and expand the folders, which allows you to quickly locate the layer.



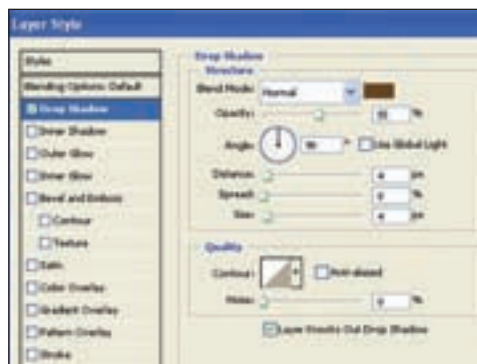
2: Use Copy Merged

Here is another advantage of organising layers into folders; hold the Alt key and click the folder's visibility icon to hide all other layers, then Select All and Copy Merged. This way, we needn't rasterize the Layer Styles.



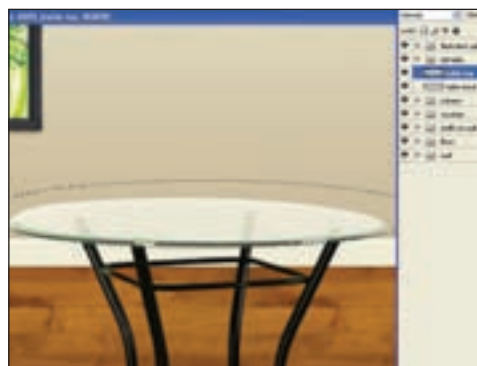
3: Realistic shadows

Perhaps you already know how to create cast shadow, but have you ever tried making a double-cast shadow (on both sides)? This little bit of extra work will make your graphics look much more appealing.



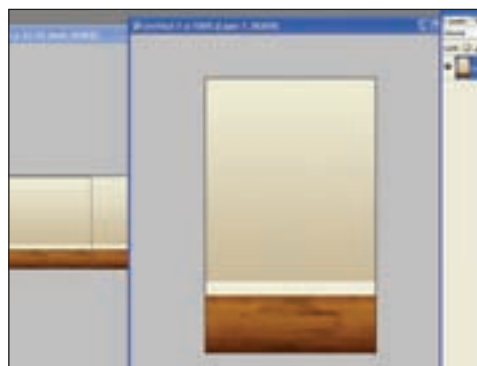
10 In the frame

Cut and paste a picture frame into the scene. Make a shape layer below the frame layer and apply a Drop Shadow (Colour: #674521, Opacity: 55, Angle: 90, Distance: 4, Size: 4). Group the picture frame and shape layer by selecting both and pressing Ctrl/Apple+G.



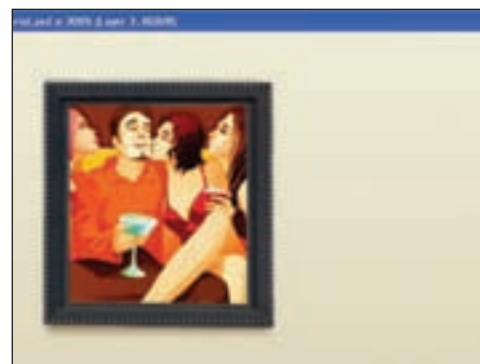
12 Create transparent glass

Cut out a glass table and paste it into a new layer folder. To make the glass tabletop look like see-through glass, use the Elliptical Marquee Tool to make an oval selection, cut and paste it into a new layer then adjust the Opacity of the tabletop layer to 70%.



14 Exporting the background

Hide all other layers except the wall and floor. Roughly make a large rectangle selection from the left edge. Go to Edit>Copy Merged. Now paste the wall image in a new document of 280x450px. Export the image to PNG. Soon we will use this image to make the tiled background.



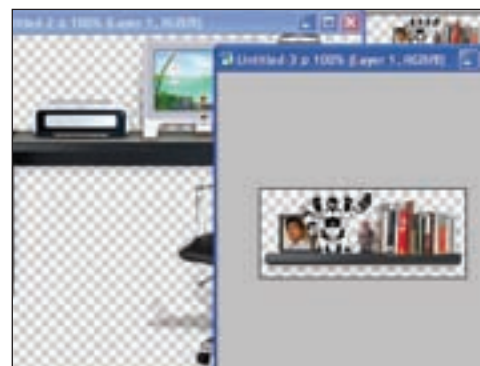
11 Illustrated miniatures

In the picture frame layer folder, make a new layer below the frame layer. Copy your work image and paste it into the selection via Edit>Paste Into (or Ctrl/Apple+Shift+V). You can use Free Transform (Ctrl/Apple+T) to scale the thumbnail. Repeat this for the rest of the picture frames.



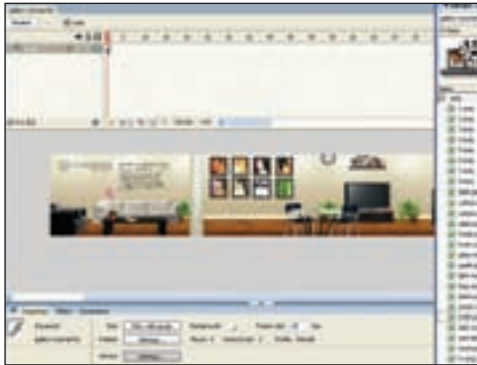
13 Dressing the stage

Now you need to add the other room elements. Just follow the technique from the previous steps and you should have the following items in the final image: desk, computer, monitor, chair, wall shelf, TV set, plants, printer, power outlets, table, and light switch.



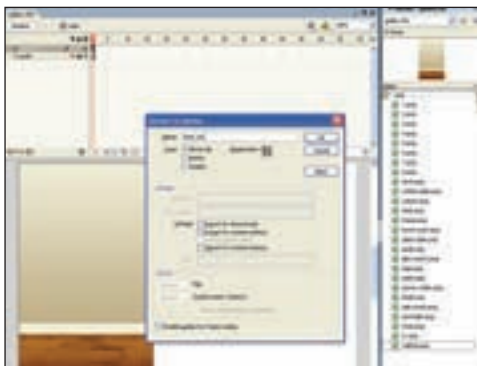
15 Export the remaining items

Use the Copy Merged technique from the step 14 and export the remaining items to PNG format. Be sure to save all PNG files in a separate folder. This way you will save some time when importing them in Flash and also better for file organisation. Get ready to Flash now!



16 Get Flashy

Now for the Flash. Create a new Flash document, 700x450px at 25fps. Import all PNG files and organise them in a folder in the Library palette. Import a JPEG copy of the Photoshop mock-up and set it as a guide layer. We will use this to assist with positioning the items on stage.



17 Background movie clip

Drag the wall bg.png from the Library to the top left stage. With the wall bg.png instance selected, press F8 to convert it to a Movie Clip. Make sure you select Type: Movie Clip or the ActionScript will not work. Name the instance back_mc so you can assign ActionScript to it.



18 A continuous background

Double-click the back_mc instance to edit the clip. Hold Alt and drag the wall bg.png to the right to duplicate it. Duplicate it nine times until you reach 2520px in width. By tiling the background graphic rather than using a full image, you save the file size and download time.

In detail

Parallax scrolling ActionScript code

Now to explain the ActionScript code in detail, line by line, so that you see how it's done

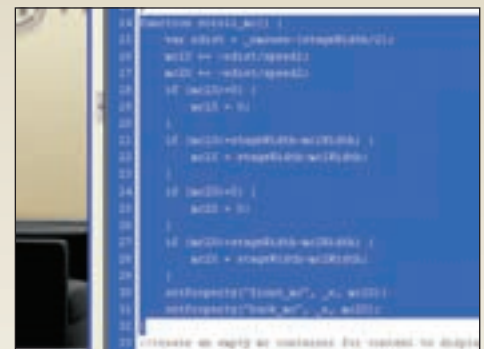


WE'VE SKIMMED OVER the coding in the steps, so I'll take this opportunity to go through the finer points of the ActionScript code that powers this cool portfolio. Over the first seven lines, I basically declare the variables that are used in the code. Notice speed1 value (front_mc scrolling speed) is larger than speed2. Larger number means slower scrolling.

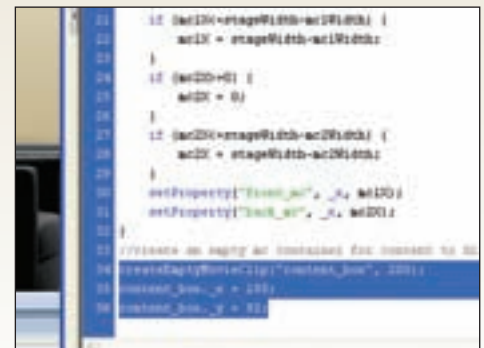
In order to turn the scroll_mc() function on and off, I create a variable, lock_scroll = false. In next line I have an if statement (if lock_scroll is not true) then activate scroll_mc() function. If you go back to tint mc, at frame5, you will see this code: _root.lock_scroll = true; this actually turns off the scroll_mc() function. Then in frame 40, the lock_scroll is set back to false to restore the scroll function.

In the scroll_mc() function, I declare a variable xdist = _xmouse - (stageWidth/2). Then mcX is equal to mcX + (-xdist/speed). So the farther your mouse position away from the centre point the faster the scrolling will be. To prevent the mc scroll off the left edge, there is an if statement: if mcX is greater or equal to 0, then set mcX to 0. Vice versa, if the mcX is less than or equal to (stageWidth - mcWidth) then set mcX to (stageWidth - mcWidth). Then set the _x property of the front_mc and back_mc to mc1X and mc2X.

In the last part I create an empty movie clip at level 200 and name it content_box. Then I position the content_box._x: 195 and _y: 92. The purpose of this code is to create a container that allows external files to load at the exact location.



We implement a function that scrolls the movie clips left or right depends on the x mouse position

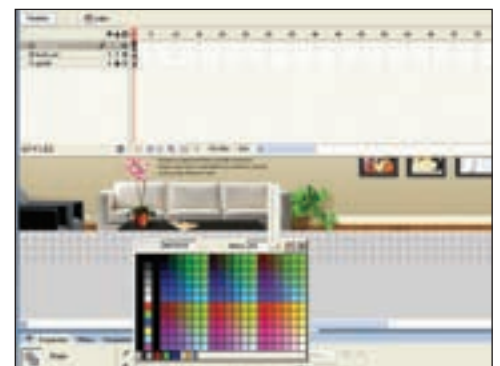


Here you can see that an empty movie clip is created in order to load external an SWF file at an exact location



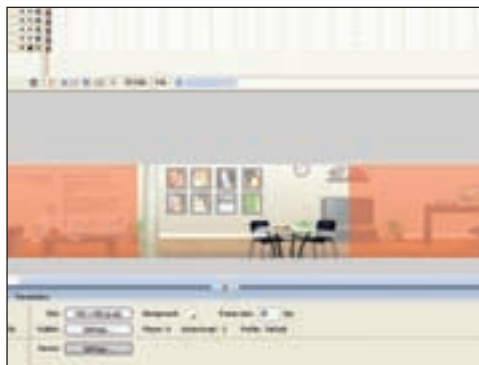
19 Positioning items

Drag the other items from the Library and position them. The following are the PNG that can be reused: plant, power outlet, picture frame, and stool. Use the Text Tool to display a welcome message. It is a good idea to organise each instance in a separate layer.



20 Front movie clip

Go back to the main stage and make a new layer. Use the Rectangle Tool to make a 2520x80px box. With the box selected, adjust the fill colour's Alpha to 0%. This will create an invisible rectangle box. Press F8 to convert it to movie clip and name the instance front_mc.



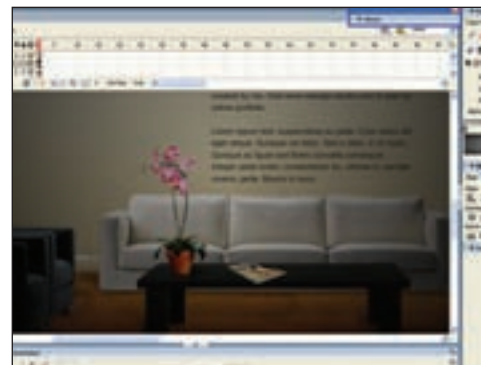
21 Gallery corner

Double-click the front_mc instance to edit it. Using the back_mc as the guide, position the column, table, and stool.png as the mock-up. Try to avoid placing any object at 750px from the left and right side of the movie clip, since this clip will scroll faster than the back_mc.



22 ActionScript layer

In the main timeline, make a new layer and name it 'actions'. Select frame1 and type in the ActionScript code as shown. As I don't have enough room to explain the details of this code here, please read the In Detail boxout, which will explain this code line by line.



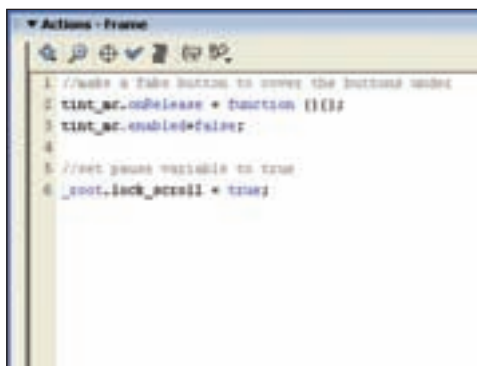
23 Tint symbol

Make a new layer above the front_mc layer. Use the Rectangle Tool to draw a 700x450px box on stage. Fill it with black gradient, colour1: black (alpha=30%) and colour2: black (alpha=90%). This will create a tint effect. Press F8 to convert it to symbol and name it 'tint symbol'.



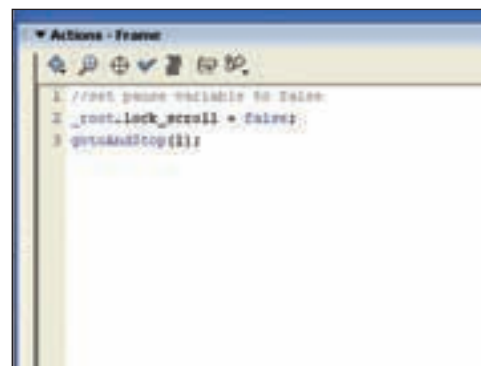
24 Fade-in tint movie clip

Convert the instance to movie clip and name it 'tint'. Double-click it and name the instance in frame1 tint_mc. Insert a keyframe (F6) at frame5 and frame20. Select the tint at frame5, adjust its Alpha: 0. Right-click the timeline and Create Motion Tween. Delete the tint symbol in frame1.



25 Pause the scroll

Reverse step 24 to create a fade-out effect (frame25 to frame40). Make a new layer for coding. Insert a stop() action at frames 1 and 20. Label frame5 "on" and type in this code. The first two lines create a fake button and block all buttons under. The third sets lock_scroll to true.



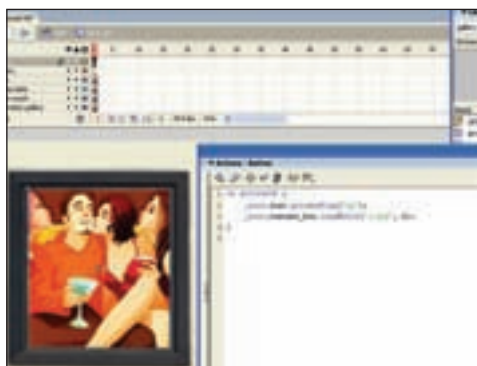
26 Get moving

In the previous step, we set the variable lock_scroll = true to stop the scroll function as soon it reaches frame5 ("on"). This step will restore the scroll function when it reaches frame40. Label frame25, "off" and enter the code in frame40 as shown.



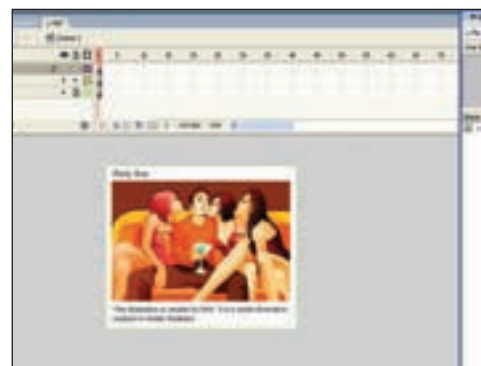
27 Make invisible buttons

Make a new layer in back_mc Movie Clip. Draw an invisible shape (fill alpha=0), then press F8 to convert it to button. In the Over state, fill the invisible shape with a 2pt yellow stroke by the Ink Bottle Tool. Repeat this for the other buttons: magazines, books, robot and so on.



