

38
PAGES OF
EXPERT TUTORIALS



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SOFTWARE+TUTORIALS
INSIDE BACK COVER

ISSUE 123

web designer™

 DREAMWEAVER  FLASH  PHOTOSHOP

www.webdesignermag.co.uk

A New Breed WEB 2.0

25 pages of next-generation
techniques and tutorials

TEN YEARS OF FLASH

A look at the past, present
and future of the Internet's
multimedia master

FIRST LOOK!
**BUILD
CUSTOM
WEB APPS**

Next level online coding
with **Flex Builder 2**

HOW TO...

- Create translucent menus in **Flash**
- Design mobile web content for consoles
- Draw stunning online vector art
- Produce Web 2.0 graphics in **Photoshop**
- Dream up next generation layouts with **CSS**
- Working with **XML** data in **Dreamweaver**

BUILD A PSP FLASH GAME

Create interactive content for
Sony's powerful handheld

ip
IMAGINE
PUBLISHING

Welcome

OUR experts

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



Nick La

DROPPING HIS FLASH WAND FOR AN EXERCISE IN WEB 2.0

Key contributor Nick La returns this month with an exclusive double tutorial spanning Photoshop and Dreamweaver. Not content with explaining how to produce cool Web 2.0 graphics, he also finds the time to give us a lesson in awesome CSS layouts.



Rodger Page

SKETCHING OUT WEB IMAGES HAS NEVER LOOKED BETTER. Whether it's for page backgrounds or breathtaking splash screens, Rodger's latest look at Photoshop is guaranteed to give your site impact. Learn how to fuse photography, vectors, and brush techniques in this truly beautiful four-page walkthrough.



Steve Jenkins

MAKING YOUR DATA EXCITING WITH CSS-BASED TABLES

HTML pages have never been famed for being great at formatting numbers, figures, or large amounts of data nicely. Steve talks you through the ways you can add style and organisation to such content with the power of CSS.



Mark Shufflebottom

'SEEING THROUGH' ANOTHER SUPERB FLASH 8 TUTORIAL

Complementing Darren Richardson's piece on building PSP games, Mark looks at creating a menu system also inspired by Sony's sleek handheld. Here we discover glass-like transparency effects with the help of displacement maps and some keen coding.



Nobody likes getting older. But for some of us the passing of time makes us stronger, leaner, meaner, and funnily enough more popular than we've ever been...

Macromedia's Flash, now owned by Adobe of course, is currently celebrating its tenth birthday. A mere spring chicken in comparative terms maybe, but this truly groundbreaking piece of software has, in that time, become one of the most powerful tools ever in shaping the modern web. With each year and version of the dynamic giant that has passed it has cemented a reputation for being the most widely installed plug-in or player in circulation worldwide, while providing web designers with the ability to realise their creative ambitions like never before. So what better excuse for our humble magazine to throw a party in Flash's honour and give a posthumous nod to an already incredible career? Turn to page 28 now to join the festivities and indulge in a tribute to the past, the present, and what's sure to be an exciting future.

And the future is something upon which we have been focusing this issue as we unashamedly jump aboard the Web 2.0 bandwagon with a special tutorial double-header. Nick La takes a departure from Flash duties to talk you through creating next-generation web graphics in Photoshop before switching to Dreamweaver and CSS layouts. Both combine to give you invaluable techniques for achieving that fashionable futuristic look that newfound web giants like

Blogger, Writely, and Flickr are all famous for. Shiny rounded buttons, reflective effects, gradient fills, and drop shadows are all in, so be sure to post your Web-2.0-influenced efforts on our forum if the inspiration takes you.

Elsewhere in the tutorials department, we have a web design first with Darren Richardson's look at building Flash-fired content for Sony's PSP, while Mark Shufflebottom discovers displacement maps to create a console-inspired glass-effect menu. Rachel Andrew puts her rather fetching code hat on to tackle XML in Dreamweaver 8, while CSS-styled data tables are the order of the day for Steve Jenkins. As if that wasn't enough, we also have a first-look feature on the new Flex 2 development toolkit on page 34 and a special look back at talented entries from the Adobe Achievement Awards 2006.

We deserve a medal ourselves for that lot!

Mark Billen
DEPUTY EDITOR

Editor's picks

Reasons why it would be a crime to miss out on Web Designer 123...



28-32

A celebratory look back at the highs and lows of a century of incredible Flash development



46-50

Learn to build an entertaining Flash game compatible with Sony's amazing PSP console



70-74

Produce fashionable Web 2.0 graphics before dropping them into cool, table-free CSS layouts

COVER ARTIST

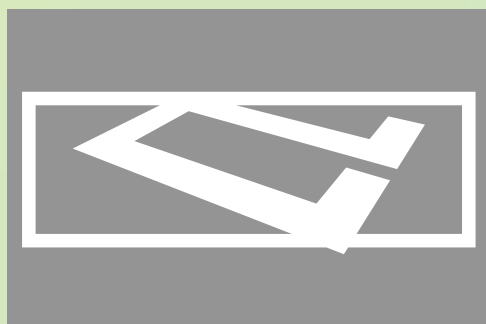
Justin Maller

WEB: <http://superlover.com.au>

This month's awesome cover artwork comes courtesy of freelance Australian artist and designer Justin Maller. Justin is also Creative Director at depthCORE (www.depthcore.com) the renowned international art and design collective. Regular *Web Designer* readers may well recognise his unique blend of 3D and Photoshop work from our 'grand designs' feature in issue 119. Justin is currently available for artwork and magazine commissions, so head over to his online portfolio to find out more about this hugely talented designer.



Justin's portfolio has all the style and effortless elegance you might expect from such a creative talent



As Creative Director at depthCORE, Justin is busy putting design touches and tweaks into the new site due October

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



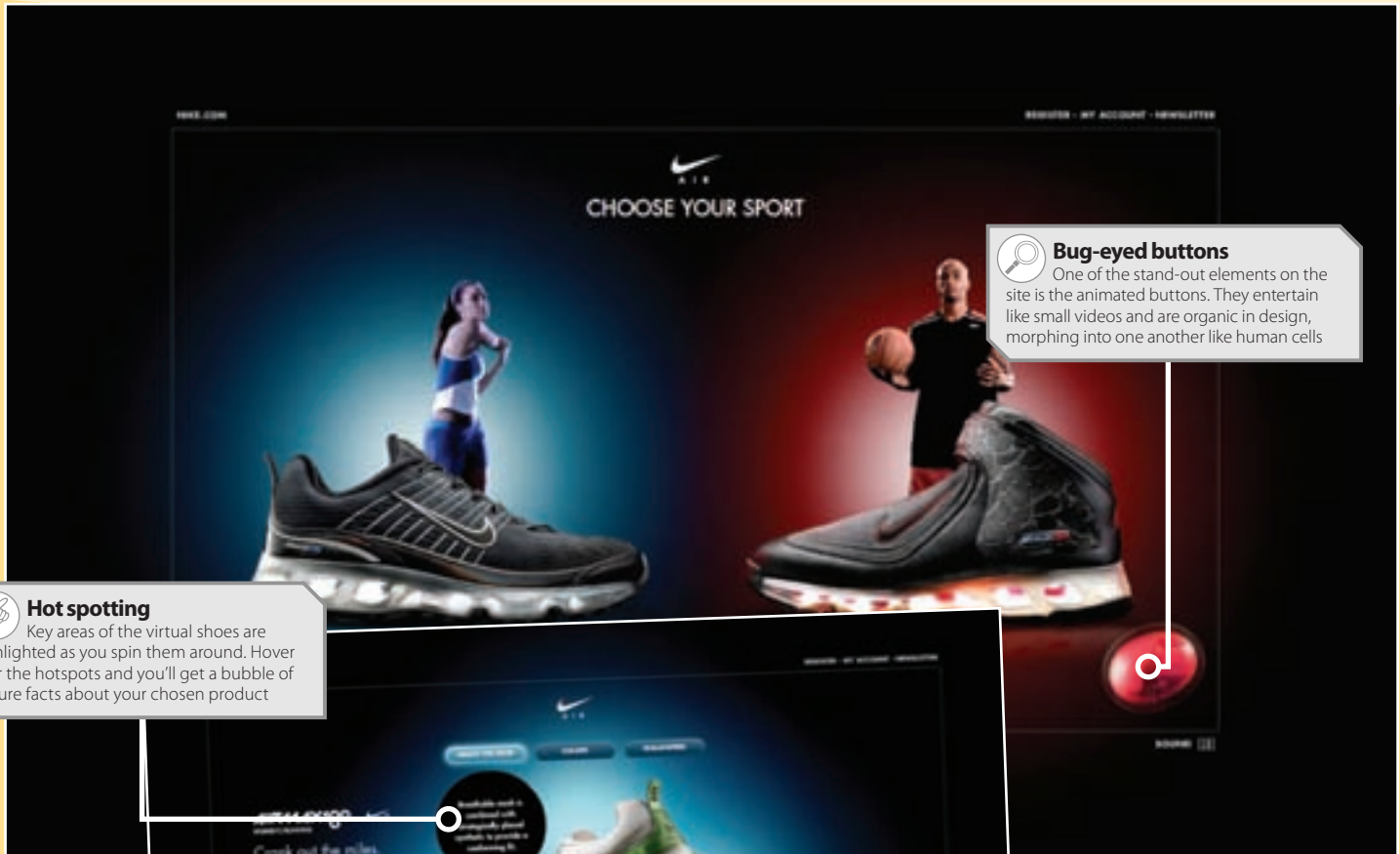
MOVIE SEQUENCE

Animation, video and cool stuff to watch



HEAR THIS

Gives you a clue to any audio elements



Hot spotting

Key areas of the virtual shoes are highlighted as you spin them around. Hover over the hotspots and you'll get a bubble of feature facts about your chosen product



Bug-eyed buttons

One of the stand-out elements on the site is the animated buttons. They entertain like small videos and are organic in design, morphing into one another like human cells



Nike Air

www.nike.com/nikeair/us/

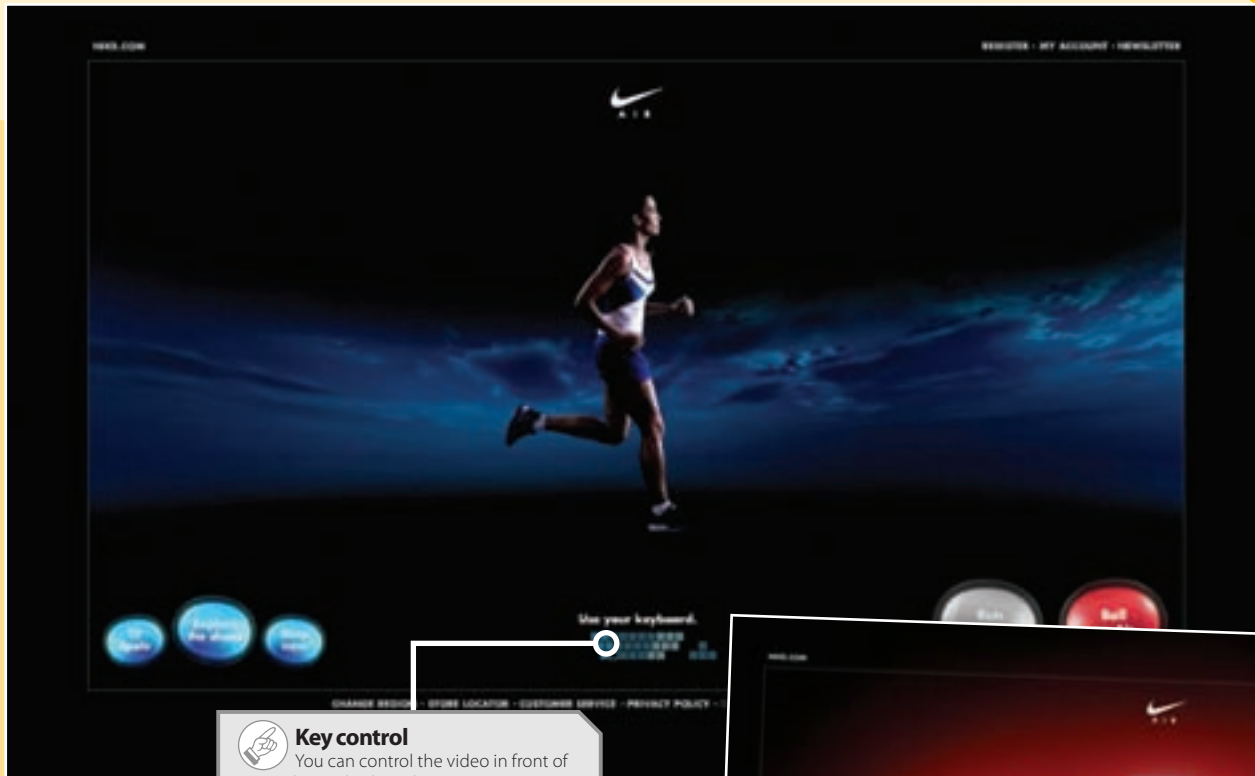
Designed by: bigspaceship.com

Nike's marketing team has done it again. To promote its latest brand of Nike Air trainers the team has created a website that you could simply describe as beautiful. With a mix of ambient music, stylish video and photography, simple navigation and creative interactive elements, they have produced a promotional website that you feel the need to explore – careful, you may end up buying the trainers! You have two main sections in which to navigate – the 'Run on Air' or 'Ball on Air', each taking you to what is essentially an interactive commercial in which you can manipulate the video clip with your keyboard. The site also gives you the opportunity to view TV spots and to explore the shoes, with previews of colours and information as well as downloadable wallpapers.



WELCOME AGAIN to our regular section where the great and beautiful flaunt themselves for your viewing pleasure. As always, if you see anything that inspires you to create an equally fetching URL or you know of one that we've not yet covered, then give us a shout!

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



Key control

You can control the video in front of you with your keyboard. By pressing certain keys you can change the background and subtly customise your own little Nike advert



Zooming lovely

While exploring, you're presented with a seamless rotation of shoes with an illusion of distance using focused and unfocused images, all determined by your interaction

gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



Proud portfolio

In2Media hits the ground running for maximum impact by dazzling you with a seamless and stylish video showcase of its most recent work on the initial page

In2Media

<http://in2media.com/>

Designed by: In2Media

Welcome to the portfolio website of the Danish digital advertising masters In2Media. This site boasts fluid navigation with subtle yet crisp interactive elements encased within a carefully crafted and polished dynamic Flash interface. Being a portfolio showcase, you can find all you would expect in terms of content. However, with a lot of the work involving fast and slick motion graphics and video, this has no doubt enabled them to bring the site to life with the use of seamlessly embedded video.



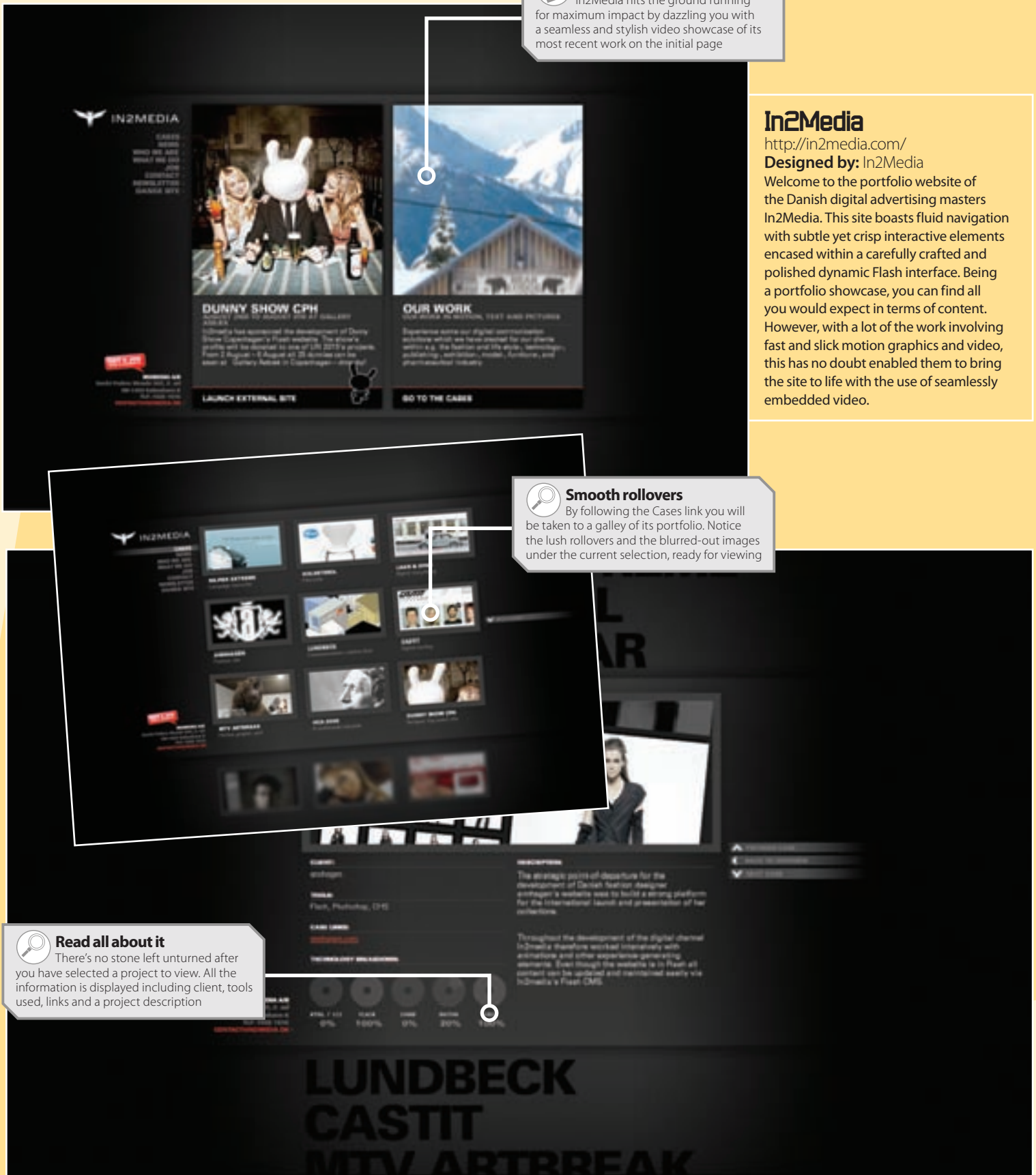
Smooth rollovers

By following the Cases link you will be taken to a gallery of its portfolio. Notice the lush rollovers and the blurred-out images under the current selection, ready for viewing



Read all about it

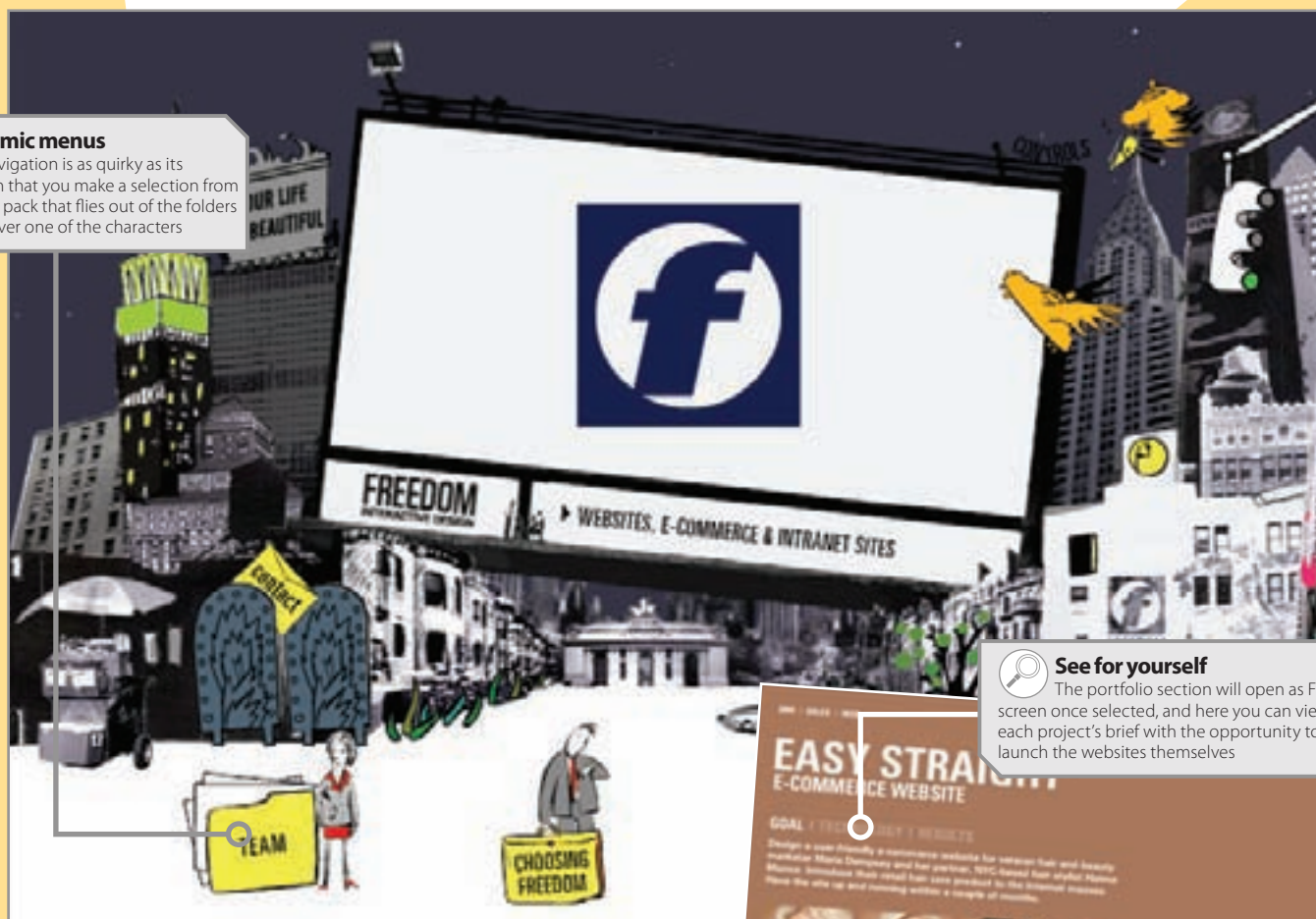
There's no stone left unturned after you have selected a project to view. All the information is displayed including client, tools used, links and a project description





Dynamic menus

The navigation is as quirky as its environment in that you make a selection from the unshuffled pack that flies out of the folders as you hover over one of the characters



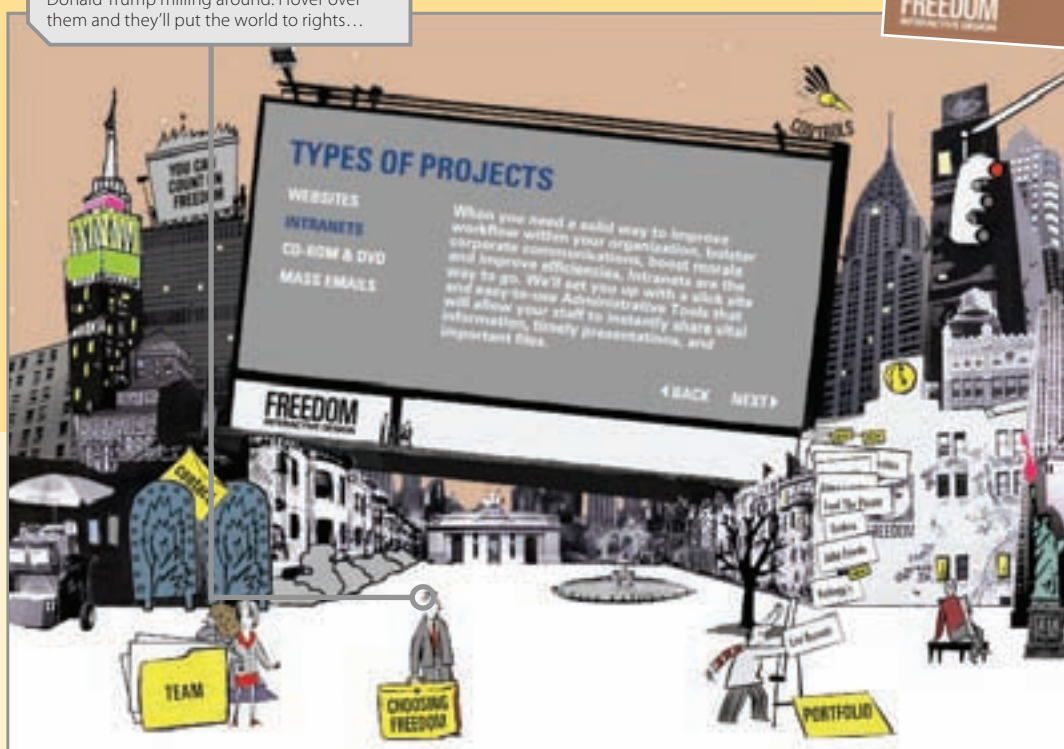
See for yourself

The portfolio section will open as Full screen once selected, and here you can view each project's brief with the opportunity to launch the websites themselves



Famous faces

You'll occasionally spot some well known people such as Woody Allen and Donald Trump milling around. Hover over them and they'll put the world to rights...



Freedom Interactive Design

www.freedominteractivedesign.com/main.htm

Designed by: Unknown

If you're looking for a quirky and entertaining website for inspiration, then take a tour of the wonderful world of Freedom Interactive Design. It shatters any idea that a corporate website should be formal and official, like that of most banks. This site's style communicates its business model perfectly using photographic yet cartoony illustrative collages which are lots of fun, together with silly sounds and music to suit. The navigation focuses on the three characters at the bottom of the page, with the site's content displayed in the dominant advertising board in the centre. This is a great example of a simple concept with brilliant execution.

gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



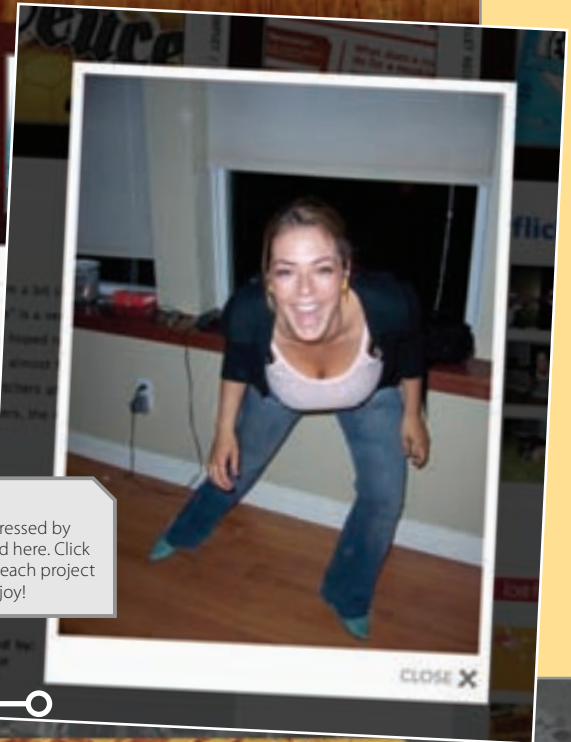
Plenty to see

There's no mistaking what you're here to see. The large gallery-style images scream at you to select them – which means the site achieves its main goal



In the frame

You cannot fail to be impressed by the strength of design showcased here. Click on each image and you'll launch each project into a new browser window – enjoy!



Special appearance

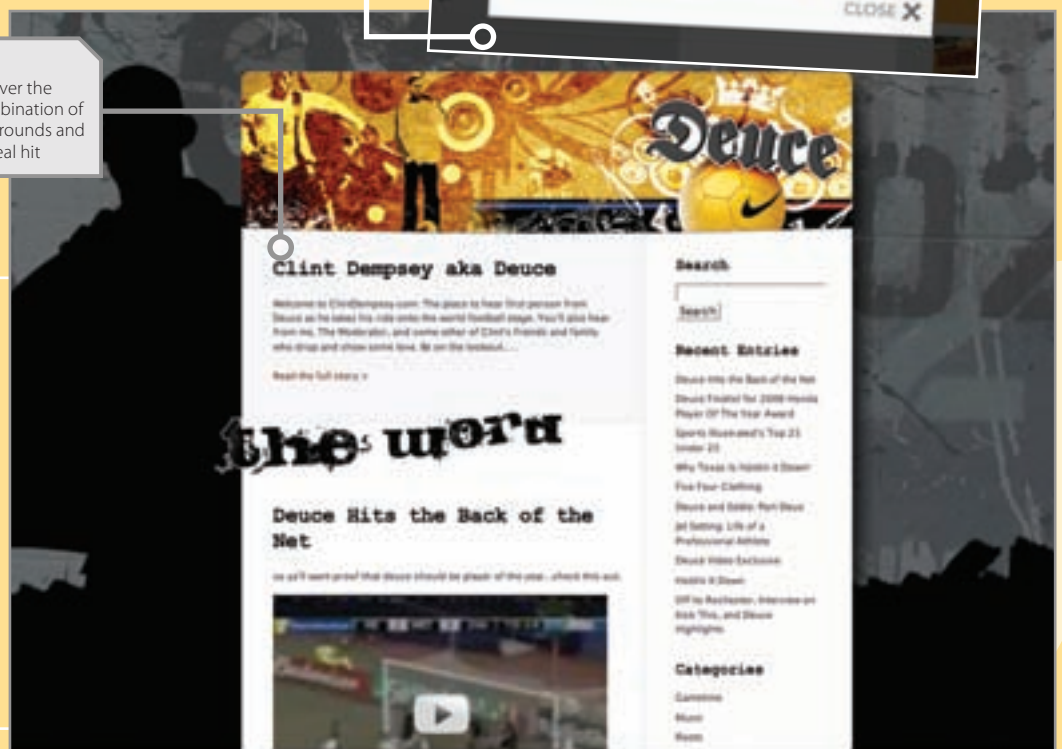
Eleven3 exhibits real care over the design of its templates, with a combination of clean white space, shadowy backgrounds and vibrant vector banners proving a real hit

Eleven3

www.eleven3.com/

Designed by: Unknown

From the outset, on opening up Eleven3's website you're struck by its strong visual layout and imagery – clearly there is a designer at work here. In terms of interactive play, there's no playground but each element is indeed reassuringly apparent and functional, so there are certainly no penalty points incurred here. This site is more than a showcase of 'green websites' produced by the designer. It's an extension of the person behind Eleven3, and this is largely due to the inclusion of blogs and personal photography.





Fantasy Interactive

www.fantasy-interactive.com/

Designed by: Fantasy Interactive

Websites don't get much sexier than the latest incarnation from web masters Fantasy Interactive. For the majority of web design junkies your first visit is like being the first at the buffet table, waiting to help yourself to generous helpings of solid design and slick functional navigational elements, all beautifully balanced at each end of the table. The site is primarily a showcase portal for you to not only view but also witness, and unlike so many other interactive agency sites out there you'll find yourself wanting to access all the news and info about the people behind the site. Most definitely a benchmark of web design without going over the top.



Where are we?

Sitting at the top right of the website is a simple directory indicating the current location of the visitor within the site. This is a great lesson in effective navigation



Immediate impact

A key strength of this site is that the company's strengths are displayed from the off for maximum impact in the form of its visual portfolio and all-round design polish



Fantasy films

The website enables you to learn more about the story of Fantasy Interactive in the form of a short video documentary embedded within the web page



Introduce yourself

The introduction to this website certainly leaves a lasting impression. The embedded clip of 3D animation gives us a good idea of the talent on display



Monochrome master

Navigate across the various design disciplines and you can view the projects the artist has undertaken, with a simple yet very effective use of black and white imagery

WELCOME

ANOVA / JESPER BENTZEN

Anova is the personal portfolio of graphic & interactive designer Jesper Bentzen. Here you will find selected commercial work and personal projects made by me since 1999.

NEWS

26 JULY 2008

Anova got praising a lot to Filip for helping on site of the week Awards. Thanks a lot.

Anova Design

www.anovadesign.com

Designed by: Jesper Bentzen

This website introduces us to the personal portfolio of the multi-talented interactive designer and student Jesper Bentzen. Crossing all the major digital design mediums of motion, interactive, graphics, photography and 3D with ease, he is guaranteed to have you cringing in the corner with envy. This young artist introduces us to his explosive talents in just the way you would expect – with a thoroughly conceived yet unpretentious showcase of his work, with plenty for all of us to enjoy.



Real appeal

By selecting to view any of the projects, you're guaranteed an engaging experience that keeps you occupied for a good while, whatever the section on show



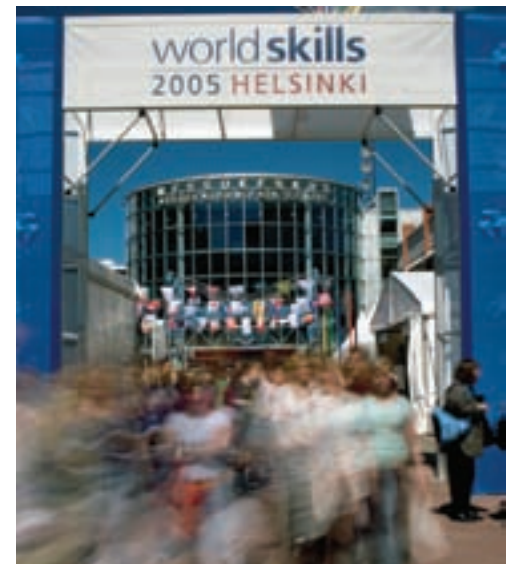
*e***Mag**

bulletin

HOT NEWS FROM THE WEB DESIGN WORLD



Think you can take on the world with your web skills? Log onto www.worldskills.com and show those pastry makers who's boss



Show us your skills

A CALL FOR ENTRIES AS THE SEARCH FOR AN OLYMPIC WEB DESIGNER INTENSIFIES IN WORLDSKILLS EVENT

CHAMPION WEB designers are at the ready after an internationally recognised competition threw its doors open to suitable candidates. WorldSkills is effectively a skills Olympics where representatives of various industries can show off their talents, and 2006 sees the event invite web designers to strut their stuff for the first time.

It joins a diverse array of trade disciplines ranging from pastry and confectionary to welding, landscape gardening, robotics and plastering. "Web design is one of the newer events to be put forward and we're looking for talented young HTML enthusiasts with a competitive streak who think they've got the skills to take on all comers," says Gareth Deaves, Communications Executive for UK Skills.

Chosen representatives will be asked to attend next year's conference in Shizuoka, Japan where keynote speeches and competitions will be presented. Helsinki

staged the event successfully in 2005, and Tony Blair has given his endorsement to London's winning bid to host WorldSkills 2011: "Developing the right skills is fundamental to achieving our ambitions as individuals, for our families and for ourselves."

WorldSkills is a freestanding non-political organisation that aims to achieve a cost effective means for international government and industry cooperation in achieving higher standards for vocational education and training. The experience and results of the competitions provide valuable feedback both to the individuals and the systems and enterprises in which they are trained.

Interested entrants in the UK can find out more about qualifying via regional events through the



www.ukskills.org.uk website, and will be asked to submit an example of their work. Competitors need to have been born after January 1st 1985 in order to qualify. For further information on dates and entry procedures visit the WorldSkills website at www.worldskills.com or the 2007 event site at www.skillsfestival2007.or.jp.

However, before you proceed, be sure to take on Gareth's words of advice: "It's important to stress that this is a world standard competition; we need competitors who are going to go above and beyond and aren't afraid to take on the best in the world." As readers of *Web Designer*, we doubt you'll have any problems there!

"We're looking for talented young HTML enthusiasts with a competitive streak"

GARETH DEAVES, UK SKILLS

YouTube shows the tunes

YOUTUBE MAKES PLANS TO HOST 'EVERY MUSIC VIDEO EVER CREATED'

POPULAR WEB 2.0 video site YouTube has announced plans to become the number one in pop video showcasing. Until now, channels such as MTV have led the way in providing music videos past and present to viewers. However, the new plans could mean that every music video ever created is up and running on the site. "What we really want to do is, in six to 12 months, maybe 18 months, have



every music video ever created up on YouTube," said co-founder Steve Chen. YouTube has yet to finalise deals with the record labels who hold the rights, but the link-up looks very promising. Copyright issues have been generally ignored due to the overwhelming popularity of this Web 2.0 site, which was recently named as one of the top 50 websites in the world (see report on the right).

NEWS in brief



TIME SHORTLIST

Time magazine has included YouTube and MySpace among the 50 'coolest websites' of the year. Many of the sites chosen are Web 2.0 branded sites, which give users tools to create and share content online. The poll follows a similar one by www.thefwa.com, which is covered in an exclusive report next issue.

Leopard's leap

APPLE READY TO PREVIEW ITS EXCITING NEW OPERATING SYSTEM

APPLE HAS PREVIEWED the sixth major version of its operating system, OS X Leopard. Version 10.5 is set to ship in spring 2007.

New additions include Time Machine, a procedure for automatically backing up and restoring everything on your Mac. In the event of losing a file, users can search back and restore the whole system to its set-up at that particular time. Spaces keeps your open documents in order and presents a new way to instantly switch between groups of apps needed for various tasks. Birds Eye View lets you choose which app you want to work in with one keystroke or mouse click. The trusty Mail and iChat have been spruced up to include Stationery, Notes and To Dos, while Photo Booth lets you place yourself in any photo or video as the backdrop for your live chat.

Other features include enhancements to Boot Camp, a technology that makes it possible to run Windows natively on Intel-based Macs, a new Movies Dashboard widget, Web Clip for clipping any part of a web page as a live widget, and anti-phishing protection in Mail and Safari.

"Breakthrough features like Time Machine and Spaces are good examples of how Mac OS X leads the industry in operating system innovation," said Apple CEO Steve Jobs. "While Microsoft tries to copy the version of OS X we shipped a few years ago, we're leaping ahead again with Leopard."



"While Microsoft tries to copy the version of OS X we shipped a few years ago, we're leaping ahead again with Leopard"

STEVE JOBS, APPLE CEO



EXCESSIVE HOURS

Apple has been alerted to reports alleging that workers in the Foxconn iPod plant in China have been working shifts of more than 60 hours a week or working for more than six consecutive days at a time. In line with the company's workplace standards policy, a delegation has been sent over to investigate. "Apple has a zero tolerance policy for any instance, isolated or not, of any treatment of workers that could be interpreted as harsh," a statement confirmed.



REAL DUTCH DESIGN

If you figured that the Dutch design landscape was as flat as the country itself, then you'd be very wrong indeed. This brand new book hopes to bring a diverse cross-section of outstanding creative talent out of Holland and onto cosmopolitan coffee tables everywhere. Over 1,000 pages and featuring more than 300 designers or agencies – check out www.realdutchdesign.com for more details.

The cat's whiskers

Just a few of our favourite features from Apple's latest OS



Web Clip & DashCode

Web Clip lets a segment of web page be transformed into a live updating widget; DashCode offers widget-creation tools.



iChat Screen Share

Take control of another iChat user's screen to work on joint projects, or share movies/videos with iChat Theatre.