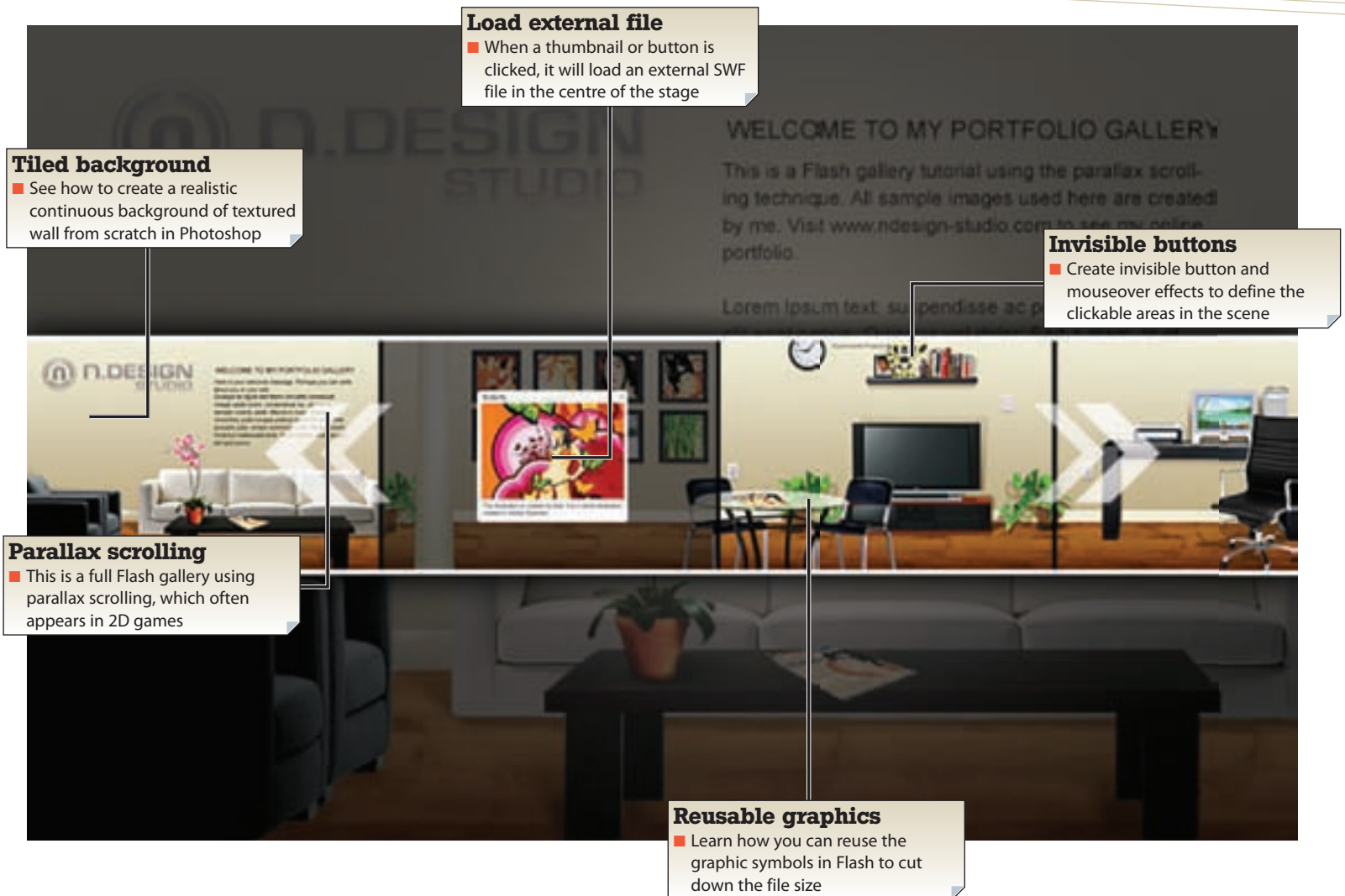
28 Assign action to the buttons

Select the invisible button and type in the code as shown. When clicked, tint mc will play label "on" and load the external SWF in the movie container, content_box. Repeat this for the rest and load different SWF according to the button (eg, print button loads print.swf).



29 Create an external file

Make a new document, 310x265px. Use the Rectangle Tool and draw a rounded corner rectangle shape on stage. Then import the sample image and add some text as shown. Save this file name according to the paths you've assigned in the previous step.



30 Close and unload

Now to make a button that allows the user to close the pop-up and go back to the main movie. Create a button symbol and name the instance 'close_btn'. In frame 1, enter the code as shown, which unloads the movie in content_mc container and tells tint mc to play label "off".



31 Other SWF files

As soon the file is done, you can just simply replace the content and save it as different FLA. In this tutorial, I have the following linked SWF: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, books, experimental, magazines, print, and web. Of course you can make more or fewer depending on your site.



32 Publish the final movie

Finally, publish the gallery Flash movie. Then, open the gallery.html and change the HTML background to black and align the SWF movie to centre. Finally, preview the HTML file in a browser and make sure that all the external files load correctly.



Your expert

Rodger Page is a new-media designer and multimedia editor who has been using Photoshop and Flash for years. His plans are to teach digital arts at a college or university, but for the moment enjoys authoring CD and DVDs here at Imagine Publishing.



The brief

On the CD

Tutorial files:
City.psd, flyby.psd,
Glide_final.psd, tree.psd,
WD logo.psd

Tutorial objective

Create artwork combining vectors, bitmaps and layer effects

Time required

Up to two hours

Skill level



Design original desktop artwork

Create a unique desktop pattern for your own computer or to use as an advertising tool for your website

THE IDEA BEHIND this tutorial is to create a branded piece of artwork to either use on your own computer as a site background, or to give away as promotional tool through your website. There are plenty of websites out there willing to display your desktop artwork and provide a link back to your website (and as Google ranks your site on the amount of sites that externally link to your site, this just happens to be an added bonus!). The artwork itself combines various

techniques to improve your skills and help you discover some of the finer points when it comes to working with vectors in Photoshop. For this tutorial we will be working with a document dimension of 1680x1050 pixels, as this is the maximum screen resolution of an iMac G5 or of any monitor. Working to the biggest dimensions enables you to easily modify the desktop pattern to any screen resolution while maintaining maximum quality.



01 Start with a new document

Here's nice easy one to get us started. Create a new document (press Ctrl/Apple+N) and enter the dimensions 1680 by 1050 pixels with a resolution of 72dpi. Now give your new document a relevant name containing the screen resolution, such as 'Glide_1680x1050', and click OK.



02 The widescreen effect

Change the background colour to black (Ctrl/Apple+Backspace). Select your Rectangle Tool and draw a white rectangle vector shape layer, ensuring it is flush to the edges of your document. Select View>Snap, then grab a guide from your top ruler and position it in the centre.



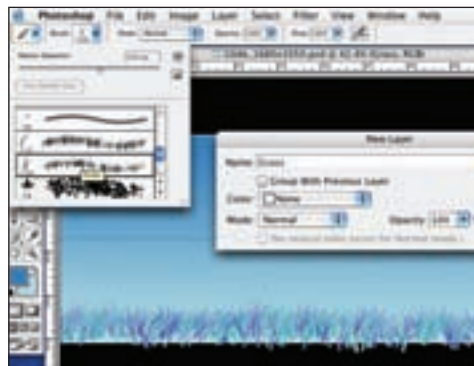
03 Into the blue

Select your Move Tool (V) and snap the vector shape to the centre guide. Select Gradient Overlay from the Style menu at the bottom of the layer palette. Click to edit the gradient's colours, select the two colour sliders and pick light blue for the left and dark blue for the right. Click OK.



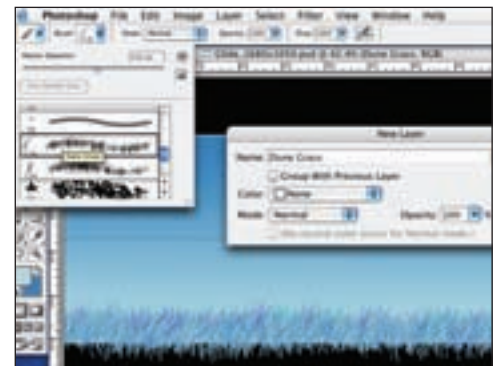
04 Add a masking layer

Holding down Ctrl/Apple, select the layer mask thumbnail and inverse it (Shift+Ctrl/Apple+I). Select Layer>New Fill Layer>Solid colour. Name the layer 'Black Mask Layer', select a black fill and click OK. Apply a white outside stroke layer effect set to two pixels. Click OK.



05 Create the grass

Create a layer and name it 'Grass'. On this layer you will paint the grass; the brush is automatically set to scatter the brush shape, rotation and the colour. Set White to the foreground colour, select the Brush Tool, and select the Grass brush from the brush palette. Now draw the grass.



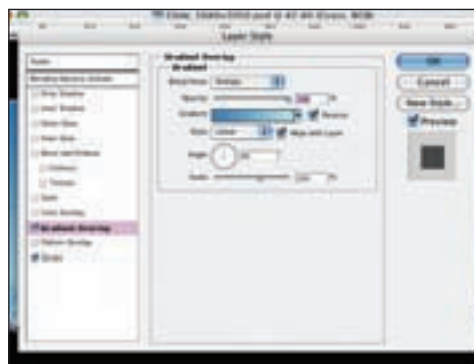
06 Giving it depth

Create a new layer and name it 'Dune Grass'. Select the brush menu once again and select the Dune Grass brush located above the previous brush. As you start filling in the grass, this time you'll notice that the grass does not scatter the rotation but leans to the right.



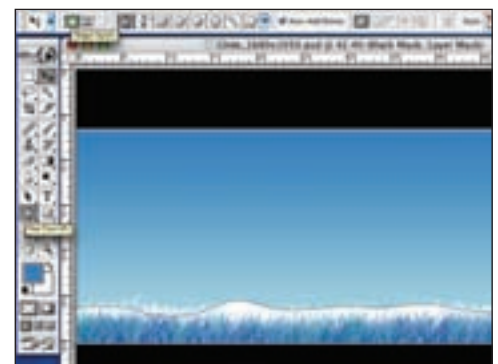
07 Copy and merge

Duplicate the Dune Grass layer (Ctrl/Apple+J), flip it horizontally (Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal), select the Move Tool (V) and play around with the positioning of the layer. Once you are happy, merge all three grass layers together (Ctrl/Apple+E).



08 Add a stroke

In the Layer palette, select the Layer Effect button and select Stroke. Set the stroke to white with a 2px diameter and set it to Outside. Select the Gradient Overlay option (the colours should still be set to light blue and dark blue), then set the blend mode to multiply and click OK.



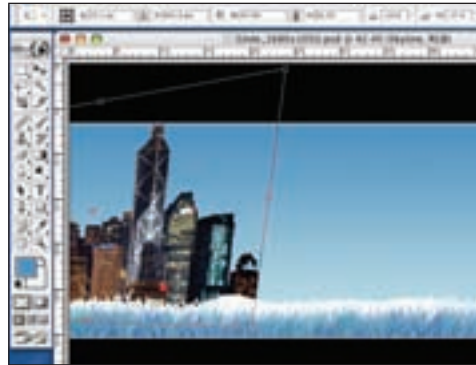
09 Horizon lines

Position the Grass layer beneath the Black Mask layer. Select the Pen Tool, ensuring that Shape layers is selected, and draw a white horizon following the shape of the grass as a rough guide. Change the fill of the layer to white and position it beneath the Grass layer.



10 Building in scenery

Open up 'City.psd' from the disc. Using the Pen Tool, cut out the skyline. If you are having trouble seeing the buildings, duplicate the layer, open Levels (Ctrl/Apple+L) and move up the highlights. Make a selection of the path and copy the unaltered buildings layer.



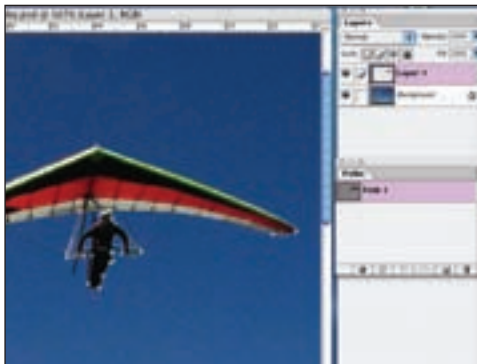
11 Position the city

Paste the building into the document, rename the layer 'skyline' and position the layer below the white grass horizon. Now transform the layer (Ctrl/Apple+T) and reduce the size as above. Try holding down Ctrl/Apple to transform the perspective.



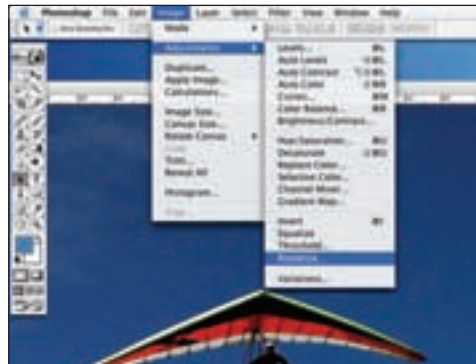
12 Transform the skyline

Duplicate the skyline, invert the image to turn it negative (Ctrl/Apple+I) and change the blending mode to Hard Light. Position the layer below the skyline and play with the scale and perspective. Turn down the opacity and finish it off by adding a white stroke layer of two pixels.



13 Pen a path

Open the 'flyby.psd' file and zoom in to the glider. Select your Pen Tool and, making sure that the Paths option is selected from the top menu, cut around the glider. Open your Paths palette, make a selection of the path and copy the glider to a new layer.



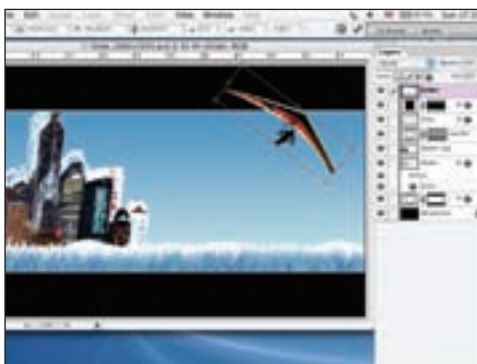
14 Flatten the flyer

With the new glider layer selected, go to the main image menu and select Posterize (Image>Adjustments>Posterize). In the dialog that appears, enter a value of five steps and click OK. This will have flattened the colours to five steps of solid colour.



15 Add some style

From the Filter menu select Cutout (Filter>Artistic>Cutout) and enter the following values: Number of Levels: 8, Edge Simplicity: 3, Edge Fidelity: 2 and click OK. This will have further smoothed the solid colour, giving it a stylised vector-style effect.



16 Copy and transform the glider

Select the glider by holding down Ctrl/Apple and clicking on the glider thumbnail in the layer palette, then copy and paste the glider into your main artwork. Transform its rotation (Ctrl/Apple+T) by selecting outside of one of the corner nodes. Position the glider layer on the top.



17 Cut the blades

Go back to your Glider.psd file and zoom in to the wind tower. Select your Pen Tool, make sure paths is selected, and cut out around the wind tower. Open your Paths palette and make a selection of the path then copy the wind tower to your desktop artwork.



18 Perfect positioning

Transform the scale of the wind tower (Ctrl/Apple+T) – while holding down the Shift key reduce the size in proportion and position on the page. Place this layer below the grass. Now, flip the wind tower horizontally (Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal).



19 Dodgy effects

Add a gradient fill layer to the tower and set it to Linear Dodge. Click the gradient and set the sliders to black. Add a new slider by clicking between the two sliders and set it to white. Change the location either side of the white slider to 93% left, 50% right. Add a white stroke.



21 Bring in the sunshine

Select the Rectangle Tool. Draw a long thin rectangle, hold down the Shift key so you see a plus symbol on your cursor, click and hold in your document, release Shift and finish drawing. This should create a vector shape layer with two vector shapes in it. Repeat ten times.



23 Fading light

Now apply a layer mask (Layer>Add Layer Mask>Reveal All). Select the Gradient Tool and in the gradient menu select the default black/white gradient. Follow the angle of the rays and draw out the gradient from left to right. The rays should fade away at the bottom.



20 Duplicate the wind towers

Position the layer to where you're happy with it and duplicate it. Move this layer to the right and transform the scale (Ctrl/Apple+T) while holding down Shift, now duplicate the second wind tower layer and repeat the transform, ensuring they're on the same vanishing point.



22 Transform and position

Transform the perspective of the rays (Ctrl/Apple+T) by holding down the Ctrl/Apple key and pulling out the corner nodes until you get the right effect. Change the blending mode of the rays to Soft Light and position the layer directly below the black mask layer.



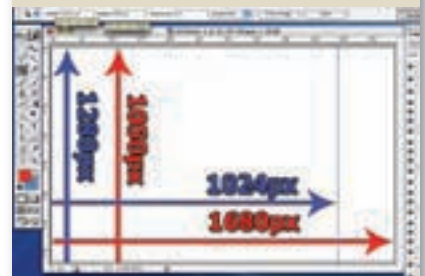
24 Dot to dot

From the Shape Tool, select the Circle Tool. Draw a circle, holding down the Shift key to make it round, and add more circles by holding the Shift key to add it to the new vector shape layer. Try holding the Alt key to subtract from a circle and then using Shift to keep the proportion.

Technique

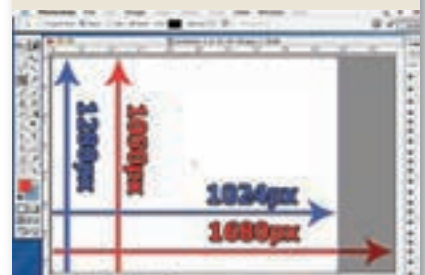
Downsizing your design

We'll create three documents with different resolutions so that your artwork is always proportionally correct



1: Start with a crop

Layer effects are relative to the size and resolution of the document. We have to shrink it down while maintaining the layer effect and styles. Select the Crop Tool and enter 1280 by 1024px at 72dpi.