Time Machine

Ever wished you could go back to when a deleted file was available and bring it into the present? Well, now you can.



Movie has site accepted

NEW TEEN COMEDY BOASTS AN EFFECTIVE PROMOTIONAL SITE AS IT GEARS UP FOR SUCCESS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC

AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL comedies have largely been hit and miss at the cinema, but a new example hopes that its approach to online marketing will reap dividends. *Accepted* brings together an oddball group of reluctant students back to a stereotypical college life, with the predictable mix of boozy parties, classroom hi-jinks and buxom cheerleaders at its core. However, what isn't so generic is the design of www.acceptedmovie.com and its homage to academic intranets and university yearbooks. Universal Studios enlisted respected web agency Jetset Studios on production duties,

and it has come up trumps with a memorable mix of effective Flash design that really feels like you're hacking into the campus network. There's a mailing list that mimics a course enrolment form, rollover character menus with photographic biographies, production notes, trailers and the inevitable array of downloadable wallpapers featuring the main cast.

"The website really captures the inventive, DIY spirit of *Accepted*, and is a perfect complement to the film," commented the movie's Director Steve Pink. Let's just hope he's done as good a job behind the camera when *Accepted* hits screens later this year.



Insight Out

BRUMMIE SCHEME SEARCHES FOR HOT NEW GRADUATE TALENT

INSIGHT OUT is on the hunt for recent graduates with outstanding talent and an original business idea. The scheme aims to pluck the most creative graduates, giving them an opportunity to receive support, expert tuition and the opportunity to win funding from a pot of £20,000.

Applicants for the programme should be willing to present their innovative ideas in front of a panel of business experts and demonstrate an ambition to make them a reality.

"The competitive element makes it unique," explains Sara Harris from UCE Birmingham, who organises the West Midlands Insight Out



programme. "It gives participants an opportunity to receive investment in their ideas, not just advice or guidance but hard cash that can be used to get their business off the ground."

Previous winners include fashion designer Gavin Douglas who used the prize to fund and exhibit at Barbados and New York Fashion weeks. The six-week programme will take place in November at UCE's Screen Media Lab in Digbeth, Birmingham, starting with a four-day induction, followed by five weeks of full-time study.

For more information on the scheme itself and exactly how you can get involved visit the official site at www.mediaskills.org.uk/insightout.

TOP Downloads



THEMEWORLD

www.themeworld.com

If you're after some more unusual theme fonts then log onto this free download site. Fonts are split into themes, so it's easy to find exactly what you're looking for quickly. If you're sat twiddling your thumbs trying to find something to distract you, there are also plenty of free wallpapers and icons for you to choose from.



FREE WEB TEMPLATES

www.freewebtemplates.com

Whether you're stuck for inspiration or would like a jump-start on a new design, there's plenty to choose from here. The downloads are sleek and modern, and you won't need to trudge through reams of menus in order to find what you want quickly.



ACCLAIM IMAGES

www.acclaimimages.com

There are over 150,000 stock photos and illustrations in this easy-to-search site. All images are priced individually and you can save your shots on a lightbox for quick reference. If you're after a particular image that you can't find, Acclaim will carry out complimentary research to find just what you're after.



MOZILLA FIREFOX

<https://addons.mozilla.org/plugins/>

Spruce up your favourite web browser with the official Mozilla plug-in page. All the essentials are here, and if you click on the most 'popular' downloads you can add naughty things like torrent search plug-ins and less naughty things like weather maps.



Spruce up your office space and put these on your 'wanted' list



JEREMY FISH'S TURTLECAMPER

Price: Bone (limited to 1,000) \$55/£29, Gold (limited to 350) \$65/£35, Platinum (limited to 150) currently out of stock

Web: www.silypinkbunnies.com

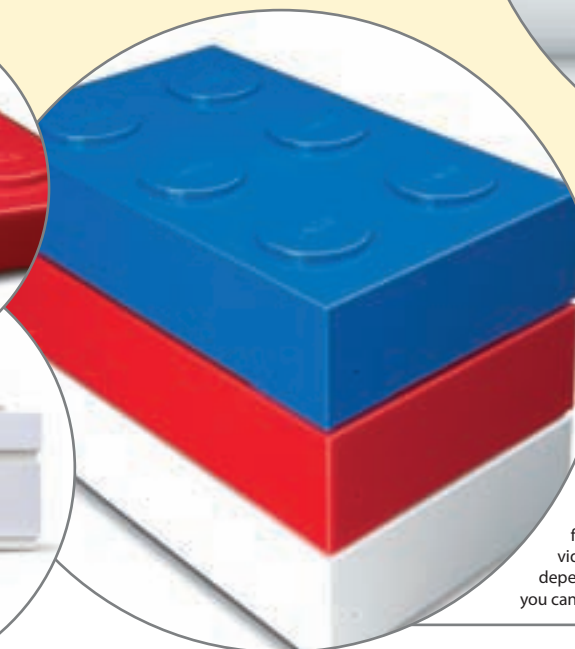
Okay, so we don't think that these models have any special powers to make your web work any easier, but a gadget-cluttered office is a happy office in our opinion. The limited edition vinyl figures from Jeremy Fish will be sure to bright up even the duller of working spaces. Available in Bone, Gold and Platinum (if you're lucky enough to get your hands on one), each piece is made of rugged Rotocast vinyl and measures four inches in height. If you're keen to collect these turtles, each model can be stored safely in its own window-box packaging.

INTELLIGENT KEYBOARD RAZER PRO TYPE MULTIMEDIA KEYBOARD

Price: TBA

Web: www.razerpro.com

Get rid of unsightly cables with this intelligent keyboard from Razer Pro. The current model allows the docking of the Microsoft Zune media player, but who has one of them? Don't fret though, the new version will be able to dock with an iPod for easy access to all your tunes. Other features include Media Center keys to control media programs like iTunes, and ten programmable hotkeys for storing macros and keystrokes. If you want to rig up more audio peripherals to the keyboard then there's also the option of an extra line-out socket.



MEGA STORAGE BRICK

Price: 160GB \$99.99/£53, 250GB \$129.99/£69, 400GB \$229.99/£123, 500GB \$269.99/£144

Web: www.lacie.com

A portable hard drive is perfect for backing up your work and saving a bit of space on your desktop or laptop. If you want to back up in style then check out these models from LaCie. Created by the designer Ora-Itto, the Brick comes in a selection of different storage spaces ranging from 160GB to a generous 500GB – perfect for backing up large images, videos and MP3s. The desktop models are available in white, red or blue depending on the size. The models can be stacked on top of one another, so you can fool friends into thinking you've invested in a giant Lego kit.



Mike Downey Adobe

WITH FLASH CELEBRATING ITS TENTH BIRTHDAY WE HEAR FROM ITS SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER, MIKE DOWNEY, ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Flash has rapidly expanded over the last decade. Can you encapsulate the main areas of development?

Flash evolved from a simple Web animation tool to a broad and robust platform for delivering rich media content and applications. Early on we saw an opportunity to integrate a scripting engine into our Flash Player runtime, which led to a revolution in interactive content being produced with Flash. Over time, we continued to evolve the interactivity model, getting us to a point currently where we are a leading member of the ECMAScript standards body (which is the same standard that JavaScript is based on).

Another key area of growth was the incorporation of video and audio into our Player. With support for video in the Flash Player we very quickly found ourselves in a position where we had the most widely deployed video playback technology on the Web.

The third key development in the technology was the emergence of a new class of application on the Web, something that we coined 'Rich Internet Applications'. These applications focused on delivering rich, desktop-like application functionality to the browser.

Who is the current Flash user?

The Flash authoring tool has a broad base of over 1.5 million designers and developers. The Flash Player is installed on over 600 million desktops (98 per cent of PCs). According to Forrester, nearly 92 per cent of online users

New owner Adobe is proudly looking forward to a great future with Flash



will be engaging in some form of personal rich media every month.

Flash seems to have taken over in some quarters as the main tool for web building. Do you think this trend will continue?

Dreamweaver is Macromedia's flagship product. There are still a few more Dreamweaver users (approximately 3.2 million) than there are

on more than 50 phone models around the world. This adds up to over 32 million people with the Flash Player on their phones. Wireless carriers offer premium services like games, animated ring tones and screensavers, applications, and wallpapers, all built with Flash.

Looking at the capabilities of Flash today, how do you think its features will evolve in the future?

The vision shared by many at Adobe is the Flash Player running on almost any digital interface. I think Flash will continue to transcend the browser and reach

out to the desktop, the mobile device, the embedded system and so on. The possibilities are incomprehensible. I think our platform is uniquely positioned to flourish on many operating systems and hardware platforms. We also want to allow Flash designers and developers to create rich, interactive, engaging graphical content that they've never been able to build before. This will materialise in future releases of the product family in features like a next-generation video codec and font rendering engine, a rich library of graphic effects as well as precise control over pixels and vectors. Our priority is to give our customers everything that they need in order to create great content. We think the work we're doing for the next release will make it the most significant Flash yet.

"Flash evolved from a simple web animation tool to a broad and robust platform for delivering rich media"

Flash users (around 1.5 million). It's been an incredibly successful web authoring tool with over 90 per cent market share. The integration between Flash and Dreamweaver is really great in today's product offering and we plan to continue strengthening the integration between the two essential authoring tools. For example, you can launch and edit Flash content from Dreamweaver at the click of a button. You can do the same with bitmap images from Flash to Fireworks as well as Dreamweaver to Fireworks.

Can you outline the current state of play regarding Flash on mobile devices?

The Macromedia Flash Lite player, a version of our popular desktop player optimised for running on mobile phones, is currently deployed



Version 8 was the biggest release for the Flash family in recent times

Message board

POST: Web Designer, Richmond House,
33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, BH2 6EZ

FORUM: www.webdesignermag.co.uk/forum

EMAIL: webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Time again for us to throw open the flood gates and listen to what you have to say about your magazine

Flash Favouritism

Hello team, I was given a subscription to Web Designer when Web Developer magazine was discontinued, and I'm disappointed. At present I can't guarantee I'll maintain my subscription at the end of the year because of the particular bias toward using Flash. More and more of the content is geared like this – be it features or tutorials – with less emphasis on the back-end coding. It perhaps speaks volumes that Developer is no longer running, but I feel that there is a large section of the readership who would love to see things opened out a bit more. If you persist on going down this road, you might like to consider a name change to 'Flash Designer' and at least pitch it directly to such a market base. Not all of us want to be graphic designers you know!

Andrew Shearing

Hi, Andrew, and thanks for voicing your concerns so eloquently. This is a tough problem because we imagine that it's something most previous subscribers to defunct sister title Web Developer may be feeling. Our intention was to give you all as close as we could a like-for-like subscription when the magazines moved to Imagine, so we see how you may be slightly disappointed. However, the only bias we may have with Flash is based around the great feedback we get from these issues where Flash development is most prominent. As we've said before, the content is geared toward great projects whether that entails lots of code or lots of pretty front-end stuff.

Flash Gaming Fan

I would have to say that the games section of issue 120 was fantastic, and an area of web design that I'm sure most readers loved to find out more about.

I'm a developer, programmer and a designer professionally. I read the magazine to keep up with current Internet trends styles and news. Flash is a vital and ever-increasing aspect of Internet development. Flash video has pushed the boundaries of a web designer's imagination greatly, and added to the community-driven success of websites such as YouTube and mySpace. The Flash platform is more robust and significant than some people seem to think, it's progression to accessibility and XML integration will set apart web designers who do not embrace new web technology and those who understand its place in the industry.



*Some of you
seemed pleased
by our special on
web gaming*

MAIL OF THE MONTH

A Toast To An Old Rogue

I'm writing this letter to provide my thoughts on the ten-year anniversary of Flash. Surely web design has never witnessed another tool or package that has equally changed the online landscape and also divided the online community over its purity as a development platform like this. One thing is certain: the Internet we now enjoy when firing up our browsers wouldn't be what it is if Macromedia hadn't picked up this piece of software and taken it to the next level. Web content is dynamic in ways we could only imagine and has broadened the creative horizons of all of us, not to mention creating new avenues for gaming and animation. Broadband has helped to dispel the worries about long loading times, while every version of Flash has managed to trim its file sizes down despite offering more capabilities. However, the same arguments persist over Flash accessibility and the exuberance with which it allows designers to place more emphasis on good looks as opposed to content value. Whether you're a fan or a sceptic, Flash's tenth birthday is a significant milestone that we should all doff our hats to.

Stephan Reeks

We couldn't agree more, Stephan, and that's precisely why we've a special look back at the red giant on page 28. While CSS has liberated the presentation of HTML-based content, Flash has to be heralded as the true force behind changing the face of a modern web. The sites we marvel over these days are nothing short of awesome and have defined web design as a new art form for our generation. Something this revolutionary couldn't avoid causing a stir among purist web slingers, with valid reason, but on the whole we believe Flash has done more good than it has harm. So let's indeed raise our glasses to another ten years of exciting development!

I understand the need for coding sections and tutorials, but the point is Flash games are fun and if a user of your website has fun they will come back!

Perfecthill, via the forum

The Flash gaming issue was a tough choice for us and a rare exception. This was supposed to be viewed as a one-off special that would provide a departure from the normal issues of web design. We're glad that you appreciated this, while we remain sorry if any readers felt alienated by the content in any way. The key thing for us is that we do try to push the boundaries of what the common perception of web design is, much like with our Flash PSP game tutorial on page 46. It's all about widening our readership and trying to find original avenues that keep things interesting. If you're not happy, remember to let us know what kinds of things you want to see – we do listen!



*e***Mag**

We present a unique showcase of the leading lights to come out of the most important awards programme in the creative calendar



2006 Adobe Design Achievement Awards



This website from Sam Smelter came mighty close to taking top honours



Animation featured heavily in this year's haul of entries

When it was announced that Macromedia was to be swallowed up in one of the most significant takeover bids in recent history, the sceptics were casting a few frowns.

The prospect of Adobe, the most powerful force in desktop and print publishing, obtaining market dominance within the graphics and web design business as well, was a worry. Although the full repercussions won't be known for some time, the theory that such a competitive stranglehold could damage this industry might ordinarily have been a critical blow to the Californian firm's plans. But wait, Adobe is a company that cares.

Global domination aside, it's always been committed to the grassroots of a design landscape that must harvest the talent emerging from its target

market rather than alienate it. In its sixth year of judging, the Adobe Design Achievement Awards are a testament to the way new animators, artists, short filmmakers and web developers have been given a chance to launch the careers they've dreamed about.

"Honouring top students in the creative arts is part of Adobe's ongoing commitment to design and film education, and to the creative professional market," enthused Adobe's Melissa Dyrdaahl. "Winning an Adobe Design Achievement Award is just the beginning for these students; winners have the opportunity to gain exposure to the creative community, jump-start their careers in the creative arts, and showcase their talents at industry events such as Sundance, Cannes and the ZeroOne festival."

Indeed, this was the precise motivation for the 1,800-plus students hailing from 24 different



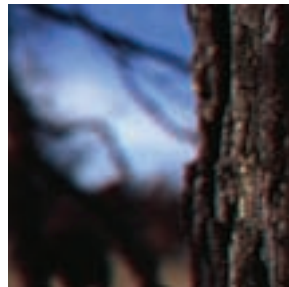
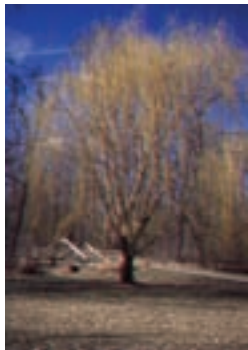
Katherine Sheridan

Origin: **Columbia College Chicago**

Category: **Finalist, Digital Photography**

Project title: **Conversational**

Katherine Sheridan is currently in her fourth year at Columbia College Chicago, where she studies advertising, art direction and photography. Before moving to Chicago, she grew up in quiet Glen Ellyn, Illinois, which gave her an appreciation of both suburban and fast-paced urban life. This project is inspired by capturing the diversity of trees and their individual characters on film. A photographer for five years, Katherine shot these examples with 35mm 100F slide film and used Photoshop to give them the 3D effect. Two images were combined, colour levels altered, and the blending mode set to Screen so that viewing through 3D glasses would make the final result leap out of the frame.



Unique 3D effects give Katherine's images a hugely individual quality

countries this time around, with not just exposure up for grabs but some seriously attractive prizes. Finalists all received trips to Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum to attend the official awards event and a walk through the doors of 12 leading design firms for exclusive tours. Interbrand, Cuppa Coffee Studios, Tango Media Group and TAXI Canada all took part in the scheme and allowed budding entrants the chance to speak with professionals about what it takes to make it in the real world.

An additional prize pot of \$5,000 as well as a selection of Adobe products also made it into the winning hands of Amy Wang, Janina Boesch, Karolina Novitska and those from the remaining six categories.

A tall order for the judges to decide on, with several organisations and individuals volunteering

their valuable time to run the rule over the finalists and provide sponsorship. Xerox provided a notable presence as provider of all printed media for the event, while the judging panel included Rodolphe Guenoden of Dreamworks Animation Los Angeles, Stefan Bucher from 344 Design, and Masamichi Udagawa from New York's Antenna Design.

With such an incredible body of work celebrated from some of the most promising up-and-comers in the creative world, we thought a *Web Designer* showcase was in order. Over the next four pages you'll be able to view a selection of our favourite examples that this year's competition had to offer, and also find out a thing or two about the entrants themselves. We hope it'll be enough to spur you on and maybe inspire you to get your game on in 2007's event!

Final standings

Winning highlights from this year's competition in all their glory...

Animation

Name: Keng-Ming Liu

Origin: School of Visual Arts, New York

Winning work: Travel Diary

A 2D animation using collage, video, photography, illustration and stop-motion techniques



Experimental Graphics and Packaging

Name: Amy Wang

Origin: School of Visual Arts, New York

Winning work: Ametrica!

An innovative awareness campaign for converting the US to the metric system



Digital Illustration

Name: Lucie Bichelberger

Origin: Ecole Intuit/lab

Winning work: 2006

Ornate, wallpaper-style illustration showing a personal vision of the world in 2006



Interactive Design

Name: Janina Boesch

Origin: Rhode Island School of Design

Winning work: Manhattan Dissected

Interactive digital city guide with photos, sound recordings and 360-degree views



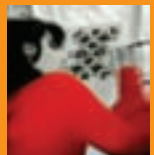
Live Action

Name: Karolina Novitska

Origin: Massachusetts College of Art

Winning work: Crossword

A cinematic visualisation of Alzheimer's disease using stop-motion still images



Motion Graphics

Name: Howard Hao-an Tsai

Origin: Art Center College of Design, California

Winning work: Hungry Planet

Woodcut-effect animation based on imagery from the organic food industry



Digital Photography

Name: Nils Orth

Origin: Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Rome

Winning work: Untitled Faces

A collection of facial portraits commenting on the notion of individuality



Print Design Multi-Page

Names: Stephan Powilat, Mathias Vogel, Stephanie Ambiel

Origin: Fachhochschule Mainz

Winning work: Rororo Monographien Redesign
Style redesign project for a historic German book-publishing company



Print Design Single Page

Name: Hank Huang

Origin: Art Center College of Design, California

Winning work: Apartment Seven Inventory

Inventory poster of everything the artist owns as of November 2005.

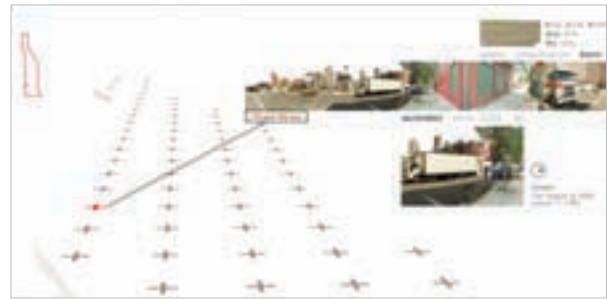


“Winning an Adobe Design Achievement Award is just the beginning for these students”

Janina Boesch

Origin: **Rhode Island School of Design**
 Category: **Winner, Interactive Design**
 Project title: **Manhattan Dissected**
 (www.janina-boesch.de)

Originally from Bremen, Germany, Janina moved to New York to undertake a one-year internship at 4 Corners, New York. 2003 saw her enroll in graphic design at Rhode Island, where key skills in typography and the combination of interactive design with clean lines were developed. Now working for the New York Pentagram office as a full-time designer after graduating in June earlier this year, she looks set for great things. Her winning Flash-based project sums up her penchant for carefully produced interfaces and provides an interesting twist on the idea of an NY city guide.



Manhattan Dissected gives us a taste of the Big Apple with a difference



Stephen Neary

Origin: **New York University**
 Category: **Animation**
 Project title: **Bigfoot's Eulogy**

Hoosier-born Stephen Neary began animation humbly: with a few GI Joes and a movie camera. His art background and creative family eventually egged him on to win the National Student Emmy for Technical Achievement in June 2004 for his animated/live action high school programme, Where It's At. Now finishing his second year in NYU's Film and Television programme, Stephen continues to pursue animation and production. In 2005, Stephen interned at Warner Bros Animation in LA on the cartoon hit *Teen Titans*. Stephen currently interns at Wachtenheim/Marianetti LLC, a New York studio famous for producing SNL's TV Funhouse segments.



Bigfoot's Eulogy has an incredibly charming feel thanks to a quirky cut-out style





Sam used a combination of Flash and HTML to build this hugely polished website

Sam Smelter

Origin: **University of Wisconsin-Stout**

Category: **Finalist, Interactive Design**

Project title: **Minnesota State Park Interactive Website**
(www.smelterdesign.com)

Sam Smelter originally hails from Minnesota but graduated with a BFA in Multimedia Design from the University of Wisconsin-Stout in May 2006. Information design and interactive design are his main interests, although he always adopts the attitude that design is a way of making communication more effective. A continuing goal is to create more efficient connections between user and information, while allowing the user control over viewing that information. The purpose of this project was to utilise Flash as a tool to present info in a unique and interactive way. The site contains details on 70 state parks in Minnesota that are accessed through an interactive interface, with Photoshop and Illustrator used to create the graphics.



Filip Olszewski

Origin: **Rhode Island School of Design**

Category: **Finalist, Interactive Design**

Project title: **Suckling Pigs Interactive**
(<http://forgiveme-iloveyou.com/sucklingpigs.html>)

Moving to Queens, New York in 1989 after growing up in Poland, Filip Olszewski made a conscious decision to discover what art could do for him. Convinced he could use the medium to express himself honestly, he opted for Rhode Island School of Design as the place to gain the necessary experience. Here he broadened his horizons into areas of performance and installations, while actively pursuing a keen interest in interactive projects. His project Suckling Pigs Interactive provides a virtual simulation of his band, and uses Flash 8 to allow visitors to control each character via the computer keyboard.

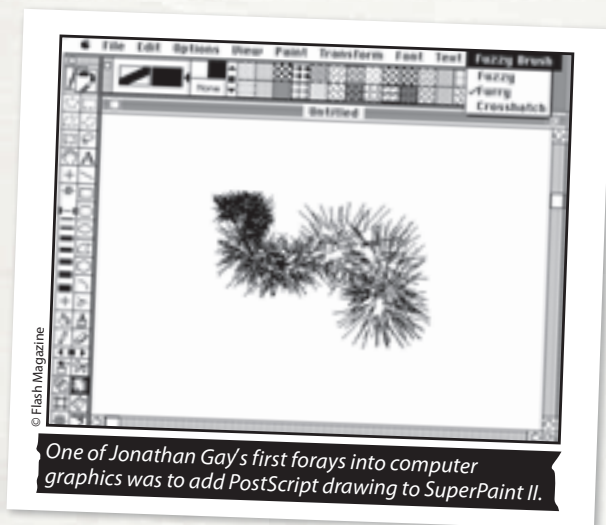


FEATURE ➤

With Flash celebrating its tenth birthday, **Dave Howell** looks back at the history of the application and discovers that the future is looking very bright indeed



10 YEARS OF



One of Jonathan Gay's first forays into computer graphics was to add PostScript drawing to SuperPaint II.

Before 1996 the Internet was a very static place to visit. You were lucky to see a few animated GIF's or some low quality video the size of a postage stamp. Full-motion graphics and DVD quality video were little more than the fantasies of web designers. Today, Flash is not only an almost ubiquitous component of the web, but is now moving onto new platforms that will cement its place as one of the truly great innovations that touches millions of lives every day.

IN THE BEGINNING

The history of Flash begins with its creator's fascination with Lego. Jonathan Gay was enthralled with the multi-coloured building blocks. He cites his long hours playing with the toys as one of the most important

elements of his development as an engineer and then a software developer. In common with many of his contemporaries, Gay began his love affair with the computer by designing games initially on an Apple II and then on a Macintosh. Soon moving to graphics applications, Gay added drawing capability to a program called SuperPaint II and after graduation from college developed Intellidraw from Aldus.

Seeing the future of graphics software, he started FutureWave with investment from Charlie Jackson. Initially aimed at the then fledgling pen computing market, it quickly became clear that a change of direction was need if the company was to survive. Gay along with Robert Tatsumi developed SmartSketch which became the foundation from which today's drawing applications have developed.

Visiting SIGGRAPH in 1995 was a turning point for Gay and FutureWave. After seeing the burgeoning computer animation industry at the show many attendants commented that SmartSketch should be marketed as an animation product. At this

"THE WORLD'S FIRST GRAPHICS ANIMATION APPLICATION SHIPPED IN MAY OF 1996"

FLASH LANDMARKS

We pick out those envelope-pushing sites that have been instrumental in propelling Flash development forward as chosen by Rob Ford, Founder and Principal, FWA [www.theFWA.com]



Gabocorp

www.thefwa.com/flash10/gabo.html

"In my opinion, this was the first Flash site that got everyone's attention and started a wave of Flash demo downloads. We were lucky to find an old file of this site to publish on our website."

1997

FLASH

time a new communication environment called the Internet and World Wide Web was beginning mentioned. Gay thought that if this new Internet technology became popular users might want to send graphics or animation over it. So he began to add animation features to SmartSketch. The Internet was also slowly taking shape but the only way that a web browser could be extended to play any kind of animation was by using Java. Luckily, Netscape quickly released an API which gave decent performance to SmartSketch's animation player. With a name change to FutureSplash Animator, the world's first graphics animation application arrived to an expectant industry in May of 1996.

Microsoft, so often involved in these things, now enters the history of Flash as they were looking for a system that could give a television-like experience to anyone using their MSN service. Turning their attentions to FutureSplash Animator meant much market recognition for Gay's company, which also resulted in subsequent work for Disney.

With such high profile clients it wasn't long before Macromedia began to take an interest in what they were doing and within a short space of time approached Gay with a view to working together. At that time FutureWave had been operating for four years with just an investment of \$500,000. Gay liked the idea of having the resources of a much larger company at his disposal so in December of 1996 he sold FutureWave to Macromedia. FutureSplash Animator was then re-released as Flash 1.0 and the rest, as they say, is history.

TAKE CONTROL

One reason that Flash has become so popular is that it can be easily controlled via its own programming language. However Flash did not initially include a scripting model to allow development of dynamic, interactive content. ActionScript 1.0 made its first appearance with Flash 5 and was based on JavaScript, which is why it shares many of its syntax characteristics. Beginning with relatively few commands such as nextScene and gotoAndPlay, with



One of the first programs to come out of FutureWave Software, SmartSketch aimed to make it easier to draw

FLASH TIMELINE

1993: Jonathan Gay creates his first graphics programmes

Gay and Jackson found Silicon Beach Software. Gay adds PostScript drawing capability to SuperPaint II and designs Intellidraw for Aldus.

1994: FutureWaves Software is founded

SmartSketch is created by Jonathan Gay and Robert Tatsumi. Gay redesigns SmartSketch that then goes head-to-head with Illustrator and Freehand.

1995: Animation added to SmartSketch

Whilst attending SIGGRAPH Gay is recommended to develop SmartSketch into an animation application for use by the burgeoning Internet, which captures his imagination.

1996: Macromedia buys FutureSplash

After Disney and Microsoft use FutureSplash Animator for their high profile Internet sites, Macromedia buys FutureSplash Animator.

1997: Macromedia releases Flash 1.0

Macromedia realise that the Internet is the next global information and entertainment environment. They produce the first tool to create interactive motion graphics for the web browser.

1999: Internet Explorer ships with Flash player

Flash instantly becomes available on millions of desktops with the release of Internet Explorer 5.0, which now bundles the player. No download is necessary to view any Flash content.

2000: Flash penetration reaches 92%

Macromedia release Flash v5.0. Features of this release include HTML text formatting, and the JavaScript-like code platform ActionScript.

2002: Studio MX and Flash 6 Player released

The Flash MX release includes support for streaming video for the first time and also XML support.

2004: FlashLite 1.0 is released

Macromedia release Flash MX 2004 and Flash MX 2004 Pro. Features include ActionScript 2, behaviours, text alias and support for MP3.

2005: Adobe acquires Macromedia

Flash 8 is released. FlashCast goes live in Japan. NTT DoCoMo launches i-cast based on FlashCast server and FlashLite technology.

2006: Flash Player 9 is released

100 million FlashLite enabled devices have shipped. Verizon announces first US based Flash mobile service.

FEATURE >

VOX POP

We asked some top web designers and industry commentators how Flash has influenced them over the last ten years

Jens C Brynildsen,
Editor, Flash Magazine
www.flashmagazine.com

"The F in Flash stands for 'Fun'. The web would have been a lot less enjoyable if it was not for Flash. Where HTML tables ruled, Flash took over and gave the designers complete freedom. Where animated GIFs ruled, Flash took over (think banners). Where MIDI files ruled, Flash took over (think multimedia). Where Java ruled, Flash took over (think games). Flash has taken over so many aspects of the web that no user wished to be without it. People want to install Flash. That can't be said for many other plugins."



Rob Ford, Founder and Principal, FWA
www.theFWA.com

"Flash has grown into an essential piece of the whole Internet jigsaw and is finally looking to make big leaps into the mobile market. I first picked up with Flash when version 3 was released and

what impressed me at that time was how you could do almost anything you could imagine with it and that the usual constraints of HTML were no longer an issue. I see this applying even more so today, with video through the Flash player being the latest big wave of development. What is so great with the latest trend in video content on the web, aside from an Internet that is turning into a 24 hour edition of "You've Been Framed" through the likes of YouTube, is the ability to have interactive video. Flash has also grown as an excellent tool for building both online and offline applications, controlling exhibitions and installations alike."

Billy Bussey
www.billybussey.com

"It really is amazing that Flash is now 10 years old. I started with Flash right when version 4 came out in 1999. Back then the most important part of Flash was its vector graphics. Using video was of course an impossibility at that point so any sort of animation or movement within websites was sort of mind blowing. That is, anything that wasn't an animated GIF. ActionScript began to get a little fancy then and enabled some of us to really start showing off as far as interactivity and complex animations went. After that Flash slowly seeped its way into everything. Flash makes interactivity very easy. I have a Treo myself and would love to see some of my websites on it. I assume in the near future a notebook PC will be the size of a phone anyway so I'm sure Flash and any other programs that exist on standard computers will work on other devices."



MONO*crafts

<http://yugop.com/ver2/>

"Designed by the legendary Yugo Nakamura. Yugo inspired a small generation of experimental Flashers, which, in turn, set forth a huge amount of ideas and creative navigations that would go on to be used even to this day."



Barneys New York

www.joshuadavis.com/02_web/2000/barneys_new_york/barneys_archive

"This site is also designed by another legend, Joshua Davis. The now famous 'Barneys scroller' is still used six years later. At the time, everyone was using it after it surfaced on Flashkit as a free download."

Flash 7 it became a fully fledged language when version 2.0 arrived. Macromedia has continued to extend the language to offer even more features and functions to designers with each iteration. Version 3.0 is a powerful tool that enables rich Internet applications to be built rapidly and perfectly complements the Flash Player. And with the release of Macromedia's new design suite, Studio 8, ActionScript once again moved forward in its impressive capabilities.

"ActionScript was introduced in Flash 5, and proved to be the most significant feature of that release," said Gary Grossman, Software Architect, Adobe. "What prompted us to develop it? In a word: interactivity. Interactivity has been an essential ingredient in Flash content since the product's inception. Flash has a myriad of uses, but a common thread is that Flash is something

you can click on, interact with, and see stuff happen in response to your actions. This is true whether Flash is being used to make a game, a database application or a videoconferencing solution. Of course, Flash can also be used to make more passive experiences where you sit back and watch the content unfold, but interactivity is definitely a key part of the product's essence. We developed ActionScript to broaden the possibilities of interactivity in Flash, to give Flash developers a means of expressing complex interactions in a simple, powerful way."

ADOBE ADVANCES

When Adobe announced it was buying Macromedia, industry watchers greeted the move with tentative approval. Now the dust has settled we can take a step back

2001

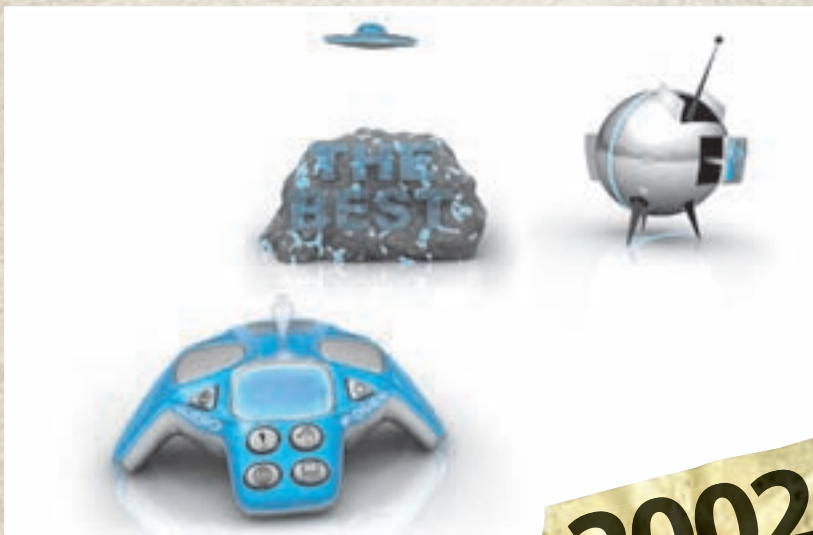
"THE BIGGEST THING WE'RE FOCUSING ON THIS TIME IS INTEGRATION WITH EXISTING ADOBE PRODUCTS"



2Advanced Studios v3 Expansions

<http://v3.2a-archive.com>

"The first of what would become the highly acclaimed 2Advanced Studios pioneering sites. Their design would later go on to become one of the most copied web designs ever."



Who's We Studios v1

www.whoswestudios.com/flashsite.html

"The Who's We Studios v1 site was the first in a new wave of 3D bitmap enhanced Flash sites and one with bundles of attitude. It has now been copied countless times."

and evaluate what this really means for Flash designers and the web at large. Clearly having just about all of the powerhouse creative applications under one roof is an exciting prospect and one that many designers have welcomed. The move towards greater integration between Flash and Photoshop is perhaps the most eagerly anticipated development for some years. But the move to a plethora of new platforms is a more telling indication that Flash is not only a driving force in web design, but in the design industry as a whole. This shouts volumes about its versatility.

Outside of consumer facing websites more developments are afoot that could ultimately have an even greater impact. If you look at the Internet today you can see that we have websites that are dynamic in that they present their information in

2002



FUTURE FLASH

With the next release of Flash just around the corner, what can we expect from the new version?

The rumour mill has been working overtime since Adobe announced that the next version of Flash (codenamed BLAZE) is in the pipeline. One area of development almost certain to become a reality is further integration with some of Adobe's flagship products. Product Manager Mike Downey recently stated: "We're about halfway into development right now. The biggest thing we're focusing on this time is integration with existing Adobe products. Historically, we've found that a very high percentage of Flash users also rely heavily on Adobe's Creative Suite applications, especially Photoshop. In fact, over 90 per cent of Flash customers also use Photoshop." After Photoshop you can then expect Flash to touch every Adobe product over the next few years.

Adobe has also given details of a new technology they have dubbed 'Apollo'. As part of the Flash anniversary celebrations Adobe stated: "One area Adobe is focusing on now is a product code-named Apollo, a new, cross-browser, cross-platform, cross-device client. Using Flash and other Adobe technologies, Apollo will provide an identical experience across browsers, desktops and devices on or offline, in or out of the browser. An example of Apollo would be clicking on an online travel brochure which takes you to a video of the destination and from there, having the ability to book the travel while at the same time collaborating with others on the details, connecting on schedules, purchasing tickets and printing boarding passes offline - all within a single interface." You can read more about Apollo at <http://labs.adobe.com/wiki/index.php/Apollo:developerfaq>.

One area that has gained much debate is how far Adobe will be pushing the 3D elements of Flash, which has been on many developers wish lists for some time and generally regarded as the one feature missing from Flash. Jens C Brynildsen, Editor of Flash Magazine commented: "3D has long been the main reason to choose Director over Flash. Version 9 will have a new 3D optimised Virtual Machine that will change game development and GUI-building forever. Microsoft Vista depends on this. It's the single most hyped Vista feature. Adobe will probably deliver Flash 9 before Vista arrives so this will be important to Adobe as well."

Whatever features eventually make it into Flash 9 you can be certain that integration with Photoshop will be seamless. 3D is certainly an exciting prospect. With more support for platforms other than the web, Flash 9 looks set to be a landmark in the future life of this powerful application.

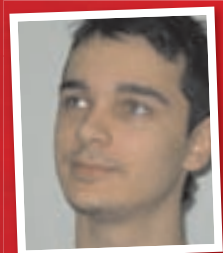


AgencyNet [www.agencynet.com] is an astonishing experience full of stunning animation and video

VOX POP CONT.

Kent Hertzog, Web Director, Inclined Inc
www.inclinedinc.com

"I started school at the Art Institute of Philadelphia in 1999 and Flash was just starting to be used. I'd estimate less than 1 per cent of sites on the web used Flash at that point. It's hard to believe but Director's Shockwave player had a much higher penetration rate than Flash, but it's true. Our curriculum required one entry level Flash course but three levels of Director courses. I loved Flash even back then so I took as many elective courses in it as possible. But it's funny because back then broadband wasn't available and Director was being used much more for CD-ROM's. But I could tell Flash had all the potential in the world if put in the right hands, especially since it could display vector artwork so crisply and at low file sizes. So, I just continued using it through the versions that followed and keeping up with its expanding capabilities. It's really hard for me to start planning the design of a site without Flash. It's become a standard tool in my arsenal."