2: Reposition objects

From the top left, draw the crop box so it just reaches the bottom of your creation. Do not crop the image – grab a vertical guide and position it to the right edge of the crop box. Press Escape to remove the crop box.



3: Flatten and resize

Now reposition the all of the objects in relation to each other and to the left of the guideline. Flatten the document and reapply the crop box and crop. Repeat this for any screen resolutions.



25 Rays of light

From the main menu create a Layer Mask (Layer>Add Layer Mask>Reveal All). Select the Gradient Tool and from the gradient menu select the default black/white gradient. Follow the angle of the rays and draw out the gradient from left to right.



26 Drop in the tree

Open up 'Tree.psd' from your CD. Highlight this layer by holding down Ctrl/Apple and, clicking on the tree thumbnail, copy and paste it into your artwork. Position the layer above the black mask layer. Select the Eraser and delete the overlapping bottom section of the tree.



27 Smoothing out detail

Apply a Stroke Effect to the tree layer, and you'll see that this will smooth out the edges of the tree and give it a more modern look. You may find that you will have to reposition and possibly resize the building layers so that all three layers fit around each other properly.

In detail

Mastering vector shape layers

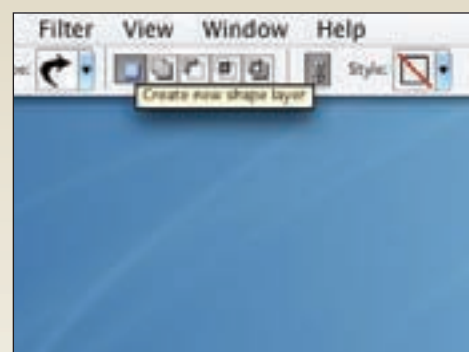
Make the most of your vector shape layers by combining more than one shape on each layer

PHOTOSHOP CAN DO a million and one different things, but above all else it is an image-editing package, and this is where it really excels. Here we've created a fantastic piece of art by manipulating vector shapes and working on them in Photoshop, but getting the best from vector elements takes a bit of practice. Although you can create vector shapes very easily, it is still not as easy as it is with Adobe Illustrator to edit, move and combine various paths and shapes.

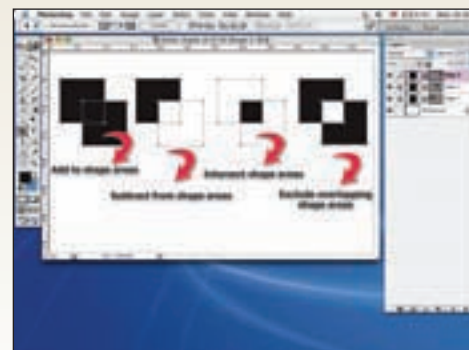
If you draw a vector shape on the page and then draw another vector shape straight after, it will create a new vector shape layer. Merging the two layers together will only rasterize the two shapes. This is easily overcome by holding down a combination of Shift, Ctrl, Command and Alt while keeping an eye on your cursor, as a little +, -, x, next to the tool icon will tell you what you are about to do and enable you to continue drawing on the first vector shape layer.

Holding down one of these keys and drawing on the vector shape layer then releasing the key while still holding down the mouse button, and then holding down the key again will apply the vector shape to the same layer. It also enables you to control the proportions (for example, holding down Shift will create a perfect proportioned shape).

Another way of doing this is to select one of these five different buttons from the symbols on the top toolbar: Add to shape areas, Subtract from shape areas, Intersect shape areas, Exclude overlapping shape areas. However, we've found that this is more time-consuming and a lot less fun.



Different buttons indicate what type of path you are about to create, so make sure the correct one is selected for the editing job



Play around with Photoshop's combinations of vector shapes to get a better feel for what can be achieved



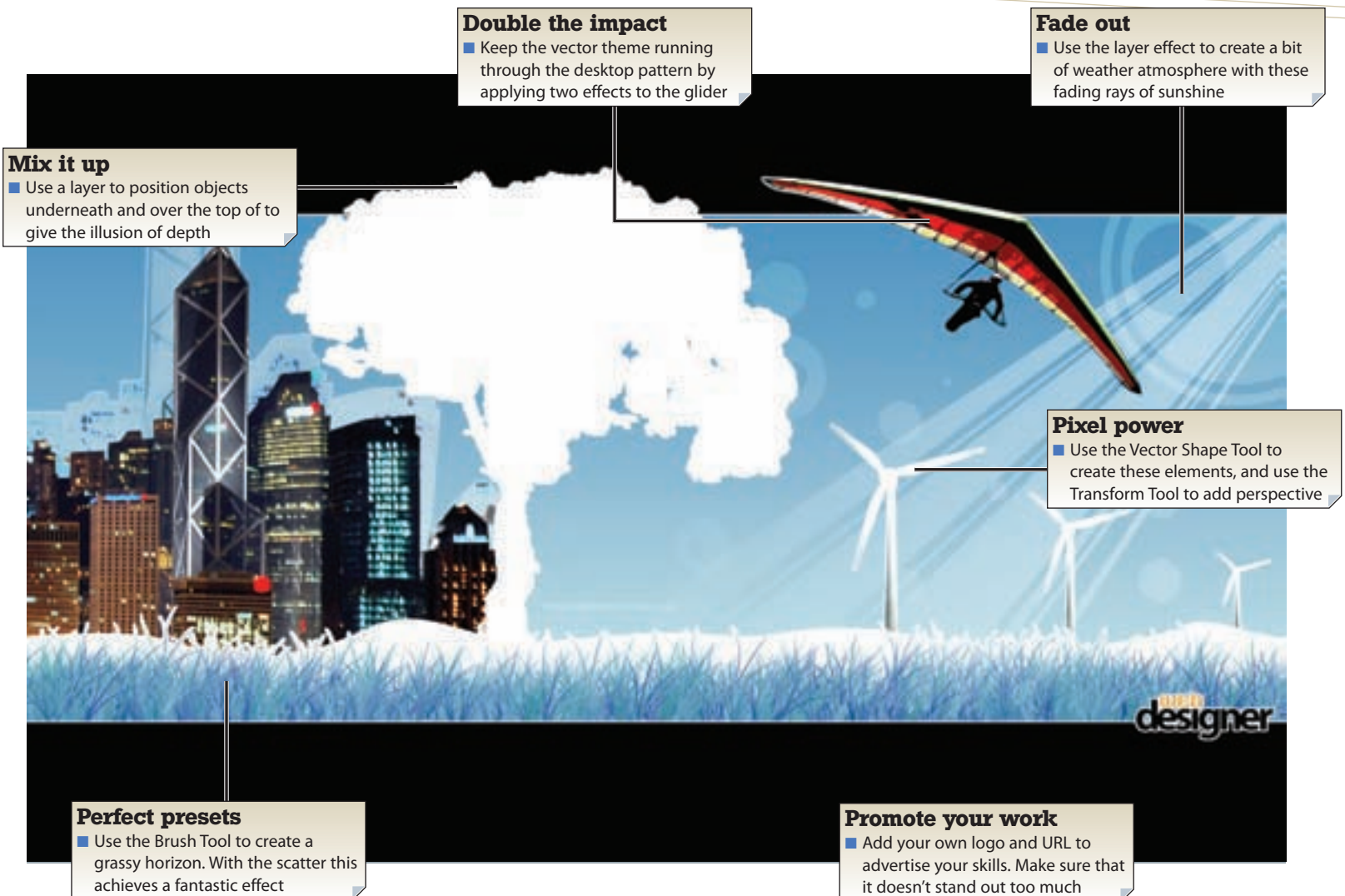
28 White lines

Select the bottom glider, apply a stroke of 2px positioned to the outside and click OK. Select the Eraser Tool (E) and erase the stroke on the bottom glider below the white horizontal line but not the areas in the black. Now it looks like the stroke is running across the top.



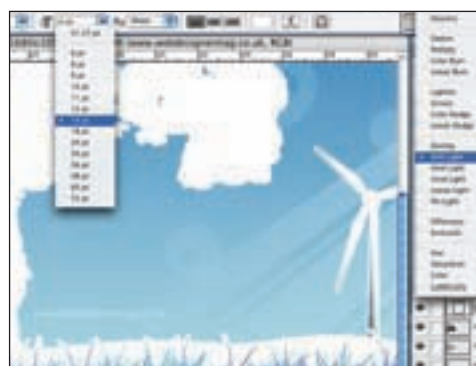
29 Position your promo

Add your own personal touch to the artwork by adding your URL and logo where we've added *Web Designer's*. Open up your artwork copy and paste it into the document. The colours contained in your logo will determine whether you require a Stroke Effect.



30 Add a stroke

Apply a stroke to your logo if you feel that it is a bit lost. Reduce the size of the logo, as it's not the focal point of the desktop pattern so you want it to be as subtle as possible. If your logo is too overbearing then someone will just open it up in Photoshop and clone it out!



31 The small print

Select the Text Tool (T) and enter your URL (and even your email address if you wish). Again this wants to be very subtle so choose a suitable font and a size of no more than around 14pt. Set the colour to white and the layer blend mode to Soft Light.



32 Squash 'n' go

With all of the elements together on the page make any final adjustments that you think will improve the appearance of the desktop pattern. Finally, save the document as a PSD and export it as a JPEG with very little compression. Now you can use it as you wish!

Tech support Photoshop

Rodger Page takes you through the finer points of handling Photoshop brushes and delves into History as we answer reader's issues

Q

Brushing up

I have recently discovered the benefits of using the Brush Tool and creating things freehand within Photoshop. I have also located a few websites (thanks to your mag) that provide free brushes and resources for Photoshop. I have now got a massive library of brushes but I have noticed that some of the brushes that I

forward. This can be achieved simply and easily within Photoshop so finding the right image to use is key.

The trick is when you create your brush to keep the image as large as possible; as with any image reducing the size will not affect the quality but blowing it up will. To get the most out of the brush it is a good idea to turn up

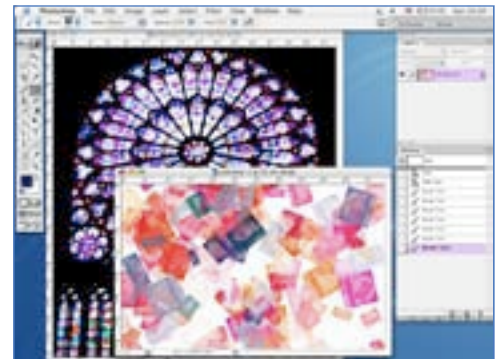
“The Brush Tool is a powerful utility – you can build up a vast and varied library”

have located seem to be images, and I was wondering if there was a way of creating my own brushes within Photoshop. If not, could you point me in the direction of some software that can?

A

The Brush Tool is indeed a powerful utility and with additional resources that can be found on the Internet you can build up a vast and varied library to have at your disposal. But if you are working on a unique bit of artwork it can be the case that you just cannot find the brush you need to finish the effect, so creating your own brush is definitely the way

the contrast so there are definite areas of black and white. This may not always be the effect you are trying to achieve as areas of black will be heavy in colour and areas of grey will be lighter, so having a play around with your image first creating the brush and going back to tweak it further will achieve better results. This brush image works in greyscale so it might even be an idea to convert your images just to make the job of contrasting the image even easier. As for creating the brush, well this could not be simpler, select Edit/Define Brush and you are done. Open up the Brush menu



Play around with the brush options to create some fantastic effects

and your new brush should be located at the very bottom of your list. You will notice that the name of the brush is by defined by the file name of your document and the size (located at the bottom of the thumbnail) is the width of the original image in pixels.

To change the size of the brush press] (square bracket) to increase and [to decrease. Your brush is not a vector shape but a bitmap image, so increasing the size beyond its default size will cause distortion while decreasing its size will not harm it at all.

Q

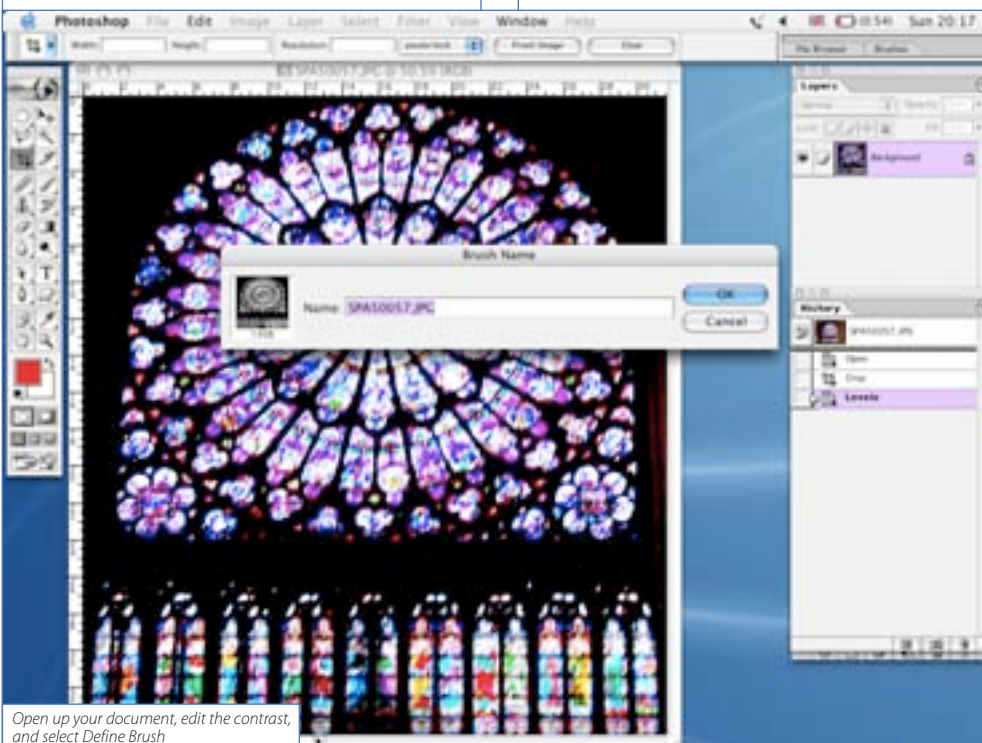
Your History

I recently read an article online that was asking photographers what they thought of Photoshop and what tool they find most useful. Someone said that the History Brush was the most useful tool ever, so I gave it a try and either nothing happened or it just drew a white line as with the Brush Tool. Where am I going wrong?

A

I found the History Brush to be a little tricky when I first started working with it too. How you begin your work is key in determining how the history Brush Tool can be used.

If you open up an image then open the History palette you will notice a small thumbnail of your image. Now let's say you adjust the levels; after this you would be able to use the History Brush to bring back some of the highlights. Because your original first step was opening the image this is now the start point and the brush will revert to this. If, however, you begin by creating a new document and pasting an image in, your starting point will be a blank white canvas, which is why you



Open up your document, edit the contrast, and select Define Brush

If you have a problem, and no one else can help, send it in to the *Web Designer* team! We'll do our best to print your problems on our pages, but we cannot reply personally to every email.

SEND YOUR QUERIES TO:
webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk



Your expert

Rodger Page is a new-media designer and multimedia editor who has been using Photoshop and Flash for years. His plans are to teach digital arts at a college or university, but for the moment enjoys authoring CD and DVDs here at Imagine Publishing.

Expert advice

■ Crop without the Crop Tool

It is possible to crop an image without using the Crop Tool by simply using the Marquee Tool. This will not downsize the document but reduce the dimensions to fit the selection. This can be quite handy if you have transformed the scale of an object and wish the document to fit its boundaries. Hold down the Apple/Ctrl key, click the thumbnail within the layer palette and select Image/Crop. Your document should now fit the object's height and width perfectly.



were painting white lines. In the History Palette at the top right there is a drop menu where you will find an option that says Snapshot. Click on this and you will notice that you now have two thumbnails.

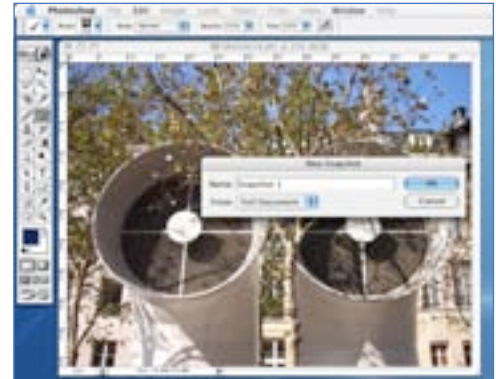
Select the new thumbnail, make a few adjustments, and try using the brush again. If you have a lot of work to do on an image, taking snapshots at strategic points and naming them relevantly will help you to keep track of progress and enable you to quickly rectify any mistakes. If you think of the History snapshots as another layer palette, it will be easy to get your head around what you are doing.

The History Brush Tool itself is really intended for use on single layers, which is why photographers find it useful as all they wish to do is colour-correct, clean up and crop. When it comes to working with layers you will find it more difficult, so the trick is to make any adjustment to an object in a different document then paste it into your work.

Q

Easy edits

I'm not much of a photographer but I want to put a few of my latest photos



Open the History palette to view the snapshots

onto my website. I don't 'get' all the tonal changes I should make, so is there a way to get Photoshop to automatically fix them?