Mikhail Ivanov
www.activate.ru

"Flash is extremely versatile and flexible technology, it can be and integrated part of the website to make it living and moving or stand-alone interactive presentation with amazing visual effects and animation. There are dozens of applications for this

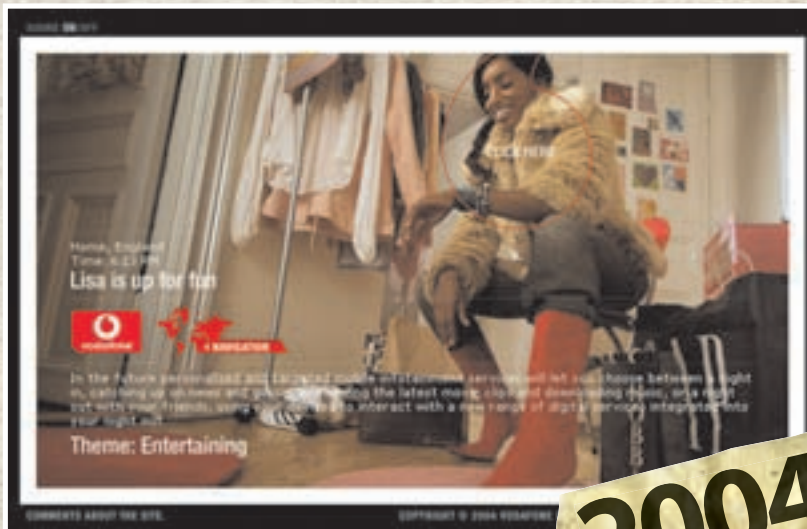
software from animated website headers to cartoons and very complicated interactive multimedia presentations or multi-user online games. On the other hand Flash is easy to use and to understand software. The fact is there are so many designers using Flash. They make it popular. And that is also one of the reasons why Flash can be seen everywhere not only over the Internet but also on TV, cell phones, PDAs and even ATMs."

Hoa Loranger, User Experience Specialist, Nielsen Norman Group
www.nngroup.com

"We've seen an improvement in the implementation of Flash. When Macromedia first released Flash, web creators were seduced by its potentials and applied it prolifically, often to the detriment of the user experience. Also, the earlier versions of Flash introduced usability problems, such as, broken back buttons and causing accessibility issues for disabled people. Today we see designers showing more restraint. For example, the use of annoying splash pages has dropped considerably (although some companies still insist on having them). Designers have become increasingly more aware of the need to have Flash emulate traditional interaction models, thereby avoiding usability catastrophes. Also, newer versions of the Flash technology have resolved some of the usability issues of the past."



"FLASH GIVES YOU THE ABILITY TO CREATE ANYTHING YOU CAN IMAGINE"



2004

Vodafone Future Vision

www.vodafone.com/flash/futures

"The first site to embrace video, 3D and interaction. Plus a site that would win international acclaim as well as the first site to win both FWA Site Of The Year and FWA People's Choice Award."

interesting and engaging ways, but the interaction that we have with websites if you think about it, is actually quite limited. You can click buttons and fill in forms, but what is missing is a system whereby you can integrate information and functionality into the graphical interface that we have all come to expect from the websites we visit. "Flex provides a completely different model for creating rich Flash content that is more approachable to traditional application developers," explained Mike Downey. "We have a lot of plans to continue to strengthen our Flex solutions for developers. While our Flex platform grows and evolves, the Flash authoring tool will do so as well. With each release we try to enable new capabilities that allow our customers to build better content. For example, the last two releases

of the authoring tool have been focused on strengthening the development features of Flash so users can create data-driven Rich Internet Applications. We've also focused on adding great support for video. In the next release we're going to put a heavier focus on the design and graphics features in the authoring tool - as well as continue to innovate with video."

Flash is now a decade old and like other ten year olds is now finding its feet and looking to the future. As a development platform it looks set to reinforce its reputation as the application of choice for web designers and enterprise programmers. Today Flash offers a set of tools that give every designer - no matter what platform they are developing for - the tools they need to realise their ambitions, as Rob

Ford, Founder and Principal of theFWA.com succinctly concluded: "Flash gives you the ability to create anything you can imagine. The only problem is that you need one heck of a developer to realise the most progressive ideas. I have yet to hear of an idea that couldn't be achieved in Flash."

The last ten years of Flash development has been nothing short of astonishing. It's ubiquity on the web looks set to be eclipsed by its move to a plethora of new platforms. If you're amazed by the capabilities of a program inspired by a few coloured building blocks, you ain't seen nothing yet baby!



© Warner Brothers

Often cited as one of the best uses of Flash currently live on the Internet, the site supports the Tim Burton film



*e***Mag**

Learn more about Flex at Adobe.com:
www.adobe.com/products/flex/productinfo/overview
www.adobe.com/products/flex/productinfo/faq



Simon Bisson takes a look at Adobe's latest tool for building Flash applications

Flex 2



Flex Builder helps you get started with an initial splash screen that links to tutorials, code samples and style tools

The story of Flash is almost as long as the story of the web. It began life in 1996 as Futuresplash Animator, was bought by Macromedia and rapidly became the standard for animated content on the web. Macromedia's merger with Adobe brought it into the same stable as Photoshop and Illustrator, cementing its position as one of the most important tools for creative web development. Flash recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. As it evolved, it added more features – including a scripting language based on JavaScript, and XML connectivity to servers. It's that development framework that gave birth to Flex.

Flex is best thought of as a technology for dynamically generating Flash content on a server

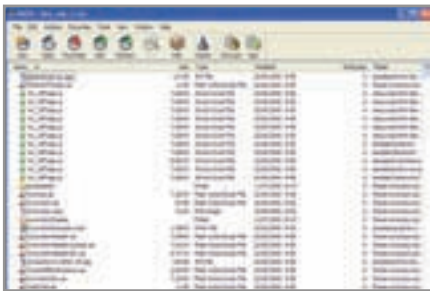
and delivering it to a browser. Flex changed the Flash development model, moving it away from a timeline-based animation tool and making it easier for traditional developers to build Flex applications. The first release was expensive, and was aimed at the largest websites and applications. Adobe's Flex 2 is the latest version, introducing a new pricing model that should make Flex more attractive to more websites and web application developers.

Adobe sees Flash and Flex as tools that deliver what it calls 'Rich Internet Applications', a name originally coined by Macromedia. Rich Internet Applications (RIAs) mix different web technologies to create more complex and interactive user interfaces than HTML, avoiding problems such as

“Flex is best thought of as a technology for dynamically generating Flash content on a server and delivering it to a browser”

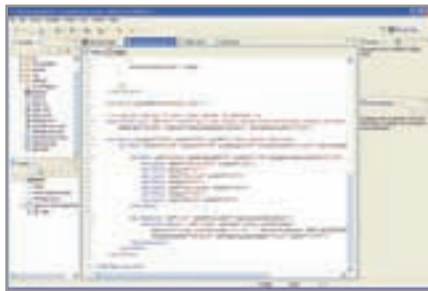
The Flex toolkit

What goes into making up the full Flex family?



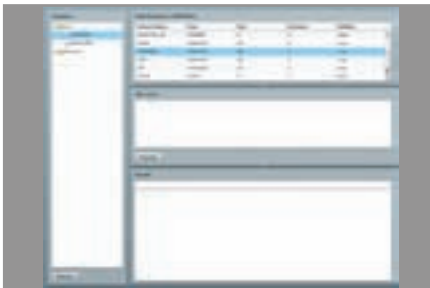
FLEX SDK AND FRAMEWORK

Flex needs plumbing that makes sure your applications work, and the free Flex SDK contains the various components that you'll need to build a UI and handle data connections, along with Flex's version of ActionScript and a compiler. You can build Flex applications with nothing but the SDK, but to get the most out of it you'll need the Flex Builder IDE and all the features we've outlined here.



FLEX BUILDER

Based on the popular open-source Eclipse IDE, Flex Builder 2 is where you'll build your Flex applications. A graphical UI builder allows you to lay out your MXML components, and a source code editor helps you build your application code. Debugging tools help you test your code before sending it out into the world. Flex Builder is extensible, so you can add new features – including Cold Fusion support.



FLEX DATA SERVICES

Flex Data Services is a separate Java-based server application that handles data connections to the rest of your server infrastructure. You'll need to use it to get the most out of any services you're already running – from database connections to web service connections to existing applications.



FLASH PLAYER 9

The new version of the Flash player adds support for the latest Flex features. It also includes a new ActionScript virtual machine which speeds up your applications by running them as machine code whether it's a Windows PC or a Macintosh – worth bearing in mind if you're worried about run times.

New features

What's new in Flex 2 and Flex Builder 2

Flex 2 is very different from the previous release, Flex 1.5. Not only is it cheaper – you can use the Flex SDK for free – but it also introduces a new development platform. The old Dreamweaver-based development tool has been replaced with a new drag-and-drop IDE that's been built on the open-source Eclipse framework. The SDK adds new components and effects, as well as enhancing XML support. There's also a charting extension to help develop Flex components for online reports and business dashboards. You can even build applications that work with a browser's back and forward buttons. Enterprise-scale applications can take advantage of Flex Data Services, a messaging-based server platform that links your Flex applications to large-scale applications like SAP and corporate databases. Flex Data Services will also work with publish-and-subscribe systems, giving Flex a foothold in the financial services market. The mix of technologies in Flex 2 makes it an ideal platform for building what Adobe calls Rich Internet Applications (and the rest of us think of as 'Web 2.0'). You can also use Flex in conjunction with client-side JavaScript and Adobe's Spry AJAX framework.

FlexStore

See the new toolkit in action online

If you want to know how the Flex framework could be used to sculpt eCommerce solutions, look no further. Adobe's online development network has a Flex 2 section with sample apps including this exquisite digital storefront for mobile phones. The unique interface techniques extend to special slider controls for adding or subtracting the product images on view, plus a handy map system for locating your local dealership. The clean and stark template stylings are a pleasure to behold – a real thumbs up for what Flex 2 development could yield your projects. <http://examples.adobe.com/flex2/inproduct/sdk/flexstore/flexstore.html>



This dynamic product viewer provides the perfect illustration for Flex 2's interface-building abilities

page refreshes, and dynamically updating page information from server-side applications – while the Flash player's cache allows applications to work without an Internet connection (unlike AJAX).

Flex uses the Flash player to host its browser-side elements. Code is written in MXML and ActionScript. Adobe's MXML is used to describe the user interface elements, while script code handles your application's business logic. There's also a class library that contains common components and methods.

The Flex development environment, Flex Builder, is an Eclipse-based IDE to help you write and debug your code. While you can build your applications with the IDE and the base Flex server components,



The Design view lets you lay out graphical elements quickly and easily, showing what your application will look like running in a Flash player

Interface guide to Flex Builder

Explore the Eclipse-based drag and drop-based IDE at the heart of Flex 2

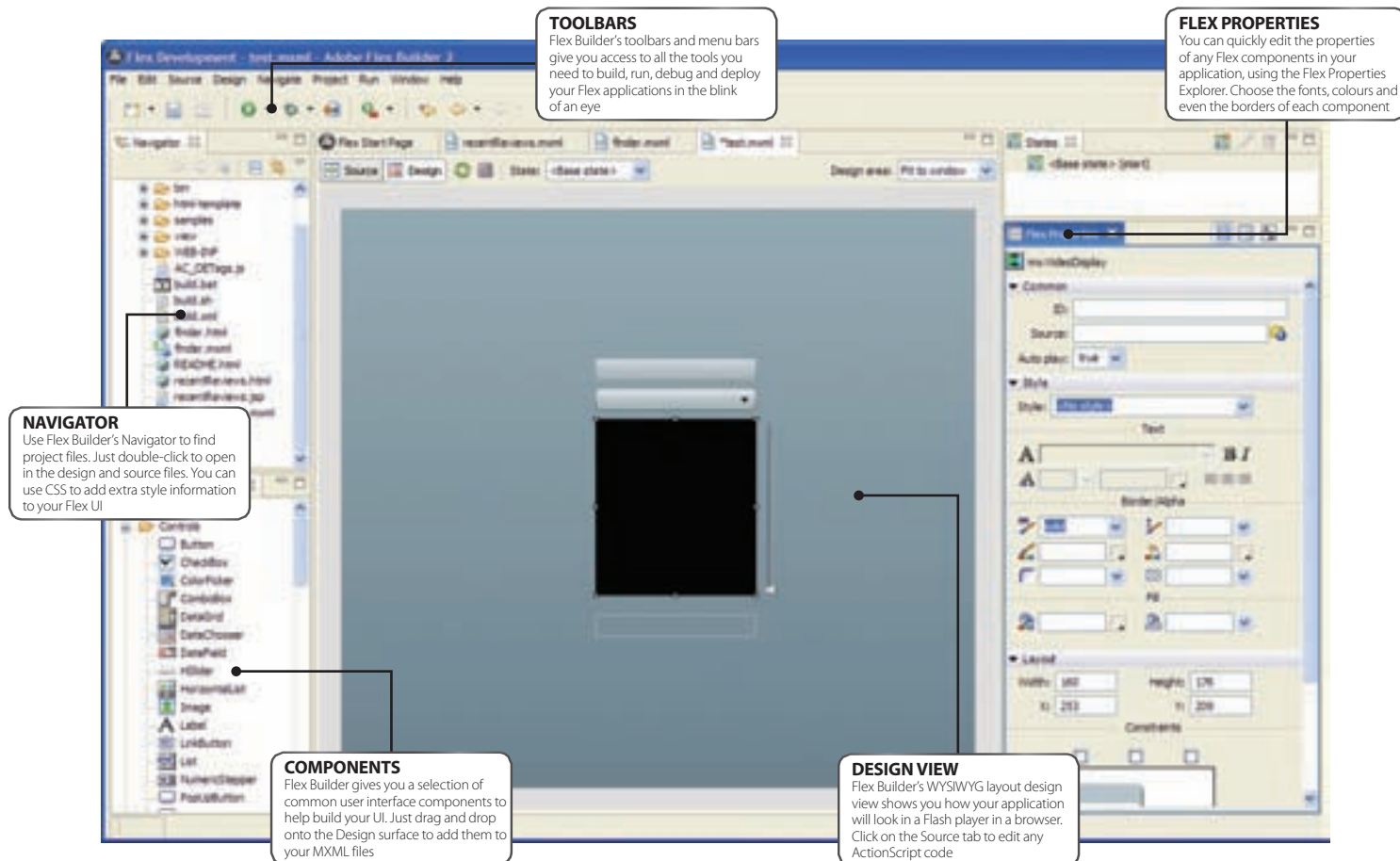


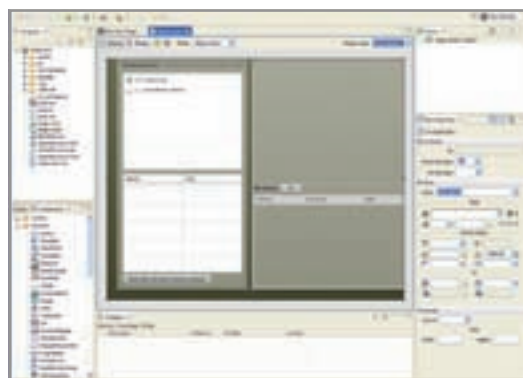
Photo Viewer

Snapshot galleries have never looked so sophisticated



Another sample app at Adobe.com's Flex development network is the tried and tested photograph gallery. Once a staple first project for Dreamweaver rookies, Flex 2 offers a far more dynamic and polished approach. Initial loading waits aside, the benefits are immediate when subtle fade-in effects load, coupled with

smoother scrolling techniques, showing what the leap to dynamic development can offer. Add to this the obvious ability to embed Flash fonts and generally raise the bar on menu or interface presentation, and you've got the perfect platform for coders and designers. www.adobe.com/devnet/flex/samples/photo_explorer/



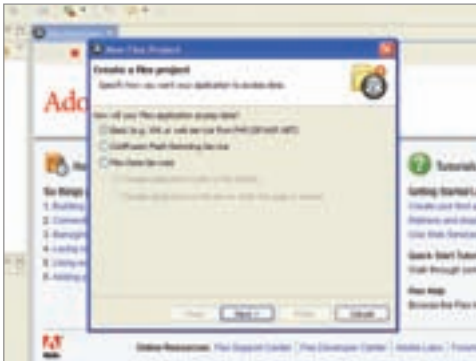
Flex Builder's source code editor takes advantage of the Eclipse IDE, with colour-coded code and code completion

more complex applications can take advantage of Flex Data Services, an optional set of components that add support for more complex messaging systems, including working with real-time data and server-side Java objects.

You're not limited to working directly with Java application servers. Flex 2 includes tools that allow you to build Flex applications that work with Adobe's Cold Fusion platform. Other extensions give you tools for adding charts and data visualisations to your applications.

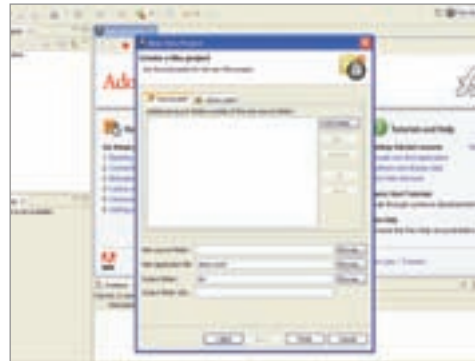
Flex is ideally suited for building web applications that need to deliver reports on rapidly changing information – perhaps providing near-real-time administrative dashboards to large web applications. It's also ideal for building interactive shopping carts, where users can see how their final charges will change as items are added and removed, especially where dynamic pricing models can alter the overall cost. A Flex-based airline booking system could make it a lot easier to see the effects of travelling on different days or even on different flights.

Step-by-step: Using Flex 2 to build a web services client



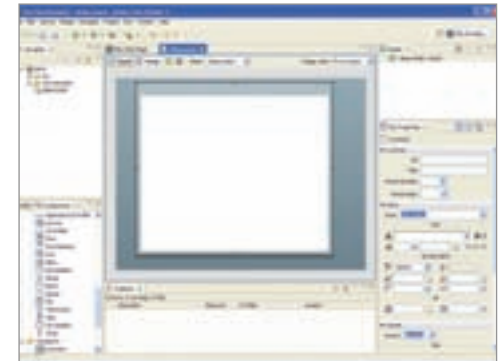
01 Creating a Flex project

Flex Builder 2 takes a project-based approach to application development. Each project is composed of the assets used to build the app. When creating a project you need to define how it connects to remote data. As we'll build an app that uses a remote web service, we'll start with a basic app.



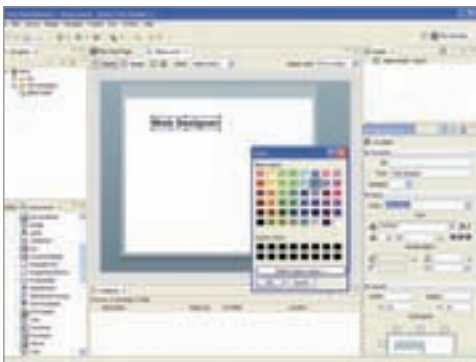
02 Define build paths

Flex apps can be built and delivered to a web server. You'll probably start by testing the app on your development PC, but you'll also want to test how it can be built into a site. Flex 2 lets you define a directory and URL for an output folder, so test pages can load Flex files from a web server.



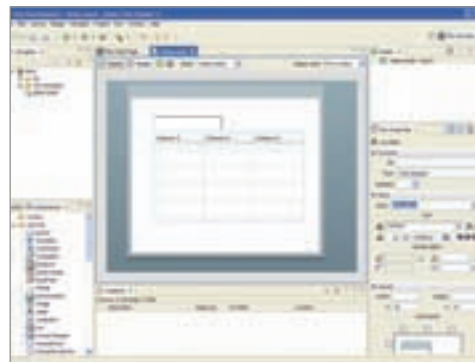
03 Add a panel

The most basic element of any Flex user interface is the panel. This is where you'll add the controls that go to make up an application, and where you'll start to define the look and feel of your user interface. We're using the default Component style, which is a variant of Flash's familiar Halo.



04 Add a label and colour it

Controls can be dragged to a panel from the Components picker. We added a Label control and used the Properties panel to add text. (You can add text here, or type directly in the control.) This panel also lets us change the colour of an element, so we're using it to give our text a blue tint.



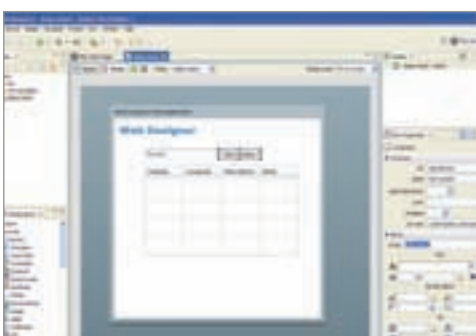
05 Add a DataGrid

As we're building an app that will work with data from a remote web service, we'll add a DataGrid component to our page. Flex Builder 2 gives us dynamic guidelines so we can place our various components in a pleasing layout. Here we're aligning our existing label with the DataGrid.

06 Connect to a web service

We'll now switch to Flex Builder's Source view to add a connection to a web service. We'll be using elements of a weather forecasting web service to show the latitude and longitude of any place in the USA given a zip code. We'll also add some feedback to make sure users can see that the application is working:

```
<mx:WebService id="wsdlWeather" wsdl="http://
www.webservices.net/WeatherForecast.
asmx?WSDL" showBusyCursor="true"
useProxy="false">
  <mx:operation name="GetWeatherByZipC
ode">
    <mx:request xmlns="">
      <ZipCode>
        {textInput.text}
      </ZipCode>
    </mx:request>
  </mx:operation>
</mx:WebService>
```



07 Add more elements

We'll now add the rest of our application's user interface. We'll need to add a button, and use its on click method to call the web service. We'll also use a text input field to get the zip code we'll be sending to the web service:

```
<mx:Button x="237" y="69" label="Get
Location" id="demoButton" click="wsdlWeather.
GetWeatherByZipCode.send()"/>
```

08 Connect grid and results

Finally, we'll hook up the DataGrid to the web service results. We'll need to label the fields and give them the same names as the elements in the XML document returned by the web service call. Here we're displaying latitude and longitude, as well as the place name and the US state:

```
<mx:DataGrid x="69" y="198" dataProvider="{
wsdlWeather.GetWeatherByZipCode.lastResult}"
width="350" height="200"><mx:columns>
  <mx:DataGridColumn
    headerText="Latitude" dataField="Latitude"/>
  <mx:DataGridColumn
    headerText="Longitude" dataField="Longitude"/>
  <mx:DataGridColumn
    headerText="Place Name"
    dataField="PlaceName"/>
  <mx:DataGridColumn
    headerText="State" dataField="StateCode"/>
</mx:columns></mx:DataGrid>
```

Flex 2 is case sensitive, so make sure you haven't made any typing errors!



09 Test your Flex app

Once satisfied you've got all your MXML and ActionScript in place, you can test your Flex app. Click the Run menu (or green arrow in the toolbar). Flex Builder will compile the app into a SWF file and open it in a web browser. You can also use Flex's debugging tools to track down any bugs.



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
The files for this tutorial can be found on the cd

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create an interface to make into a transparent glass menu with displacement map

TIME REQUIRED


1 hour

SKILL LEVEL



Cool glass effect menu with displacement maps

MAKE YOUR MENU STAND OUT AGAINST YOUR BACKGROUNDS WITH THIS GREAT GLASS EFFECT, THAT DISPLACES THE BACKGROUND IMAGE UNDER YOUR ICONS

 **MOST PEOPLE** have had a play around in Photoshop and set up a displacement map for an image so that you can create a glass logo over the top. These effects are all well and good but if you export them for Flash and want to move the icons around, the map stays displaced in that one area. Flash has had some serious improvements made in Flash 8 with the addition of being able to sample areas of the screen and keep that bitmap data. In this tutorial we are going to

create a displacement map from the logo by giving the logo a blurred, bevelled edge. This logo will then take a copy of the background image and warp the image underneath so that when you look through the icon, it appears as though the image underneath is being displaced. This of course gives the effect that you are looking through glass icons. With a little help from the drop shadow filter the icons should appear to hover above the background image.



YOUR EXPERT

Mark Shufflebottom teaches on the BA and MA Interactive Media courses at Bournemouth University where he teaches 3D applications, interface design, online gaming, small-screen device production and, of course, all things Flash and ActionScript.

Cool glass effect menu with displacement maps



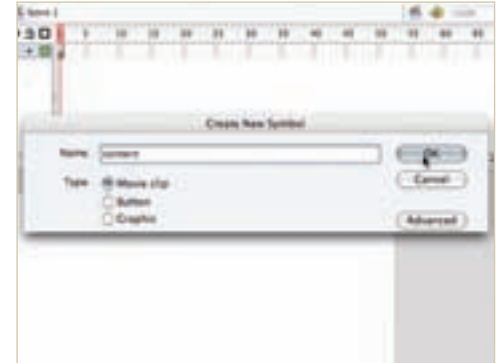
01 Start the project

Open Flash and create a new document. In the properties palette increase the frame rate to 30 frames per second, then click the size button. In the pop-up window change the document size to 500 by 500 pixels then click OK. Now go to the File menu, choose Import and Import to Library.



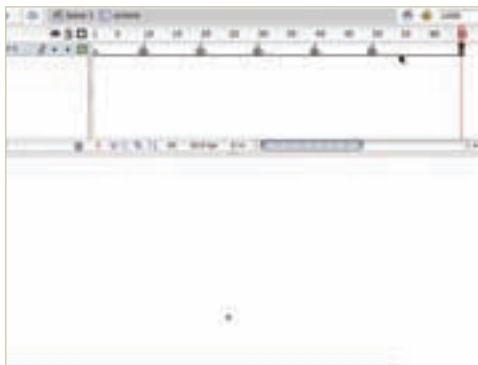
02 Import the images

This tutorial uses a lot of images so browse the cover CD for the 'project start' folder and import all the images in this folder. Click the first image in the folder then shift click the last image in the folder to import all the images in one go rather than individually.



03 Create the content

If you can't see the library press Ctrl + L to open it and you will see all your imported images. The first element that we are going to build for our interface is the content. Most of this will be dummy content so that you can see the interface working. Press Ctrl + F8 to create a symbol.



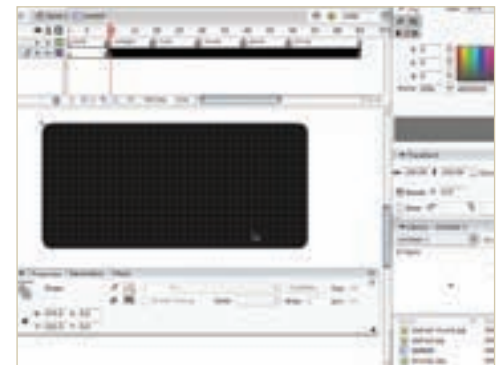
04 Make a movie clip

Make sure your symbol is set to being a movie clip and name it 'content', then click OK. You will be presented with a new timeline select frame 10 and add a keyframe by pressing F6. Add keyframes to frame 20, 30, 40 and 50. Select frame 65 and press F5 to extend the timeline.



05 Add frame labels

Select frame 1 and in the properties palette add the frame label 'home'. Then add the labels 'wallpaper', 'music', 'movies', 'sports', 'driving' to the remaining keyframes. Create a new layer and drag it below the first, then add a keyframe at frame 10.



06 Draw a rectangle

Choose the rectangle tool and then click on the 'Set Corner Radius' icon at the bottom left of the tool bar. In the pop-up window add 20 point radius and click OK. Set the stroke to non and make the fill colour black but with 60% opacity in the mixer, draw a rectangle as shown on the stage.



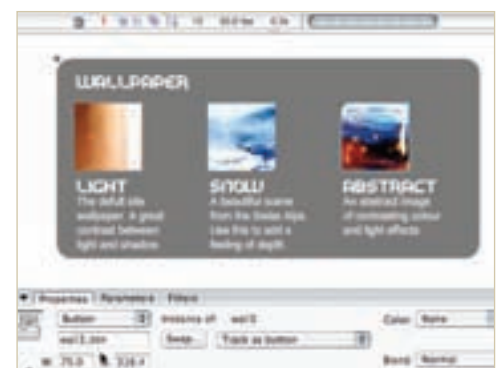
07 Wallpaper section

Make sure the rectangle is 470 pixels wide by 220 pixels high and positioned at 0 pixels on the X and Y axis. Create a new layer above this and add another keyframe at frame 10. Use the text tool to add the text as shown in the screenshot above.



08 Add images

From the library drag on the images 'light-thumb.jpg', 'snow-thumb.jpg' and 'abstract-thumb.jpg', positioning them on the screen as shown. Select the first image on the left and go to Modify, Convert to symbol. Make the type a 'button' and name it 'wall1', then click OK.



09 More buttons

Select the next image and again choose, Modify, Convert to symbol. Name this symbol 'wall2', then repeat with the last image naming this symbol 'wall3'. Give each of the buttons the instance names of 'wall1_btn', 'wall2_btn' and 'wall3_btn' in the properties palette.

Tutorial



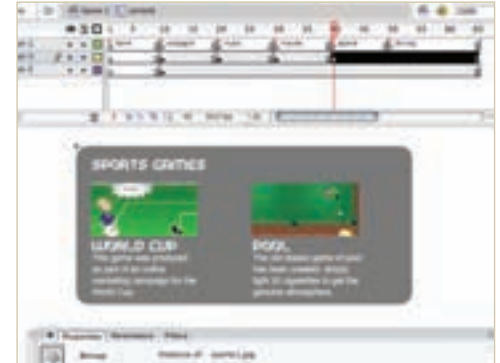
10 Music section

Select frame 20 of the layer 3 and press F7 to add a blank keyframe. Use the text tool to add the heading as shown above. Drag on the image 'music.gif' from the library and position as shown. We are not going to add any functionality to this section so we'll leave it at this.



11 Movie section

Select frame 30 and press F7. Use the text tool to add the text and headings as above. From the library drag the images 'movie1.jpg' and 'movie2.jpg' onto the stage, and position. As before, we do not have enough space to add functionality to every section of the site so this will be placeholder content.



12 Games section 1

As before, select frame 40 and press F7. Add the appropriate text and the images 'sports1.jpg' and 'sports2.jpg'. These next two sections will be selected as sub menus of the 'games' section of the site's main glass displacement navigation.



13 Games section 2

The final section of the content is located on frame 50 so select the frame and press F7 to add a blank keyframe. Now add the appropriate text and headings as shown, then drag the images 'driving1.jpg' and 'driving2.jpg' onto the stage. Select frame 1 of layer 1 (the layer with the frame labels).



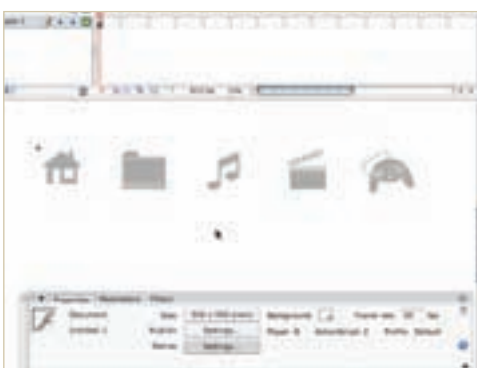
14 Stop the movie clip

Press Alt + F9 to open the ActionScript panel and then type in the command 'stop()'. This will stop the movie clip from just playing through, meaning that we can control it from our main interface, which will jump to the relevant frame label when selected.



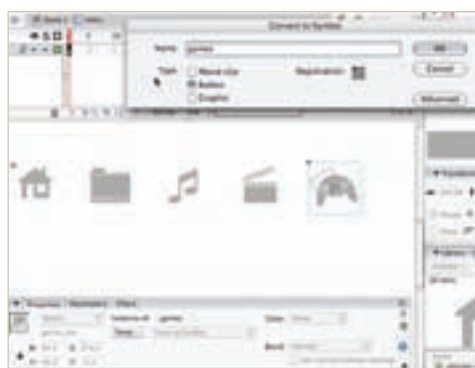
15 Add the linkage

Find the 'content' symbol in the library and right click on it. In the pop-up menu select 'linkage'. Click the 'Export for ActionScript' button and name the Identifier 'content'. Click OK and then press Ctrl + F8 to create a new symbol. Name this symbol 'menu' and make it a movie clip.



16 Add icons

Select the text tool and change the font colour in the property palette to '#999999'. We have used the font 'Webdings' to add some simple icons to the stage in separate text boxes. If you desire, you can easily draw your own icons for a unique look.



17 Convert to symbol

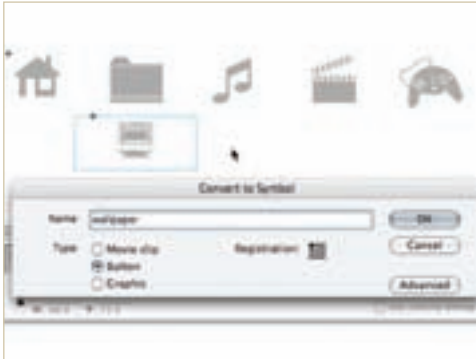
Select the first icon on the left and select Modify, Convert to Symbol. Make the symbol a button and name the symbol 'home'. Repeat this with each icon naming them 'file', 'music', 'movies' and 'games'. Ensure each one is set to a button as the symbol type.



18 Name the instances

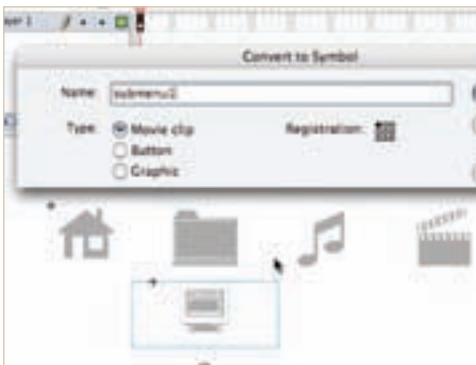
Select each of the buttons on the stage in turn and give them the instance names 'home_btn', 'file_btn', 'music_btn', 'movies_btn' and 'games_btn'. These icons may look a little dull and grey, but with the power of ActionScript we will be able to turn them into transparent glass icons.

Cool glass effect menu with displacement maps



19 First sub menu

We are going to create some drop down menus so again select the text tool and set the font colour to '#999999'. Add a menu icon from the 'Webdings' font to look like a screen. From the Modify menu choose Convert to symbol, name the symbol 'wallpaper' and make it a button.



20 Name the instance

Select the button and name the instance 'wallpaper_btn' in the properties palette. Now select the button and again from the Modify menu choose Convert to symbol. Name the symbol 'submenu1' and make it a movie clip. Name this instance 'sub1_mc'.



21 Second sub menu

Add two more icons using the 'Webdings' font and place these underneath the game pad icon. Select the snowboarder icon and select Modify, Convert to symbol. Name the symbol 'sports' and make it a button. Name the instance on the stage 'sports_btn'.

IN DETAIL

Getting under the hood with ActionScript

The tutorial takes a huge chunk of code and just drops it into this interface, here we take an in-depth look at what makes this code tick and how this relates to the elements built in the tutorial

WE'LL REFER TO the line numbers in the script to explain how this code works. Open the ActionScript panel and follow along. Lines 1-3 import the necessary filters from Flash's code into this so we can access them later. In lines 4-6 a bitmap object is set up and the 'light' image is added to this. It's placed in a movie clip and placed on the stage. The logo is added to the stage in lines 7-11, positioned on the X and Y axis then given a slight opacity with the sub menu's inside made invisible. The variables stored up to line 19 are for reference to bitmap data used in creating the bevel and displacement. Two copies of the logo are placed on the stage and the instance for these are 'logo2' and 'logo3'. Logo2 is attached to the drop shadow while logo3 is blended using 'screen' to make it lighter. In line 33, a function is declared to set up the glass effect. Here the various filters are applied to blur the logo, add the bevel and this is all used to set up the displacement map.

The code now starts to concentrate on moving the menu from line 45. Here an array is set up that holds the positions of each of the icons on the screen. A variable is set to make sure it starts in the first position called newX. The onEnterFrame function checks every frame to move the menu. It moves the X axis of logo2 to the position in the array but divides this by 2.5 so that it slowly reaches the destination. If it's within one pixel of the destination then it is positioned there, otherwise it will never reach. The text is now changed on screen to describe the logo, and the necessary sub menus have their visibility turned on or off so that they can be seen. At this point we call our glass Effect function because the logos have changed and therefore a new displacement map needs to be generated. Beyond this logo and logo3 are set to follow logo2 which is moved. The mouse is constantly checked in this function to see if it is to the right or left of the centre icon. If it is, then the next position in the array is called to move the menu. Finally, in this function all the maps are applied so that the displacement changes as the menu moves. The final section of the code from line 115 sets up the position of the text and the content, then adds functionality to the buttons.



Getting these glass icons to work involves a great deal of ActionScript in setting up the displacement map



The displacement map is applied to the icons each frame so that the image warps under each of the icons as it moves



22 Convert the bike

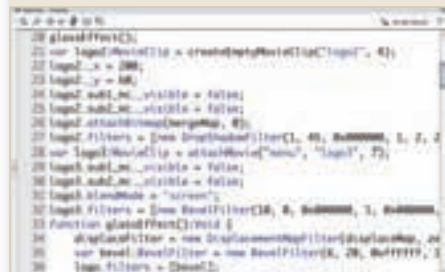
Now select the motorbike icon and again select Modify, Convert to symbol. Name this symbol 'racing' and make the symbol type a button. On the stage name the instance of the button 'racing_btn'. Now select both of the new button icons on the stage.



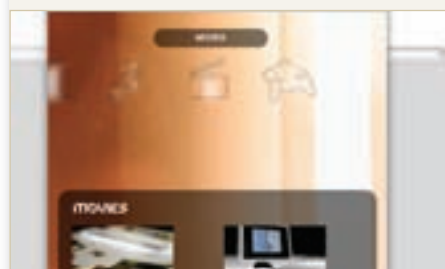
23 Create a movie clip

With both racing and sports icons selected choose Modify, Convert to symbol. Name the symbol 'submenu2' and make the symbol type a movie clip. Name the instance of this 'sub2_mc'. This completes making the menus, each of the sub menus will become visible as selected by the user.

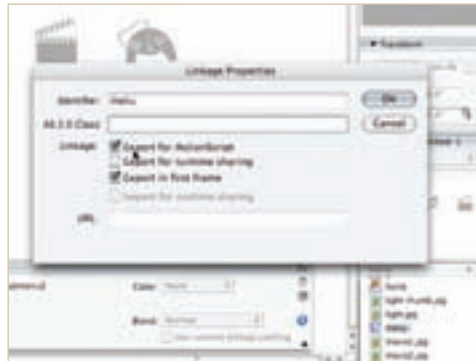
In most tutorials you'll drag movie clips from the library to the stage, however in this tutorial we've created a linkage and are talking to our movie clips this way. The reason for this is that to get the displacement to work, three copies need to be made.



The three copies are made in code because this is fairly simple to do and positioned according to the first. These movie clips are blended together using screen to give a highlight to one edge and are then blurred to give a soft focus.



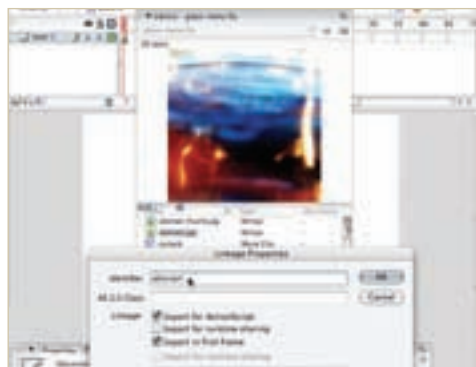
This final version of the logos added together is used to create the displacement map. Because so much of this is taking place in code, it is a better option to just update the logos in one place in the library to make all relevant changes to the screen.