A

Yes, there's an easy way to do this. First, bring up the Histogram window (Window>Histogram). Now go to Image>Adjustments and run through the three Autos: Levels, Contrast and Color. Watch the histogram as you do this; you'll see how each image is being altered and you should learn a little more about editing your photos! ■

Technique: Colour correction layer mask

Q

If I am working on a document and wish to mess around with an object, I end up duplicating the layer so that I have a backup, but I always seem to end up with a mountain of layers. I use the levels most, so is there a better way of changing levels without copying layers?

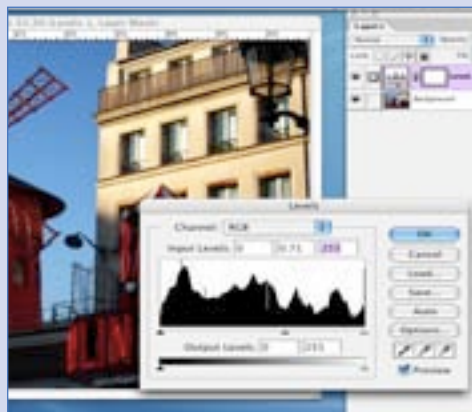
A

Try using an adjustment layer. This will create a layer mask upon which the levels will be applied. As with a layer mask, whatever is white will show through, so a trick is to flip over the colour of the layer mask to black then paint (in white) the areas that need attention.



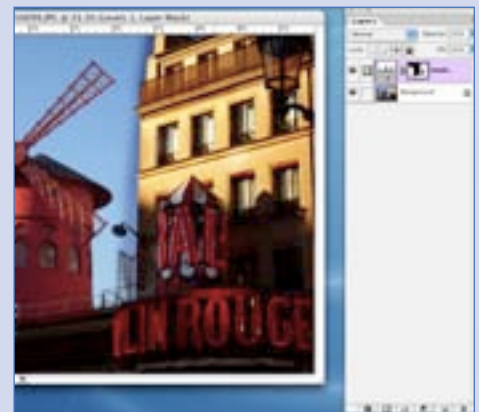
01 Launching the Levels

Open up your layer palette and located at the bottom is the 'create new fill or adjustment layer'. Click on the Levels option and the Levels dialog box will appear. If you look in the layer palette there is a layer mask thumbnail and a little icon showing on the histogram.



02 Now for the highlights

In the Levels dialog, tweak the levels to get a good highlight, a good shadow and a good 50% grey. For the purpose of this tutorial we will change the colours much more radically that you are likely to need just to illustrate how the layer mask works.



03 Painting on the layer mask

Select the default black and white by clicking on the small icon located on the bottom left of the tool bar or press D, hold down Alt and press Backspace to fill the layer mask. Swap the colours over so white is the foreground colour and press X. Paint on the layer mask.

Slicing up shapes to create abstract art

Want to create a truly awe-inspiring splash for your website? Here's how to generate your own unique abstract artwork using nothing but the magic of Photoshop and a bit of imagination

ALTHOUGH IT MAY look complicated at first glance, abstract design is perhaps one of the easiest genres to get a handle on if you're new to digital art. Now, we don't want to belittle professional artists who turn out stunningly complex abstract images, because beneath their chaotic lines and shapes lies a great deal of skill and expertise. No, all we're saying is that it's the random and dynamic nature of these images that make them an easy starting point for your average wannabe digital imageer. Basically, abstract art like

the image you see here is built up by layering a series of basic shapes – such as columns, spikes and blocks – on top of each other, messing around with their blending modes and then getting squiffy with colours. But having said that, there are a few rules that need to be adhered to should you want to make these chaotic elements appear coherent (if you'll excuse the oxymoron). The best way to learn is by doing, so head into the following workshop as we lead you through the process of creating stunning abstract art.

The brief

On the CD

Tutorial files:
Abstract.psd, Snake.jpg

Tutorial objective

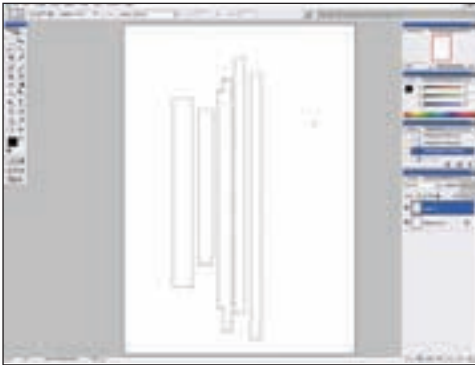
To create an original piece of abstract art in Photoshop

Time required

Up to two hours

Skill level





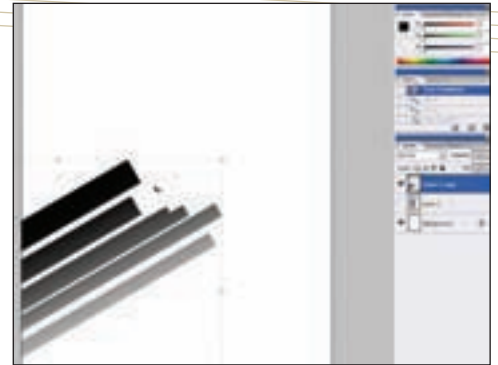
01 Make some columns

Start with an A4-sized canvas with a resolution of 300dpi. Create a new layer above the background layer, grab the Rectangular Marquee Tool, hold down Shift and start drawing some long, thin shapes in the middle of the document. Stop when you've got five or six.



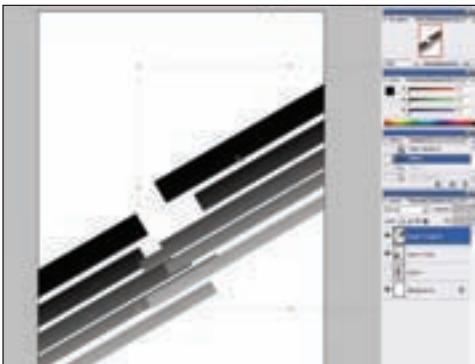
02 Shades of grey

To fill the columns in, select the Gradient Tool from the Toolbox (it's grouped with the Paint Bucket – click and hold on it to get the fly-out menu), hit D to reset your colours to black and white, then draw a straight line across the bars to fill them with different shades of grey.



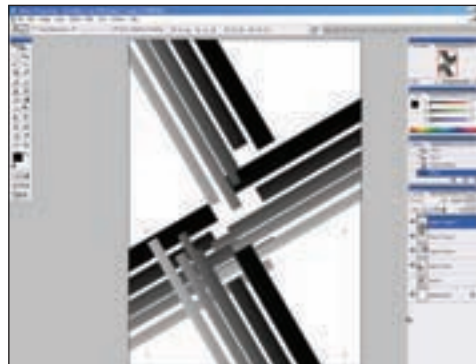
03 Spin me round

The next step is to rotate the shapes. Select the Move Tool and make sure that Show Transform Controls is selected in the Options Bar. Hold down Shift and, with the mouse positioned just outside the bounding box, rotate the shapes. Move them into position, as above.



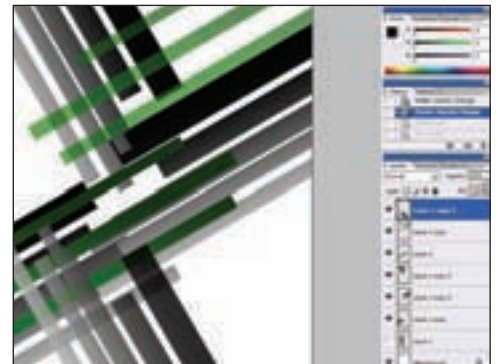
04 Copy the layer

Now to create more lines to come into the page from the opposite direction. Hit Ctrl/Apple+D to deselect, then with the Move Tool selected create a duplicate on a new layer (hold Alt then click and drag on the current shapes on the canvas). Spin them around and position like so.



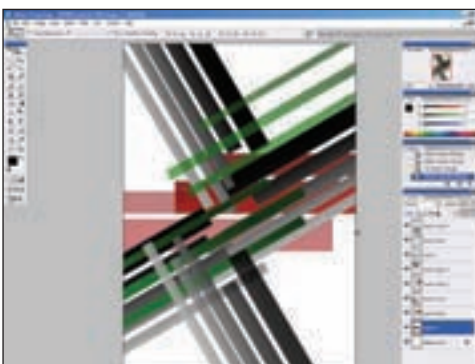
05 Rinse and repeat

Continue to build up the image by positioning new copies of the shapes as shown in the screenshot, overlapping the edges. Repeat steps two and three to create a new layer for each set of columns, and use the Transform controls to rotate them.



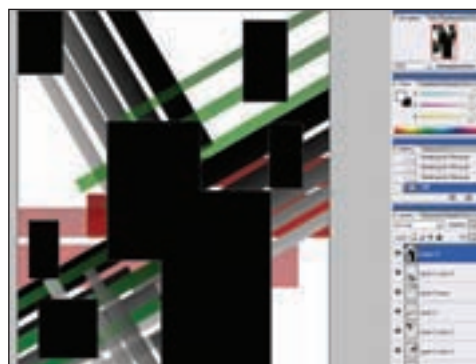
06 Going green

Chuck in a few green columns by creating some new shapes on a new layer (see steps one and two), colouring them with a medium-green to dark-green gradient (set these as your fore- and background colours before picking the Gradient Tool) and positioning them like so.



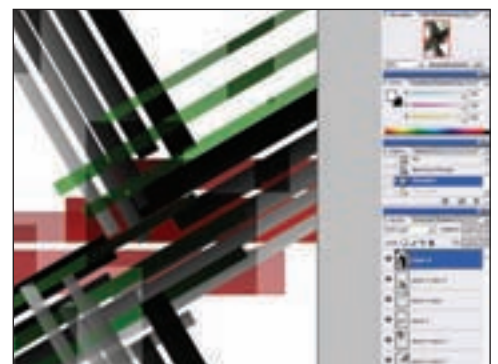
07 See through me

This image still needs colour. Create chunky red columns on a new layer using the previous techniques and position them behind the black and green layers. Select each shape layer in turn and play around with reducing the Opacity settings to make some a bit see-through.



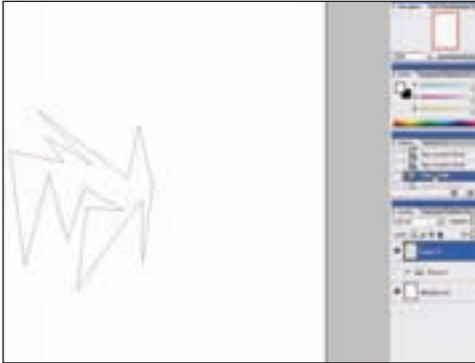
08 Big black rectangles

To add a bit of texture, create a new layer and grab the Rectangular Marquee Tool. Hold Shift and start drawing big blocks in random places. Fill them by selecting black as the foreground colour, then Edit>Fill. Select Foreground Colour in the Use field and hit OK.



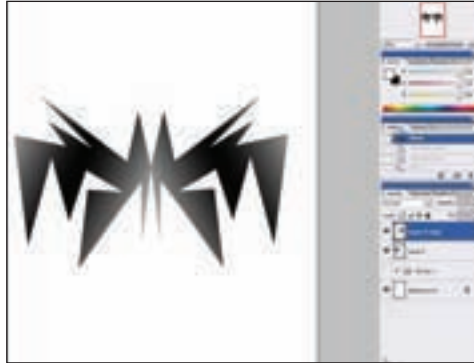
09 Softly, softly...

Now for a bit of refining. With the black shapes layer selected, change the Blending Mode from Normal to Soft Light in the drop-down menu at the top of the palette. This causes the black shapes to cut into the background shapes, changing their hue.



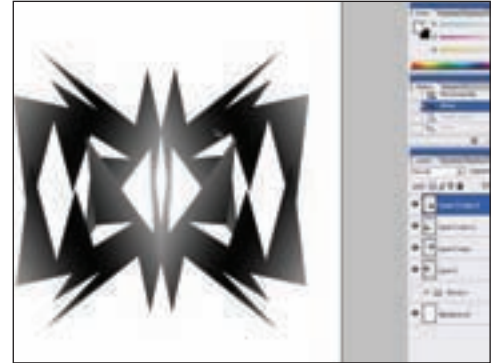
10 Getting spiky

Now let's jazz it up with some spiky shapes. Grouping the layers (Shift+click each one, click the small arrow at the top of the palette and hit New Group), hide them, then create a new layer on top. Grab the Pen Tool, set it to Paths on the Options Bar and draw a spiky shape.



11 Smoke and mirrors

Right-click the path and hit Make Selection. Enter a Feather of 0 and hit OK. Grab the Gradient Tool and fill with a black-to-grey. Hit Ctrl/Apple+D, then with the Move Tool, duplicate the layer (hold Alt and drag). Click Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal and mirror the first shape.



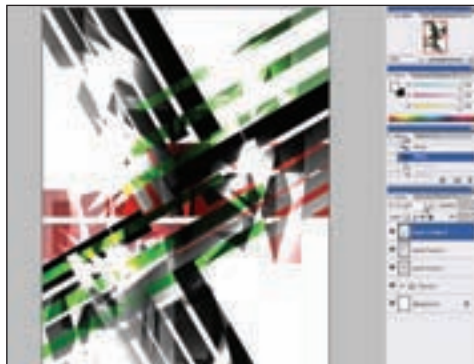
12 Flip it over

In the Layers palette, Shift+click on each of the two spiky shape layers to select them both, then duplicate them on a new layer and click on Edit>Transform>Flip Vertical. Now position them on the canvas so that they create an interesting, symmetrical arrangement.



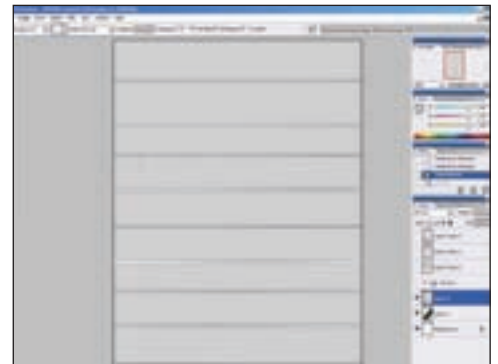
13 Invert the colours

To squash the spiky shapes into one layer, Shift+click each thumbnail in the Layers palette then click Layer>Merge Layers (or Ctrl/Apple+E). Make things interesting by inverting the colours of the spikes using Image>Adjustments>Invert. Turn the background layers back on.



14 Move and abuse

Right, let's funk things up a bit. Start by changing the Blending Mode of the spikes layer to Vivid Light, which causes the shapes to cut into the background shapes and break them up. With the Move Tool selected, duplicate a few spike layers and position until it looks cool.



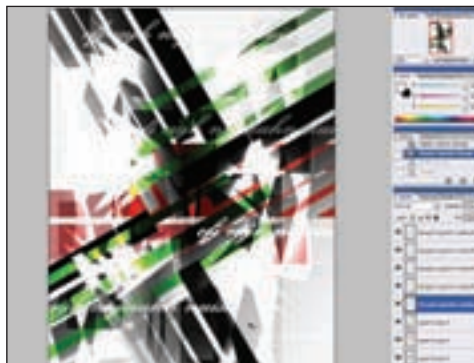
15 Getting deep

Now to create a backdrop. Hide all layers except the Background, then create a new layer. Draw a black-to-white gradient, then change the Opacity to 25%. On a new layer above, use the Rectangular Marquee to draw a set of blocks across the canvas, then fill them with grey.



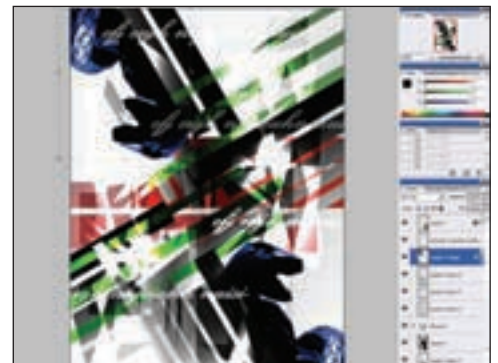
16 Cut it back

Hit Ctrl/Apple+D to deselect the blocks, then make all the other layers reappear on the Layers palette. Now, blend the blocky background into the gradient layer beneath it by changing the block layer's Opacity setting to around 25%. That's looking a bit more like it.



17 The joy of text

Let's add some text. Grab the Horizontal Type Tool from the Toolbar, select a font (we've gone for Palace Script MT), set a size of 72pt, click the image and start typing. Select Layer>Rasterize>Type and move duplicates around the image. Finally, mess about with the Opacity.



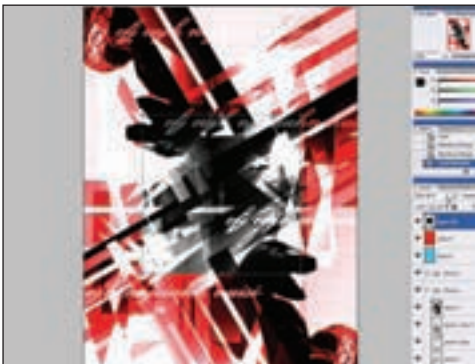
18 Solid snakes

Next, add in a dramatic photo (or use 'Snake.jpg' from the cover CD). Add two instances and again, using the Move Tool and the transform controls, spin it around and align each one to top-left and bottom-right corners. Bury them in the image by altering their position in the Layers stack.