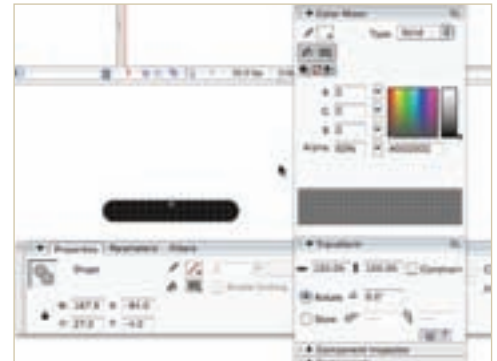
In the library, right click on the menu symbol and choose 'linkage' from the pop-up menu which appears. Now select the Export for ActionScript checkbox and name the Identifier 'menu'. This will allow the code to talk to this without placing it on the stage.



Ensure that your rectangle is 168 pixels wide by 27 pixels high. Position the rectangle at -84 on the X axis and -4 on the Y axis. Now select the text tool and add a text field as shown in the screenshot above. Change the text box to dynamic and name the instance of the box 'button_txt'.



So far we've built all the elements required to make our interface, but we haven't done anything about our backgrounds that the glass menu will float over. We'll add linkages to these images in the library so right click on 'abstract.jpg' and add the linkage as shown above.



Press Ctrl + F8 to create a new symbol. Name the symbol 'text' and make it a movie clip. Select the rectangle tool and choose 'none' for the stroke colour with black as the fill colour. In the mixer palette reduce the alpha to 60%. The round edges should still be applied from before, then draw a rectangle.

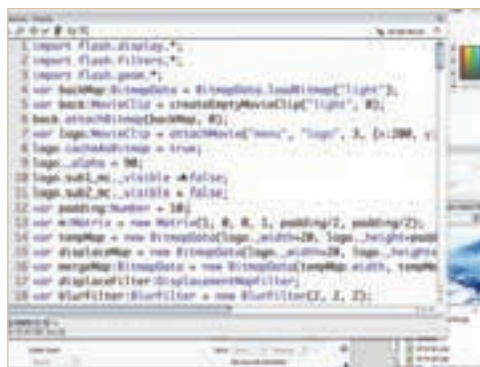
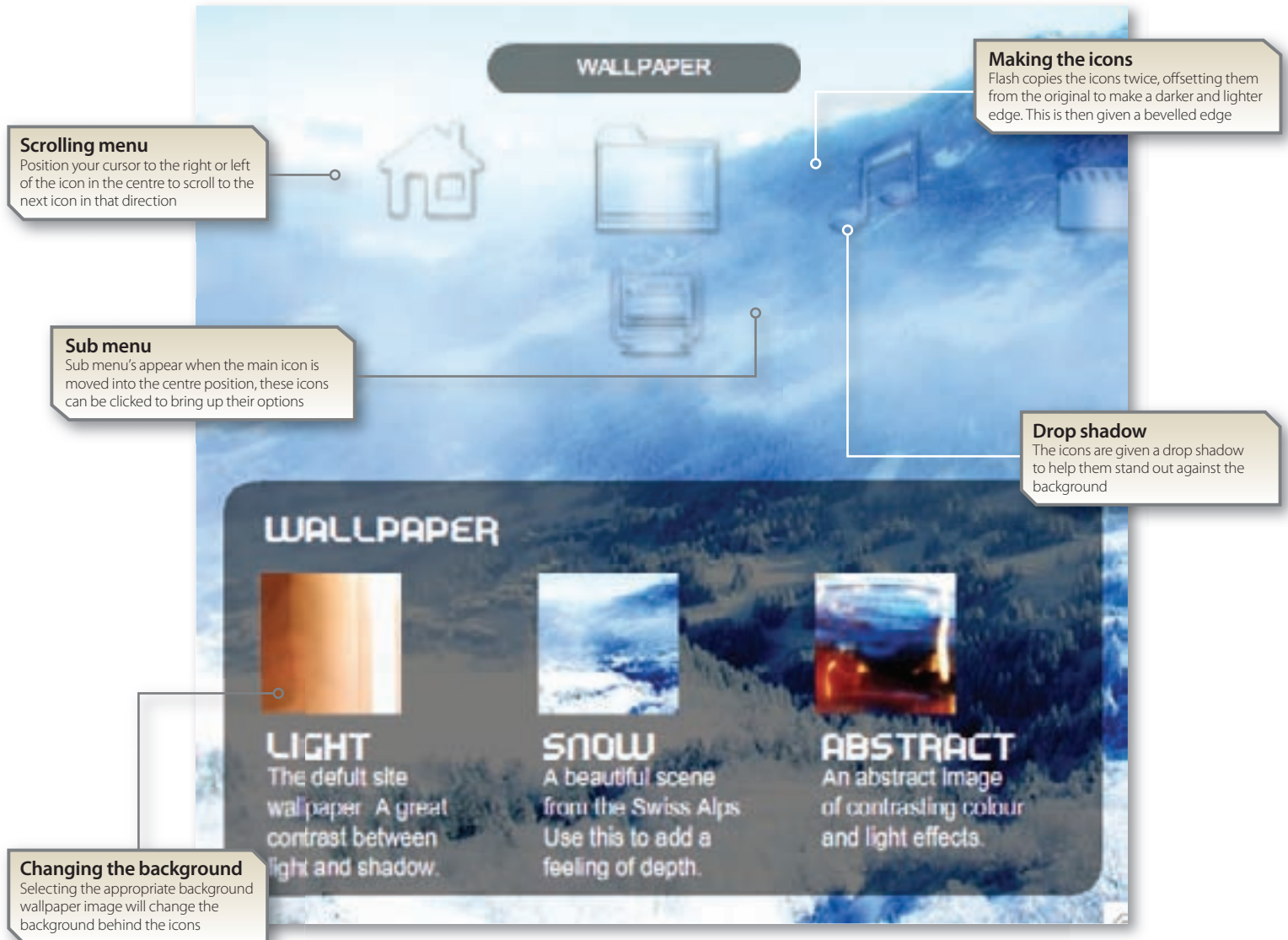


In the library, right click on the 'text' symbol and choose linkage from the drop menu. Switch on the checkbox for 'Export to ActionScript'. Name the identifier 'menu' and click OK. We've now constructed all the required elements for the interface.



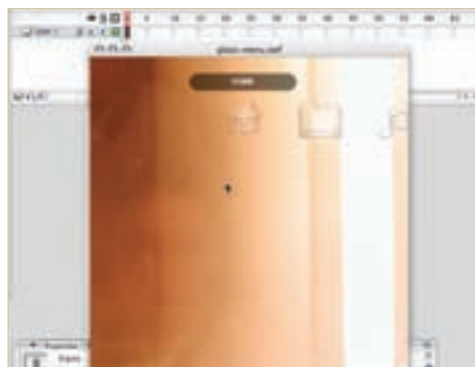
Select the other two images 'light.jpg' and 'snow.jpg' in the library for use as backgrounds. Add the linkage names to these of 'light' and 'snow'. Now our ActionScript will be able to talk to all elements of our interface and manipulate it appropriately.

Cool glass effect menu with displacement maps



30 Add the ActionScript

Return to Scene 1 by clicking the 'Scene 1' icon above the timeline. Select frame 1 of layer 1 and press Alt + F9 to open the ActionScript panel. Minimise Flash temporarily and open the file 'ActionScript.txt' from the cover CD. Select all the code and copy it, return to Flash and paste it into the Actions panel.



31 Test the movie

With over 150 lines of code, we thought it best to add this all at once rather than adding a little and explaining each section. The file is now ready to so press Ctrl + Enter to export the Flash as an SWF and test the code. If all the instance and linkage names are correct you should see the above.



32 Scrolling the icons

To scroll through the icons, place your mouse to the right or left of the centre icon. When an appropriate section has a sub menu, click the sub menu icon to see the content. You can change the background image as shown above, notice the glass displacement of the icons.



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
duckgame fla
start fla

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Learn how to create your own game
using Adobe Flash for the PSP

TIME REQUIRED


2 hours

SKILL LEVEL



Learn to build Flash content for your PSP

IF YOU'VE EVER WANTED TO CREATE A GAME FOR A SONY PSP
THEN THIS LOOK AT HOMEMADE HANDHELD CONTENT IS FOR YOU

 **I WAS HAPPY** to get a PSP for my birthday, but I think it's a present my girlfriend now regrets because since then our conversations have been reduced to grunts while I stare blankly at the glowing little machine. After playing and completing all the games that had arrived with the console, I decided to check out the options and found that with the new software update 2.71 I could actually create my own Flash content for it. I researched what was possible before I started,

with the links I found featured in this very tutorial, then set out to create the mini game we'll be building this month. In the process you'll also discover some of the limitations in producing content for the handheld, but should be able to go away and create and play PSP content with no trouble. Before we start, a quick word of thanks must go out to my girlfriend Samantha Moore for supplying all the graphics that our game will use, and for putting up with my incessant gaming sessions!



YOUR EXPERT

Darren Richardson works as a Tech lead for Magic Lantern Production based in London and has been in the business for 10+ years. In his spare time he runs flash sites at www.actionscripts.co.uk and www.flashgroup.net as well as other exciting portal sites.

Learn to build Flash content for your PSP



01 Set the scene

Open up start.fla on the disc, which has some images already in the library for you to use although feel free to change or add your own. Adjust the stage size to 480px width and 272px height through Menu>Document, leaving the frame rate at 12fps as well.



02 Publish settings

In the properties panel you'll see a publish button. Select that and navigate to the Flash tab, before selecting Flash Player 6 from the menu. This is one of the restrictions of creating PSP content; some of the new coding rules you may have learnt for Flash 8 will not apply in Flash 6.



03 Background layer

Create a new layer and call it Background. Drag the background.png from the library on to the stage and set the x and y to 0. Now make the image a graphic symbol via Menu>Modify>Convert to symbol or F8, save as a graphic and call it 'background_gfx'.



04 The target clip

Create a new layer above the background one and call it 'ducks'. Add frames up to frame 10 on the timeline on both the layers you have created (F5 or Menu>Insert>Timeline>Frame), now create a new symbol on the ducks layer (F8) and make it a Movieclip before naming it 'targets'.



05 Bomb making

In the targets Movieclip call the first layer 'clips'. We'll then create each of the target clips in turn. First let's look at the bomb clip by dragging the bomb.png onto the stage and setting the x and y to 0. Select the bomb and convert to a movieclip symbol as before. Call it 'bomb_mc'.



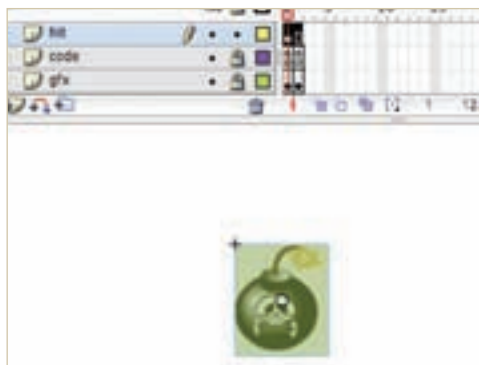
06 Bomb graphics

Double-click the bomb_mc to open the clip and with the bomb selected make it a graphic symbol and call it 'bomb_gfx'. Insert a new keyframe at frame 2 (Menu>Insert>Timeline>Keyframe), drag the bang.png to the stage and like before create a graphic symbol called 'bang_gfx'.



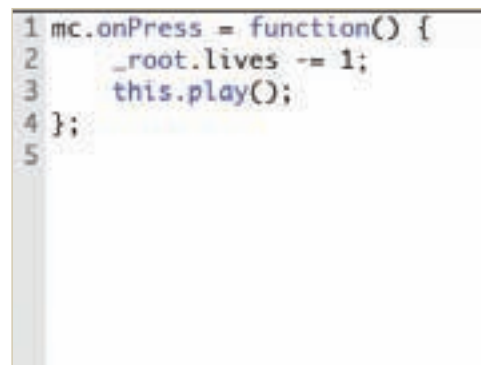
07 A little slice of code

Call the layer 'gfx' and create a new layer called 'code'. In this layer create two key frames at frame 1 and 2, open up the actions panel (Menu>Window>Actions) and add a stop command in both key frames to prevent that movie looping when played. Add another layer and call it 'hit'.



08 The hit Layer

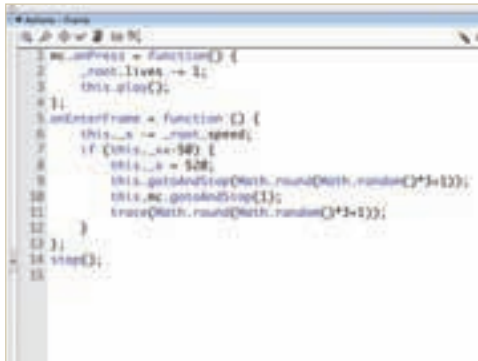
Because of the strange shapes of the target clips its best to create a hit layer. In the hit layer draw a square over the top of the bomb making sure it covers it fully, make the square into a graphic calling it 'hit' and in the properties panel set the graphic alpha to 0.



09 onPress event

Go back to the targets movieclip and add a new layer calling it 'code'. In the first key frame add the code above, before selecting the bomb clip and in the properties window making the instance name 'mc'. The code above traps the press and shows the bang if hit.

Tutorial



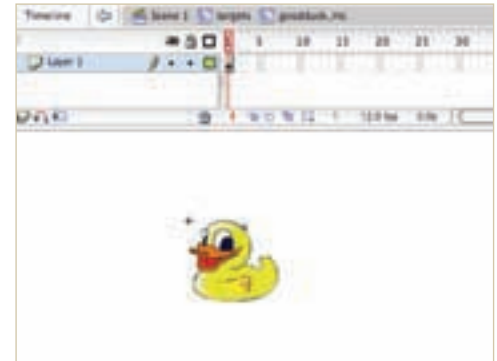
10 Coded movement

Still in the same frame, add the above code to the actions window. This tells Flash that on every frame, move the target movieclip to the left using some variables you will set up shortly, then if it is off the stage to go to the right and start again. It also tells the clip to go to its first frame.



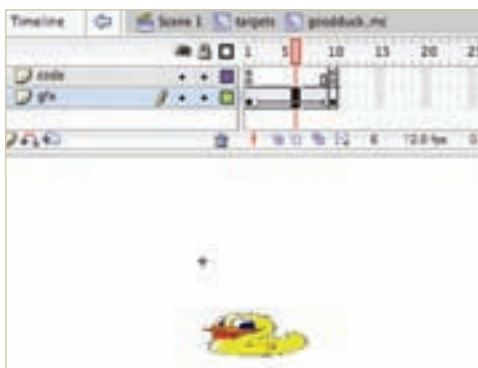
11 Yellow ducky code

Select the bomb movieclip and make the width 61 and the height 53. All of the clips have to be this size so when the movement takes place they will not overlap after time. Add a new keyframe in both the clip and code layers and add the code above to the code layer key frame 2.



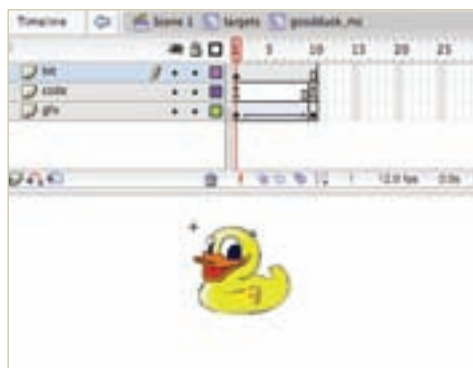
12 Yellow ducky setup

Drag the 'goodduck.png' to the stage and set the x and y to 0, make it a movieclip symbol and call it 'goodduck_mc'. When inside the movieclip select the duck again and make it a graphic symbol like you have done before and call it 'goodduck_gfx'. Navigate back to the 'goodduck_mc'.



13 Yellow duck tween

Make two layers called 'code' and 'gfx', with the duck inside the gfx layer. At frame 10 add a keyframe and repeat for the code layer. At frame 1 and 10's code layer add a stop(); In the gfx layer make the duck 1px high at frame 10 then a tween from frames 1 to 10 to give the falling effect.



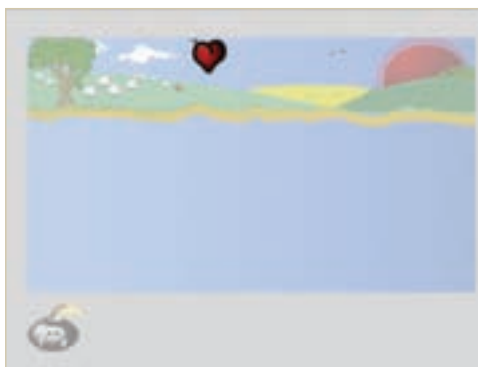
14 Hit the duck

As you did with the bomb, add a new layer and call it 'hit'. Next drag the graphic you created for the bomb and drag it onto the hit layer, before setting the alpha to zero. You are now done with this duck so save your progress. Navigate back to the targets layer to continue.



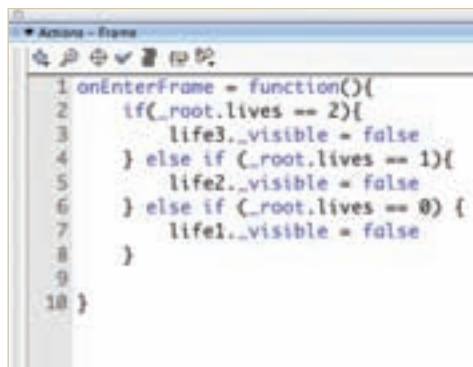
15 Bad duck

You need to repeat what you did for the goodduck_mc but with the 'badduck.png', instead calling it 'badduck'. Go back to the targets clip and copy all the duck info from frame 2 and paste into frame 4, so you have x2 good ducks. All clips should be named mc in the instance field.



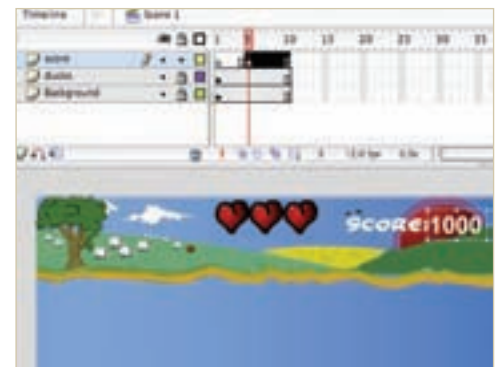
16 Score graphics

Drag the targets clip from the library onto the stage and under the background, call it 'duck' in the instance name. Now create a new layer and call it 'score'. At frame five create a keyframe, drag a heart_mc from the library to the stage and then convert to movie clip calling it lives_mc.



17 Score code

Inside the lives_mc name the layer gfx and duplicate the heart three times calling them life1, life2 and life3. Then add a new layer called 'actions' and in the first keyframe add the code above which will hide the lifes depending on a variable set on the main timeline.



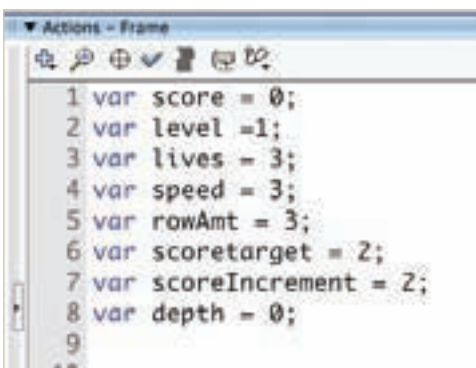
18 Score text

As well as having a graphic visual of lives you should also have a score, so on the same layer create two textfields. Make one dynamic and one static, and in the static one type 'score:' and in the dynamic one put 'score' in the Var field in the properties panel.



19 Level text

This is a time based game so you have levels which increase over time. So like you just did, create a static and dynamic textfield and in the static one write 'level:'. Set the dynamic textfield's Var Property also to 'level' so these will update when the variables on the stage are changed.



20 Vital variables

To make this game work it relies on a few variables being set in the beginning and then reset when either the game ends due to a timeout or hitting bombs. So create a new layer on the main stage called 'code', and in the first key frame add the code above to declare your variables.



21 Introduction screen

Create a new layer called 'intro', then create a keyframe at frame 2 and add some intro text. Then write PLAY and drag the square you created earlier over the text. Make it a button symbol called 'play_btn' then add a keyframe to the code layer at frame 2 and add the code above.

IN DETAIL

Updating your PSP to install Flash

Its all well and good creating a lovely game for your PSP, but without the PSP update you will not be able to play any of the content. Find out here how to install and activate the Flash player

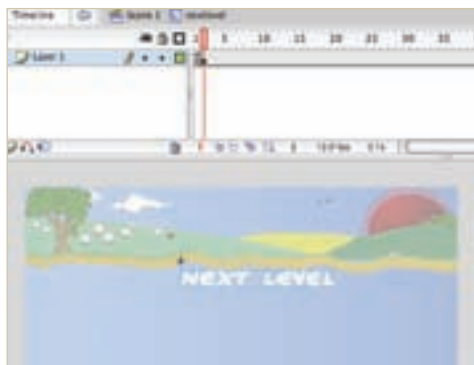
THE FLASH PLAYER update was first introduced for the PSP in version 2.71 of its firmware. The latest update is now version 2.80, which has heralded some added extras like support for video and image downloading in the RSS channel and the ability to play AAC music files. The best way to get hold of the update is directly through your PSP, but to do this you will have to have a WIFI hub nearby and be able to connect to it. Otherwise you can download the patch via Sony's official site, save the file to your memory stick and perform the installation from there. However, for the purposes of this box, we'll have a quick walkthrough on setting up a wireless connection. First, go to Network Settings and Infrastructure Mode, press X, then New Connection. Hit X to edit the name if necessary then select Scan with the right arrow, making sure the PSP WiFi switch is on. You should then see a list of wireless connections, so choose yours and enter your security key if you have set one up. Then press the right arrow through the instructions until you get to the save part and press X. You can test the connection now, so exit out of this part of the menu because you should have now set up a wireless connection for your PSP. Select Network Update and it will now ask you to select the connection you have just set up but if you already have the latest software installed it will tell you. Otherwise, let it install on your memory card and once it has downloaded it will ask you if you want to install, say yes, and the PSP will restart. Hey presto you now have the latest software! That's all fine, but how do you get the player working? Simply go to System Settings and press 'Enable Flash Player'. All that's left to do now is upload your swf file to the PSP, so connect the USB cable and you will see a new folder appear. In your explorer be it MAC or PC, in the root of this folder create a new folder called flash and drag your duckGame.swf file into it. Job done and ready to play!



If you haven't got WIFI then you can always go to the website at www.yourpsp.com and download the software there



Follow the instructions to perform the download, then connect your USB cable and upload the patch to your PSP



22 Next level

Create a new layer called 'nextlevel' then create a new movieclip symbol and call it 'nextlevel_mc'. In the first frame add a stop(); command then in the next frame add the text 'Next Level'. Add a keyframe at 60 and drag the 'nextlevel_mc' onto the 'next level' layer.



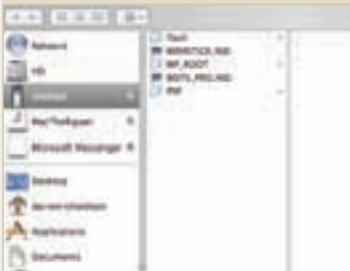
23 Set up the targets

In the code layer add a key frame at frame 5 and add the code above. Here you are setting up a timer variable which will call a function every 10 seconds, then you are creating two rows of targets each with 3 targets in them. Row amount was a variable you set a few steps ago.

TECHNIQUE

Loading your game to the PSP

You should have now created your game and also installed the latest PSP software, so all that is left to do is install your game



01 Install the Game

Attach the PSP to your computer via the USB lead. On your PSP, select USB connection and you should see the disk in your browser like above. Add a folder called flash then open that directory and drag your game swf file into it. Then disconnect your PSP.



02 Play the Game

Now it's loaded go to the Internet browser on your PSP and in the address entry type: 'file:/flash/duckgame.swf', substitute 'duckgame.swf' with whatever your game is called. Press enter and away you go, using the pad and X key on the PSP to play.



03 Links

There are new web sites popping up every day, but I always like to stick to the old ones because more often than not they're from people with more experience. Flashdevices.net is from one of the head mobile devices guy at Adobe - it's great!



24 Function junction

Now add the two functions above. 'nextLevel' checks the score against a variable called 'scoretarget'. If you've scored less than the scoretarget in the set time you've lost, or if you have a greater score then you progress. The next function clears all the variables and movieclips.



26 Crosshair

Create a new movieclip symbol and call it 'cross'. Add two keyframes on two layers, call one 'code' and add stop(); to both the keyframes, then add a crosshair to frame 1 and then a smaller red version to frame 2. Clear the stage, select linkage from the library and export for ActionScript.



28 Game over code

Add a new keyframe in frame 10 of the code layer and add the code above - this will reset all the variables needed to replay the game. Add a new layer and call it 'gameover', again adding a keyframe to frame 10. Add some text to tell the user the game has ended.



25 onEnterFrame

'onEnterFrame' checks your lives to end the game if you have run out, while 'mouse Events' will trap the crosshair which you'll be creating next. Then you attach the crosshair and set the depth so its always on top of all the other movieclips before hiding the mouse.



27 Making lables

Create a new layer on the stage and call it 'labels'. Add keyframes at frames 2, 5 and 10, and on frame 2 add the label 'start' in the properties panel, at frame 5 the label 'play' and frame 10 the label 'gameover'. You call these in the code so it knows where to start over or end a game.



29 Game over graphics

Next add a new button symbol like you have done before and call it 'new_btn', then add two textfields one static and one dynamic. In the static one write 'score:' and in the dynamic Var property write score as well. Now all you have to do is load your game to your PSP and test it.



*e***Mag**

Tech support Flash

This month **Mark Shufflebottom** helps out with creating full-screen projectors for CD, banner rotation for websites and fading out sound at the touch of a button

Q Do I need Director?

I've been working on a Flash project which is destined for CD release as opposed to placing on a web page. I know I can create an EXE file when I publish from Flash, but I was wondering if I can somehow make this fill the screen instead of being inside a window. I heard that Director plays Flash files full-screen, so should I make the investment into Director for this brief?

Angela Greening

A Director will play Flash files and create full-screen apps, but it would be silly to invest nearly £1,200.00 on it. It's a powerful piece of software, and it would seriously undervalue its power to merely use it as a glorified full-screen Flash player. Not only that, but Director hasn't been updated for about two and a half years, so can't play back all the new features of Flash. All is not lost though, because Flash is more than capable of meeting your requirements and it's probably a lot easier than you think.

Just because there's no full-screen checkbox in the export options of Flash to a

projector, it doesn't mean it's not there. On the first frame of your Flash movie, open the ActionScript panel and type the following:

```
fscommand("fullscreen", true);  
fscommand("allowscale", false);
```

The first line sets up the full-screen Flash projector, the second keeps the content at the original size and doesn't scale it to fit the new screen. This is particularly useful if using bitmap images as they'll pixelate when scaled up. If keeping your scale to the same size you may need to add a mask to the edges of the Flash file, as any off-stage content can be seen around the edge of the screen. This can simply be a layer above all others in your file with four coloured rectangles hiding the edges.

Q Banner man

I'd like to add banners to my site which would change after a certain period of time. Is it possible to write a script that will grab a bunch of banner images off my server and rotate through them while someone's viewing the page?

Jeff Carter



Banner rotation is often called for, especially in advertising. Use set interval to change your site banner after a period of time

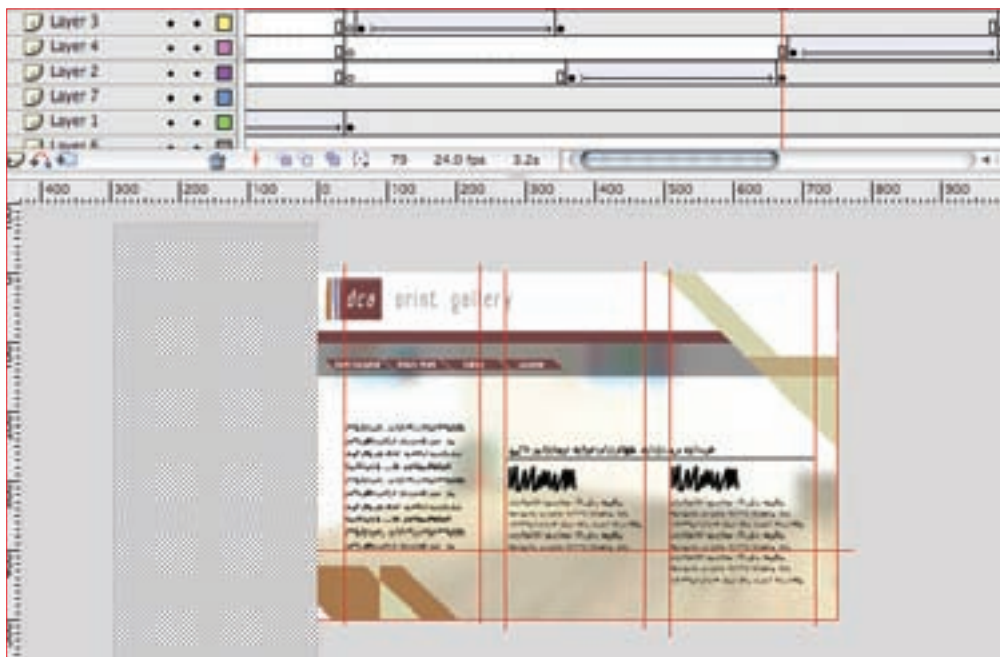
A Yes, this is certainly possible. All you need do is create a Flash file the same height and width as the banners, then store the image names of your banners in an array. After a set period the array is moved to the next stored image name and Flash can be told to load that particular image into it. The key is making an empty movie clip that Flash can load the images into.

First create a movie clip – doesn't matter what you name it. Add nothing to it, just return to the main timeline of your movie and drag this empty movie clip onto the stage and place it at zero pixels on both the x and y axes. Name the instance of this 'empty_mc' in the Properties palette. Add a new layer, select frame 1 and add the following ActionScript:

```
var intervalId:Number;  
var count:Number = 0;  
var maxCount:Number = 3;  
var duration:Number = 5000;  
var imageList:Array = new  
Array("image1.jpg", "image2.jpg",  
"image3.jpg");  
function executeCallback():Void {  
    empty_mc.loadMovie(imageList[  
count]);  
    count++;  
    if (count==maxCount){  
        count=0;  
    }  
    clearInterval(intervalId);  
    countUp();  
}  
executeCallback();  
function countUp(){  
    intervalId =  
setInterval(this, "executeCallback",  
duration);  
}  
countUp();
```

This code sets up an intervalId variable to hold the timer which will count using setInterval.

"You only need use a movie clip if you have to control an item from ActionScript code"



When getting Flash to run as a full-screen projector, be sure to mask out the edges so that content held off the stage is not visible when playing back

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.

We want to keep a count of what image we're loading from the array; this is stored in the count variable. The maxCount stores how many images we have in the variable. Now we set a duration of 5000, which is five seconds.

The next line is the array containing the images we should load. The first function sets up loading the first image and increasing the counter by 1. If the counter is at 3, it's reset to 0. The clearInterval resets the counter and we call the countUp function. This is immediately called, so there's an image in from the start.

The final function starts the timer and tells it to call the 'executeCallback' function if it's finished. Again, this starts the looping effect – and there's your rotating banner script.

Get in line

I'm trying to get animation I've done in a movie clip to line up with some content I've got on the main timeline. The problem is the movie clip only ever displays the first frame of the animation no matter how much I extend the timeline. Is there any way of getting my content to line up with the last frame of the movie clip?

Sarah Reid

A This is a common problem. You only need to use a movie clip if you have to control the item from ActionScript code. This is because movie

clips can have an instance name assigned to them which allows code to control them. If you're doing nothing more than creating an animation, then do away altogether with it being a movie clip. Don't worry, you won't have to recreate it all over again. In the library right-click on your symbol, select Type and change this to Graphic.

Now, on the stage click the movie clip, and in the Properties palette change the Symbol drop menu from a movie clip to a graphic. Next to this will be another drop menu which may be set to Single Frame; change this to Play Once. Extend your timeline so it's the same number of frames as your graphic symbol. As you move your playhead over these frames, you should be able to see exactly what's going on in the graphic symbol, which will allow you to align content on the stage with the last frame of the graphic without any problems.

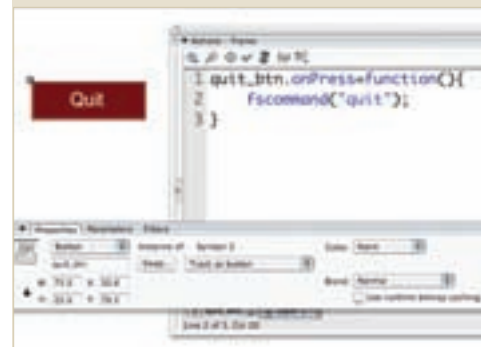


Change a movie clip to a graphic symbol and extend the timeline to see beyond the first frame of the animation

Expert advice

Fscommand to the rescue

When creating projectors in Flash, the fscommand is the most useful ActionScript command because it adds functionality not needed in a web browser. We've looked at how the fscommand can make a projector go full screen and control the scaling of the project. However, further exploration reveals that this command can provide a Quit button for closing the projector as well, and can disable the right-click menu in Flash. It can also open apps and communicate with external scripts like C++ or Visual Basic to build specific platform functionality.

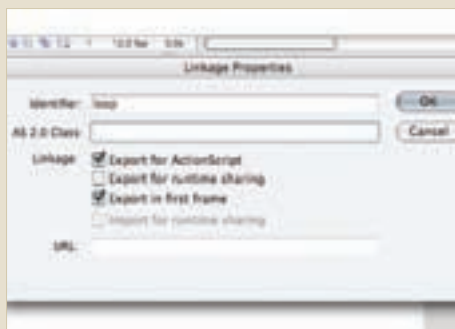


Technique: Simple sound fade-out button

Q I am trying to create a simple fade-out button for the sound on my project. The only problem is that I'm not sure how to do this. When I've looked at online tutorials I get really confused by the script. Is this really that difficult to do? Any help you can give me for this would really be useful.

Martin Warner

A This isn't difficult, as the steps below will show. The first requires you to set the linkage of the sound up – you simply need to click a checkbox. The second is to place a button on the stage which will act as the trigger to start the fade-out. Once this is done, the code will be added to make the sound quieter by 5% each frame until it reaches zero, when it will stop playing.



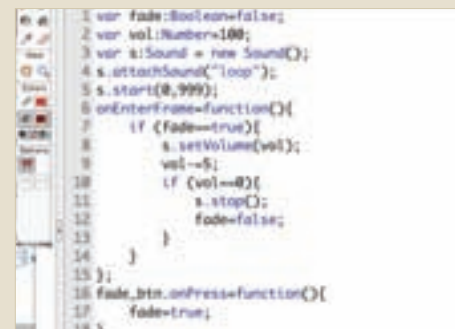
01 Link the sound

In the File menu choose Import>Import to Library, then browse for the sound. In the library, right-click the sound and pick Linkage in the pop-up. Hit Export for ActionScript and name the identifier 'Loop'. We'll use this name in step three to control the volume.



02 Make a button

Press Ctrl+F8 to make a new symbol, set it to Button and name it 'Fade'. Draw a rectangle on-screen, pick the Hit state and F5 to extend the timeline. Click the Scene 1 icon to see the stage. Drag the Fade button in, and in the Properties palette name it 'fade_btn'.



03 Add the code

Create a new layer and press Alt+F9 to open the ActionScript editor. Add the above code and it'll start the sound playing; it's set to loop 999 times. When you hit the Fade button the fade variable is set to true. The sound fades until it reaches zero, when it will stop.



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
All the required files can be found on the CD

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Combine vector graphics and vector-style imagery with custom brush shapes

TIME REQUIRED

Up to two hours

SKILL LEVEL



Stunning imagery with vectors and Brush tools

CREATE A MIX OF VECTOR GRAPHIC AND SCATTERED CUSTOM BRUSH SHAPES TO ACHIEVE AN INTRICATE AND STYLISH PHOTOSHOP EFFECT

THIS TUTORIAL IS aimed at combining vector graphics, bitmaps and custom brush tips to create an intricate effect that reduces the clean and sharp style of vector shapes. The artwork is built up over many layers, and with a combination of blend modes some fantastic colours and patterns are created.

The Brush tool is used with two bespoke shapes and controlled via the Scatter options to flow along the line of the vector shape. The circles intersect and cut into each other,

and alongside a cunning use of the Inner Shadow layer effect, combine to achieve a fluid and vibrant background.

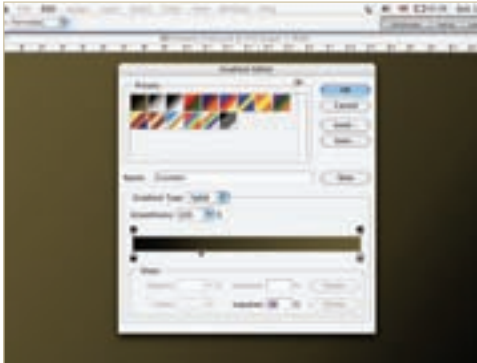
A popular effect, the Vector Bitmap, is used to complement the shapes in the background and maintain the theme. There's a contrast of styles between the flowing lines of the vector shapes and the random, textured imagery created by the Brush tool. Lastly, a line of perspective runs through the space from top left to the centre, with the main focus point being the girl.



YOUR EXPERT

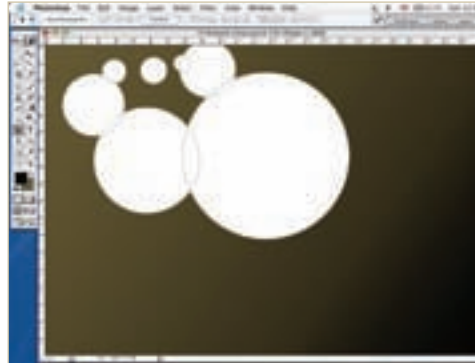
Rodger Page is a new-media designer and multimedia editor who has been using Photoshop and Flash for years. His plans are to teach digital arts at a college or university, but for the moment enjoys authoring CD and DVDs here at Imagine Publishing.

Stunning imagery with vectors and Brush tools



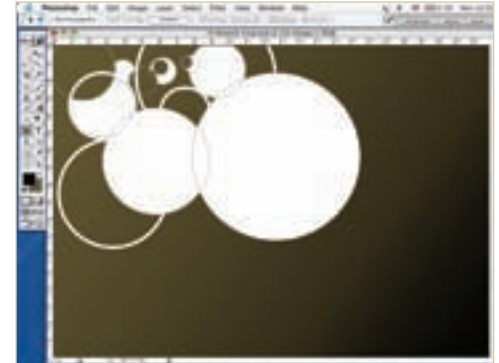
01 Create a new document

Create a new document of 25cm by 18cm at 300dpi. Now create a new layer and select the Gradient tool. Open the Gradient Editor and change the White slider to a khaki green #675B35. Move the Location to 30%. Draw out the gradient from top left to bottom right.



02 Vector circles

Select the Custom Shape tool, then the Ellipse tool. Ensure Vector Shapes is selected and begin to draw out the circles. Once you have drawn out the first circle, hold down the Shift key to add a new circle to the same vector shape layer. Fill the vector shape layer with white.



03 Vector circles cont...

Holding down the Alt key, add a new circle to the same vector shape layer, but overlapping and subtracting from the whole circles. Select the Custom Shape tool; in the drop-down menu select Circle Thin Frame and on a new vector shape layer begin to draw more circle outlines.



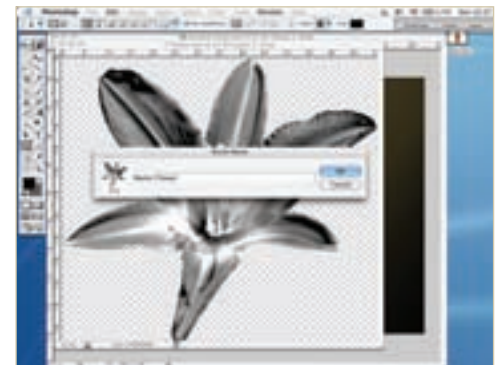
04 Block fill

Select the Pen, and starting at the top left of the document draw a shape that follows the outline of the shapes and fills the empty space. Add a gradient overlay layer effect at an angle of 135 degrees from #000000 to #544736, with the black starting from the centre of the document.



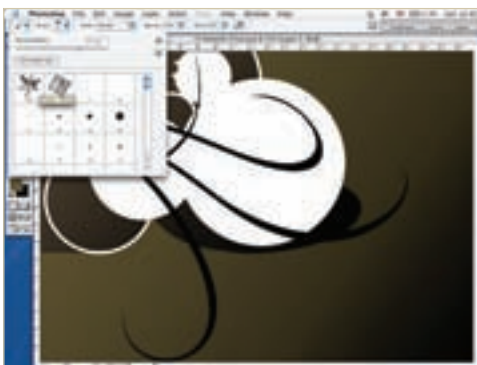
05 Main flowing vector

Select the Pen tool again, with Vector Shape Layers selected. Draw out three smooth black shapes starting at the top left and spreading out through the centre, all on the same layer, and fill with black. Still on the same layer, draw a spiral that intersects all three shapes.



06 Open the flower

Open the Flower.psd provided on the CD, and using the Pen tool cut out the flower, make a selection and paste it onto a new layer. Hide the background layer, and from the Edit menu select Define Brush. Name the brush 'Flower' and then hit OK.



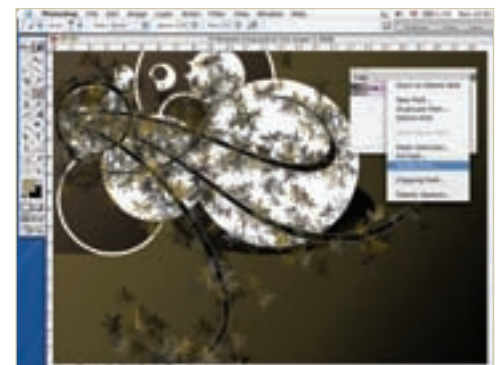
07 Select the brush

Return to your main document and select the Brush tool. In the Brush menu select your new brush, set the size to 175 and change the foreground colour to #A29874. Open the Brushes palette and enter the flowing on the next step. This will set the colour dynamics, size and scatter options.



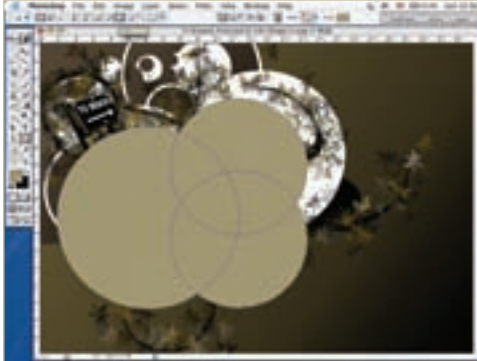
08 Brush options

Shape: Size jitter 100%, Minimum diameter 1%, Angle jitter 10%, Roundness jitter 55%, Minimum roundness 25%. Scattering: Both Axes Checked, Scatter 380%, Count 1, Count jitter 100%. Color: Foreground Background 100%, Hue jitter 22%, Saturation & Purity 0%, Brightness jitter 8%



09 Stroke the path

Create a new layer and name it 'flower 1'. Open the Paths window and select the black vector path. With the Brush tool and a blank layer selected, in the Paths menu select Stroke Path, and like magic the flowers are scattered around the vector shape. Set the blend mode to Multiply.



10 More circles

Select the Ellipse tool and while holding down Shift to add to the same layer and maintain their aspect ratios, draw three more circles and set the fill layer colour to #A29874. This will cover the main part of the graphics, but later they will be duplicated and repositioned in the Layers palette.



11 Add the tree

Draw three more circles on their own layers. Add to each layer an Inner Shadow set to a blend mode of Soft Light with Opacity 100%, Angle -135, Distance 255px, Chock and Size 0%. This will create a solid filled inner black circle. In the Layers palette set Fill to 0% but leave Opacity at 100%.



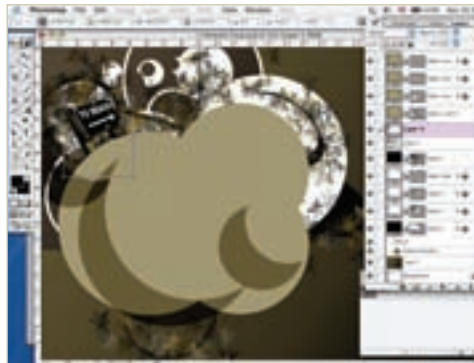
12 The beach sign

Open the Beach.psd from the CD and select the Pen tool with Paths selected, and begin to cut out the sign including big portions of the grass. Paste this to a new layer. Select Posterize from the Image>Adjustments menu and set the number of levels to 7.



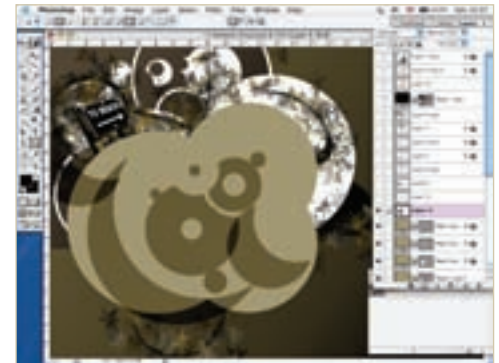
13 Roughen up the sign

There's no green in the main artwork, so we need to convert all the green to black. Select Image>Adjustments>Replace, set Fuzziness to 10 and turn down Lightness to -100 to set the green point samples to black. Hold down the Shift key and begin to select all the green.



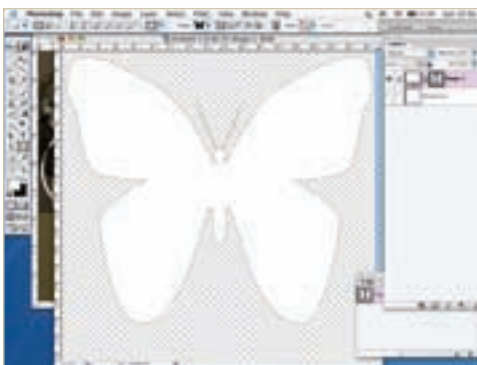
14 Position the sign

Drag the sign into your main artwork and convert to a Smart Object. Position the layer behind the coloured circles and transform the scale and rotation of the sign so that it sits on top of the far left circle. Darken the sign further if required, using the Curves.



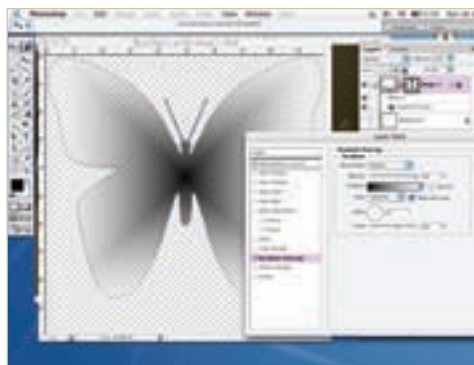
15 Even more circles

Select the Ellipse tool and draw a circle in the centre of the top circles. Position the layer at the top of the palette and fill with black. Set the blend mode to Soft Light and continue to draw more circles. Create all the circles on one layer by using a combination of the Shift and Alt keys.



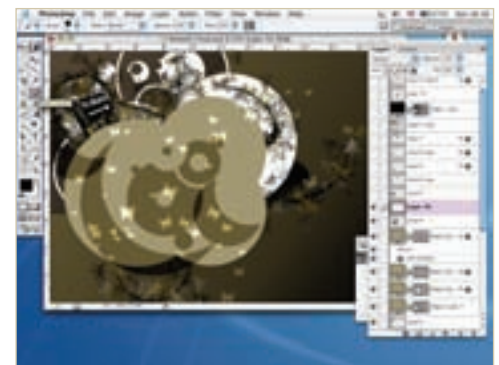
16 Create a new brush

Create a new document to the dimensions of 10cm by 10cm at 300dpi, and hit OK. Select the Custom Shape tool and from the Custom Shape menu select the butterfly shape. With the vector shape layer selected, draw a butterfly with a white fill and hide the background layer.



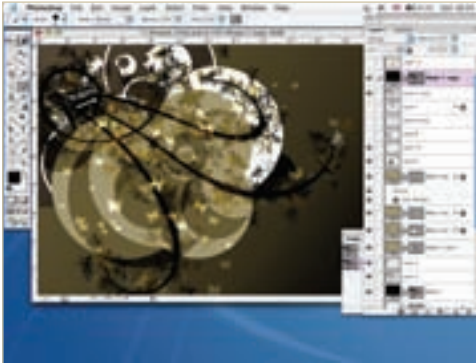
17 Define the brush

Add a gradient overlay to the shape and set the Gradient style to Diamond. Set the colour to fade from black (centre) to light grey #E9E9E9 and set the Grey opacity slider to 50%. In the Layers palette change Fill to 0% and rasterize the layer. Go to Edit>Define Brush and name it 'Butterfly'.



18 Paint on the butterflies

Go back to your main document, select the Brush tool and your new brush. Change the foreground colour to white. Create a new layer, open up the Brushes palette and use the same setting as for the flowers, only this time turn off the colour dynamics. Now paint on the butterflies.



19 Duplicate the flowers

Select the flower layer from further down your Layers palette and duplicate the layer (Command/Ctrl+J). Move the new layer to the top of the palette and change the blend mode to Overlay. Repeat this step for the black vector shape and position it at the top.



20 Draw a vector girl

Open the Girl.psd, and using the Pen tool cut out the three elements – the body, the dress and the hair. Paste each of the elements on its own layer. Apply the Cutout filter to the body and dress and proceed to clean up the rough edges with the Pen tool and solid fills.



21 Add the girl

Drag the three elements that make up the girl into your main document and position on the page. Set the blend mode of the hair and dress to Multiply, and add a black colour overlay set to Color to the dress and a #DFCF98 colour to the body.

IN DETAIL

Get the best out of the Brush tool

Create your own bespoke brushes and then utilise some of the additional options, and you'll be able to create some amazing effects in no time at all

CUSTOM BRUSH SHAPES are a great tool, and combined with the additional brush options, you will find you'll be able to create some fantastic effects with great ease.

The Brush tool is a powerful utility, and with additional resources that can be found on the Internet you can build up a vast and varied library to use as and when you wish. But if you have some interesting images, then using these as a template and playing around with the brush options will create some amazing results.

The main thing to remember when creating your brushes is to keep the image as large as possible, because as with any image, reducing the size will not affect the quality but blowing it up will.

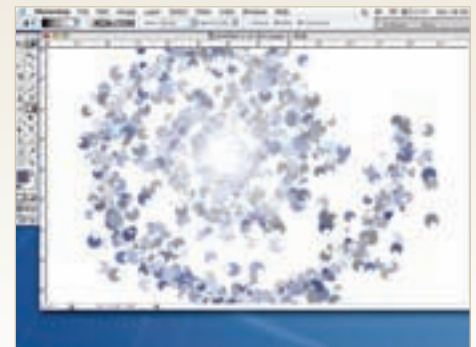
In order to get the best results out of the Brush tool, it's sometimes necessary to turn up the contrast so that there are solid areas of black and white. The Brush works on a greyscale basis, so having bright vibrant colours will only affect the tonal range. Therefore, converting your desired image to greyscale and playing around with the levels to define solid areas of black and white, and even burning out the white in some cases to create a heavy contrast, can achieve better results. But this may not always be the effect you're trying to achieve, because the brush image itself can contain very detailed imagery and therefore intricate effects can be created.

It's worth bearing in mind that the Brush tool will create a bitmap image, so if you need to transform the image convert it to a Smart Object and scale down – try not to increase the size.

The trick to getting the most out of the Brush is to concentrate on one effect at a time in the Brushes palette in order to get a clear understanding of how that channel works – and then blend them all together and start painting away.



Cut out the image, create a new layer, hide the background and define the brush. It's as simple as that!

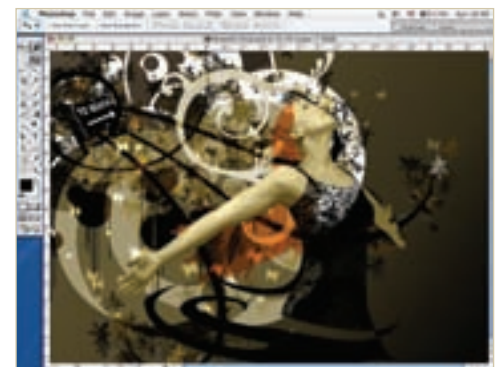


Go through the additional options and one effect at a time to see how each controls the brush tip. Put all your favourites together



22 The final element

Select the Pen again with Vector Shape Layers selected, and draw a final flowing vector shape around the back of the girl. Holding down Shift, continue to add elements to this vector layer. Set the fill colour to #DDD8C8 and position the layer below the top flower layer.



23 And you're done

All the elements are now in place. Use the Move tool and the Path Select tool to reposition the objects as needed, just to make sure all the elements are working with each other and all fit together. Now save the file and have a well-deserved cup of coffee!



DOWNLOAD

Picking up the free plug-in

You'll need a special Photoshop action especially for this tutorial, so in two quick steps we show you were to get it from



01 Get downloading

Download the free Comix Photoshop Actions by Andrew Purviance from Adobe Studio Exchange (share.studio.adobe.com) and navigating to Photoshop>Actions>Image Effects>Comix. A tiny size of 8.18K means that it'll download very quickly.



02 Comix book action

The decompressed Comix Action.atn file can be stored anywhere on your computer as it is a script not a plug-in and so doesn't reside in the plug-ins folder. Just keep it somewhere easy to remember so you'll have it to hand when needed.

THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
N/A

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Producing comic book art effects

TIME REQUIRED

40 minutes

SKILL LEVEL



Comic book art effects

THREE DIFFERENT METHODS FOR FANTASTIC COMIC BOOK ART WHICH WILL POWER-UP YOUR WEB IMAGES TO SUPERHERO STATUS

THERE'S A NEW craze gearing up to hit the web. Inspired by Richard Linklater's gorgeous new movie *A Scanner Darkly*, everyone is going crazy for comic book styled web images and templates. Thankfully it's never been easier to ape this effect and quickly convert images into cartoons using a free Photoshop action that anyone can download. Comix is a great set of scripts that attempts to recreate the look and feel of printed comics, including the rough halftone

feel of cheap paper. But unless you're inclined to dig through the steps in the Actions palette, the effects are pre-baked and relatively inflexible. This tutorial shows you not only how to get the best out of the Comix actions, but to also create your own comic-book style. The techniques shown here are only supposed to be a starting point for further work, so feel free to come up with as many dynamic concepts as you can with your own photographs or the free set found on this month's disc.



01 Size can matter

Open up an image that you wish to use for the first image. Andrew Purviance, Comix's creator, recommends using larger images that are 1,000 to 2,000 pixels across for the best results. It also helps if the image is on a plain background and has plenty of contrast.



02 Action adding

From the Actions palette (Window>Actions) you need to load the new Comix actions. Click the arrow at the top of the palette and choose Load Actions from the fly-out menu. Navigate to your actions and click Load. The actions should then be appended to the list within the palette.



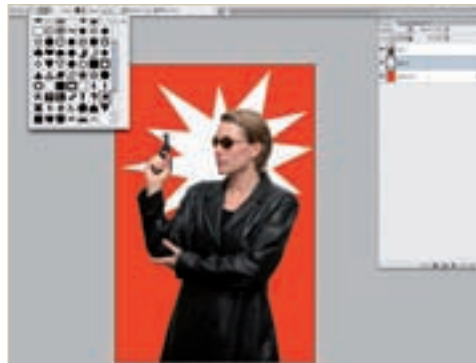
03 Monochrome man

Comix loads three actions into your palette: Comix, Comix Hue and Comix Halftone. Applying each is as simple as clicking the button and letting Photoshop do the rest. The default Comix action turns your photo black-and-white with an additional grey tone to add a bit of detail.



04 Give it some colour

Looking at the Layers palette (Window>Layers) you can see that the action has created several new layers. One of these layers is called 'color here or hide', and it's here that you can introduce a bit of colour back into the altered image by adjusting the opacity or transparency mode.



05 Adding impact

Select Layer>New>Layer via Cut to place a figure on its own layer. Fill the background with the foreground colour using Alt+Backspace (Windows) or Option+Backspace (Mac). Use the Custom Shape tool in Fill Pixels Mode (from the Options bar) and draw a dramatic shape in behind.



06 Factory settings

Make a copy of the figure by dragging the layer onto the New Layer icon, and with the duplicate selected choose Filter>Filter Gallery. This opens up an effects factory. Choose Cutout and adjust the Number of Levels and Edge Simplicity sliders until you're happy.



07 Definition done

On another duplicate layer, boost the contrast with the Levels dialog (Image>Adjustments>Levels). Drag the black and white triangles closer together to bleach out any unwanted detail while clearly defining areas such as the mouth, eyes and any other prominent features.



08 Stamping out

With the new contrasting layer, return to the filter and chose Sketch>Stamp. This will reduce the image to black and white with no grey, but emphasise transitions such as the jaw line. Adjust the Light/Dark Balance and Smoothness to get the effect you want.



09 Check the sketch

Ensuring the Stamp layer is above the Cutout layer, change the layer's transparency mode to Multiply using the menu at the top of the Layers palette. Anything white will become transparent, leaving black. With the posterised colours, the effect is like a hand-inked illustration.



10 Flashy background

Time to do something interesting with the image behind. Select the white shape and choose **Filter>Blur>Radial Blur**. For the Blur Method choose **Zoom** and for the quality select **Draft** (the rougher the effect the better). Zoom amount depends on your resolution so results may vary.



11 Cut that out

Matte the shape onto the background layer (if it's not already) and select the background. Pay another trip to the Filter Gallery to choose our old friend **Cutout** from the Artistic section. When you're happy enough with the finished results click **OK**.



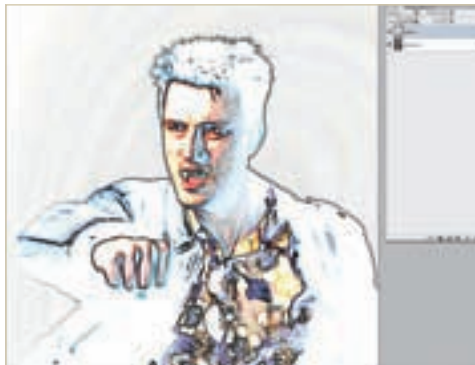
12 Action shots

Open a new image and duplicate the layer by dragging it onto the **New Layer** icon on the Layers palette. With the copied layer selected, add a new **Levels Adjustment Layer** (**Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels**), ensuring that **Use Previous Layer to Create Clipping Mask** is selected.



13 Raise the contrast

As with the previous image, boost the contrast to create dense black areas and bleached out highlights. Maximise the edges of the image such as the eyes, mouth, nose and other features. Click **OK** to apply the effect once you feel the preview is at a level you'd like to work with.



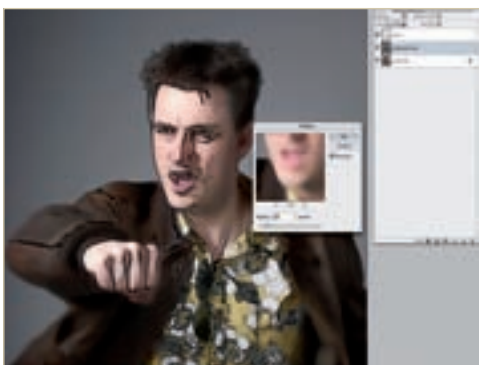
14 Looking edgy

Shift-click to select both the duplicate layer and the Adjustment Layer and combine them into a single layer (**Layer>Merge Layers**). Apply the **Find Edges** filter (**Filter>Style>Find Edges**), which turns the image into a multicoloured series of lines.



15 Make it stronger

Desaturate the image to black and white (**Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation**) by dragging the Saturation slider to the left. Get rid of the wispy pale grey lines and beef up the thicker lines by increasing the contrast with the **Levels** (**Image>Adjustments>Levels**).



16 Median filter

With the **Find Edges** layer remaining on top, change the Transparency mode to **Multiply**. Duplicate another base layer and apply the **Median** filter (**Filter>Noise>Median**). The bigger the radius value, the more abstract the image becomes, so a value between 5 and 15 should suffice.



17 Touch-up time

Using a brush, paint in some keylines in black or white (or a combination). This will give your image a hand-drawn, cartoonish look. With the saturated background layer copy selected, choose the **Color Halftone** filter (**Filter>Pixelate>Color Halftone**).



18 Pulp vision

The default angle values are fine, but you may want to adjust the **Maximum Radius** value. The result will vary with your image's resolution, but a starting point of five pixels should be fine. Click **OK** to apply and hopefully achieve that genuine low-grade print feel. Lovely stuff!





THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
ndesign web2 logo.psd
web2_design.psd

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Learn how to make Web 2.0 style template in Photoshop

TIME REQUIRED

1 hour

SKILL LEVEL



Turn to **page 70**
to learn Web 2.0
CSS layout skills

Create a Web 2.0 style logo and template

PART 1

EMBRACE THE NEW WEB 2.0 DESIGN TREND BY LEARNING HOW TO FASHION NEXT-GENERATION PAGE TEMPLATES IN PHOTOSHOP

WHAT IS WEB 2.0? According to Wikipedia, the phrase Web 2.0 was created by O'Reilly Media to refer to a "supposed second generation of services available on the World Wide Web that lets people collaborate and share information online in a new way." Fair enough, but how would one go about identifying a site that is part of this 'new wave'?

In the first part of this tutorial, we'll reveal how to design a trendy Web 2.0 layout design that will set your page apart from the crowd. Although there's no official or specific standard on

what Web 2.0 design should look like, there are some common characteristics that apply across such websites. You often see a lot of colourful gradient, use of bright colours (blue, pink, lime green, orange and so on), large font size, soft drop shadow, reflective effects, glossy icons, and a 'clean' look.

You'll learn these techniques here before coding a W3C compliant XHTML page in Dreamweaver with our second follow-up lesson on page 70.

Your future projects have never looked so good!



01 Web 2.0 style logo

First, we need to spice up your logo with the Web 2.0 effects. Open your logo document in Photoshop, and pick two bright pink colours (foreground colour: #f961a4, background colour: #ef106f). Lock the transparency of the logo layer, use the Gradient tool and fill the logo with pink.



02 Add some gloss

Make a new layer. Ctrl+click on the logo layer in the Layers palette to load the selection of the logo. Go to menu Select > Modify > Contract the selection by 1px. Fill with a black-and-white gradient and set its Blending mode to Screen. Make a selection and delete the lower part of the gloss.



03 Logotype

Basically, repeat steps one and two to make the glossy effect of the logotype. For the dark grey gradient, we use the following colour: foreground: #626b72, background: #061620. When you are done, select all layers in the Layers palette; press Ctrl+G to group them in a layer group.



YOUR EXPERT

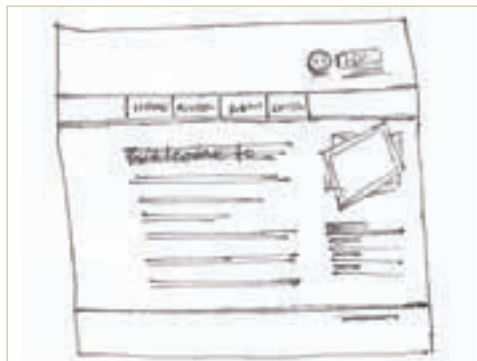
Nick La is a Toronto-based graphic and web designer, and is a regular contributor to *Web Designer*. His work has been featured on many design portals and design magazines. Visit www.ndesign-studio.com to see his portfolio and goodies.

Create a Web 2.0 style logo and template



04 Logo reflection

Duplicate the layer group by right-click and select Duplicate Group. That done, click Ctrl+E to merge them in a single layer. Go to Edit > Transform > Flip Vertical to flip up side down. Click Add Layer Mask in the Layers palette, and apply a gradient from bottom to top.



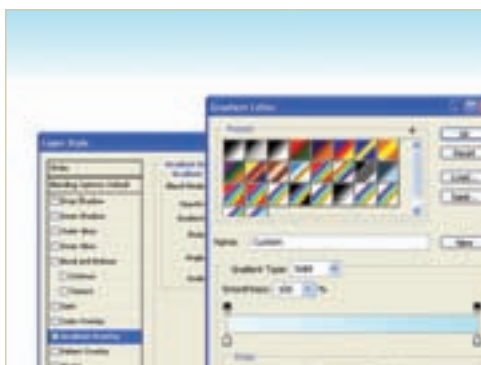
05 Layout sketch

Now the logo is ready. Before we start the layout in Photoshop, we should sketch out how the web page should look. Planning your layout on paper will save your working time in Photoshop. Here we have sketched out the header, navigation, content area, sidebar, and footer.



06 New document

Make a new document, 770x720px. Drag two guidelines to the left and right boundary of the document. Go to Image > Canvas Size to re-size the document's width to 900px so we get more working space. We will use these guidelines to ensure our layout does not to exceed 770px in width.



07 Header

Use the Rectangle tool and draw a rectangle box at the top of the page. Double-click on the layer to activate the Layer Style options, apply a two-colour Gradient Overlay (colour1: #e9f7fc, colour2: #afe1ee). Then copy-and-paste in the logo you've done in step one.



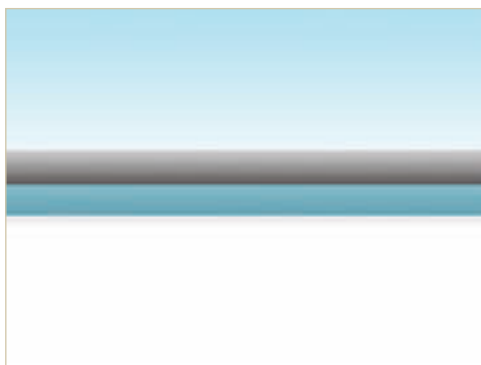
08 Menu bar

Use the Rectangle tool and draw a rectangle bar just below the header. Now we need to add a subtle gradient effect. Double-click on the layer in the Layers palette, apply Gradient Overlay with the following setting: Angle = 90 degree, colour1 = #66a6b7, and colour2 = #addbe7.



09 Drop shadow

Remain in the Layer Style window; apply a 1-pixel white stroke. Then we are going to add a very soft drop shadow. We use the following setting for the Drop Shadow effect: Opacity = 12%, Angle = 90 degree, Distance = 5px, and Size = 5px.



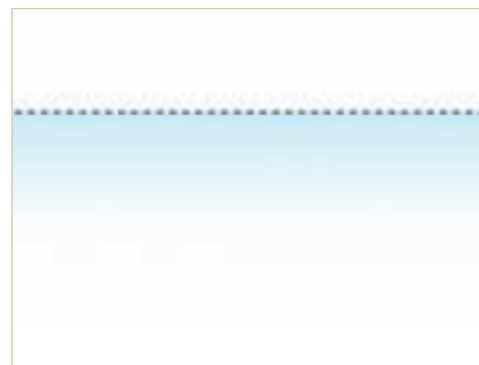
10 Menu bar gloss

Make a new layer. Use the Rectangle Marquee tool, draw a rectangle selection across the menu bar. Fill the selection with a black-and-white gradient. Then set the Blending mode to Screen. This will make the glossy effect on the menu bar, a staple graphical feature for Web 2.0 sites.



11 Menu text

Use the Type tool and type in the menu text of your site. We use 16pt Tahoma here. Make a new layer above the menu bar. Make a rectangle selection same height as the menu bar, fill it with #a4d5e2 colour and set the Blending mode to Multiply. This will be the menu mouseover effect.



12 Footer forming

Now we shall make a gradient background for the footer. Make a new layer. Select foreground colour #bee6f2, and background colour white. Make a rectangle selection at the bottom of the page. Use the Gradient tool, drag from the top of the selection to the middle (keep the bottom part white).

TECHNIQUE

Layout designing in Photoshop

Here we will explain more detail on the layout techniques that we have used within this tutorial...



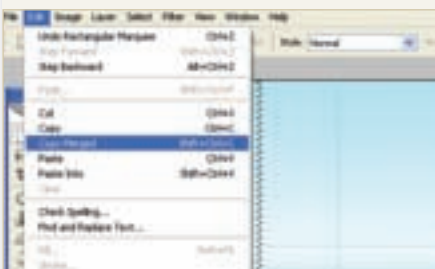
01 Rough guide

In general, you should have three to five guidelines that clearly indicate the boundaries of each panel. Guidelines can help you to precisely position the objects and export graphics for HTML layout. Press Ctrl+H to quickly turn guides on/off.



02 Layer groups

If you are using Photoshop CS2, take the advantage of layer grouping. With CS2, you can group layers with a group. Grouping layers will help you organise the layers so you can locate the layer quicker. The short cut for grouping is Ctrl+G.



03 Copy Merge

Try to use Copy Merged instead of flattening the entire document when exporting the graphics for HTML layout. For example, to export the header gradient, you just need to make a 1-pixel selection and go to Edit > Copy Merged (Ctrl+Shift+V).



13 Body text

Pick a blue foreground colour, use the Type tool and type in the heading text. In the Character (font) palette, choose Georgia 24pt. Again, use the Type tool and drag a rectangle box to create an area type box. Paste in some sample text. Format the body text to Tahoma, 12pt, 18pt leading.



15 Photo set

Use the Rectangle tool, drag a rectangle box at the right side. Then apply 5-pixel inner white Stroke and Drop Shadow style with the following setting: Opacity = 25%, Distance = 5px, and Size = 5px. Duplicate this layer and rotate it slightly.



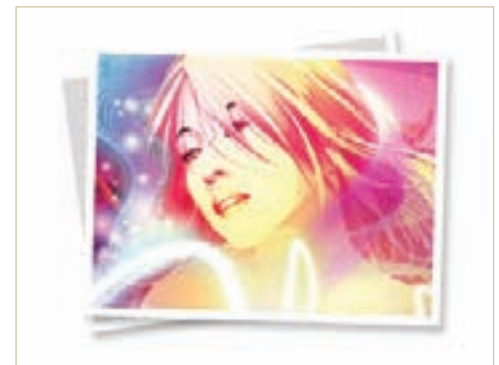
17 Sub-navigation heading

Right below the photo set image, type in "Quick Links" as the navigation heading. In the Character palette, format the heading text to Tahoma 16pt bold, colour = #03b4e1. Use the Line tool, draw a 2px blue line stroke below the Quick Links heading.



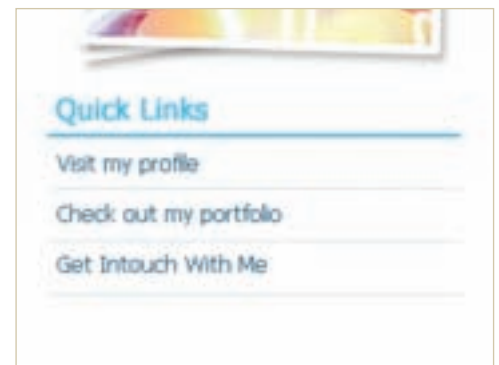
14 Set guidelines

We should set more guidelines to indicate each panel: header, content, sidebar, and footer. This will assist us on positioning the design elements. We also need these guidelines when exporting the mock-up to HTML layout. You can toggle the visibility of the guidelines with Ctrl+H.



16 Photo image

Make a new layer above the photo set layers. Ctrl-click on the upper photo layer to load a new selection. Copy and paste into (Ctrl+Shift+V) an image you like as a welcome image. Right-click on the photo set layer, copy the Layer Style and apply it to the image layer. Delete the upper photo set layer.



18 Sub-navigation menu

Enter the sub menu text below the sub navigation heading. Here we have the following format: Tahoma 12pt, 28pt leading, colour = #036f8b. Then draw a 1-pixel light stroke in between each menu item. That's it! Get ready to transform this layout into HTML in Dreamweaver on from page 70.



Tech support Photoshop

Get back in the creative game with Photoshop as we deliver more expert solutions to common design or usability gripes

Q Photos for the web

I wonder if you can help me. I'm an avid (although admittedly amateur) digital photographer and I'm currently building an online album in which to store and share my best photos. I've recently moved to digital from film stock, although I've been using Photoshop for a few years to improve the colour tone of my pictures. My question is, what would you recommend as the best standard set of tweaks to apply to digital pictures in order to prepare them for uploading to the web?

Mr C Millington, Northumberland

A Your question is actually quite a common one, and we're sorry to say that there's not really a single catch-all answer. As you're no doubt aware, every digital photo is unique and may exhibit unique characteristics that you may need to enhance, repair or tweak, so there's no real instant-fix solution – despite what other photo editing programs may lead you to believe.

That said, if you just want to give things

a quick sprucing-up before they hit your website, then you could do worse than follow this routine: First, open the image in Photoshop and click on Image>Adjustments>Auto Levels (or alternatively hit Shift-Ctrl-L). This will usually correct obvious colour inconsistencies and even remove colour casts that are frequently caused by many digital cameras.

Next, it's always a good idea to sharpen things up a little to improve the definition of details in the image and increase visual punch. To do this, click on Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask and enter a fairly calm value for a slight increase in sharpness (we usually find Amount: 125%, Radius: 1.5 pixels, Threshold: 1 pixel to be plenty), then hit OK. Finally, make sure that you save the tweaked photo as a JPEG to ensure that the image size is small enough not to hog your bandwidth.

Of course, if you want to apply all of the above steps to numerous photos automatically, try recording the steps as an Action and using Photoshop's Batch command



Speed-up your workflow by creating custom Workspaces and stripping Photoshop's menus of the commands you don't need

(File>Automate>Batch) to do all the hard work for you.

Q Getting the right look

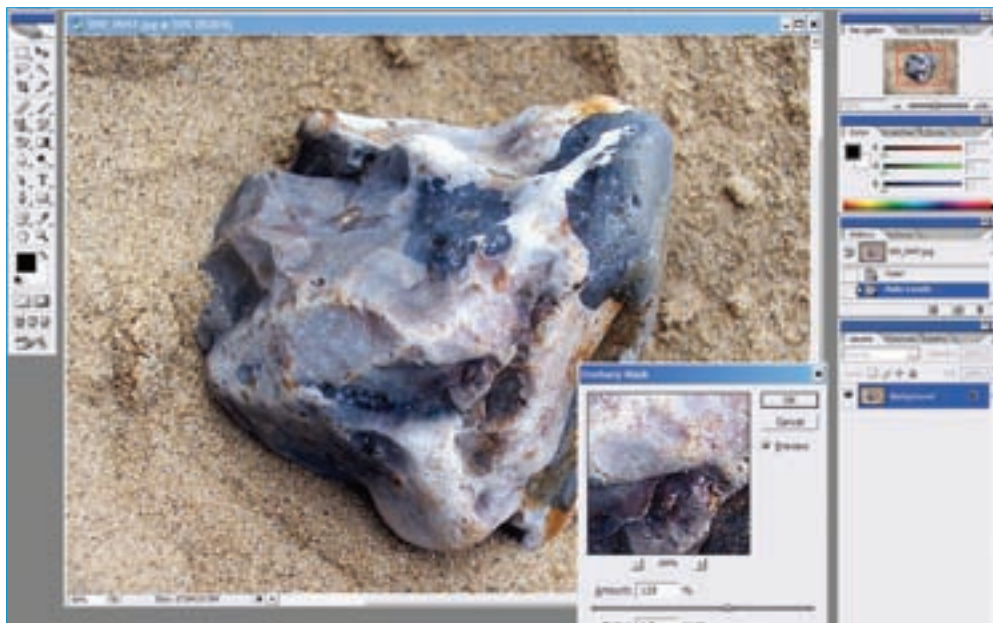
I've been reading your magazine for a while now as I'm very interesting in creating digital art for use on my portfolio website. Recently, I've also been buying Advanced Photoshop magazine and Photoshop Creative magazine for their art tutorials, and I think I've started to develop my own style that happens to use a lot of Photoshop's built-in effects.

However, I recently created an abstract piece that I was keen to show off on a digital art forum, which I did. But the comments I received were disappointing, with many people saying that my image looked obviously Photoshopped. Is there any way that I can easily make my images look less like this?

Cary Howes, Exeter

A That's a difficult question, Cary, although we can tell you that as a rule of thumb, it's best not to use any of Photoshop's native special effects if at all possible. While the program does contain a plethora of effects like lens flares, lighting simulations, texture stamps etc, the trouble is that the same ones are available to every Photoshop user on the planet, which has resulted in them becoming incredibly over-used. So, it's not to wonder that seasoned digital artists are able to spot these effects, patterns and textures in an instant. What we'd recommend, then, is to see if you can source some dedicated third-party plug-ins to create the sorts of effects you're after. There are literally hundreds of excellent plug-ins available that can produce anything from photo-realistic clouds and natural textures to abstract designs and complex lighting effects. Have a look at the programs on offer at Alien Skin (www.alienskin.com), AutoFX

"It's always a good idea to sharpen things up a little to improve the definition of details in the image and increase visual punch"



While there's no magic fix for all digital images, a spot of levels adjustment and sharpening always goes a long way

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

(www.autofx.com) or The Plugin Site (www.theplugin.site) to see just a few examples of what's on offer.

Q A new workspace

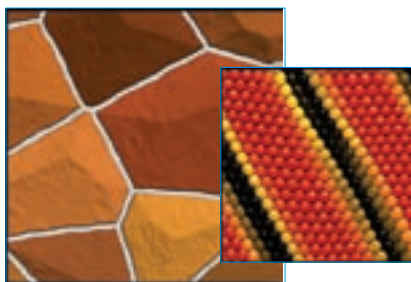
I use Photoshop for a number of tasks when I'm working on websites, although I have to admit that I'm fairly new to it. Through the course of a project, I need to use it for working on photos, constructing navigation elements (like icons and menu bars, etc), even creating roll-over graphics. Lately, I've found that I keep using the same tools and menu options over and over again, so is there a way that I can rig up the program interface so that I can save myself some mousing around?