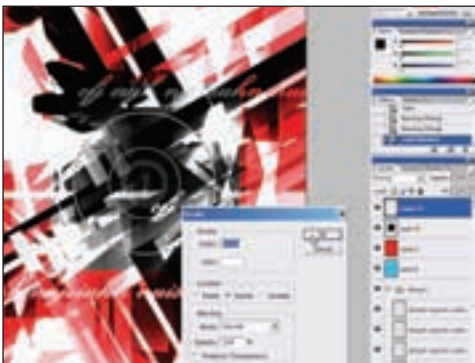
19 Going red

The image is nearly complete, so let's ramp up the impact by altering the overall hue. Create a new layer on top of the stack and fill it with Cyan. Change its Blending Mode to Overlay, then create another new layer above. Fill this with red, then set its Blending Mode to Color.



20 Centre square

Create a new layer on top of the stack and use the Rectangular Marquee Tool to draw out a large square in the middle of the image. Fill it with black, then change the layer's Blending Mode to Saturation to desaturate the centre portion of the image.



21 Smaller circles

Create a layer and flip to the Elliptical Marquee Tool. Holding Shift and Alt, click in the centre of the image and draw a circle. Right-click and select Stroke, set the Width to 10px and Color to white, hit OK then Ctrl/Apple+D. Use Move and Transform to shrink duplicates of the circle.

In detail

Creating those spikes

Is the Pen Tool leaving you in a muddle? Here's how to sketch out those shapes with ease



THE PEN TOOL is one of the most useful yet widely misunderstood gadgets in Photoshop's wide imaging arsenal. As a consequence, it's also one of the most frustrating tools to get to grips with as a new user.

One of its main uses is enabling users to create precise selections around objects through the magic of Bezier curves. Put simply, when you click points with the Pen Tool, you can manipulate the adjoining lines into incredibly accurate curves by adjusting the anchor points that appear at each stop.

It's often tricky to master, but the good news is that there's a simple rule that makes things easier: once you've created a curve, always ensure that the forward anchor point is facing the direction in which you intend to place the next point along the path. You can do this by holding Alt and dragging the point to face the correct direction without affecting the curvature of the line you've drawn at all.

In this workshop, though, we're using the Pen Tool to create a really basic, jaggy edged shape, so we don't need to partake in any of that curve nonsense. For this, all we need to do is quickly click some random points to describe a spiky path.

You can close it by clicking back on the first point you made, then all you need to do is convert the path into a selection by using the relevant option in the context-sensitive menu that appears when you right-click somewhere on the shape. It's all very easy, really, but the only way to really master the Pen Tool is through practise, as any designer will tell you.



Quickly click random points on the canvas to create a spiky path comprised entirely of straight lines

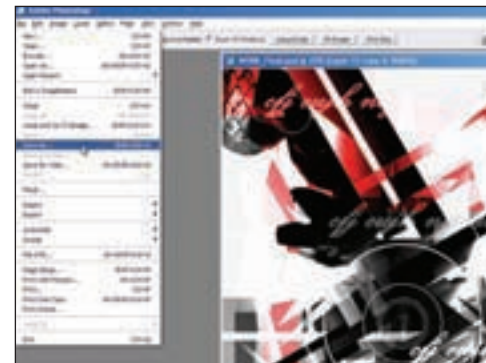


Once the path is complete, turn it into a selection by right-clicking on it, hitting Make Selection and entering a Feather Radius of 0 pixels



22 Move them around

The circles add a neat sense of depth to the image and help to draw the eye. It's also a good idea to create some copies, scale them up and down a bit and position them in random locations, as above. Just play around until things look right – but remember, don't overdo it.



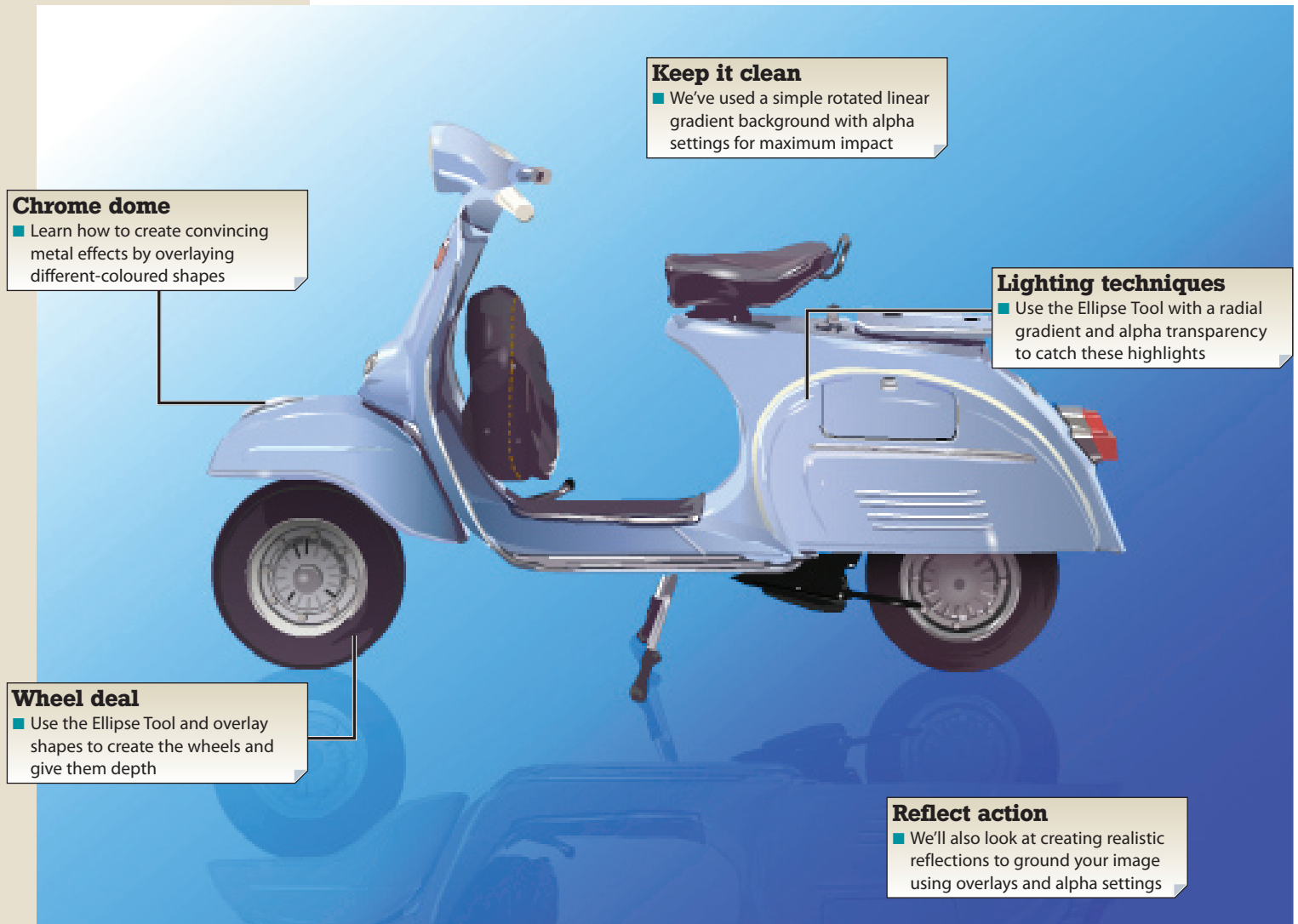
23 Finish and save

That's just about all there is to it. We've finished up by adding in another layer with a few more de-saturated blocks at the sides (created in exactly the same way as in step 20), just to add a little extra detail and balance. Then, all that's left is to save your work and you're done!



Your expert

Craig Lowe is just the average everyday guy who enjoys web design as a hobby and is currently specializing in SWiSH Max and acting as a moderator on www.swish-db.com. He would like to do web design full-time in the future. Visit www.craigspage.co.uk.



The brief

On the CD

Tutorial files:
Vespa-start.swi,
Vespa-final.swi

Tutorial objective

Create stunning vector graphics for your website from a photo

Time required

Four to five hours

Skill level



Design photo-realistic graphics in SWiSH Max

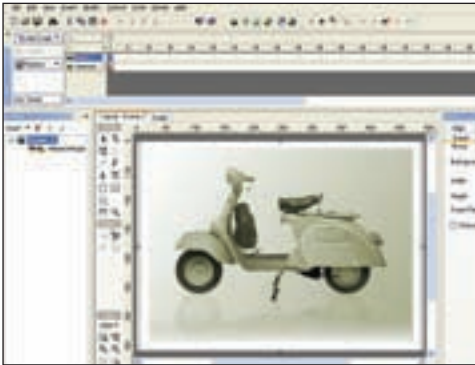
Create professional-looking graphics for your website or presentations with this all-in-one web design software

THIS TUTORIAL IS designed to show you how to create great professional-looking graphics for your website, presentations or even poster prints without the use of expensive graphics packages and extensive knowledge requirements.

If you have never used SWiSH Max before this tutorial is still great practice as it will introduce you to the interface and the most common tools you will use within the software. You will also learn many techniques within this that you can

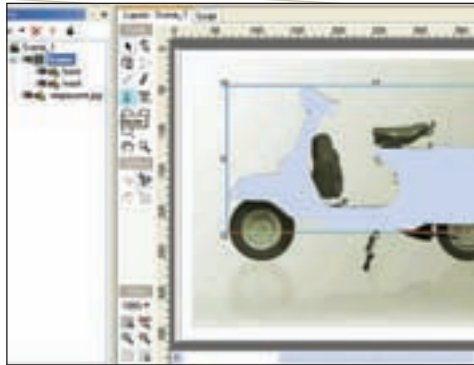
use in other projects, such as metal colouration, lighting and reflection effects. All it takes is time; as you're basically tracing over photographed elements, the results should be great even if you're no artist.

Don't worry if you don't have a copy of SWiSH Max. Head to www.swishzone.com to download a free 15-day trial run of the program (PCs only, we're afraid) so that you can get a feel of how it works and have a go at this tutorial!



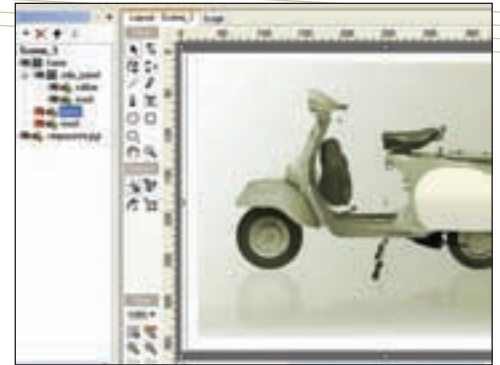
01 Begin with the image

To start the tutorial, open 'vespa-start.swi' from the cover CD in SWiSH Max. The whole image is far too plain for our liking, so we are going to trace our way through and create a gorgeous coloured replica using various tools and techniques for a photo-realistic finish.



02 Drawing the frame

Use the Bezier Tool to draw around the scooter outline. Name the shape 'base', right-click on it and select Copy, right-click again and select Paste In Place. Now rename one of the shapes to 'mask'. Select both shapes and group as a sprite, selecting 'use bottom object as mask'.



03 Adding definition

Draw around the outline of the side panel in a cream colour. Copy and paste this in place, then rename one shape 'mask' and the other 'rubber'. Group the shapes as sprite (use bottom object as mask). Name the sprite 'side_panel'. This sprite should be inside the 'frame' sprite.



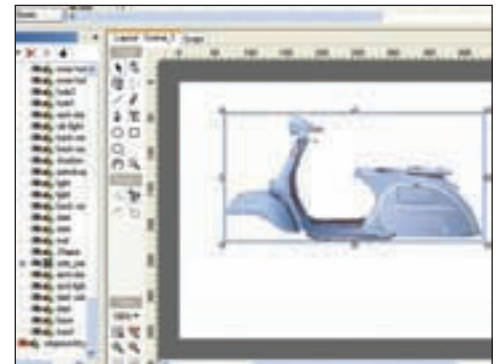
04 Metallic sheen

Switch off the last image you drew by clicking on the eye icon at the side to enable you to see the original image. Draw the same shape as the rubber, but make it smaller so it leaves a little of the shape showing (name it 'panel colour'). Our gradient colour fill is B9C7EA to 788BAB.



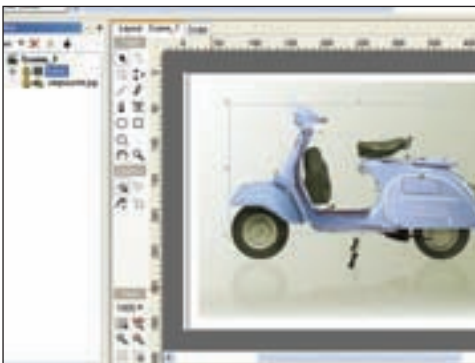
05 Add the key details

Using the Bezier Tool, create the side panel features. For the door, grilles and highlights, draw the shapes using the Pen Tool, changing the thickness to suit. Once you have all the images for the door, group them and name them 'door'. Do the same for the grille and highlight elements.



06 Sorting shapes

Use the Pen Tool to draw the rest of the shapes on the scooter frame, then colour and name them something obvious so you don't get in a mess as the numbers of shapes build up. Getting the colouration and how the light reflects on things will come with time and practice.



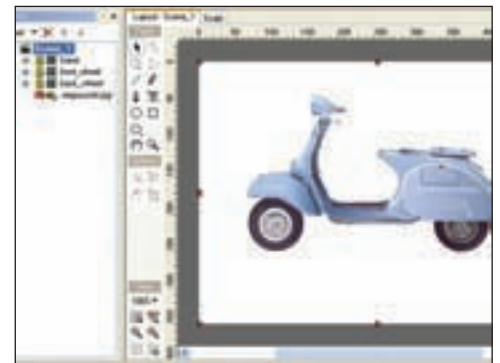
07 Lock and load the Ellipse

The frame is complete, so close the sprite by clicking the minus symbol at the side and then click the eye symbol until a lock appears (this will stop you accidentally moving the frame out of place). You're ready to do the wheels now – the easiest way is with the Ellipse Tool.



08 Drawing the wheels

Using the Ellipse Tool, press and hold the Shift button and drag the shape to match the wheel size. Again using the Ellipse Tool, build up the wheel using the same technique as with the frame, changing the colours and overlapping the shapes to give depth to the wheel.



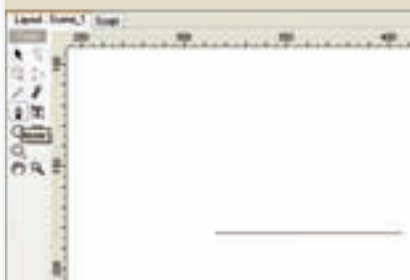
09 Nuts and bolts

Using the Bezier Tool, create the detail of the wheel rim, group it then name it 'spines'. For the wheel nuts use the Ellipse Tool. Once you have all the nuts in place on the image, group everything as a sprite and name it 'front wheel'. Use the same technique to create the back wheel.

Technique

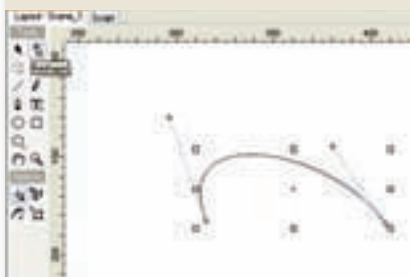
Using Bezier and Reshape

Perfecting using the Bezier Tool is a must-have skill for SWiSH art – or any other web art for that matter



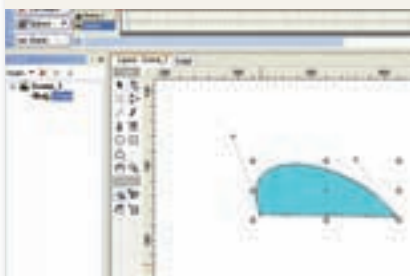
1: Starting up

Select the Bezier Tool from the toolbar, click where you wish to start, drag the line until you wish to stop, then double-click to get your end anchor point. Now select the Reshape Tool from the top of the toolbar.



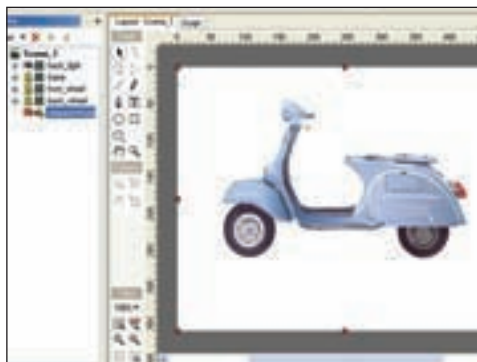
2: Create a curve

With the Reshape tool selected, right-click in the middle of the line you've drawn, and click Quadratic from the menu. Now click and hold the left mouse button on the blue anchor point and drag up to create a curve.



3: Closing paths

You can manipulate your shape as much as you like by adding more anchor points. When you wish to make a solid shape, join two anchor points together just like a dot-to-dot. You can then colour-fill the shape.



10 Light up the back

Using the Bezier Tool draw the back light. Copy and paste it in place, group as a sprite and use bottom object as mask. Name it 'back light'. Use the linear gradient fill option to give it a metal sheen. Draw a new shape to use as the light cover with a red colour fill.



12 Defining lines

Using the Bezier Tool, draw around the lighter top half of the seat using a light grey as a colour fill. You don't have to be to neat; this is why we use the bottom object as mask, as when it is viewed in a browser you only see what's inside the shape and not what's outside.



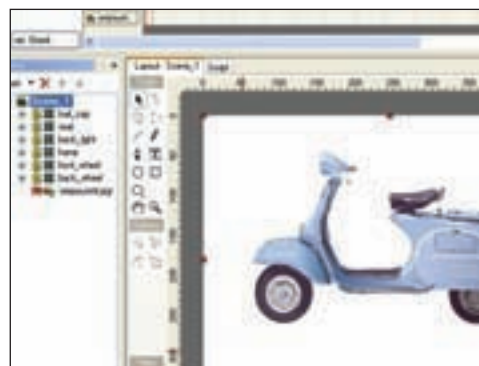
14 Drawing the foot brake

Using the Bezier Tool, draw round the foot brake using medium grey colour fill, copy shape, paste in place, group the shapes as sprite name as 'foot brake'. Inside the sprite draw the black rubber tip and add the white light highlight to the foot brake, again using the Bezier Tool.



11 Drawing the seat

Using the Bezier Tool, draw around the seat using the 'vespa-print.jpg' image as a guide. Choose black as the fill colour for the shape, copy and paste the shape in place, group both shapes as a sprite, name this 'seat' and check the option to use bottom object as mask.



13 Cap it off

Using the Bezier, draw around the outline of the petrol cap behind the seat on the scooter. Use black as the colour fill, copy and paste it in place, group the shapes as a sprite, name it 'fuel cap' and check to use bottom object as mask. Add the lighter shapes inside the fuel cap sprite.



15 Work on the stand

Again using the Bezier Tool – you must be getting good by now – draw around the stand on the image, copy and paste the shape in place, group the shapes as sprite name as 'stand' and use bottom object as mask. Choose black as the fill colour for the stand shape.

In detail

Metal and lighting techniques

There are some nice creative lighting effects that can be added by simply using the linear and radial gradient colour fills



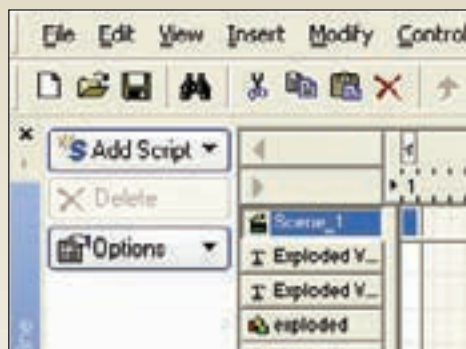
CREATING THE DIFFERENT lighting effects used in this tutorial is quite easy to do in SWiSH Max once you get the hang of using the radial and linear colour fills. You can also get different lighting effects by using the custom alpha option under the tint tab – for solid colours this helps feather and soften the colours when overlaying shapes.

This technique can be used on any shape no matter what colour fill it has. To create the dark shadow light effect, simply use the linear gradient colour fill. Choose the darker colour leading to the lighter colour, and set the colour of the object you are going to overlay to 0 Alpha. This technique will make the overlaid image blend in very nicely with the image beneath it.

The radial gradient colour fill technique is very similar, but this is better for smaller areas and finer detailed work and is a little simpler to achieve than the linear gradient fill.

To use the radial fill, create an oval shape use the radial gradient colour fill option. Have white showing in the middle of the oval and the colour of the shape you wish to overlay set to 0 alpha on the colour setting (the default setting is usually 100%, so just use the down arrow to reach zero or tap in '0' and click Done). Resize the oval to the relevant size and drag it into place. You can rotate any shape using the transform rotate option from the context menu, or by using the Rotate or Skew Tool in the Options section of the tools panel.

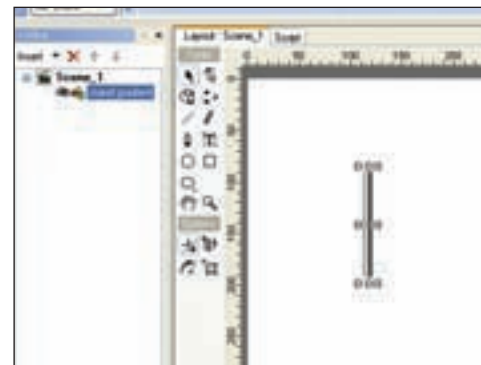
For creating the shadow effect on the back wheel, all you need to do is to add a linear gradient rectangle shape with black-to-transparent white over the top of all the shapes inside the back wheel sprite.



Using the Bezier Tool to draw the different coloured shapes, and overlay them to look like one shape



Use the radial and linear gradient colour fill with alpha settings to achieve different lighting effects



16 Adding colour to the stand

Using the Rectangle Tool, draw a shape big enough to fill one of the legs on the stand, and using a linear gradient fill use the colours #444444, #FFFFFF, and #000000 for a nice metal look to the leg. Repeat for the other leg. Then just add some shadows near the top of the stand.



17 Tracing the exhaust

Using the Bezier Tool, draw around the exhaust shape. Use a black solid colour fill and name the shape 'exhaust', then place it under the 'frame' sprite. You can add some light detail to the image if you wish. If you do, group the shape as a sprite and add the details inside the sprite.



18 Finishing touches

Again using the Bezier Tool, draw around the spare wheel, copy and paste the shape in place, group the shapes as a sprite and name it 'spare wheel', choosing to use bottom object as mask. Pick a solid black colour for the base then and add any highlights inside the sprite.



19 Adding the reflection

The vector image of the scooter is now complete, so delete 'vespa-print.jpg' from the scene and remove it from the contents tab. Group everything else together as a sprite and name it 'vespa'. Copy the vespa sprite, paste in place, rename it 'reflection' and move it into place.



20 Drop on the gradient

Using the Rectangle Tool, drag a shape to cover the scene, name it 'background' and place between the Vespa and the reflection. Set a linear gradient fill: #FFFFFF, 0099FF 85% alpha set and 0000FF with 30% alpha set. Click the Fill transform and rotate the background into place.

e-commerce

SET UP YOUR SITE TO SELL WITH OUR GUIDE TO
MAKING MONEY IN THE NEW DOT COM WAVE



Safety savers

LEADING VENDOR OF SSL CERTIFICATES OFFERS
SECURITY AT INCREDIBLE PRICES

WITH THE INTERNET growing more and more as a gateway for transferring sensitive personal and financial data, there's never been a better time to invest in security. In the ecommerce arena this normally points to a protocol called Secure Socket Layers, whereby information exchanges are encrypted using a set of public and private keys.

You'll probably know it best by the little padlock icon that appears in the browser when you enter a secured shop or from the 'https://' prefix that it sticks in front of a protected URL.

Leading online reseller of SSL certificates ProntoSSL has a range of product options that are currently listed at incredible discount offers. As much as 60 per cent can be saved across its QuickSSL Premium, RapidSSL, and Verified Domain packages, with all instantly available directly from the shop website. Brought to you in conjunction with RapidSSL and GeoTrust, you'll also receive authenticated seals with every purchase that can be proudly displayed on your newly secured pages. All information and product prices can be viewed at www.prontossl.com.



COMPETITION

We've teamed up with the ProntoSSL team to give three lucky *Web Designer* readers the chance to win a RapidSSL certificate and protect data transfer to and from their site. All you need to do is answer this simple question:

"ProntoSSL has reduced the price of its SSL certificates for a limited period. During this special offer, how much does a RapidSSL certificate cost for one year?"

- A) £14.95
- B) £22.45
- C) £58.95

Answers must be submitted to the www.prontossl.com/webdesigner competition page before 7 July 2006. For rules see the competition page.

Mobile merchants

SELLING GOODS ONLINE GETS A WHOLE LOT EASIER WITH THE
LAUNCH OF A NEW WEB-BASED SERVICE FROM QPASS

BUYING ONLINE IS without doubt revolutionising the way that retailers do business in the modern marketplace, although the potential for mobile technology still remains largely unfulfilled. The idea of interactively picking a pizza from your favourite take-away's website over your phone or handheld device is far more intuitive than relaying an order verbally, so why isn't it happening? If complexity is a factor then the people at leading commerce solutions company Qpass are hoping to alleviate that hassle by providing a service that lets you build a mobile storefront online. TheContentMarket.com claims to be as easy to use as

it is to set up an eBay account and utilises a four-step process over a highly usable interface where uploaded content can be embedded within a number of built-in templates. No registration fee is required to set up an account, and the system boasts tight integration with leading mobile search engines to ensure the widest possible exposure across European merchandising tools. "Opening up mobile search and discovery technology to allow any content provider to publish, price, sell and deliver content will prove a catalyst for growth throughout the mobile commerce market", confirmed VP EMEA for Qpass, Christian Lutz.

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Trading on your name

BILL GATES HAS PREDICTED THE END OF PASSWORDS. IN THE FIRST PART OF OUR LOOK AT IDENTITY FOR ECOMMERCE, **MARY BRANSCOMBE** LOOKS AT WHY THEY JUST AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH ANY MORE

HOW MANY PASSWORDS do you have? One for your email, one for the user account on your PC or Mac. One for Amazon, one for eBay, one for online banking or getting your credit card statements or checking frequent flyer miles or booking cheap flights online. One for each IM account, one for Google or Yahoo! or Passport or Flickr or your blog. Passwords for the information you want to protect, passwords that sites insist on even when you might not want them. But just how secure are all those dozens of passwords?

Do you create a new, complex password for each account and store than in a secure password manager or an encrypted file? Or do you do what more and more of us are doing: make all our usernames and passwords the same so that it's easy to remember them? According to Sophos, 41% of business users stick to one password and another 45% rotate. When there are so many to remember, passwords are no protection and users don't put any value on them. In survey after survey, people happily give away their password for a free pen or a Starbucks voucher. Simple or sophisticated,

phishing sites con people into giving up passwords and other security data. And whether people have lost money by handing over their information or not, they're starting to feel that ecommerce isn't as safe as they once thought; some users are even switching back to traditional shopping.

That's a worrying trend when more websites than ever include ecommerce – more than 25% of new sites from small and medium businesses launched over the last year, according to PFA Research. The same research found that businesses are spending twice as much on an ecommerce site as they would have in 2004 (on average

where they go on holiday, what car they drive, their date of birth, shoe size, weight or whatever else helps them work out how to pitch the right offers and adverts. But once you have all that customer data, you also have a legal responsibility to store it securely and, increasingly, a liability if the information leaks out. PGP's chief technical officer, Jon Callas, recently commented on the irony that business interests and privacy concerns are finally pointing to the same solution: working with the least customer data you can get away with.

Take age and date of birth. Age matters. You don't want to sell alcohol to teenagers. You might want to give older drivers a discount on their premiums. But unless you plan to send them a birthday greeting, you don't need to know their date of birth – just that they're over 18,

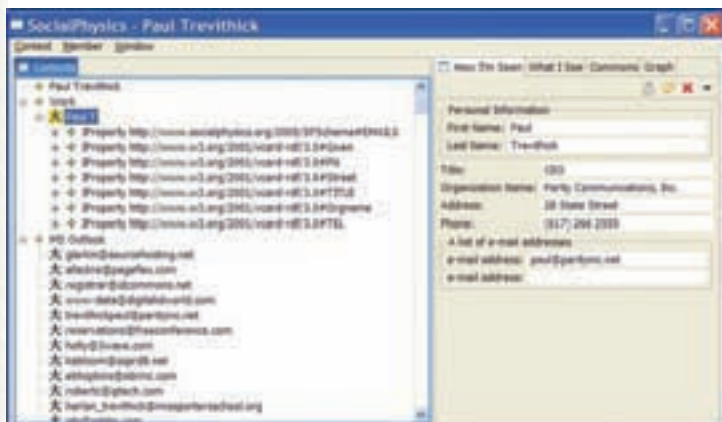
between 40 and 60 or whatever it is that makes a difference to your service. If you ask for a driver's licence or a credit card as proof of age in the real world, you don't need to take down the number – you just need to see it and be sure it's valid. You can effectively do the same thing in the online world by breaking identity up into smaller pieces of information, referred to as claims, and only checking the ones that matter.

Your identity could claim that you have a driving licence but not give out the number (or whether there are any points on it) unless you're hiring a car. It could confirm that a purchase won't take you over your credit limit without disclosing what the credit limit is. Rather than storing the information about the customer permanently, you request it every time. That's more secure because you're getting up-to-date details and with new identity technologies like Microsoft's InfoCard it's not going to mean any more typing for your customers. You already check the details of the credit card a customer supplies with another identity provider – your credit card handling service. You could check whether they have a valid driving licence or are a member

“People happily give away their password for a free pen or Starbucks voucher”

£4,600), so it's an area you can't afford to ignore. Over half the UK population shops online these days and ecommerce isn't going to fail because of identity problems, but solving them opens up huge opportunities to offer better services to more satisfied customers. We need new ways of letting people identify themselves to websites.

Over-using secure information devalues it because there's more chance that it's going to be compromised somewhere along the line. Some websites that should know better ask for details like mother's maiden name before you can download a white paper: the same shared secret almost every bank asks for. But how much information do you really need beyond a customer's name, address and a valid credit card authorisation? Your marketing department may be keen on learning their annual salary and



Higgins will let users see what identities they have in a range of systems as well as making it easier for developers to work with several identity systems at once

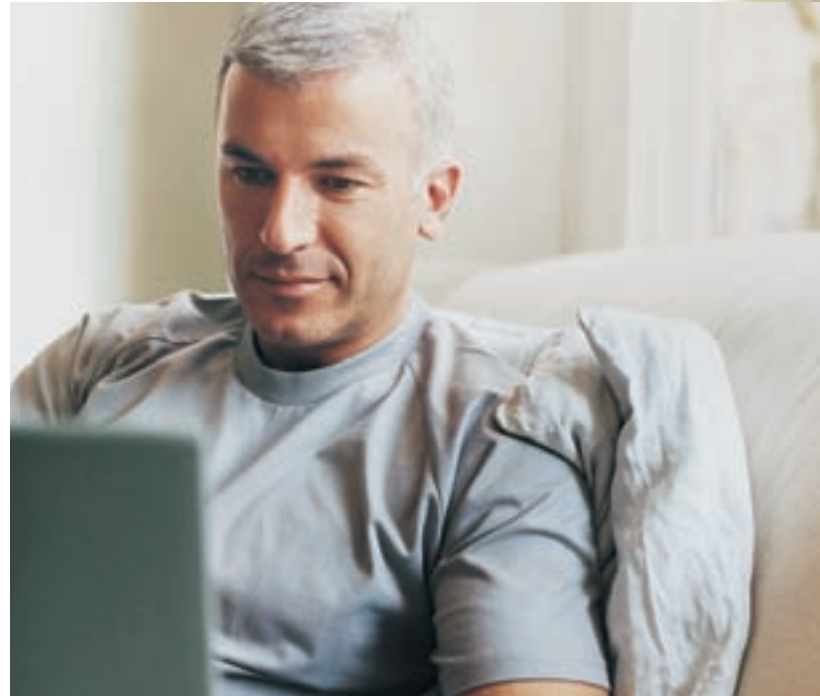
STAYING SECURE



Users will have several InfoCards, but you can set what information an InfoCard has to have for your site to accept it



When your site asks for an InfoCard the users will be sure of who you are and what you want to know



of a loyalty scheme with one of your partners in the same way. As long as you're getting that information from someone you trust (the DVLA, British Airways, etc), you can check whether the claim is true without having to retrieve and secure any more details than you need.

THE NEXT STEP IN IDENTITY

There are technologies on the way that will make identities less of a burden for users – and easier for developers to work with. Windows Vista will introduce InfoCard, a virtual wallet of identities that look like real-world cards: everything from a driver's licence to a casino membership card to a general identity that you use on sites like Amazon and

use to validate them. Unlike Passport, that's not necessarily a Microsoft service either. InfoCard isn't a Passport replacement, although when Vista comes out Passport will let you use InfoCards to sign in to services like MSN Messenger and MSN Spaces.

VeriSign has already announced that it will use InfoCard with one-time passwords generated by security fobs, USB keys or even mobile phones running the software for its Identity Protection Network as a way of signing in to eBay, Yahoo! and PayPal. And any site will be able to issue and accept InfoCards, so you can set up your own identity system or piggyback on someone else's. That's because InfoCard is just part of what Microsoft's identity architect Kim Cameron is calling the identity metasytem, where the systems we already have start to work together in a way end users can recognise.

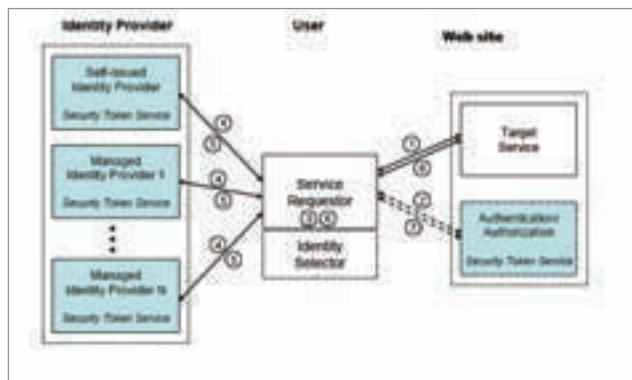
Microsoft has produced the InfoCard interface for Windows where you select the InfoCard you want to use; other software companies could produce their own interface to use the same InfoCards and identity services. The key is for it to be a consistent experience for end users so it's easy to tell who's asking for what information. InfoCard uses new high-

security X.509 certificates, which prove the company has provided information like years of accounts and other legal proof that they are who they say they are. That will make it easier to tell when you're really visiting PayPal and when you're at a phishing site.