Darren Newbury, Haymarket

A Sure is, Darren. If you're using Photoshop CS2 there are actually a number of things that you can do to speed up your workflow. The first thing that you should do is consider creating a few customised interface layouts (or 'workspaces', as Adobe calls them) that are specifically geared towards one of your tasks. For example, for your photo editing, you could arrange the palettes to show just the items you frequently require and then place them exactly where you want them to be on the screen. Then, just click Window>

Workspace>Save Workspace to bring up the Save Workspace dialog window. In here, you can specify whether you want to have Photoshop remember Menu settings, Palette Locations and Keyboard Shortcuts. Tick the boxes you need, enter a name for the Workspace template (for example, 'Photo Editing') and hit Save. You can now call it back whenever you want by choosing it from the Workspace menu.

Alternatively, you are also free to build up a bank of customised keyboard shortcuts. To do this, click on Edit>Keyboard Shortcuts to bring up the dialog window. Here, you can scan through the list of available actions and assign a customised set of keypresses that you can use to execute commands at will.



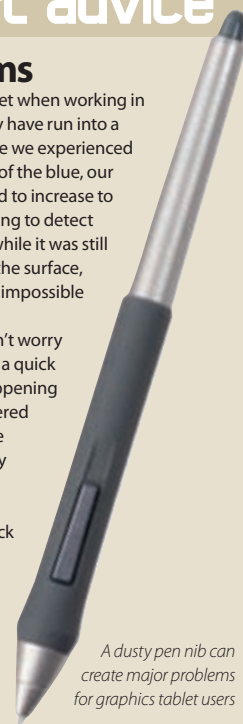
If you're on the lookout for new textures, Alien Skin's Eye Candy 5: Textures plug-in has all the answers

Expert advice

Pen problems

Do you use a Wacom tablet when working in Photoshop? If so, you may have run into a similar problem to the one we experienced this month. Basically, out of the blue, our tablet's sensitivity seemed to increase to the point that it was starting to detect the presence of the pen while it was still a good half an inch from the surface, which effectively made it impossible to use it for precise edits.

If this sounds familiar, don't worry as it turns out that there's a quick fix. What's likely to be happening is that some dust has entered the pen and restricted the nib movement, effectively holding it in the active position. Just like your mouse rollerball, it can pick up all sorts of muck and grime during general use. To sort it, just pop out the nib, give it a quick clean and replace. There you go, problem solved!



A dusty pen nib can create major problems for graphics tablet users

Technique: HDR headache

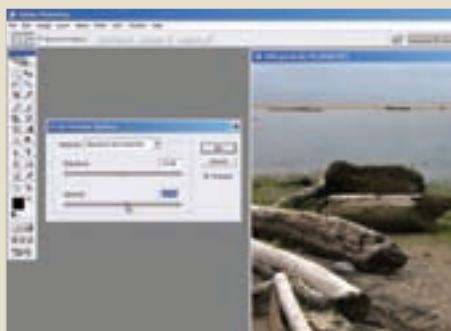
Q I'm a regular Photoshop user and reckon that I'm pretty au-fait with most of the Photoshop's art and photography tools, and recently I've started to experiment with CS2's new HDR facilities. However, whenever I successfully merge an image, it always appears dark and a bit dull on my monitor. Is there any way that I can solve this problem?

A HDR stands for High Dynamic Range, and it allows photographers to get around exposure limitations by basically merging two slightly differently exposed shots into one 32-bit image with a richer colour palette. However monitors can't render the tonal subtleties of the image, which is why they appear dark. You can get around this using Photoshop's View controls:



01 32-bit preview

We'll start by adjusting Photoshop's view options for 32-bit pictures. This should always be the first step because any changes you make won't affect the image, just the way that it's rendered on your screen. To start, click on View>32-bit Preview Options.



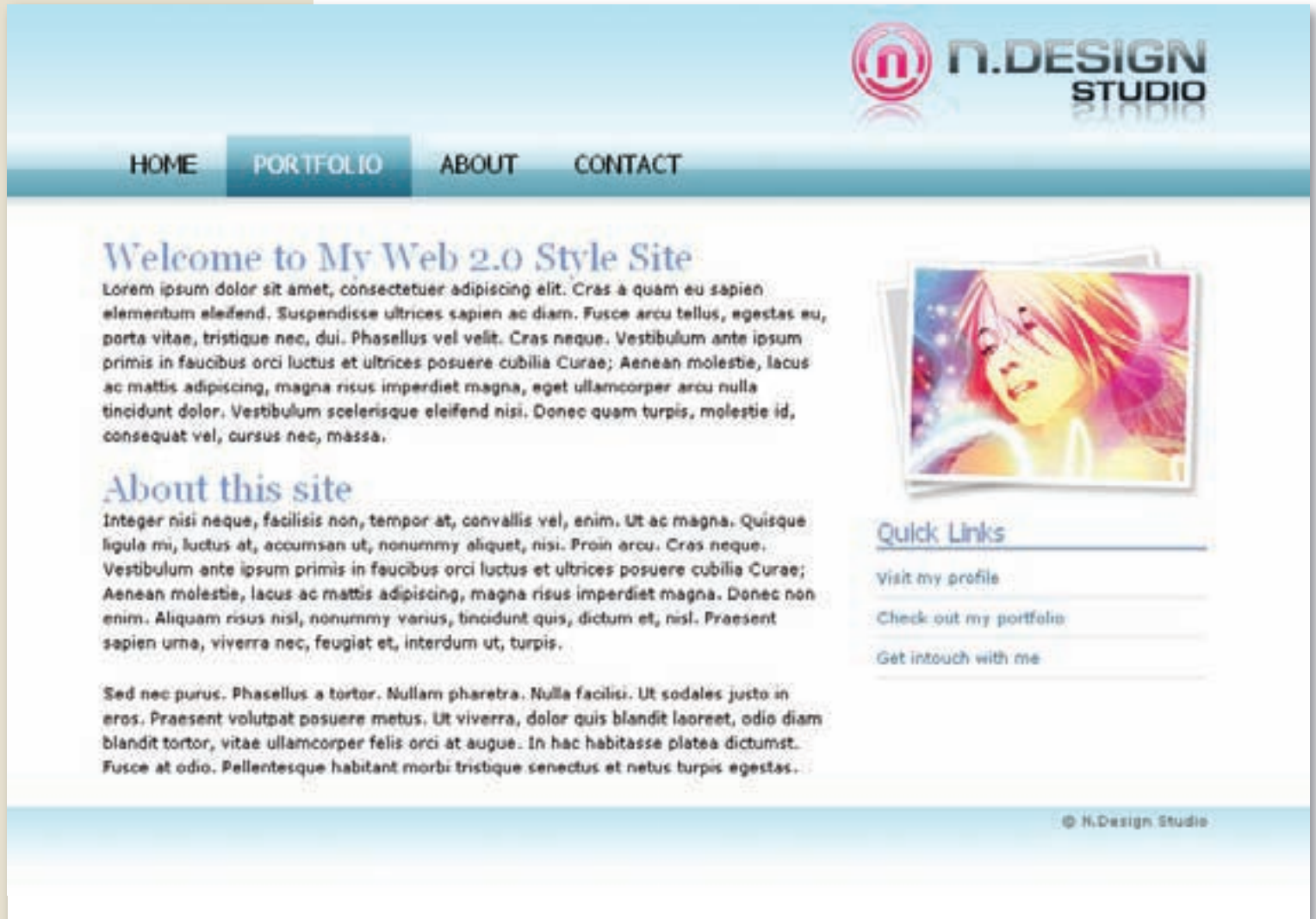
02 Exposure and Gamma

This will open a small dialog box in which you can adjust the Exposure and Gamma levels. Start by making very slight Exposure adjustments until the picture becomes clearer, then tweak the Gamma levels to reduce the washed-out look. Hit OK to finish.



03 Real adjustments

You can choose to adjust the actual image to make it appear clearer on your screen (which is most useful for web images). Click on Image>Adjustments>Exposure and make similar tweaks like those shown above before saving the image in .hdr format.



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
All the required files can be found on the CD

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Learn how to transform a PSD mock-up into a valid HTML & CSS template

TIME REQUIRED

One hour

SKILL LEVEL



Create a Web 2.0-style template with CSS

PART 2

LEARN HOW TO WRITE A CSS TABLELESS XHTML PAGE USING SEMANTIC MARKUPS AND YOUR NEW WAVE PAGE GRAPHICS

 **IN THE PREVIOUS** tutorial we demonstrated how to make a simple Web 2.0-style template in Photoshop. This tutorial will show you how to transform your layout into a W3C-compliant XHTML and CSS template. No CSS experience? Don't worry, we'll explain in the step-by-step how to code a CSS tableless layout in Dreamweaver.

First we're going to write a plain HTML page using semantic markups. Writing semantic HTML means using proper HTML

elements (eg H1, UL, LI, etc) that best describe the content. For example, use H1 for the page heading, H2 for the sub heading, and use UL & LI elements for list items so your page can still be understood by the text-based or screen-reader browser. Once the HTML structure is done, with proper markups, we will add an external CSS file for visual presentation.

This tutorial is a superb exercise for beginners who want to learn how to make a CSS tableless web page.



YOUR EXPERT

Nick La is a Toronto-based graphic and web designer, and is a regular contributor to *Web Designer*. His work has been featured on many design portals and design magazines. Visit www.ndesign-studio.com to see his portfolio and goodies.

Create a Web 2.0-style template with CSS



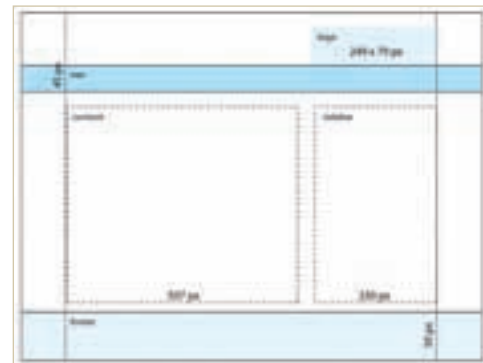
01 Page background

Open the Photoshop file we did in the last tutorial. Zoom in, use the Marquee tool to make a 1-pixel-wide rectangle of the header gradient and go to Edit>Copy Merged (Ctrl+Shift+C). Paste it in a new document and export it for web GIF. We'll use this for the page background.



02 Export graphics

Use the same technique and export the graphics for logo, menu highlight bar and footer gradient. Make a note of the width and height of the graphics so you don't have to refer back to your PSD when writing the CSS code. For example, the logo is 249 x 79px, 14px from the top margin.



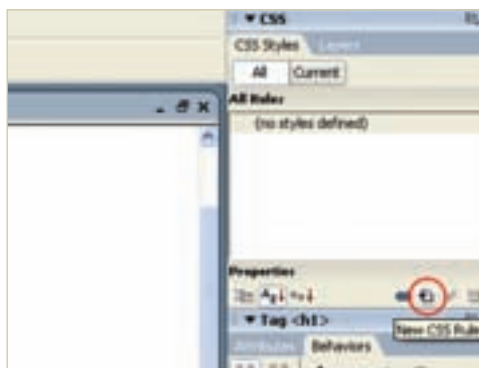
03 Planning

Before writing any CSS code, make a quick sketch of the layout. This illustrates the wireframe of the page. The main container is 770px wide, logo is 249 x 79px, menu is 45px tall, content is 507px wide, and sidebar is 230px. With this sketch we don't need to switch back and forth.



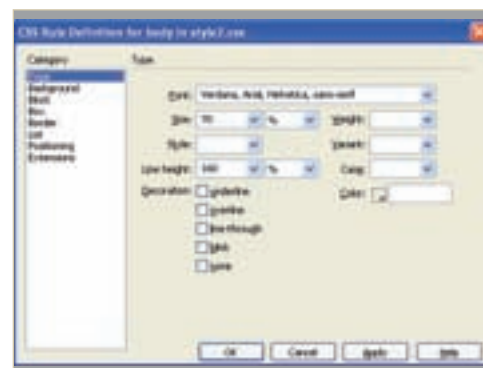
04 New document

Now jump to Dreamweaver. Make a new HTML document. In the Document Type (DTD), select XHTML 1.0 Transitional. In the Code view, enter a DIV tag with attribute id="main_wrap". In between the DIV wrap, enter the page heading (H1) and the Navigation menu in unordered (UL) format.



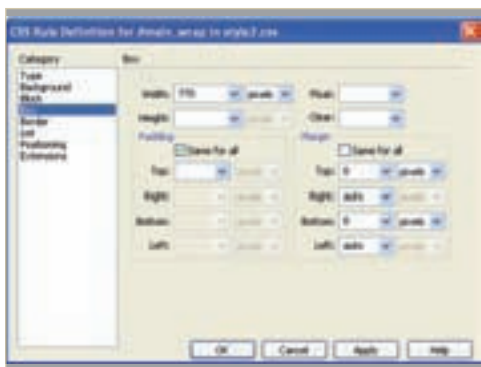
05 Add CSS sheet

In the CSS Styles palette, click on the '+' icon to add a new CSS rule. In Selector Type, select Tag. In the Tag drop-down menu, type in or select Body from the list. Save your CSS file in a separate file. The benefit of an external file is you can share the CSS and it's easier to update.



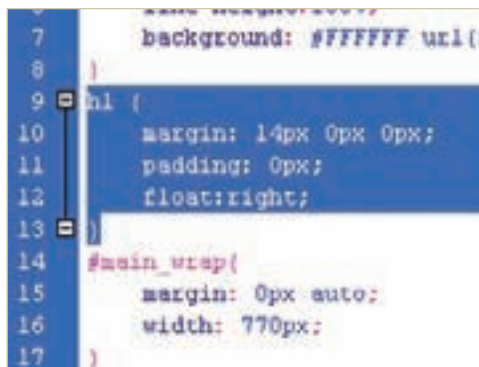
06 Body tag

In the CSS Rule Definition window you can define CSS styles without knowing the syntax. In the Background category, enter the header gradient background and set it to repeat-x. In the Box category, enter 0 for margin and padding. In Type, pick Verdana, size 70%, Line height 160%.



07 Style main wrap

In the CSS Styles palette, click '+'. In Selector Type, hit Advanced (IDs, pseudo-class selectors), enter the selector name, start with the # sign (#main_wrap). In the Box section enter Width 770px, Margin: Top 0, Right auto, Bottom 0, Left auto. This displays the main wrap in the centre, 770px wide.



08 Heading one

Add a new CSS rule for the H1 tag. Set the padding to 0, the top margin to 14px, and float to right. Basically, what we do here is set the H1 element aligned to the right, with no padding, 14px from the top margin. If you are familiar with CSS syntax, you can simply type in these codes.



09 Add background to H1

Now we want to hide the heading text and display the logo instead. To do that, we must define the CSS styles for the H1 link. First, we set the text-indent to -900em so the text is displayed out of the box. Then we use logo.gif as the background image and define the size of the H1 tag.

IN PRACTICE

The sites that set the trend

We look at these real-world examples of Web 2.0 designs that can be hailed as inspirations for your own projects



01 www.writely.com

This is probably the best example or metaphor for what Web 2.0 as a concept represents. It's all about content that isn't merely passive, and here we see a popular application like word processing taken from the desktop and implemented on the web.



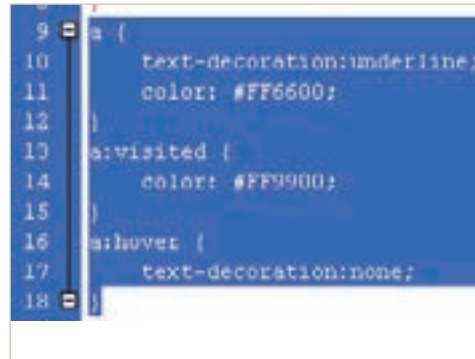
02 www.blogger.com

Blogging is the new black, as far as the web goes, and this site panders to that demand beautifully. The Web 2.0 style points are here as well, with chunky and bold interface elements sitting well against pastel shades and curvy button faces.



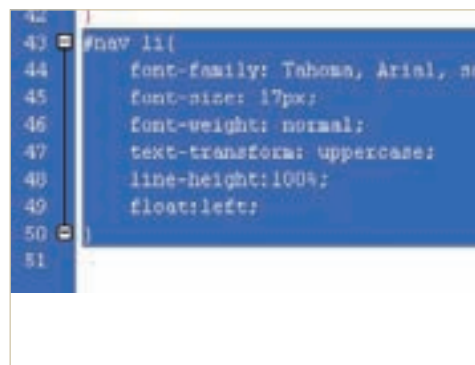
03 www.8notes.com

Far from an obvious choice, and not necessarily strictly Web 2.0 by definition, this handy site for musicians certainly adopts the trademark look. Guitarists will find the online tuner and chord charts and absolute godsend for quick reference.



10 Link styles

Here we define the font styles for link, visited link and hover. You can either enter the CSS by using the CSS palette or type in manually. We want all the links to appear underlined in bright orange, colour (#FF6600). Visited links to be lighter orange, and no underline on mouseover.



12 Navigation

We do not want to display menu items in a vertical list; instead we want to display them in line. First, let's set the font styles to Tahoma at 17pt and transform all text to upper case by using text-transform: uppercase. Then we add float:left to make the list items float left of each other.



14 Navigation a:hover

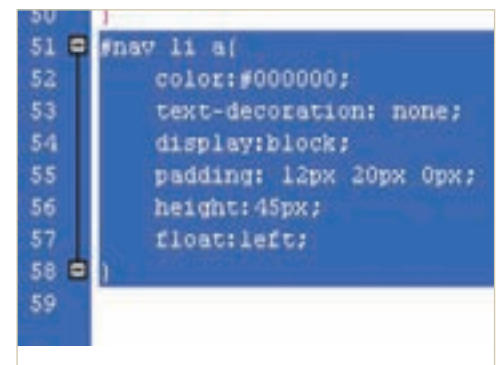
To make the menu item highlight when the user hovers over the button, enter the follow code after #nav li a:

```
#nav li a:hover{
background: url(images/nav-highlite.gif)
repeat-x;
color: #FFFFFF;
}
```



11 Navigation menu

In Code view, add id="nav" to the menu UL tag. Now add a new CSS rule for #nav. By default, unordered list item will display a bullet for each item. To get out of that, go to List and select None. Clear:both is used to clear the floating of H1 and force this container to display in a new line.



13 Navigation link

Here we set link colour to black with no underline. We want a bit of space in between each navigation button. We add 12px padding-top, 20px padding-left and padding-right. Set the height to 45px. We want the entire container area to be clickable, so we use display:block.



15 Content container

Now the logo and menu are done. Go to the Code view, enter a <div id="content"> tag right after the menu list. Then type in a sub heading (H2) and some sample text in the content container. Add a new rule for id #content, width 507px, float left, top and bottom padding 20px.

IN DETAIL

Class or ID attribute?

There are two types of attributes in CSS, which can cause some confusion. Class and ID definitions have different purposes, so what are they and which one should you use?

THE ID ATTRIBUTE is used to uniquely identify an element within an HTML document, therefore no two elements can have the same ID name in the same document. On the other hand, class attributes allow you to apply as many elements as you want in the document. In a CSS style sheet, class names always start with a period or '.' and ID names start with a hash or '#' symbol.

There may well be times when a declaration causes conflict with another declaration. If a class selector and ID selector cause conflict, the ID selector will be used, since ID has a higher level of importance than a class selector.

So which one should we use within our projects and what contexts call for these different types to be used? The key point to remember is that ID can only be used once in a document, while class can be used as many times as you want. So if you need to apply the CSS rule more than once within the same document, for whatever reason, then class will be the best choice.

As an additional rule of thumb, IDs are normally used to identify the main parts (DIV wrappers) of the page, such as the header, navigation, content, footer, etc. Classes are normally used for elements that will appear more than once, for example the sub headings, buttons, dividers, lists, blog posts, etc.

Sometimes you might accidentally use the same ID more than once in the document and it will still work. Why? This is because many commercial browsers are not as strict on this as they should be and do not enforce this rule. However, this is poor practice to fall back on, and as a fundamental rule of HTML/XHTML it will cause a failure if you go on to validate your document.

So why not just use class instead, since class is more flexible? If you prefer to use all classes instead, that is fine. We have chosen to use ID for the main wrappers because we know those wrappers will only appear once.

```
78 }
79 #content {
80     width: 507px;
81     float:left;
82     padding: 20px
83 }
84 #sidebar {
85     width:230px;
```

This is an example of an ID rule within CSS. Be sure to note that the class name starts with a hash sign

```
116 font-size: 90%;
117 color: #666666;
118 }
119 .img_border {
120 padding: 4px;
121 background-color: #f0f0f0;
122 border: 1px solid #ccc;
123 }
```

This is a sample class rule for defining styles in CSS. Notice the name starts with a period, with everything encapsulated in braces

16 Heading 2

Add a new rule for Heading 2, so all H2 tags will display in Georgia, size 240%, colour #6699FF, with 20px top margin and 5px bottom margin. The reason we use percentage here for the font size instead of fixed point value is that we want the size to be scalable by the user's preference.

17 Sidebar

Right after the content DIV wrap, enter a `<div id="sidebar">` wrap. In between the sidebar DIV tag insert the image, then enter the Heading 3 text and a submenu list. In the CSS file, add a new rule, `#sidebar { width: 230px; float:right; margin-top: 20px }`.

18 Heading 3

Now we need to format the submenu heading (H3). In the CSS file, add a new rule for H3. In the Type category, select Tahoma font, size 160%, colour #6699FF, and normal font weight. Add a 2px blue border at the bottom and then add 5px to the top and bottom margins.

19 Submenu list

Go to the Code View mode, and in the `` tag of the submenu insert `id="submenu"`. Now go to the CSS file, add the CSS codes as shown. Basically, we want to remove the default margin space and bullet of unordered list and add a 1px bottom border to the list `` item.

20 Submenu links

We want the submenu to have different font styles from the regular links. Go to the CSS file, add the CSS codes as shown. This will display all submenu links in #036f8b colour with no underline. It will change to an orange colour when the mouse hovers over the link.

Tutorial

Hover effects

The menu hover (mouseover) effect is a simple yet effective way to add life and excitement to your content

Web 2.0 styles

Large font heading, soft shadow, reflective logo, gradient background, and yes, a glossy menu bar

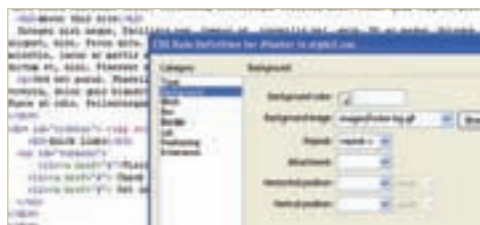


CSS tableless pages

No more tables required. Light-weight XHTML markups with CSS-styled appearance are the way forward

Semantic XHTML

Use proper XHTML markups (H1, H2, UL, LI, etc) to construct the page and ensure standards-compliant content



21 Footer wrap

Right after the closing tag of the main wrap, enter a DIV tag with ID="footer" attribute. Then in the CSS, add a new rule for #footer ID to display a gradient background:

```
#footer {  
    clear: both;  
    background: url(images/footer-  
bg.gif) repeat-x;  
    text-align: right;  
    height: 50px;  
}
```



22 Copyright text

In between the footer DIV tag, insert the copyright text: <div id="copyright"> © N.Design Studio</div>. Then add a new CSS rule for #copyright text:

```
#copyright {  
    width: 770px;  
    text-align: right;  
    margin: 0px auto;  
    font-size: 90%;  
    color: #666666;  
}
```

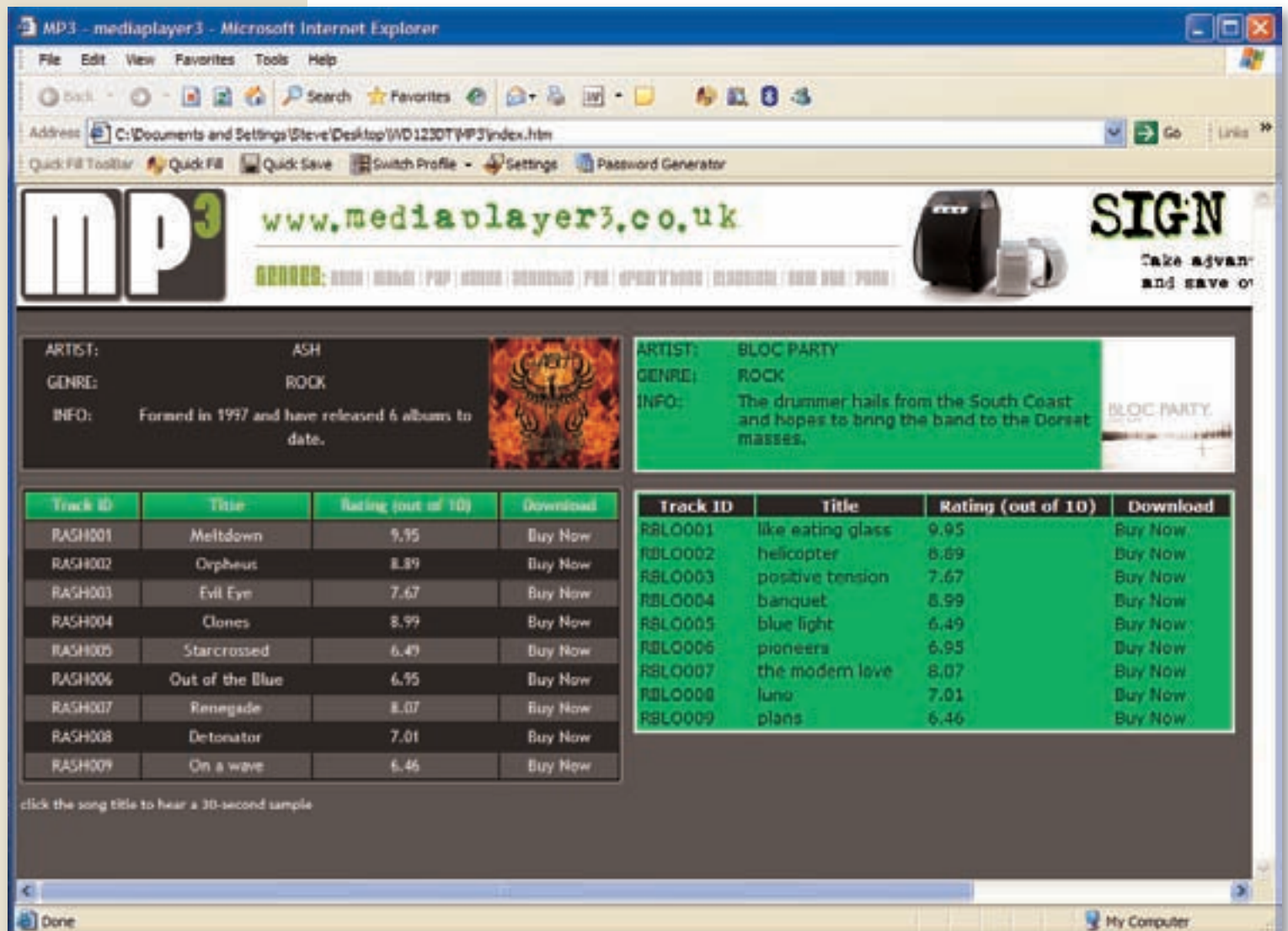


23 Testing

That's it. You've just created a CSS tableless semantic XHTML page. Now you need to test it. Preview your page with at least two major browsers: IE and Firefox. Make your page renders preferably under different browsers. It's also best to validate your HTML and CSS file at www.w3c.org.



*e***Mag**



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
N/A

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Creating attractive looking data tables using CSS

TIME REQUIRED


30 minutes

SKILL LEVEL



Create better data table designs with CSS code

GIVE YOUR DATA TABLES OR CONTENT LISTS AN INSTANT OVERHAUL WITH THE HELP OF SOME CREATIVE CSS STYLING

 **THE ADVENT OF CSS** has seen the humble table take a bit of a bashing. Whilst experts are extolling the virtues and power of CSS the table has been cast into the HTML wilderness. Admittedly, CSS is a powerful beast and is surely the way forward for future web development but the table still has a rosy future. Tables provide the ideal environment for arranging data and at present there really isn't anything better. In its base form a table is simply a set of rows and columns that

is a container for text. However, the clever use of table tags and CSS can provide a whole new look and feel. Simple CSS will format the text and even the background colour. However, the addition of some extra tags and a little bit of CSS we can show you how to transform any table that resides on your site. The best bit is that once you've created your masterpiece, the code can be modified in a matter of minutes for a completely new look that fits happily in with the rest of your site.



YOUR EXPERT

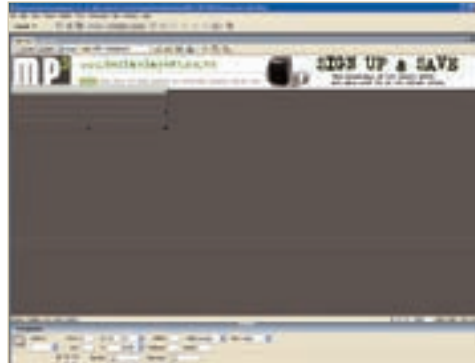
Steve Jenkins is a keen designer and developer who started creating websites after attending Bournemouth University, and loves tackling the most testing of Dreamweaver problems. To see a sample of Steve's work, take a visit to www.thesouthend.co.uk.

Create better data table designs with CSS code



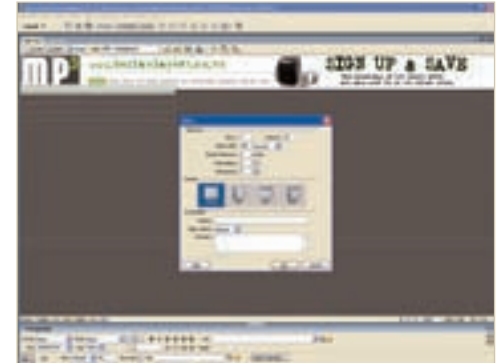
01 Site template

To demonstrate the effectiveness of creating attractive looking data tables we have created a site to act as the background. This helps designers establish how the various elements of the table will work when placed within a page. This is not essential but it is good working practice.



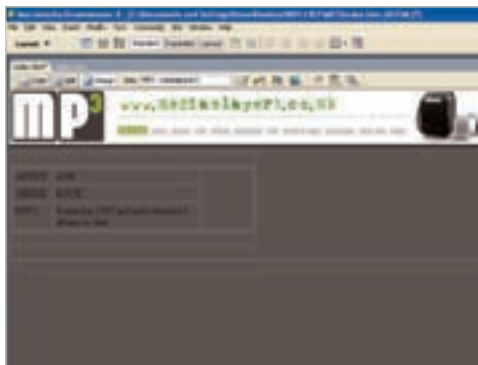
02 Table layout

The next step is to design the layout of the page that will contain the CSS driven data tables. In our example we are going to create a table (4 rows x 1 column) related to a specific artist, which will contain a nested table for a heading and another nested table to list any data.



03 Add tables

The first and third rows of the original table are to contain a simple graphic to divide the artist information from the track listing or data table that is to be styled using CSS. The second row is to contain a table (Insert>Table) with 3 rows and 3 columns as shown above.



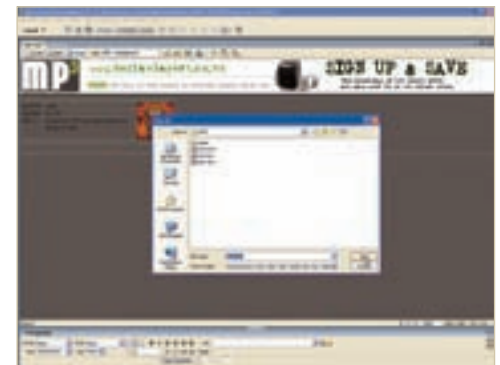
04 Merge cells

To create the header we are going to first merge the rows of the last column. Select the cells and click Merge selected cells (alternatively, use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl + Alt + M). In the remaining cells we are going to add information for the artist.



05 Add images

To finish the header, an image (Insert>Image) is going to be added along with the simple dividing graphics. Once these are in place it is time to select the table and set the cell padding, cell spacing and border properties. For this particular table all are to be set to zero.



06 Time to save

Before going further the current page needs to be saved to ensure that no work is lost. Head to the File menu and select Save As for a first time save. Once the file has been saved use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl + S at regular intervals to keep the latest version of the file.



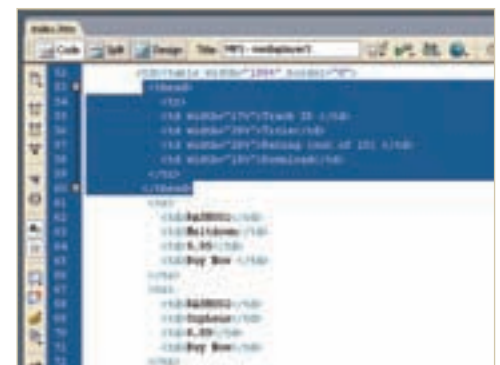
07 Basic data

In the fourth row of the original table add the basis of the data table that is to be used. For this we are going to add a standard table (Insert>Table) with 10 rows and 4 columns. This is only an example, be sure to add as many rows and columns as you think you're going to need.



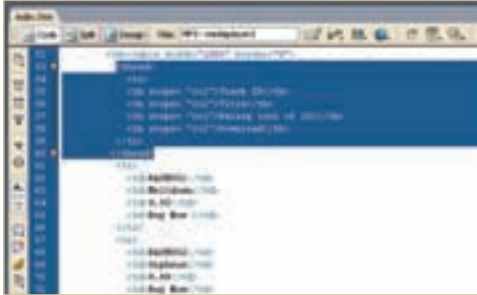
08 Populate table

With the table in place, the next step is to populate the table with the relevant data. The first row will contain the titles or headings like Track, Title etc. Once these are in place it is time to populate the rest of the table with all the sample data so we're ready to get styling.



09 Table head

Now switch to Code view to see the standard data table code including the <tr> and <td> tags. To establish which row is the table header the <thead> tag is to be placed before the first <tr> tag. Also remember to add the closing tag </thead> after the appropriate </tr> tag.



10 Special relations

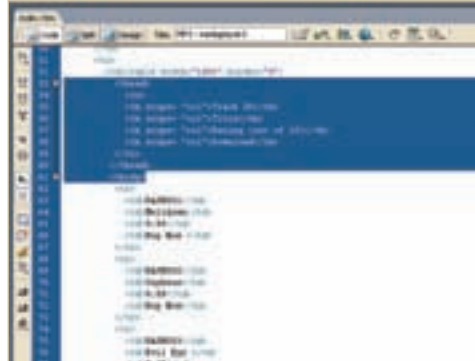
To establish the table headings, the present code between the <thead> tags needs to be stripped out and replaced. At present the code contains the following

```
<td width="39%">Title</td>
```

Replace with

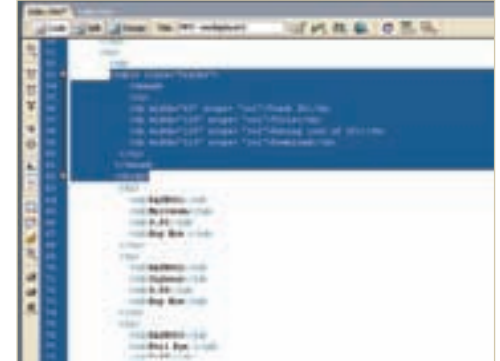
```
<th scope="col">Title </th>
```

substituting Title with each column heading.



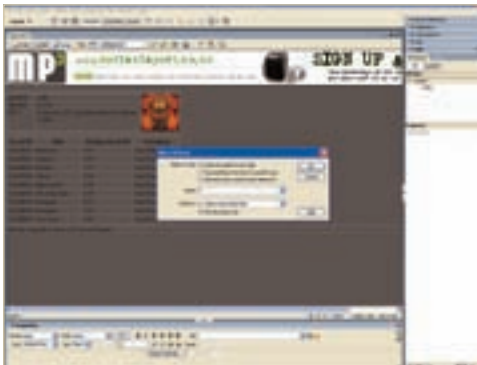
11 Table body

Now that the column headings have been defined, the next step is to establish the table body. After the closing <thead> tag the following tag <tbody> needs to be put in place. At the end of the code just before the closing </table> tag add the following </tbody> tag.



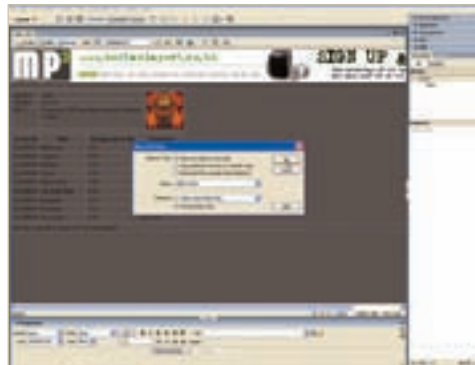
12 Table class

To help identify the table when the CSS is added to the page, the table is going to be given a name. Decide upon a name, ie, 'Tracks' and add the following code: <table class="Tracks"> just before the <thead> tag. This will replace the original opening <table> tag.



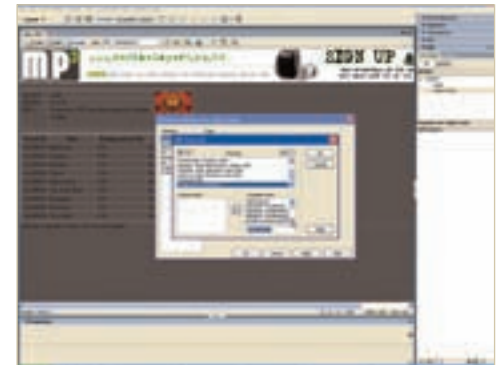
13 Create CSS

With the various table elements in place it is now time to start creating the CSS to style the table. Head to the Window menu and select CSS Styles to open the CSS panel. Now click the New CSS Rule icon at the bottom of the CSS panel. This will open the related dialog window.



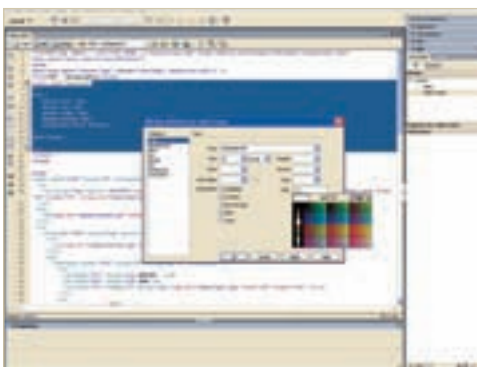
14 Name your CSS

The next step is to give the new CSS rule a name. In our example we have given the table a class of Tracks, thus any styles we are going to apply will use the rule name of 'table.Tracks'. Finally, select the Advanced Selector Type before pressing the OK button.