Don't think of it as losing control over your login experience or your shopping cart; you still get to choose what those look like. What you don't get to design are the things you couldn't control in a physical shop: every time you use an InfoCard it will be a similar experience, in the same way that using an ATM to take out cash or a PIN card reader to go shopping is a similar experience. Leaving the design up to individual websites means that phishers get to choose the look; Kim Cameron compares that to putting the wolves in charge of a sheep farm.

Microsoft isn't the only company working on the next steps in identity. Intel Research has an identity project to create a trusted identity platform. Users would sign in to the platform using strong security like biometric authentication, and you'd check that they've signed in to the platform rather than checking their biometrics yourself. That way confidential information like fingerprint scans isn't winging its way back and forth across the Internet.

IBM and Novell are working on identity as part of the open-source Higgins project. This aims to produce a single API that developers can use in the Eclipse IDE to work with a variety of identity systems, from Lotus Notes and LDAP to Exchange and Active Directory. Instead of trying to come up with one perfect identity system, we can make systems work together and cherry-pick the best to find out what we need to know; nothing more and nothing less.



Your site can use InfoCard to get information about a user from several different identity providers for your site

Next month we'll look in more detail at how **InfoCard**, **Higgins**, **Intel's Identity Project** and the other pieces of the identity metasytem are coming together, and when you'll be able to start using them in your projects



Best practice

CHRIS BARLING, CEO OF ECOMMERCE AND EPOS SUPPLIER ACTINIC, EXPLAINS HOW TO CREATE A STANDOUT SITE THAT BOTH PLEASES SHOPPERS AND FULFILLS A DESIGN AESTHETIC

AFTER A PAINFUL CHILDHOOD, ecommerce is coming of age. Few designers or merchants implementing a web store lack experience of buying over the Internet, and site design is gradually coalescing around certain common elements that reflect today's best practice. The key benefits that best practice brings to buyers are simplified site navigation and reduced brainpower needed to make a purchase. You don't have to spend long online to see that Contact and About pages, Add to Cart buttons, and an editable shopping cart are standard fare. For designers, conformity can be a two-edged sword – providing ease-of-use at the cost of blandness. Getting the right balance is a skill.

There are tens of thousands of web stores, so it's important to stand out from the crowd. Although this can be achieved with unusual or ultra-creative design, it isn't always effective and is usually hard to get agreed by the client. Taking a holistic approach is often better. A well-designed site combines form with function and purpose.

APPROPRIATE DESIGN

If you're selling haute couture at high margins, contemporary design with high-quality images is essential. If you are developing an online bargain basement, a no-frills design can better communicate what you are about. People want a keen price, but with good service. Ease of use is one of the least recognised priorities in ecommerce site design. It's incredible still to find stores that require a login

Garden (www.garden.co.uk) gets 12-14% of its sales through an affiliate scheme



before they allow access. At every stage, present as few barriers as possible. Supplying enough information is possibly the most obvious areas, but also one of the most neglected. Because, well, it's difficult. If you go into a shop, you can see the

how people will search. If it's a clothing store, do people search on their colour or size? If there is a high stock turnover, and items are frequently out of stock, what's the point of browsers looking at items that aren't available in their size?

Over time your client will want search engine optimisation and pay-per-click advertising. Pleasing search engines isn't that hard, you just need to think like an indexer. Identify the keywords commonly used to find the content you're publishing. Put them in the text, and in page titles and hyperlinks. Make it easy for the search engines to understand the content, but never cheat – you may get blacklisted.

Merchandising aims to get a higher proportion of browsers to buy, and then to buy more. There are many techniques to achieve this. Most are borrowed from conventional retail. In many stores you will find prominent displays of top-selling items (the online equivalent is 'best sellers' on the home page), items near the checkout (the equivalent is the 'also bought' facility), coupons, and offers like

'buy three get one free'. Everyone loves a bargain, so a browser who thinks they are getting one is more likely to buy. Opportunities exist to create bargains by aggressively discounting end-of-line stock or stock that isn't moving, or making arrangements with the supplier for time-limited deals.

The key to increasing revenue is to require the buyer to make a bigger commitment in order to access the bargain. Examples include 30 per cent off batteries if you buy them with the appliance needing them and so on. A well marketed site may be successful, but the ability to up-sell, and maybe increase average order value by 10-15%, could double the profitability of a store as all of the gross margin will drop straight through to the bottom line. Ecommerce has come of age, but this doesn't mean that it's obvious or boring. In the retail sector, there are continuous innovations. The combination of creative and technological elements involved in designing a web store makes new ideas crucial. It's a great place to be, and there's a great opportunity to help clients, and hence help ourselves.

www.actinic.co.uk

"Ecommerce has come of age, but this doesn't mean that it's obvious or boring"

products. If not, there is information on the box. If you need more, there's an assistant who can help.

Online, it is a lot of work to provide enough information to support the decision to buy, so sites often don't bother. Recently, I visited a chandlery site to buy a new ship's wheel. But the only wheels shown had no dimensions, let alone any technical data to let me know whether it would fit the existing spindle. I quickly clicked away in frustration. My wife had the opposite experience purchasing plants. She found a site that provided a mass of detail. There were pictures of the plants, information about growth and conditions. It made it easy to make a decision to buy – so she did. The challenge is to find ways of presenting large quantities of information without being confusing when less is required. Try pop-up boxes or More Details links.

SEARCHING CAPABILITIES

There are two aspects to searching – on-site searching and incoming search engine traffic. It is not just a question of adding a text search box. On an ecommerce store, it's important to understand



Anything Left-Handed (www.anythingleft-handed.co.uk) is packed with useful buying information, and uses a range of promotional tools to increase sales

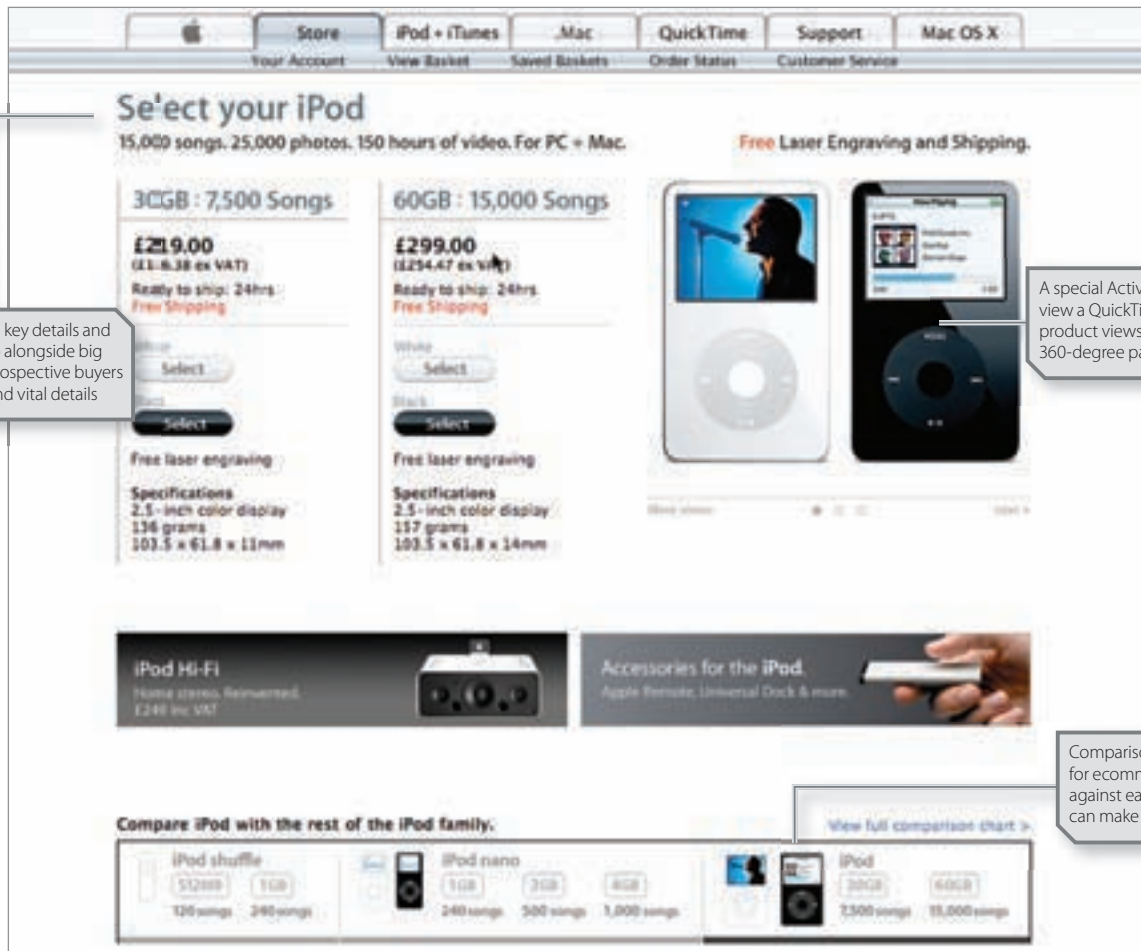
WE'RE TAKING A LEAF OUT OF OUR MAIN GALLERY SECTION TO CELEBRATE THOSE LEADING ECOMMERCE GURUS CURRENTLY DOING THE BUSINESS ONLINE. BUT AN APPRECIATION OF PURE AESTHETICS IS OUT, WITH OUR ANNOTATED SHOTS FOCUSING ON EXACTLY HOW AND WHY THESE SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES OF ONLINE EXCELLENCE MANAGE TO APPEAL TO THEIR CUSTOMERS

Link menus may be more functional than pretty, but the way in which these columns are organised under key headings is clean and effective

It's fairly unsurprising that this famous purveyor of über-stylish computing technology would choose a fitting way to sell its wares online, but Apple should still be congratulated. This UK hub of its multinational Apple Store network in fact sticks pretty close to the format of the rest of the company's dot com HQ, where a combination of elegance and efficiency provides rapid access to the products that matter. An opening page groups the most desirable hardware from iPods to PowerBooks most prominently down the central column, with the ability to click through the lush photography or explore quick links down either side. A great ecommerce example that shows how sumptuous presentation can still be highly accessible.

On this site virtually every element is a clickable link to related pages, making it easier for elderly, disabled, or inexperienced users to get around

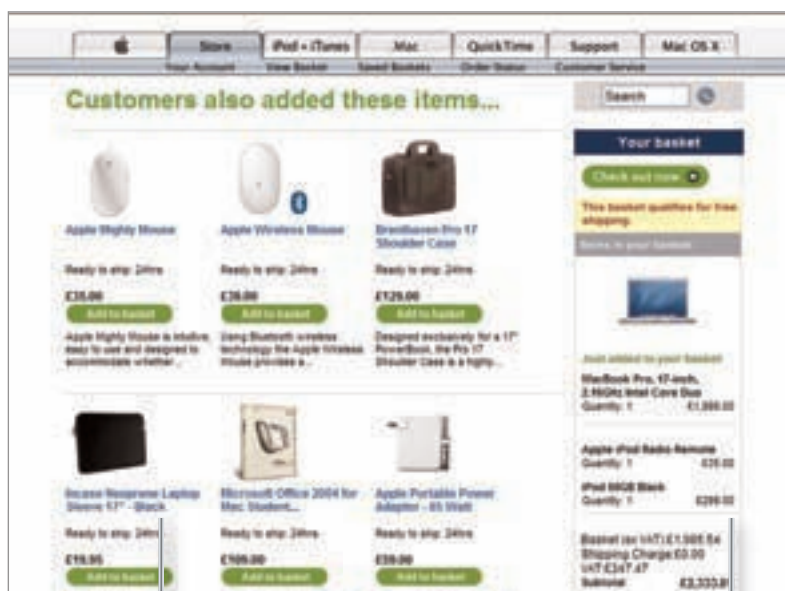
ECOMMERCE GALLERY



Product pages put the key details and pricing right at the top alongside big bold images so that prospective buyers don't need to dig to find vital details

A special ActiveX control allows you to view a QuickTime plug-in offering static product views, dynamic demos and 360-degree panoramic displays

Comparison charts are a good way for ecommerce sites to stack products against each other so that customers can make a more informed decision



Unlike other shop sites, Apple Store tucks your shopping cart selections into a separate page, where you'll also find associated targeted products

The shopping basket panel not only lists the products you hope to buy in the order of selection, but also breaks down total pricing for complete clarity

A QuickTime VR simulation is a superb technique for giving users the chance to examine a product in a similar way as they would within a real-world shop



VERDICT

TAKE A BITE: Apple shows its design credentials with a slick and efficient online store that provides a friendly shopping environment for all customers

Choosing a home for your website

SCAN THROUGH OUR COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ALL THE MAJOR WEB HOSTING DEALS AVAILABLE, AND SHOP AROUND FOR THE BEST VALUE

IT MAY WELL be the last thing on a designer's mind as they put those final touches of inspiration into a hot new online project, but hosting is pretty important. Just remember that if you actually want people to enjoy and appreciate your hard work then it will need a spot on the web to call home, and that many clients will expect you to find it.

To be fair, the choice can be slightly bewildering thanks to the amount of choice on offer and the technical jargon used to describe the many deals

available. That's why our new-look ecommerce hosting pages not only list the attributes of the best packages money can buy but now come complete with a quick-draw guide to what it all means.

Each month we'll also be picking out a couple of the featured companies and going into more detail about why we'd recommend them, while encouraging the industry itself to keep us informed of the very latest offers. If you love your ISP, let us know at webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk.



WE WANT THE LATEST DEALS!

We don't always have the chance to keep track of package or price changes as they happen, and packages often change after we go to print – so we're relying on you! If you're a hosting company and want to update us on the very latest listings, or would like to investigate ways of promoting your services via these pages, email webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk.

NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POPs ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Home (Linux)	08708 503 305	£59.88	800MB	10GB	300	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Home (MS)	08708 503 305	£71.88	800MB	10GB	300	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Business (Linux)	08708 503 305	£107.88	2.5GB	20GB	700	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Business (MS)	08708 503 305	£119.88	2.5GB	20GB	700	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Professional (Linux)	08708 503 305	£179.88	6GB	50GB	1500	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Professional (MS)	08708 503 305	£203.88	6GB	50GB	1500	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123 reg (www.123-reg.co.uk)	Starter	0900 11 22 123	£19.08	100MB	1.5GB	15	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123 reg (www.123-reg.co.uk)	Starter Plus	0900 11 22 123	£35.88	250MB	3GB	25	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123-reg (www.123-reg.co.uk)	Starter Pro	0900 21 11 23	£47.88	500MB	5GB	35	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	Everyday	0845 166 7456	£100	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	PHP	0845 166 7456	£150	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	JAVA Tomcat	0845 166 7456	£175	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	Coldfusion	0845 166 7456	£250	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4D hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Bronze Package	0845 166 8386	£40.00	10MB	500MB	2	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Silver Package	0845 166 8386	£64.99	20MB	2GB	10	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Gold Package	0845 166 8386	£79.99	50MB	2GB	50	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Titanium Package	0845 166 8386	£149.99	500MB	5GB	500	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4D hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Reseller Package	0845 166 8386	£299.99	1GB	10GB	1000	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue (www.9netave.co.uk)	Starter	0870 8726560	£99	50MB	1.5GB	10	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue (www.9netave.co.uk)	Professional	0870 8726560	£199	100MB	2.5GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue (www.9netave.co.uk)	Corporate	0870 8726560	£399	500MB	5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BeamHost (www.beamhost.co.uk)	Home	0871 277 9827	£59.88	800MB	5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
BeamHost (www.beamhost.co.uk)	Business	0871 277 9827	£119.88	2GB	2GB	300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
BeamHost (www.beamhost.co.uk)	Economy	0871 277 9827	£239.88	5GB	80GB	1000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd (www.christiantechnology.co.uk)	Host Package	0870 742 0530	£55 inc VAT	50MB	1GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd (www.christiantechnology.co.uk)	Pro Package	0870 742 0530	£125 inc VAT	100MB	2GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd (www.christiantechnology.co.uk)	Base Package	0870 742 0530	£250 inc VAT	250MB	5GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Clara.net (www.clara.net)	Clarahost Lite	0845 355 1000	£29.99 inc VAT	10MB	1GB	10	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clara.net (www.clara.net)	Clarahost Advanced	0845 355 1000	£699	500MB	30GB	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Entry Package	0870 703 1000	£120	750MB	5GB	10	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DataGate (www.datagate.co.uk)	Exchange Hosting	08000 19 98 19	£120+	200MB	Unlimited	19	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DataGate (www.datagate.co.uk)	Unix Shared Business Hosting	08000 19 98 19	£179.40+	150MB	2GB	50	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level1	08000 652 2110	£185	300MB	1.5GB	5	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level2	08000 652 2110	£259	400MB	2GB	10	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

WEB HOSTINGS

NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POPs ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level3	0800 652 2110	£330	500MB	3GB	50	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level4	0800 652 2110	£369	750MB	4GB	80	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level5	0800 652 2110	£409	1024MB	5GB	120	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level6	0800 652 2110	£549	1500MB	6GB	200	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dedicated Servers (www.dedicated-servers.co.uk)	Linux entry	0870 333 0365	£99/month	40GB	30GB	Variable	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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 7414151	£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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



HOSTWAY
www.hostway.co.uk
Signing up to any one of the many Hostway packages comes with a seal of quality few other vendors can boast. Nine years in the business and a worldwide customer base of over 350,000 has seen Hostway hone its services for both the personal and enterprise markets. A 100 per cent network uptime, commitment to customer care, and competitive rates starting from just £3.98 per year are just a few reasons why most won't look any further.