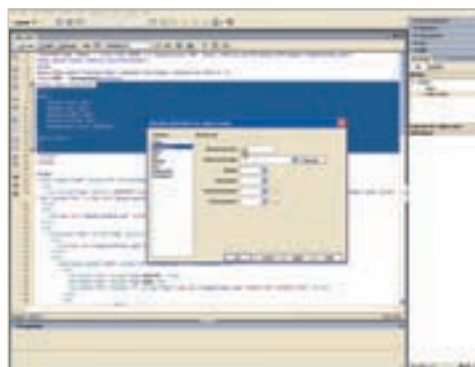
15 Select a font

The CSS Rule definition dialog window will now be available. The first category, Type, offers a number of options relating to text. First up is Font so use the drop down list to select a font. If the desired font is not available then select Edit Font List and pick the font you want.



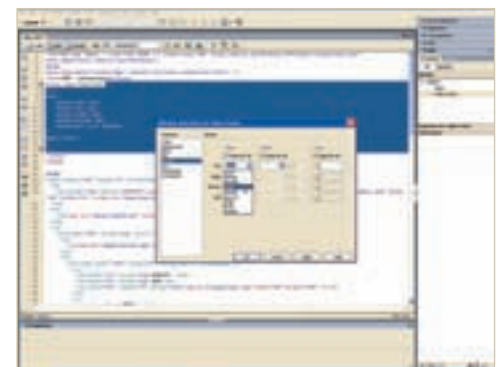
16 Font options

With the font selected, the remaining options need to be selected. First, select the appropriate Size for the job with 10 or 12 pixels being a good choice. The majority of the other available options can be avoided but a good contrasting colour must be selected here also.



17 Better backgrounds

Next head to the Background category where again there are a number of options to choose from. The main player here is the Background colour option. If left blank the background colour of the page will be used. Be sure to remember not to pick the same colour as the font.



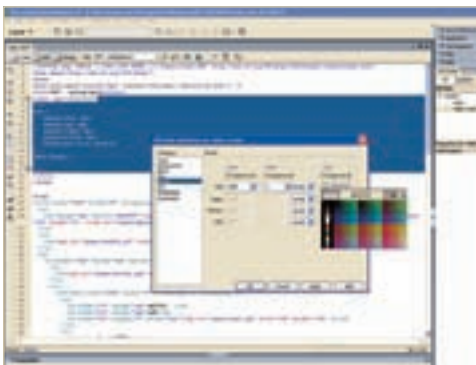
18 Better borders

Now select the Border Category to view the available options. First up is Style, which determines the type of border that will be applied to the table. In this example we have chosen a simple solid border. Alternatively, any of the other options, eg, dotted, groove or ridge are ok.



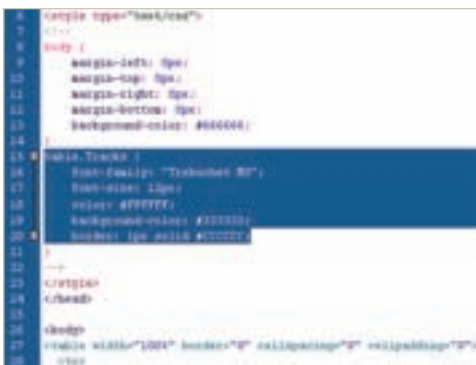
19 Border width

With the border style selected the next step is to decide upon its size. Dreamweaver offers 4 options, thin, medium, thick and value. For greater control, value is the best option. Select value and then select the actual text and enter a value. We've chosen a 1 pixel border here.



20 Border colour

To complete the border options a colour needs to be chosen. First click the top box and choose a colour from the palette. A complimentary or contrasting colour is a good choice. For more options deactivate same for all and select alternative colours as you see fit.



21 All in place

Once all the options in the CSS Rule definition dialog window have been chosen, click the Apply button to add to the code and OK to close the window. You'll now see that the <HEAD> of the page has the newly created CSS rule. Save the page using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl + S.

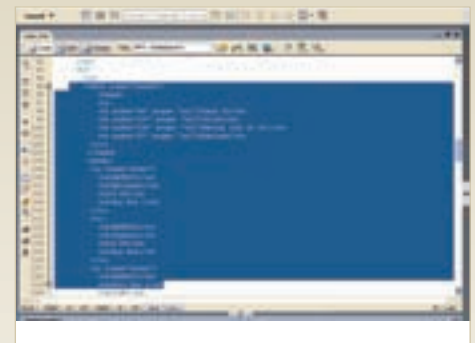
IN DETAIL

Table tags

There is more to tables than just the associated tag. Here we delve into its very close cousins and reveal exactly what they can offer when it comes to styling up and laying out your pages

AS WE HAVE ALREADY mentioned, tables often get a pretty bad press although before the introduction of a workable CSS specification tables were king. Whilst the original purpose of the table had little to do with layout it was quickly adopted as the obvious answer to creating top class sites. With a little creativity and the clever use of table tags and its various incarnations a table can become a thing of beauty, giving structure and attractive organisation. By default the one obvious tag that springs to mind when discussing tables is indeed that of <table>. However, there is more to a table than just the obvious. As you would have seen throughout the tutorial tables can incorporate a whole number of related tags. These include <thead>, <tbody>, <th>, <tr> and <td> - but what do they all mean?

A quick look at the name often gives users a good indication of what to expect. For example, <thead> is short for table header and this is exactly what should lie between the tags. Alongside the <thead> tag we have used the <tbody> tag which encompasses the data of the chosen table. A table tag which did not get used in the tutorial was that of <tfoot>. Somewhat predictably, this tag defines a table footer which will appear at the bottom of a table. However, if all the tags are to be used, ie, head, tfoot and tbody they need to appear in the code in the following order <thead>, <tfoot> and <tbody>. The reason for this is that a browser can render the foot before receiving all the data. It is also worth noting that all these table tags must be used within the table tag itself. Separating the table tags enables browsers to support scrolling of table bodies independently of the table header and footer. The <th> tag defines a cell in a table header and is usually rendered in bold. Finally, we should all already know that the <tr> tag defines a row in a table whilst the <td> tag is more specific and defines a cell in a table. Just remember that they all need closing tags otherwise your table could very well turn out wrong!



The <thead> tag comprises four column headings in the table header. This can be extended to include as many as you want.



By default the <th> tag generally renders the text bold and centred. To align differently, add the text-align attribute text-align: left



22 Line up text

Now switch back to Design view to see how the newly applied CSS has changed the table. By default the column headings are centred making the headings and body out of alignment. To compensate, add text-align: center to the table.Tracks class just as is shown above.



23 Apply to table

Now that the CSS rule table.Tracks has been created and added to the page it can be applied to any other tables on the page. In our example we have the information table. To format, simply select the table and head in the Property Inspector and select Tracks from the Class drop down list.

TECHNIQUE

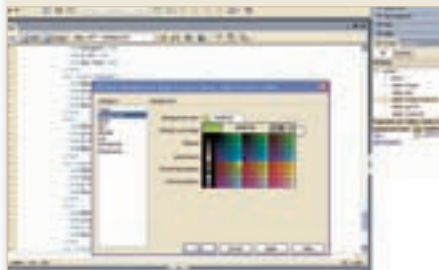
The hover effect is explained

Add interactivity and help identify specific elements with a hover effect. We show how it's done in Internet Explorer



01 Internet Explorer

Different browsers support the hover class differently, hence the need to produce different code. To add a hover effect in IE a new CSS rule needs to be defined. If you want it to appear within our tables.Tracks class, be sure to name the rule table.Tracks tr: hover, table.Tracks tr: hilitte.

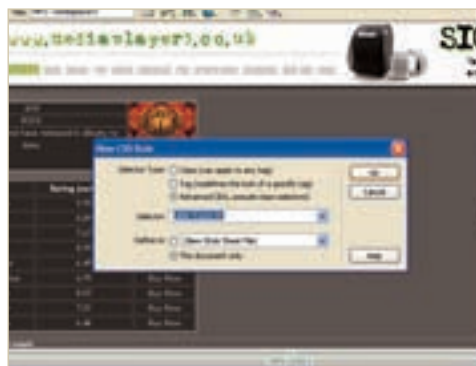


02 Select colours

Now select a good contrasting colour from the Type category before heading over to the Background category. Now select a background colour that again adequately compliments or contrasts and will not bleach out the text making it unreadable. Now press the Apply button and hit OK to confirm all the changes once you are satisfied.

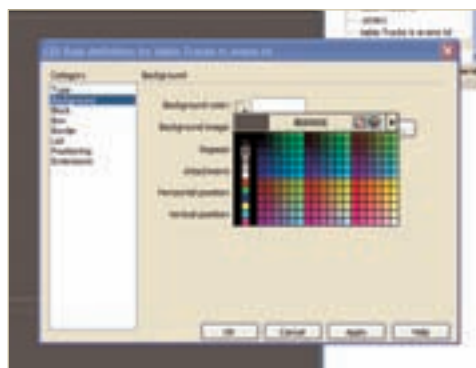
03 Javascript listing

```
Now add the following code after the table
<script type="text/javascript">
var rows = document.getElementsByTagName('tr');
for(var i = 0; i < rows.length; i++) {rows[i].onmouseover = function() {
this.className += ' hilite'; }
rows[i].onmouseout = function() {this.className = this.className.replace('hilite', ''); } } </script>
```



24 New header

Now that the table body has been established the next step is to work on the table header. This involves creating a new CSS rule as described in the previous steps. Name the rule 'table.Tracks th' and choose a background colour and border options if desired.



26 Background row colour

Head to the Background category and select the colour to be used. Alternatively, to give the rows some imagination and definition select the Border category. Deselect same for all and choose a colour for a couple sides of the border, eg, left and bottom, top and right.



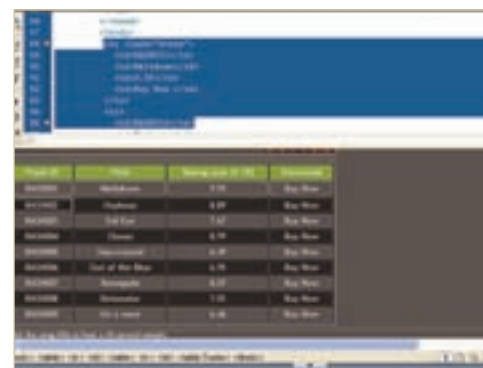
28 Image header

To give the table header more style than a simple colour background, an image can be used. First, create a coloured gradient using your image-editing package. Now double-click table.Tracks th in the CSS panel to open the dialog window. Select (URL) and click Browse to locate the image.



25 Stripy rows

Data tables often contain a mass of text which can often be hard to distinguish. One solution is to create alternating coloured rows. These should be different from the header and the background colours. To start, head to New CSS Rule and name it 'table.Tracks tr:evens td' and press OK.



27 Even class

To implement the changes, the tr (table row) tag that accompanies each line needs to be modified. Replace the original <tr> tag with <tr class="evens"> and that specific row will change colour as specified in the rule. Add the code to all rows you want changed.



29 Customised code

Once the original CSS has been created there is the option to modify the code. Follow previous steps and create a new CSS rule or alternatively copy the code, rename, and edit the code by hand. Lastly, place in the <head> of the page or create a new style sheet to view the effects.





THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
All the required files can be found on your cd

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Use PHP to create an XML file from data stored in your MySQL database

TIME REQUIRED

60 minutes

SKILL LEVEL



Creating XML files from a MySQL database

XML IS OFTEN USED TO SHARE DATA, SO RACHEL ANDREW SHOWS YOU HOW TO EASILY CREATE AN XML FILE FROM A DATA SOURCE

XML IS USED primarily to share data between applications. Often if you are working with a web service you will need to send data from your application to the third party in XML format, which requires that you can create XML from data stored in your own database. In this tutorial we will look at a simple example of creating an XML file from data stored in MySQL. Although the example we are using is quite rudimentary, you could extend it to create the XML format

that you require for your own projects. When working with a third party they will usually supply you with examples of how the data should end up looking and you can then use that to work out how best to format your data. To make the process of creating the XML easier we'll be using a third party PHP class. All of the code for this tutorial is available on the cover CD, and you will require PHP and MySQL properly installed to follow all the steps as we go. No lagging behind now folks!



YOUR EXPERT

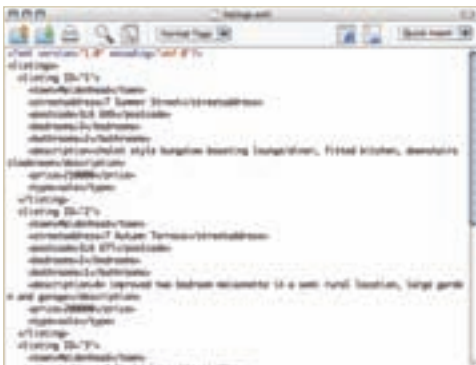
Rachel Andrew is a web developer and Managing Director of web consultancy edgeofmyseat.com. She is author of a number of books including 'Build Your Own Standards Compliant Website Using Dreamweaver 8' published by Sitepoint

Creating XML files from a MySQL database



01 Create the database

First we need to create our MySQL database in order that we have some sample data to work with. The database that I am using in this tutorial is also available on the CD so you can skip the next few steps and import the data if you would rather do it that way.



04 The file format

We'll create a simple XML document with our data. You may see more complex documents when working with a web service that requires XML for example, but the basic techniques are the same. Our document contains all the properties in the database marked up as XML.



07 Connect to the database

As we are going to generate xml from our database data the next thing that needs to happen is that we create a connection to the database and select the dbProperties database (or wherever you have your data that you wish to turn into xml). Change USERNAME and PASSWORD to your MySQL username and password.

```
$conn = mysql_connect("localhost","USERNAME",  
"PASSWORD");  
mysql_select_db("dbProperties", $conn);
```



02 Create a table

You now need to add a table to the database and in our case we are creating a table of properties available for sale or rent. The following SQL will create that table with fields for all of the main information that is required when listing a property. You could also create the table in a MySQL graphical interface.

```
CREATE TABLE tblListings (  
    listingID INT NOT NULL AUTO_INCREMENT  
    PRIMARY KEY,  
    listingTown VARCHAR(100),  
    listingAddress VARCHAR(255),  
    listingPostcode VARCHAR(10),  
    listingBeds INT,  
    listingBaths INT,  
    listingDesc TEXT,  
    listingPrice FLOAT,  
    listingType ENUM('sale','let'));
```



05 The class

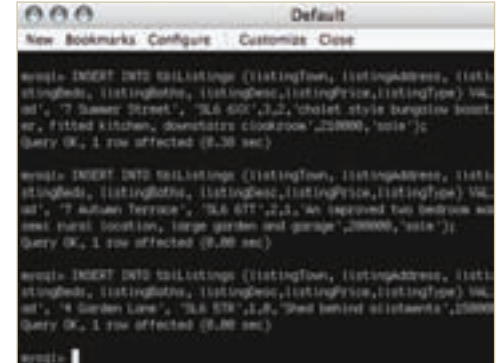
Creating XML files using PHP can be a bit tricky, however you will find that there are several classes already written to make life easier. We are going to use the XmlWriter class written by Simon Willison from: <http://simon.incutio.com/archive/2003/04/29/xmlWriter>.



08 Get the listings data

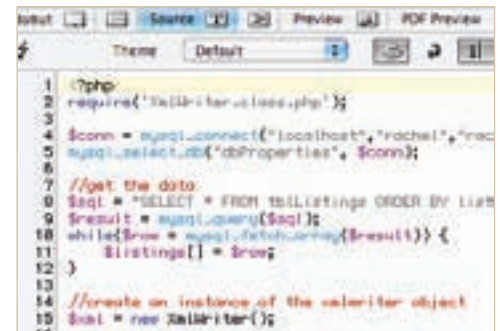
Select the listings from the database. This SQL could have any additional WHERE clause that you want, you just need to get a list of data. Once you have your recordset of data in \$result, loop through the data a row at a time putting it into the array \$listings.

```
//code  
$sql = "SELECT * FROM tblListings ORDER BY  
listingPrice DESC";  
$result = mysql_query($sql);  
while($row = mysql_fetch_array($result)) {  
    $listings[] = $row;  
}
```



03 Add some sample data

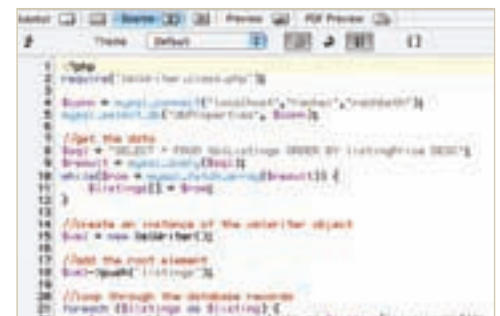
We first need some sample data in order to create our document. Insert at least three rows of data into the database at this point either directly from the command line or using your MySQL tool. You now have your database prepared and we can start to work with the data.



06 The script

We are going to start by creating a script which generates XML. Save a new file as createxml.php and, on the first line open your PHP tags and require the XmlWriter class. This includes the class so that we can use it once we are ready to generate our xml document.

```
require('XmlWriter.class.php');
```



09 Create a class instance

The XmlWriter code is a PHP class, so to be able to use a class you need to create an instance of it. We have created this as the object \$xml. To use any methods of this class you need to call them with \$xml->function_name, and here we'll also add the root element 'listings'.

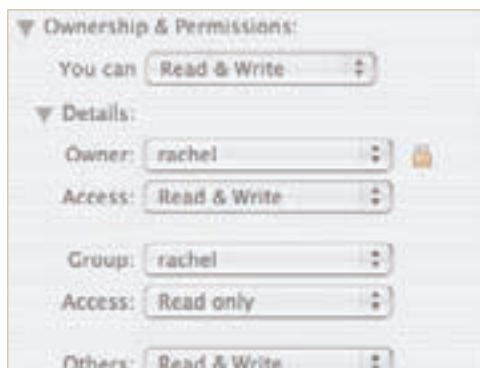
```
$xml = new XmlWriter();  
$xml->push('listings');
```



10 Create the listing

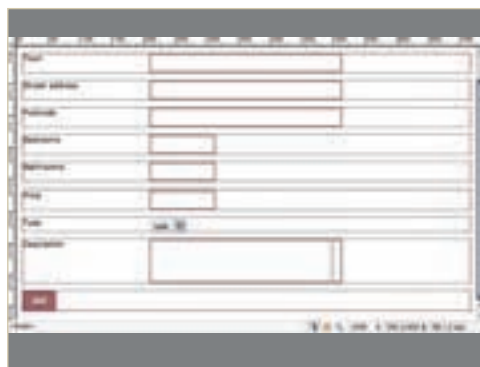
Looping through the array of data, the first thing we need to do is to create the listing node that will contain all of the elements for that listing – basically the fields that make up a row in the database. This has an attribute of ID, which contains the listingID field from the database for the current record.

```
foreach ($listings as $listing) {
    $xml->push('listing', array('ID' =>
        $listing['listingID']));
}
```



13 Writing to the file

We have now created our XML but if we are going to use it to share the data with another application we may need to write it to a text file. Create a new directory in your site called XML and ensure that it is writable by the web user.



16 Create a form

On a new page create a form with fields corresponding to all of your database table fields (except listingID which is created automatically). You can create this form using Dreamweaver Design View and the Insert Toolbar. A simple CSS file for all the styles is included on the CD.

11 Add the other elements

We'll now add the rest of the elements that make up a property listing. The first parameter is the name of the XML element and the second it's content, and after looping through all the data the print line will display it.

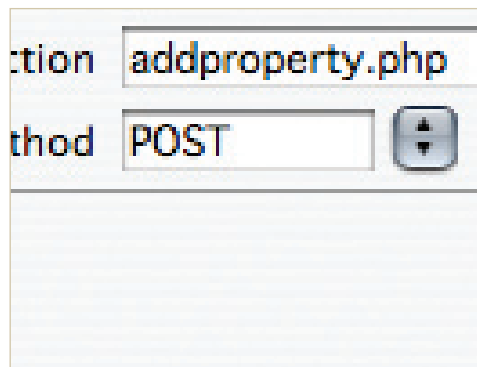
```
$xml->element('town', $listing['listingTown']);
$xml->element('streetaddress', $listing['listingAddress']);
$xml->element('postcode', $listing['listingPostcode']);
$xml->element('bedrooms', $listing['listingBedrooms']);
$xml->element('bathrooms', $listing['listingBaths']);
$xml->element('description', $listing['listingDescription']);
$xml->element('price', $listing['listingPrice']);
$xml->element('type', $listing['listingType']);
$xml->pop();
$xml->pop(); print $xml->getXml();
```



14 Open and write

We use the same function that we used to display the XML data to the page to write it to a file. We open the file in write mode so it will overwrite any existing data, then write the xml data to it, once we have written the data we close the file.

```
$file = 'xml/listings.xml';
if($f = fopen($file,"w")) {
    fwrite($f, $xml->getXml());
    fclose($f);
} else {
    echo 'could not open file';
}
```



17 Posting the form

The form needs to be set to POST and the action is the same page on which you have saved the form. On the CD, the form page is called addproperty.php and so we set the action of the form to addproperty.php. We will be adding the processing code to this page later on.



12 Seeing is believing

Hopefully you will now see the xml contents output on the screen. If you view the source you should be able to see the complete structure of the XML and how each row in your database is now a listing node within the XML, with each field in the row an element.



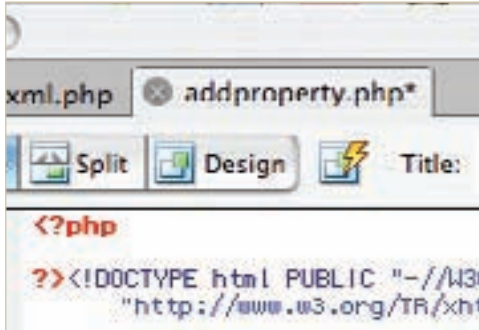
15 The completed script

You now have a simple script that uses the XmlWriter class to generate an xml document from your database data. In the second part of this tutorial I am going to add to this script to make a more useful application – regenerating the XML when a property is added.



18 The form code

Above is the mark-up that we end up with for the form. Text fields are used for everything except the type as this can only have one of two values. We can then prepopulate them in a select box for the person completing the form to choose between a property for sale or to let.



19 The PHP code

Switch into Code View as we are now going to start to add our PHP code. Add your PHP tags making sure that the closing tag is right up against the DOCTYPE to avoid any whitespace that would cause Internet Explorer to display in Quirks Mode - causing rendering differences between it and other browsers.

20 Data protection act

After including the XmlWriter class once again I have added a function that I will use to ensure that no unprotected single quotes entered into form fields break the SQL. This function just checks to see if the field is numeric and if it isn't, adds quotes so it's ready to insert.

```
<?php
require('XmlWriter.class.php');
function pdb($value){
    if (get_magic_quotes_gpc()) {
        $value = stripslashes($value);
    }
    if (!is_numeric($value)) {
        $value = "'" . mysql_real_escape_string($value) . "'";
    }
    return $value;
}
```



21 Do we have POST?

If the form has been posted we need to run our script, otherwise we just show the form and skip all of the form processing section. If we have a post then make a database connection like before and select the database that you will be using.

```
if(isset($_POST['btnSubmit'])) {
    $conn = mysql_connect("localhost","U
SERNAME","PASSWORD");
    mysql_select_db("dbProperties",
$conn);
```

IN DETAIL

An XML document explained...

In this tutorial we have been creating an XML document. Here we look at what XML actually is and then find out what makes up what we mean by a valid XML document

XML STANDS FOR Extensible Markup Language and it is a way of describing data. A number of other languages that you may have come across are based on XML, such as XHTML, RSS and SVG. These languages are defined in a formal way and enable the sharing of data across systems. When you create an XML file you create a tree-based structure to contain your data. As we have seen in this tutorial this is very well suited to describing data which originates from the database, with each node in the XML file containing a row of data from the Recordset. The document that we have created is an example of a simple XML document but it contains all of the basic elements that you will find in more complex documents. Below is our XML file containing two property listings, taken from two rows of the database:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<listings>
  <listing ID="1">
    <town>Maidenhead</town>
    <streetaddress>7 Summer Street</
streetaddress>
    <postcode>SL6 6XX</postcode>
    <bedrooms>3</bedrooms>
    <bathrooms>2</bathrooms>
    <description>chalet style bungalow
boasting lounge/diner, fitted kitchen,
downstairs cloakroom</description>
    <price>210000</price>
    <type>sale</type>
  </listing>
  <listing ID="2">
    <town>Maidenhead</town>
    <streetaddress>7 Autumn Terrace</
streetaddress>
```

```
<postcode>SL6 6TT</postcode>
<bedrooms>2</bedrooms>
<bathrooms>1</bathrooms>
<description>An improved two bedroom
maisonette in a semi rural location, large
garden and garage</description>
<price>200000</price>
<type>sale</type>
</listing>
</listings>
```

The first line of the document is the XML declaration, showing that this is indeed XML we are using whilst also detailing the character encoding.

The XML document is then made up of elements with a complete element looking like this:

```
<streetaddress>7 Summer Street</
streetaddress>
```

It has an opening tag of <streetaddress> with some content, in this case '7 Summer Street', and a closing tag named </streetaddress>. It is also worth noting that elements may also contain other elements nested within them. So <listing></listing> is a complete element which contains other elements within it. An element may also have attributes – such as the ID attribute of the listing element. As a rule XML must contain one root element, which in our case would be <listings>. This document would not be considered valid XML if we had started out by just adding our individual <listing> elements and not containing them within a root element. We know it might all sound a bit complicated to begin with, but once you start getting used to using XML a bit more you'll soon wonder what all the fuss was about. It's easy when you know how!



22 Get the variables

Get the variables that were posted in the form and use the pdb() function to ensure they are ready to be inserted. In a more complete application you might add checking for required form fields at this point before continuing the script and prompt the user to complete anything they might have missed during entry.

```
$listingTown = pdb($_POST['listingTown']);
$listingAddress = pdb($_
POST['listingAddress']);
$listingPostcode = pdb($_POST['listingPostco
de']);
$listingBeds = pdb($_POST['listingBeds']);
$listingBaths = pdb($_POST['listingBaths']);
$listingDesc = pdb($_POST['listingDesc']);
```



23 SQL strings

Now that you have all of your variables we can insert them into the database. Build up an SQL string to insert a new line. The pdb() function wraps the non-numeric elements with quotes so you don't need to worry about it here, just add in the variables to the string.

```
$sql = "INSERT INTO tblListings (listingTown,
listingAddress, listingPostcode, listingBeds,
listingBaths, listingDesc) VALUES (" .
$listingTown . "," . $listingAddress . "," .
$listingPostcode . "," . $listingBeds . "," .
$listingBaths . "," . $listingDesc . ")";
```




*e***Mag**

Tech support

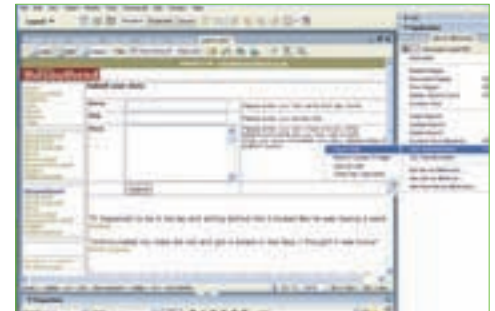
Q

I am developing a website for the first time using Dreamweaver (just converted from Microsoft FrontPage) and I'm worried about testing my projects. I've heard that good designers really should try out their pages on multiple platforms. Previously, I installed Firefox and Opera in addition to Internet Explorer for testing. Do you think I should install any other browsers and what does Dreamweaver offer to help?

Roy Jones

A

then click Browse to locate the .exe file of the specified browser. For example, Internet Explorer is located in Program Files>Internet Explorer, whilst Firefox is located at Program Files>Mozilla Firefox. A browser in the list can be assigned as the Primary Browser and an alternative as the Secondary Browser (the list allows up to 18 different browsers). A shortcut key is assigned to the Primary (F12) and Secondary (Ctrl + F12) for quick previews. The other available option is Check Target Browsers, which allows you to check a single page or an entire site for any code issues. The feature contains the profiles of all the standard browsers including Internet Explorer, Navigator, Mozilla, Firefox, Opera and Safari. To check a page head to File>Check Page> Check Target Browsers. This will display a list of the different tags and attributes that are ignored or not supported in specific browsers. Finally, right-click on a file in the list and select Settings to set up which browsers and which versions are included in the Check Target Browsers list.



Using the Log In User server behaviour will ensure that only approved users can logon to the site and access your restricted content

My site needs a login page that will authenticate a username and password. Not being too hot with any coding, any help pointing me in the right direction would be fully appreciated. Love the mag.

Mary H Dykes

A

The first step in the process is creating the login page itself. This is essentially a form with the necessary elements in place, ie, username and password fields plus a Submit button. The username field is a standard text field, which simply needs an appropriate, pre-registered alias. The password field takes a slightly different path as any text entered in the field needs to be masked. This involves selecting the field and selecting Password from the Property Inspector. The page will need to be saved as a dynamic page with the appropriate extension, eg, php. In addition to the form a Recordset will also be needed. This is essentially part of a database and a connection to the Recordset will be required. With the PHP page open, go to Window > Databases and click the '4' button on the panel to select MySQL Connection from the pop-up menu. Now complete the MySQL Connection dialog box and press OK. Remember that a database will need to be setup on your server and that MySQL server is assigned as localhost.

With all the necessary elements in place, head to the Servers Behaviours panel, click the '4' sign and hit User Authentication>Log In User and fill out the related form. Make sure you have a page set up should users be refused access for whatever reason. Alternatively, the PHP Authentication extension (featured in Issue 121) from DVP Tools (www.dvp-tools.com) can be used instead.

“Testing pages in a number of browsers is good practice and ensures that a site will offer maximum impact when viewed”



Ensure your pages are built for every occasion with the help of Dreamweaver's browser checking tools

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 while attending Bournemouth University, and loves tackling the most teasing of Dreamweaver problems. He has been a keen Dreamweaver advocate since the heady days of version three, creating a wide range of site for clients and for personal use. To see a sample of Steve's work take a visit to www.thesouthend.co.uk



Better text

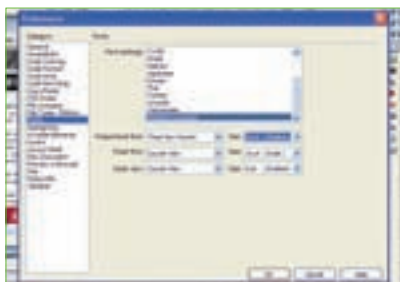
I am sure that this is an easy problem to solve, so forgive my ignorance. I basically want to choose a particular set of fonts to use with my site. The thing is I am not sure where to get started and how this might affect my page design. I'm also concerned that my chosen font won't be viewable on other people's machines. Surely there's got to be more choice than just good old fashioned Verdana?

Jon Stacey



You are correct in your assumption that this is pretty easy to set up. By default Dreamweaver sets up the font preferences and document encoding and by and large these are perfectly adequate for most everyday tasks. Document encoding is essential to the process because it determines how a document appears in a browser. The encoding options include Greek, Hebrew, Japanese etc but it is Western European that any English based site will use. To set a font type, head to Edit>Preferences and select Fonts from Category. This includes three options which can be set simply by selecting from the drop down lists. First there is Proportional Font, which is used to display normal text, eg, text in paragraphs. The default depends on the fonts installed

on the local machine, but Times New Roman 12pt is the favoured option. Note that this can be changed to any installed font, but it is a good idea to choose a font that is installed as standard with the operating system. If you choose a non-standard font this may cause problems when viewing the page. For example, if Jenkins v2.0 is chosen and the machine viewing the page does not have the font installed, the OS will use a substitute. Fixed Font is the font Dreamweaver uses to display text within pre, code, and tt tags. Again, the default depends on the installed fonts. Finally, there is Code View which is the font used for any text that appears whilst coding and the default is again determined by the installed fonts on your machine.



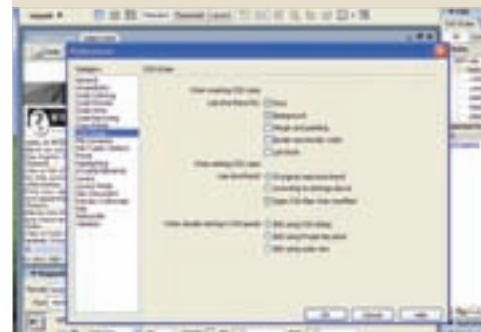
Select a default font that you'd like to use but one that is preferably standard across all operating systems



Expert advice

Shorthand CSS rules

As you would expect, Dreamweaver controls how the CSS code within the program is written. By default it uses standard CSS practices that produce standard code. However, the CSS Styles preferences (Edit>Preferences>CSS Styles) can be altered to incorporate a number of different choices including Shorthand CSS. This lets users specify the values of several properties using a single property tag. However when using shorthand notation, omitted values are automatically assigned their default values. This may cause problems if styles are defined in more than one location, for instance in the HEAD of the page and a linked style sheet stored externally.



Technique: Flaunting your assets



I have been reliably informed that components created or added to a page can be reused for other pages. So when I create a new page I can just add images without using the long-winded menu path. I would like you to demonstrate how this can be achieved. I will be eternally grateful for the advice and will carry on buying the mag forever, honest!



Well we are pleased to be able to tell you Michael that you have indeed been reliably informed and the Assets panel offers a good answer to your question. In a nutshell the Assets panel will show all the assets (images, links etc) of a selected site and allow users to add to a new page almost instantly, thus negating all the mundane processes along the way.



01 Site definition

Before the Assets panel can be used, the site that is being used must be defined. To do this head to Site>New Site and fill out all the relevant details. Now all the files and images will need to be copied into the newly defined site folder.



02 Drag and drop

If the Assets panel is not already on display, head to Window>Assets to show the appropriate panel. Now click the first icon (Images) on the left and select Site to display all the available images. To add an element simply drag and drop onto the HTML page.



03 Insert an element

The Assets panel also offers Colors, URL's, Flash components, Movies, Scripts and Templates. Click the appropriate icon and the panel will reveal the related components. Alternatively, you can select an element and hit the Insert button to add it instantly.

THIS Month

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| ECOMMERCE GALLERY TAG deodorant under scrutiny | 98 |
| WEB HOSTINGS Packages to meet your needs | 100 |



It deletes your web history in the blink of an eye

Browzar 'bout this then?

NEW EXPLORER PLUG-IN CLAIMS TO OFFER USERS A MUCH SAFER ONLINE EXPERIENCE FOR INTERNET EXPLORERS

WHEREVER MONETARY transactions or the passing of personal details online is required, safety and privacy are paramount concerns. Web commerce continues to face a battle to instill total confidence among shoppers, although a brand new piece of software could be about to provide added assurance. Less of a complete browser and more of a 'shell' for Internet Explorer, Browzar leaves no trace of user habits by automatically deleting all records of visited pages when it closes down. While other commercial alternatives offer this service manually, the team behind it insists that this simple tweak will be invaluable within a shared computing environment like Internet cafés, libraries, or the workplace. "All sorts of people are using it: teenagers, mums and grandparents", said Freeserve founder and Browzar creator Ajaz Ahmed. "Many don't realise that their browser doesn't offer them privacy and they learn the hard way." Browzar is totally free to download from www.browzar.com, however, despite

claiming downloads from over 200 countries; the software has been questioned by voices in the industry. Users are still required to install IE security patches from Microsoft when flaws are identified as Browzar offers no new protection here, while rumours that site records can still be found despite the browser's claims.



Hey, big spenders

A VIRTUAL SHOPPING MALL LAUNCHES WITH A £1M TAB FOR EVERY CUSTOMER

FOR MOST OF US, winning the lottery is just about the only way we're going to become instant millionaires. However, a new website aims to at least give you the feeling of what it's like to be so wealthy by giving its visitors a £1 million credit note to fritter away on its fictitious product catalogue. It's all for fun of course, with no actual transactions taking place, but it represents an entertaining idea off the back of similar novelty schemes like milliondollarhomepage.com. "I live for ideas, everyday I write down a new one", enthuses creator Paolo Di Terlizzi via the site's about page. "I have a notebook that I carry around with me, and sketch out those gaps, ideas and opportunities that I see." Spendamillion.com is apparently Paolo's 10,007th idea, but as a freelance web designer and php coder who has been responsible for over 250 sites he's well placed to make a success out of this latest creation. The site already has a Myspace code generator built for it, with a Google homepages gadget on the way, along with various Ajax-based features in the pipeline. Anyone looking to enjoy a spot of retail therapy or contact Paolo about possible advertising opportunities is invited to head over there now!



Sticky Websites

WITH RESEARCH INDICATING THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF YOUR SITE'S VISITORS WILL STAY FOR LESS THAN A MINUTE, **DAVE HOWELL** OFFERS SOME ADVICE ON HOW TO TURN YOUR BROWSERS INTO BUYERS

THE EQUATION IS SIMPLE. If you can increase the time that visitors spend on your website's pages you increase your chances of making a sale. With thousands of retailers available to consumers at the click of a mouse button, businesses are realising that they must hold customers on their sites to increase the conversion rate of browsers into buyers. Often, a potential customer will have found your site via a search engine. They have never visited your site before so you must not only instantly grab their attention; but also hold this long enough for them to find what they want.

ONLINE SELLING

Making your site sticky should start at the planning stage. Take a look at how other successful websites in your sector layout their homepage and catalogues. You don't need to copy their design of course, but see how their navigation takes visitors effortlessly to the goods they are interested in. Look at how promotions

are handled and how additional information like terms and delivery charges as well as customer services contacts is displayed. This is essential information that a first time visitor will want to see, so don't hide these pages. However, don't make the mistake of simply copying the layout of your rivals and simply put a few new graphics to differentiate your site. This isn't stickiness at all. You have to make your site stand out, and compel your visitors to stay, make a purchase and return for another shopping trip. This can be achieved by developing a number of initiatives.

One very strong method of retaining customers is to embrace your competition. It might sound like commercial suicide, but the Internet is a very different place to shop. Research carried out by the Faculty of Business, University of Alberta, Canada indicated that online purchase are made in a two stage process where a customer will evaluate a potential purchase against those from a range of suppliers, before looking in more detail at a shortlist of products and then making a final decision. If you make this comparison easy for your customers, they will not only return again and again, but trust your business, which will translate into masses of repeat sales. This is precisely what Tesco's do with their website what enables their customers to price check their products against the competition. Tesco's of course ensure that they are always competitive. The result: They are the UK's leading supermarket. If you can make buying from your site less effort, customers will continue to return. Making your site sticky requires a number of skills with the most important being an understanding of what your customers are looking for. Give them the tools to find and buy the items they want, and your site will find its way onto the favourites list of thousands new customers.

"Stickiness is vital regardless of your market," said Nicholas Mann, managing director,

Interdirect Limited (www.interdirect.co.uk). "Unless you are in a completely monopolistic position, your customers will have a choice of supplier. Therefore, it is vital that your website persuades existing, potential and even former clients to use it in favour of your competitors' websites. Creating a sticky website is a good step towards achieving this. What makes a website sticky is obviously a big topic, but providing regularly updated, useful information is very important and content management systems can help companies do this without having to rack up large bills with their web design agencies."

WORD OF MOUSE

Today's customers are looking for businesses that they can put their trust in and form a lasting bond. If you can make your website not just a place to buy goods or services you will reinforce the bond and promote long-term loyalty to your brand. One way of achieving this goal is to offer special rewards for customers that sign up to a club or community. This is useful as you not only capture the contact details of these people for future marketing activities, but you also gain a loyal customer base that you can sell to. Keep in touch with these people, but don't overwhelm them with marketing emails for newsletters. Remember, there is a fine line between useful messages and spam.

One proven method that many websites use is personalisation. When your customers arrive at your site they can login and instantly see the goods that may be of interest to them. Sites like Amazon make superb use of this technique. The 'my store' and 'new for you' can increase your sales levels manifold. Your customers may not have the time to trawl your site looking for new products or services so enabling them to personalise what they see each time they visit your site is a superb way of holding their attention and gaining multiple repeat visits.



Online shopping cart software packages like Actinic must provide sticky features wherever possible to try and keep customers coming back for more

"I think that virtually every technique used in the high street translates into a similar approach in the virtual world"

CHRIS BARLING, CEO ACTINIC



Clarity.uk.net are used to giving practical design advice as well as making their own site sticky in its own right

"I think that virtually every technique used in the high street translates into a similar approach in the virtual world," said Chris Barling, CEO of Actinic (www.actinic.co.uk). "For 'location, location, location', read 'promotion, promotion, promotion', especially in search engines. An 'also bought' facility is the equivalent of carefully deciding what products to place alongside each other in a supermarket. Suggestions during checkout are the equivalent of prominently placing of chewing gum and other impulse purchases in the supermarket checkout aisle. Upselling by giving a discount if you buy a bit more is the equivalent of two-for-one and so on." All these techniques can be used to make your site stickier.

Using the tried and test technique of promotional vouchers can also be a highly effective way of holding customers on your site. Printed vouchers contain a code that a visitor types into your site to gain a discount or other promotion. Vouchers can be a superb way of driving traffic to your site as the voucher can't be redeemed anywhere else. An effective voucher campaign can generate a 50 per cent increase in sales if handled properly.

CONTENT IS KING

It's become almost a cliché on commercial websites, but content is still king. Your potential customers have arrived at your site because they are interested in your goods or services. You must now ensure that the content on your site is engaging and relevant to the potential customers who are now browsing your site.

Johnie Thornton, Director, Clarity (www.clarity.uk.net) outlined his thoughts on how content and stickiness have a symbiotic relationship: "If your site is easy to understand and easy to use, then that's the first step towards stickiness. People who want to buy a product covet it, and crave all the information you can throw at them.



Shop sites like HMV.co.uk use tricks like associated product selections to target items to the right audiences

So if you're selling technical widgets people will spend ages pouring over the most detailed specification - or if you're selling desirable items people will want to gaze at the biggest images their modem will allow and imagine how that product will look in their living room or bedroom or kitchen. If it's a holiday - well, they want to know all about the area and start planning their trips to restaurants. In other words, once you've attracted a visitor you can encourage stickiness through the depth of information on your site. Your site needs to be the best sales person you could ever hope to have."

The design and layout of your site is important as this will to a large extent be the sole reason that your site retains first time visitors. People tend to scan web pages when they first see them looking for highlights that give them an impression of what the site is about and if there is anything to interest them. It's no accident that all of the most successful commercial websites follow the same layout. Navigation, special offers, trolley and checkout are all roughly in the same positions.

Now that the web has become an accepted retail environment, consumers have become familiar with how e-commerce enabled websites are laid out and operate. If you want to use a different layout for your store, test this very carefully before you put the site live. Innovation is welcomed online, but for commercial sites concentrate on enabling your customers to purchase the goods they want quickly. If you can wrap these fundamental elements in a great looking website that operates flawlessly your business is assured.

Creating a sticky website isn't a black art reserved for big business with huge budgets. Any business can develop a sticky website once they know their customer base and what they want from their business. Knowing your customers is the foundation onto which a sticky website rests.

Sticky Checklist

1 AVOID THE LOGON BRICK WALL

Don't ask your customers to log in or supply any details before they can look at your catalogue. There will be plenty of time to get their name and address once they have decided to buy something. It is nice to offer regular customers some form of recognition, like showing their name, but if you ask for it too early, it's like an over-familiar salesman that nobody likes.

2 DEATH BY FLASH

Don't use Flash, large images, front-doors or other gimmicks. If you really need a short introduction, then always offer a 'Skip intro' link. A long intro screen will mean 80-90 per cent of your visitors will leave without opening the door. The rest will watch the animation and then leave.

3 SUBTLE DESIGN IS KEY

Do make it easy to find your products and services. Don't rely on clever graphics or animations. Flashing or blinking content will make everyone assume that the rest of the site will give them migraines - so avoid this at all costs.

4 BUILD A SIMPLE TROLLEY

Keep it simple. Make sure that it is obvious how to add something to the shopping basket and use common metaphors. If your customers can't see how to buy, they won't - there is always another store to go to.

5 ACCURATE SEARCHES ARE A MUST

Provide attribute-based searches as well as keywords. If someone is looking for a four-door car on your site, they don't want to have to guess if you called it 'four-door', '4-door' or '4dr' or something else obscure. Create a drop-down list of the common product attributes and supplement your normal keyword searching.

6 KEEP YOUR SITE FRESH

If you have goods that go out of stock, take them off the site or mark them as 'Temporarily out-of-stock'. Make sure that your terms and conditions explain what happens if you do run out of stock on items. The Internet is very good for disposing of dead stock at discount prices, but keep this in a separate section.

7 QUICK CHECKOUT ROUTES

Show special prices and your fastest moving goods on your entry page. Provide hotlinks through to the main part of the catalogue but try and avoid having a 'Buy now' link on the entry page as you want your customers to have a look round at other items in case they buy more.

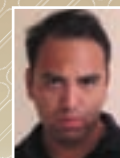
8 MAKE SHOPPING EASY

Offer to keep the name and address of buyers - you can use a cookie on their browser to avoid security issues. This will allow your customers to checkout without having to type all their details in again. They will appreciate it, and it's an incentive to shop again. Give them the option to not store the cookie - after all, they might be in an Internet café.

9 CLEARLY STATED TERMS

Make your promises and guarantees clear and unequivocal. Include them within the checkout process, even if they appear elsewhere on your website. You need to inspire confidence in buyers who have never met you. If you ever have an issue, just make the refund - unhappy people tell two or three times as many others as happy ones do. It's also important to offer all forms of contact address so that you appear approachable.

eCommerce inside view



We speak with
template vendor
Dreamlinestudio's
Victor Rodriguez

Selling web houses

TO ACCOMPANY OUR TEMPLATE GIVEAWAY ON THIS MONTH'S CD, WE HAVE A QUICK WORD WITH THE MAN BEHIND DREAMLINESTUDIO AND FIND OUT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO PROVIDE ALL-IN-ONE SITE SOLUTIONS TO THE MASSES

Firstly, how would you describe the service that Dreamlinestudio provides?

Big design without the big price tags. Dreamlinestudio started out as a digital playground for design experiments, and as time went on, people started to notice and ask for design services. Now we sell designs and do custom work that is aimed at both the big guys who drive Bentley's and the people who prefer the value menu. Design should be affordable for everybody.

What is it in general that sets Dreamlinestudio apart from all the other web template vendors in this market?

Original work. I believe in the quality over quantity to preserve the heart and soul of this company. The template industry is flooded with the same products sold everywhere, people want originality from one company. We sell unlocked source files, which is important for people that want to modify products; we don't force customers to come back to us just to make a buck, we don't play like that. We also have a reputation of being out of our minds.

"Presentation is everything, without it you will find it hard for people to take your online business seriously"

How would you classify the majority of your customer base, and what kinds of requirements do they generally look for in your products?

You name it. From 13-year-old business kids to ego-pumping millionaires. They all have something in common, they want to make a red-carpet entrance to the web world, something that moves them and their visitors. Presentation is everything, without it you will find it hard for people to take your online business seriously.

In a web world where creative originality over content is so important, how much emphasis do you place on providing templates that can easily be personalised?

That's the whole point of templates, so obviously it is very important that they can be modified easily. Some of our templates take it a step forward and use external text files and XML for dynamic text and images. Some of our products require no need for flash software.

Which products or template types are proving most popular with punters these days?

Anything to do with music is very popular. We've helped several bands with websites and media pieces.

Photo galleries are popular with photographers and model agencies. I predict our new line of e-commerce products to be number one by the start of 2007, but I could be wrong, my crystal ball is not accounted for.

From the little guy starting his first home page to the more serious eCommerce outfit, what price points do you have for delivering great site templates?

Our price points are very reasonable. You can have a flash website for as little as \$40 or a full-blown e-commerce solution for the price of a new BMW M3 and some change. We try to use existing modules to a hundred per cent original design to keep the price reasonable. Re-inventing the wheel and slapping a price tag on it is not good business ethics, unless it involves major reworking of code.

Are your template products designed by an in-house team or are you purely a re-seller? How does that work either way?

90 per cent of our products are in-house and we do not work on a re-seller basis. Because we don't have a

re-seller program, we are able to keep prices low. We buy the rights to any other products outright.

Would you ever accept original template submissions from budding designers if they were commercially viable?

We have before, but we tend to have everything built in-house. The reason for occasional outside products, is to break up a design style. You can see a certain style we have and although it has been successful for us, a change a pace benefits everybody nicely. We like to think our designers are the only ninja design masters around, but there is so much talent out there, we embrace that.

If you weren't in the template game, what business would Dreamlinestudio take on instead?

I think we would have been marketing "Dreaminject". A device that allows you to download dreams of your choice into your brain (compatible with Tivo). Okay, so maybe not... but it would definitely be creative. Most likely, Dreamlinestudio would have continued being an experimental website, and I would have taken a Creative Director position somewhere. All I really need is Flash, Photoshop, Massive Attack and a pair of headphones, I keep life simple.

ONES TO WATCH

A look at the Dreamlinestudio products that you shouldn't ignore



ProductionPro

Price: \$180.00 (£95)

We have had a lot of requests for Video Production templates. We like it, hope you do too. Item located in our Top Rated section.



Afterdawn Respawned

Price: \$150.00 (£79)

This one makes us happy for no reason really, but isn't listed on our site. Ask us about it for \$20.00 and just mention *Web Designer*...



Make Time For Art

Price: N/A

We thought we'd just remind you here to take time off for some Art. A message from people that care for you at www.dreamlinestudio.com!

eCommerce gallery

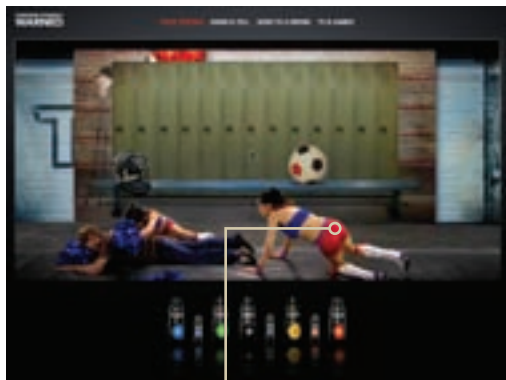
Innovative marketing concepts and interactive content helps TAG pitch its products right to the core of its target audience – good lessons to learn for any online campaign...

The sweet smell of site success www.consideryourselfwarned.com

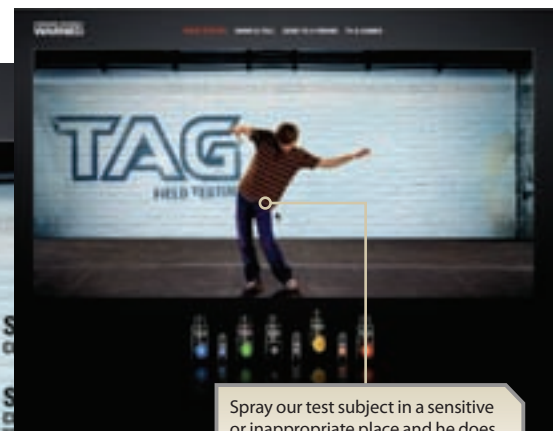
JUST LIKE IN the real world, selling your products or services on the web has to be effectively pitched to your target audience. The promotion or marketing you do will completely bypass the very people you want to appeal to if the language or message you send out doesn't make commercial sense. Follow these rules and with the right pitch you should be able to sell a ketchup lollipop to a man in white gloves, get it? Well perhaps this month's case in point, TAG deodorant's [consideryourselfwarned.com](http://www.consideryourselfwarned.com), will underline the point rather better. This beautifully executed site from design agency Mekanism plays on the tried and tested weakness of every heterosexual male to flog its range. Similar to campaigns from brands like Lynx or men's magazine *Nuts*, it essentially uses a combination of Flash video and drag-and-drop interaction to suggest the level of heightened female attraction attributed to spraying on TAG. All pretty light-hearted in content, it does however go a long way to underline the use of web technology to reinforce the communication of a brand.



The splash screen sets the tone for a provocative marketing play that remains humorous and good natured throughout



It isn't always clear how desirable the effects are, as in this instance our hero is bombarded off his feet by a 'tag' team of cheerleaders



Spray our test subject in a sensitive or inappropriate place and he does his best to duck and weave out of the way of the oncoming blast

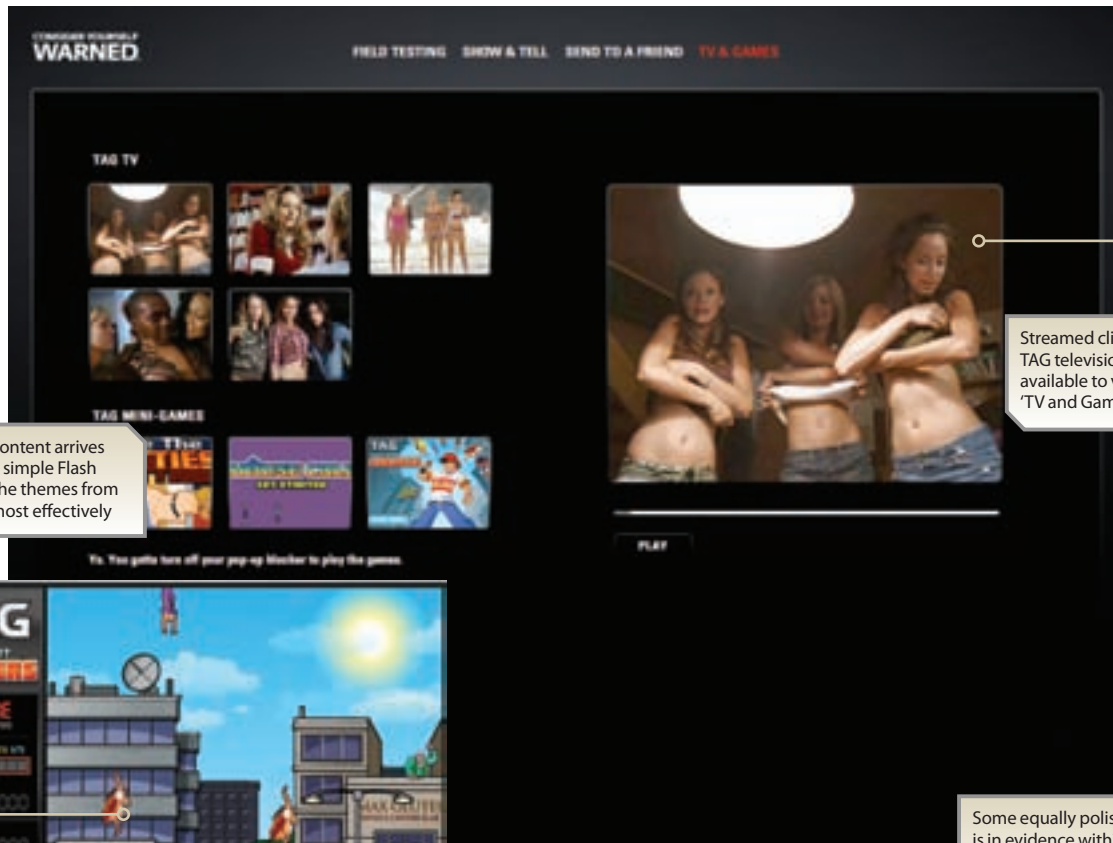
The site has had many accolades including Site Of The Day awards for both thefwa.com and Adobe. Now that's an endorsement!



Our test subject doesn't know what he's in for as the visitor selects which TAG deodorant will produce what reaction when sprayed

ECOMMERCE GALLERY

“Selling your products or services on the web has to be effectively pitched to your target audience”



Added interactive content arrives in the form of some simple Flash games that follow the themes from the rest of the site most effectively

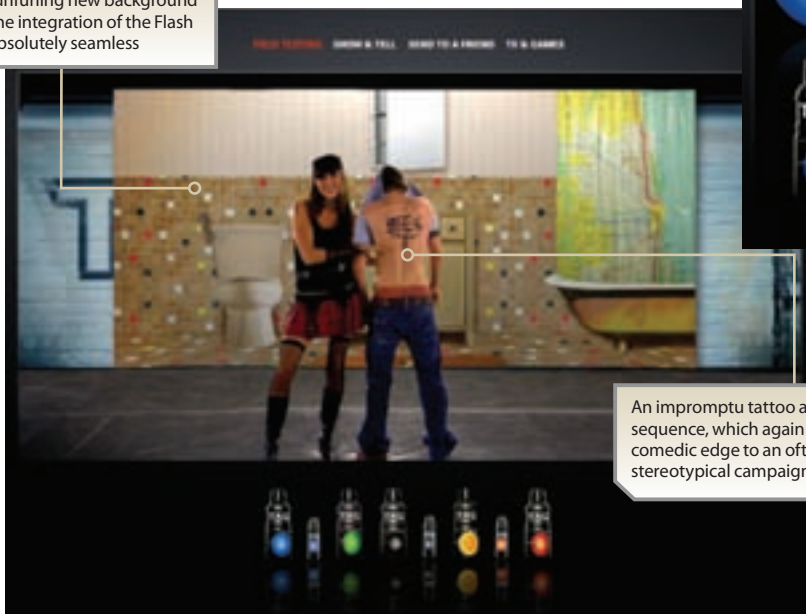
Streamed clips from associated TAG television commercials are also available to view under a thoughtful 'TV and Games' section



Some equally polished Flash work is in evidence within this simple round-up menu of all the main TAG products being promoted



Many of the hilarious sequences begin by unfurling new background scenery; the integration of the Flash video is absolutely seamless



An impromptu tattoo awaits during this sequence, which again underlines the comedic edge to an often predictable or stereotypical campaign message

VERDICT

Heaven scent:

An inventive yet unashamedly clichéd approach to marketing, this site not only shows the strength in a clear promotional message, but also a commitment to delivering entertaining Flash content.

WEB HOSTING guide

KEEP AN EYE ON THE LATEST WEB PACKAGES AND DEALS WITH OUR COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ISPS

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. Many clients will also expect you to find it.

In all honesty, the choice can be slightly bewildering thanks to the sheer amount 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 | POP3 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 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 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.uk.net) | Starter | 0870 8726560 | £99 | 50MB | 1.5GB | 10 | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9Net Avenue (www.9netave.uk.net) | Professional | 0870 8726560 | £199 | 100MB | 2.5GB | 25 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9Net Avenue (www.9netave.uk.net) | 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 Starter Plan | 0845 203 1000 | £19.99 | 400MB | 1GB | 10 | X | X | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk) | CWCS Entry | 0845 203 1000 | £109.89 | 2GB | 10GB | 30 | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk) | CWCS PRO | 0845 203 1000 | £19.99 | 5GB | 20GB | 50 | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk) | CWCS Business 1 | 0845 203 1000 | £169 | 5GB | 30GB | 100 | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk) | CWCS Windows Reseller 1 | 0845 203 1000 | £39.99 | 20GB | 50GB | Unlimited | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk) | CWCS Windows Reseller 2 | 0845 203 1000 | £59.99 | Unlimited | 1GB | 10 | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk) | CWCS Linux VDS Entry | 0845 203 1000 | £39.99 | 50GB RAID | 80GB | Variable | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk) | CWCS Windows VDS Entry | 0845 203 1000 | £46.99 | 8GB RAID | 80GB | Variable | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk) | CWCS Linux Entry Dedicated | 0845 203 1000 | £99.99 | 80GB RAID | 300GB | Variable | ✓ | ✓ | 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 | 0800 652 2110 | £185 | 300MB | 1.5GB | 5 | ✓ | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Datex (www.datex.net) | Level2 | 0800 652 2110 | £259 | 400MB | 2GB | 10 | ✓ | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Datex (www.datex.net) | Level3 | 0800 652 2110 | £330 | 500MB | 3GB | 50 | ✓ | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |



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 |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 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 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | N/A | ✓ |
| 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 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Future Internet Services (www.futureinternetservices.com) | Beginner3 | 0845 641 0776 | £ 9.99 | 40 MB | 300 MB | 3 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Future Internet Services (www.futureinternetservices.com) | Basic3 | 0845 641 0776 | £ 14.99 | 100 MB | 1,500 MB | 5 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Future Internet Services (www.futureinternetservices.com) | Standard3 | 0845 641 0776 | £ 22.99 | 200 MB | 2,500 MB | 10 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Future Internet Services (www.futureinternetservices.com) | Business3 | 0845 641 0776 | £ 39.99 | 500 MB | 5,000 MB | 50 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Future Internet Services (www.futureinternetservices.com) | Advanced3 | 0845 641 0776 | £ 79.99 | 1,200 MB | 10,000 MB | 100 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Future Internet Services (www.futureinternetservices.com) | Professional3 | 0845 641 0776 | £ 119.99 | 2,000 MB | 15,000 MB | unlimited | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 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 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |



Christian Technology

www.christiantechnology.co.uk
As well as having an endorsement from God, this firm ranks among the top ten UK companies according to Webperf and has a plethora of options for Unix or Windows platforms. Packages range from £55-£250 yearly, and all include excellent telephone and email support, a Plesk web control panel, numerous POP3 accounts, and provisions for PHP, SSL, Perl and CGI.

Webfusion

www.webfusion.co.uk

The colourful home page speaks volumes about this respected hosting company. With four main 'Fusion' packages spanning Starter, Professional, Business, and Developer requirements, there's no excuse to not find a solution. From £5.95 per month you can welcome traffic from 15GB-100GB, access 1GB-12GB of disk space, and use up to 1,500 mail boxes. All have control panels, web mail, anti-virus, and Windows or Linux.



WEB HOSTING guide

| 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 |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk) | Reseller Professional | 0845 644 7750 | £299.99 | Unlimited | Unlimited | Unlimited | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk) | Windows 2000 Unlimited Plan | 0208 777 8881 | £29.50-£499 | 100-5000MB | 2-80GB | Unlimited | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk) | Resellers Plan | 0208 777 8881 | £200-800 | 2GB | 30-50GB | Unlimited | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk) | Silver | 0808 180 1880 | £79.50 | 150MB | 3GB | 5 | ✓ | X | Option | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk) | Gold | 0808 180 1880 | £139.50 | 300MB | 5GB | 10 | ✓ | ✓ | Option | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk) | Gold Plus | 0808 180 1880 | £189.50 | 450MB | 10GB | 30 | ✓ | ✓ | Option | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk) | Platinum | 0808 180 1880 | £359.50 | 600MB | 20GB | 50 | ✓ | ✓ | Option | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk) | Platinum Plus | 0808 180 1880 | £599.50 | 1.2GB | 40GB | 10 | ✓ | ✓ | Option | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk) | Email Plus | 0808 180 1880 | £49.95 | 50MB | N/A | 5 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk) | Lite | 08712 773494 | £14.99 | 25 | 1GB | 5 | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk) | Starter | 08712 773494 | £23.49 | 50 | 1GB | 20 | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk) | Standard | 08712 773494 | £52.49 | 100 | 1GB | 50 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk) | Professional | 08712 773494 | £68.99 | 250 | 1GB | unlimited | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk) | Business | 08712 773494 | £119.99 | 500 | 1GB | unlimited | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk) | Corporate | 08712 773494 | £199.99 | 1000 | 1GB | unlimited | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Internetters (www.internettters.co.uk) | Unix Basic 50 | 0870 160 5555 | £70 | 50 | 1GB | 5 | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Internetters (www.internettters.co.uk) | Unix Frontpage 50 | 0870 160 5555 | £100 | 50 | 1GB | 5 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Internetters (www.internettters.co.uk) | Unix Standard 200 | 0870 160 5555 | £160 | 200 | 2GB | 20 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Internetters (www.internettters.co.uk) | Unix Superior 500 | 0870 160 5555 | £220 | 500 | 3GB | 50 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Internetters (www.internettters.co.uk) | Windows 50 | 0870 160 5555 | £100 | 50 | 1GB | 5 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Internetters (www.internettters.co.uk) | Windows 200 | 0870 160 5555 | £190 | 200 | 2GB | 20 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Internetters (www.internettters.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 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

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 |
|---|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Netscalibur (www.netscalibur.com) | Netscalibur Web Windows | 0800 072 0000 | £324 | 100MB | 5GB | 1 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk) | Lite | 08700 599 599 | £29.90 | 200MB | 1GB | 1 | £1.50 | X | X | £1.50/mailbox | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk) | Plus | 08700 599 599 | £49.90 | 400MB | 2GB | 5 | £1.50 | £1 | X | £1.50/mailbox | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk) | Advance | 08700 599 599 | £99.90 | 1GB | 5GB | 10 | ✓ | ✓ | X | £1.50/mailbox | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk) | Pro | 08700 599 599 | £199.90 | 3GB | 15GB | 50 | ✓ | ✓ | X | £1.50/mailbox | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk) | Enterprise | 08700 599 599 | £499.90 | 10GB | 25GB | Unlimited | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Nildram (www.nildram.net) | Unix | 08701 608602 | £120 | 10MB | 5GB | 1 | X | ✓ | X | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Nildram (www.nildram.net) | Windows | 08701 608602 | £120 | 10MB | 5GB | 1 | ✓ | X | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Nildram (www.nildram.net) | Shared SQL Business 50 | 08701 608602 | £300 | 50MB | 25GB | 1 | X | ✓ | X | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Nildram (www.nildram.net) | Shared SQL Business 100 | 08701 608602 | £600 | 100MB | 50GB | 1 | X | ✓ | X | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Pay As You Host (www.pay-as-you-host.com) | Standard | 0870 284 0287 | £47.88 | 50MB | 512MB | Unlimited | X | ✓ | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 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.

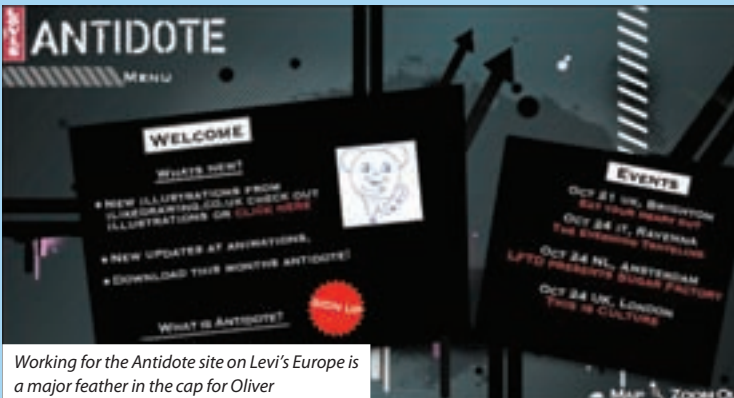
SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

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!

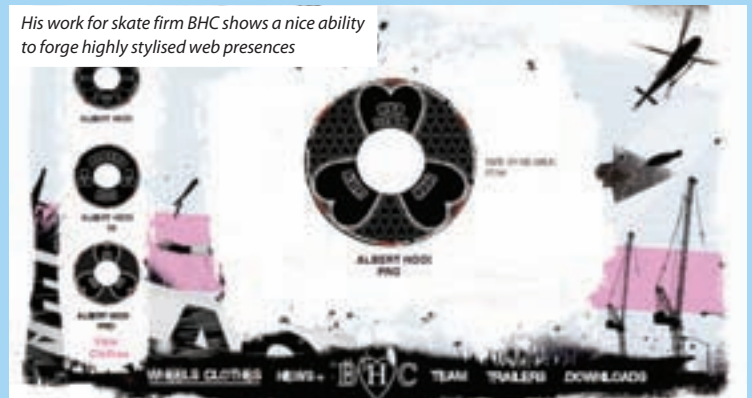
THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING



A nice and simple treatment of the work he wants to show off makes Oliver's portfolio a winner



Working for the Antidote site on Levi's Europe is a major feather in the cap for Oliver



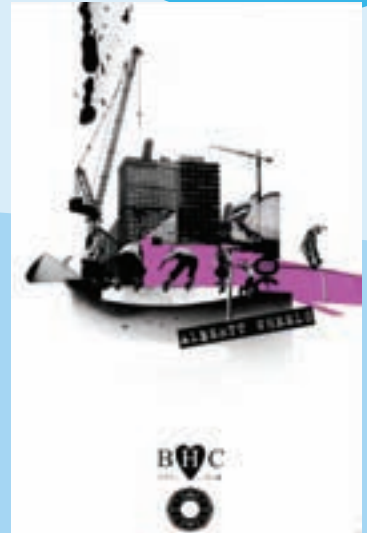
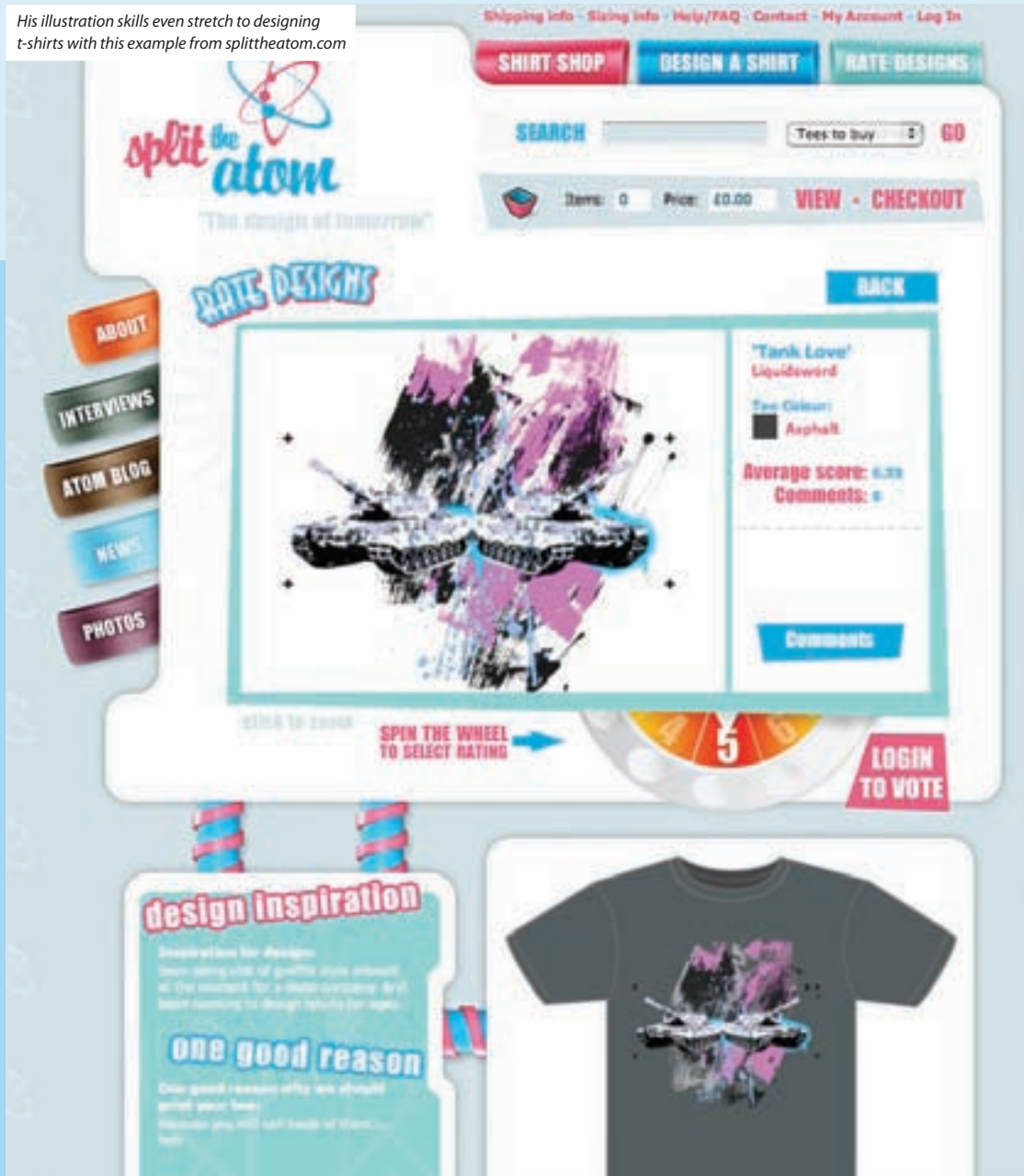
His work for skate firm BHC shows a nice ability to forge highly stylised web presences

GETTING YOUR FOOT on the creative ladder can be tough when trying to secure that career we all crave. We hope that by profiling the next wave of web and graphic design professionals across these pages will help you get a bit more positive industry exposure...

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

His illustration skills even stretch to designing t-shirts with this example from splittheatom.com



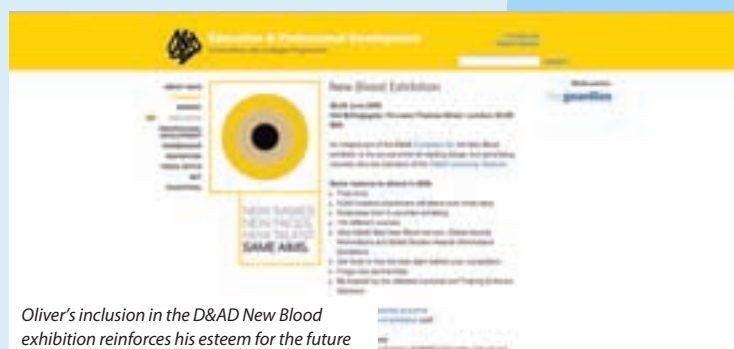
Oliver Hooper

www.nalin-design.com

Skills: Photoshop, Illustrator, Dreamweaver, Flash

Employment status: Looking for work, just graduated

Buoyed by his recent graduation from Epsom's University of Creative Arts, Oliver Hooper is hoping his bachelor's degree in Graphic Design: New Media can help to secure him the career of his dreams. What will do him the power of good is the completion of a brand new portfolio site at ruthlessgravity.co.uk, where an awesome showcase of original illustrations and web site projects are aplenty. What's really impressive and unique here is Oliver's ability to conjure complete campaigns for previous freelance clients like Black Hearted Collaboration, where poster work combines with a similarly themed Flash domain. An eclectic and modern style with an effective use of vector drawings and photographic collage is infused across subsequent efforts for the Levi's Antidote site, a project set by agency Lateral, I Love Dust poster campaigns, and Sprite. His talent was also exhibited during June's prestigious D&AD New Blood Exhibition 2006, where audiences and judges alike agreed that this boy can look forward to an extremely rosy future indeed.



Oliver's inclusion in the D&AD New Blood exhibition reinforces his esteem for the future

Tom Bagshaw

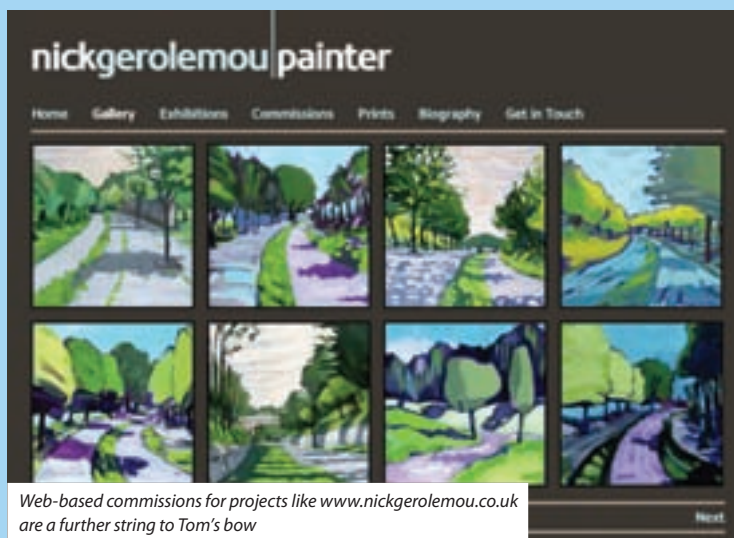
www.mostlywanted.com

Skills: Painter, Photoshop, Dreamweaver

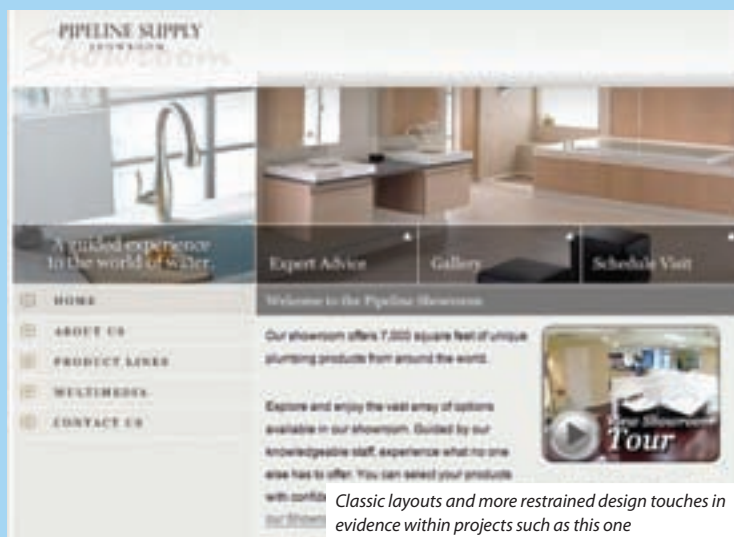
Employment status: Freelance illustrator and designer

Make no mistake about it, Tom Bagshaw is decidedly old-school when it comes to his creative upbringing. More akin to using oils, acrylic paint, and a sketchpad during time spent studying traditional art at Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education, it wasn't until a 'brush' with Photoshop that he was convinced to make the leap to a digital palette. This painterly approach has actually stood him in good stead and allows his work to marry the best aspects of both worlds and blur the lines somewhat. "Everything I do these days has been created entirely in it, or been through Photoshop at some point."

Largely working under the name mostlywanted, which doubles up as his online URL, he turned full-time freelancer in 2004. Anyone interested in commissioning on the strength of what they find via the web will be delighted to find a tasteful portfolio packed with examples, including web stuff!



Web-based commissions for projects like www.nickgerolemou.co.uk are a further string to Tom's bow



Classic layouts and more restrained design touches in evidence within projects such as this one