2020Media
www.2020media.com
Don't let 2020Media's simplistic home page fool you. Packages are actually defined by development platforms like PHP, ASP, Java, and ColdFusion, making it easy for web coders to pick the best deal. Affordable prices are quoted depending on optional extras and can be purchased easily via the site. The company might only have been formed in 1999, but its smaller stature could yield a more personal approach to customer support.



WEB HOSTINGS

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
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✓	✓	✓	✓

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

New to hosting slang? We explain what all the categories in our hostings table are talking about...

WEB SPACE

This describes the amount of physical data storage space you'll have available to you on the hosting server and will have a bearing on how weighty your site or its content is or will become over time.

MONTHLY BANDWIDTH

This relates to the amount of expected traffic and the data transfer demands that your site will place on the host each month. A very busy, data-intensive site will obviously demand larger and faster bandwidths.

POP3 ACCOUNTS

Does your site require email support? If so, you'll want the ability to set up personalised mailboxes to which you can direct feedback.

FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS

These are a group of programs that must operate behind the scenes on your host server if you're a Microsoft Frontpage developer. Most Windows Server-based packages will therefore have them as standard, although you might like to ask your chosen

vendor to make doubly sure if you think that this applies to your website.

DATABASE SUPPORT

With sites becoming more reliant on often vast quantities of information and utilising technologies like MySQL and SQLServer, you'll probably require database capabilities from your host.

SHOPPING CART

Selling products online is a big part of ecommerce,

WEB HOSTINGS

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
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pabb Web Design (www.pabbwebhosting.co.uk)	Unlimited hosting	07756 441059	£114	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Z account	0800 316 1006	£293.75	120MB	10GB	Unlimited	X	✓	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	✓	✓	✓	✓	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

and no self-respecting storefront can operate without shopping cart functionality. Host support can either mean that this is provided in some form or that your own bespoke cart systems can be facilitated, so do check in advance.

VIRUS FILTER

No one wants to have their site attacked, data ravaged, or be responsible for spreading infections across the ether. A built-in virus filter is therefore essential to sites that can't afford any sick leave.

FIREWALL

Again linked to site security, firewalls represent a digital barrier that sits between your site's server and the hordes of malicious attackers that threaten to pull it down. Only trusted data is allowed to pass through it, thankfully.

WEB CONTROL PANEL

A vital part of great hosting is control, so this is where you'll want to pay attention. Web-based panels let you log in remotely and intuitively tweak your

account whenever you like, without the need to relay complicated instructions down the phone.

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

This is all about getting guarantees that your host will do the best job possible for you. Some might have clauses about what you can and can't do, but ultimately it's a handy declaration of what to expect should you sign up. Make sure you check this for all the requirements and backup that your site may need before making the big decision!

portfolio

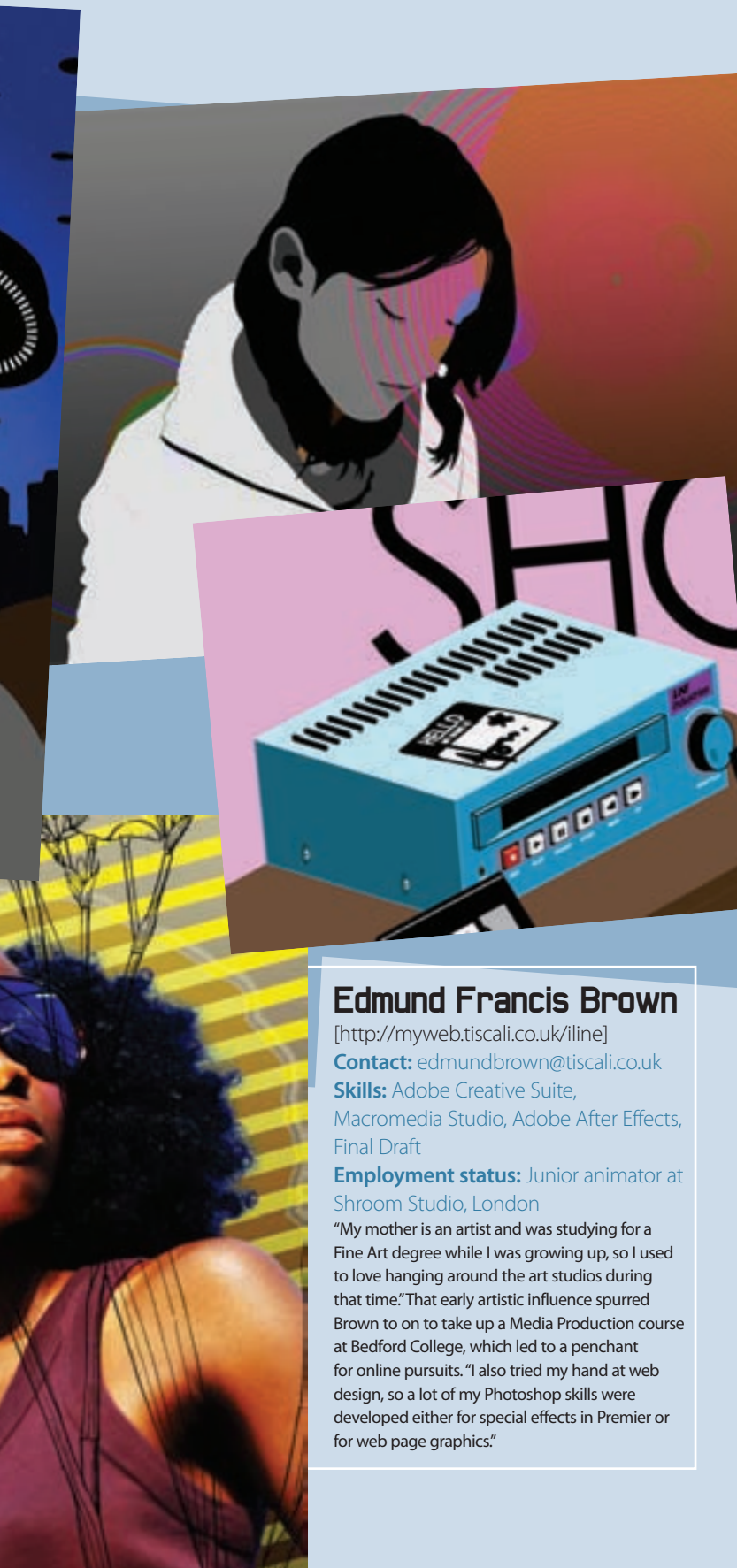
THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING



PORTFOLIO IS OUR CREATIVE recruitment section, providing you with a window into the industry. Each month we showcase up-and-coming design students or graduates to deliver key information and resources designed to fast-track budding graphic design or new media careers

MAKE IT HAPPEN!

To keep this section going we rely on student or freelance designers to put themselves forward. It is great exposure for your talents and every single one of you will be considered so drop us a line now at webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk



Edmund Francis Brown

[<http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/iline>]

Contact: edmundbrown@tiscali.co.uk

Skills: Adobe Creative Suite, Macromedia Studio, Adobe After Effects, Final Draft

Employment status: Junior animator at Shroom Studio, London

"My mother is an artist and was studying for a Fine Art degree while I was growing up, so I used to love hanging around the art studios during that time." That early artistic influence spurred Brown to on to take up a Media Production course at Bedford College, which led to a penchant for online pursuits. "I also tried my hand at web design, so a lot of my Photoshop skills were developed either for special effects in Premier or for web page graphics."

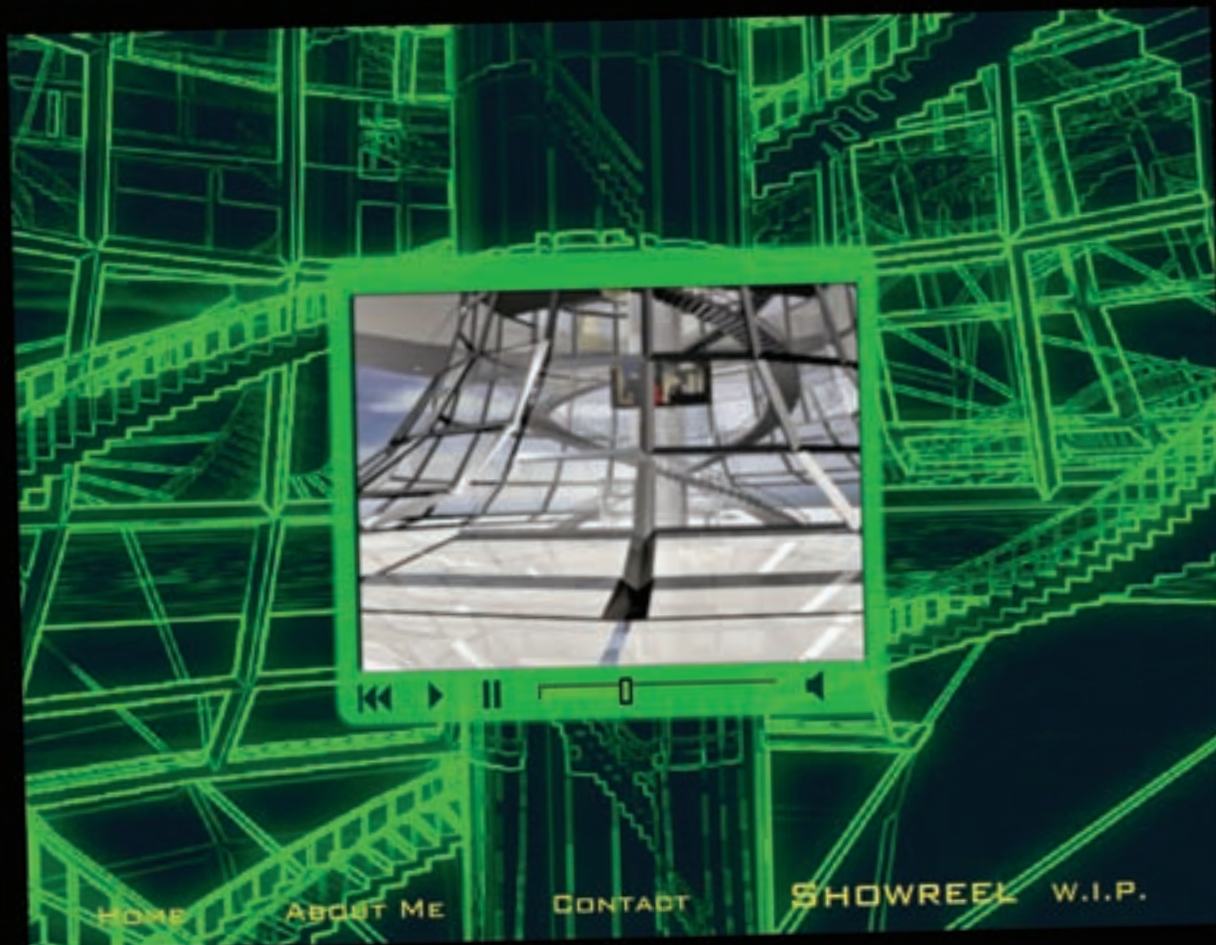


PORTFOLIO VERDICT

All the hours Edmund spent in the art studio as his mum was studying looks to have paid off in a pretty big way. His portfolio exhibits an extremely eclectic mix of artwork, showing a diverse range of style across the board. However, we reckon his actual site could do with a bit more content about him and maybe display more from his attached CV as well as showcasing his creative talents.

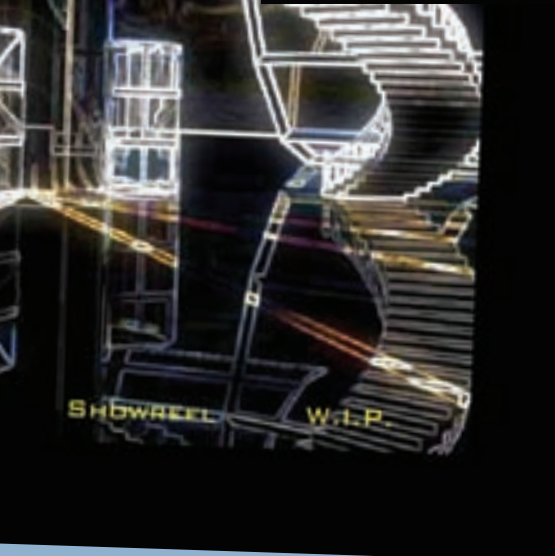
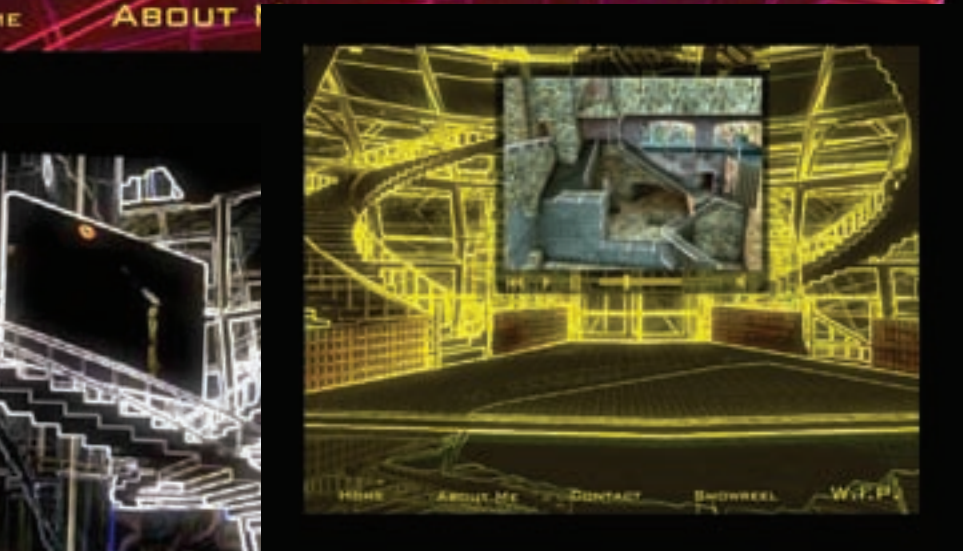
portfolio

THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING



PORTFOLIO VERDICT

Although we reckon it's still got some way to go in terms of content, Marcello's portfolio site really succeeds in conveying his talent in working with 3D. Similar examples have tried and failed but the overall effect here is really impressive and shows that Brazil's loss is our gain if he opts to keep working on UK shores.



Marcello Da Silva

[www.threecellos.co.uk]

Contact: marcello_freitas@hotmail.com

Skills: Flash, Photoshop, After Effects, Maya

Employment status: Freelance web designer/Maya artist

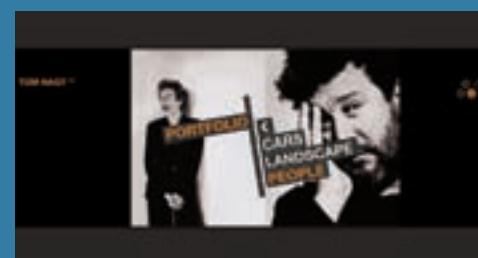
"I had been an IT consultant for some time, developing financial applications in COBOL, when I took a Maya course because I wanted a career change. After graduating from the course I thought it would be nice to have a website to display my showreel so I took a Flash course in the beginning of this year. ThreeCellos, www.threecellos.co.uk, is my first Flash work and I had great fun designing it."

THE GOOD STUFF

Those personal portfolios that are currently hotting up the web

Finding your way in the new media business can be a pretty competitive proposition but that doesn't mean you can't use that to your advantage. Fellow designers can actually provide some great inspiration in the form of their own, often cutting-edge online portfolios.

This month we've identified just a few of the latest and greatest examples that are doing their owners proud and could provide just the creative spark you need to bring yours up to scratch.



TOM NAGY

[www.tomnagy.com]

Photographer Tom Nagy's fabulously polished Flash site arrives in two versions for higher bandwidths and bigger displays. Design studio Robinizer has employed a simplistic design that marries sumptuous shots from Tom's portfolio with effective interface tricks.



8E88 GRAPHIC STUDIO

[www.8e88.net]

This one might be a bit of a cheat, mainly because it represents a studio from Thailand, but it remains an utter delight. Abstract art techniques are combined with a solid Flash interface to present examples of graphic work, illustration, and interactive projects.



ALONSO CREATIVE

[www.josealonso.com]

This is version three of Jose's portfolio, which shows he's keen to keep it updated. His use of clean colour schemes and crisp rollover menus complements the array of stunning work on show, while we like the drop-down résumé bar that lets you post feedback.