

web

designer

DREAMWEAVER FLASH PHOTOSHOP



FREE CD▶▶

See inside back cover for more...

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www.webdesignermag.co.uk

ISSUE 125

Innovative
Flash
designon the disc
FLASH
RESOURCES
worth
over
£1000

- BUILD AN IMAGE MIXER
- CREATE GRAVITY EFFECTS
- THEME YOUR SITE TEMPLATES

STANDING OUT
FROM THE CROWDTop the search rankings with our
insider guide to getting noticed

HOW TO...

- Forge a gravity-effect GUI in **Flash**
- Create a 3D image mixer application
- Use **Photoshop** to achieve distressed effects
- Complete a shopping cart in **Dreamweaver**
- Learn how to code in Object-Oriented **PHP**
- Discover blog design with **WordPress**

ip
IMAGINE
PUBLISHING



Nick La

GIVING YOUR BLOG SITE SOME WORDPRESS CHARM

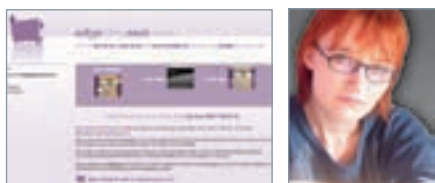
WordPress is a free blogging tool that is taking the web design world by storm – and Nick La is a pretty big fan. This month we take a break from the norm and show you how to not only get going with this handy tool, but also how to go about customising it.



Darren Richardson

MORE BOUNCE PER OUNCE WITH THIS GRAVITY GUI

This month Darren gets going on a special two-part tutorial looking at weird and wonderful interfaces. It's all about gravity with this one, using animated bouncing coins to demonstrate motion blur effects and drop madness within Flash 8.



Rachel Andrew

EXTENDING LAST MONTH'S PHP SHOPPING CART

If *Web Designer 124's* primer on setting up your own eRetail facilities left you wondering how to not only extend the functionality, but also maintain it, then catch the concluding part to this PHP coding masterclass now on page 66!



Mark Shufflebottom

MASHING UP IMAGES LIKE SOME KIND OF VISUAL DEE-JAY

Mixing funky 3D sequences with an equally funky selection of background visuals adequately describes Mark's tutorial duties this month, with an exercise inspired by content from Nike's always gorgeous home page. The results are stunning.

COVER ARTIST

weirdink (www.freewebs.com/weirdink)

According to reliable sources, the man behind "weirdink" is an illustration and character design enthusiast. His favourite software is Caffeine OSX, Rollies Pro and Adobe Illustrator. He used to be a Photoshop buff, but he now thinks that vectors look "damn sweet". When not making up stories and doodling, he likes to make up stories and doodle a bit.

Welcome



Let's face it, if you're looking to drop a brand new web presence into the metropolis that is the modern web – you're in danger of being lost, and fast.

Never has the intense vying for attention been as fervent as it is today, with the internet population exploding like none of us could have anticipated. These days web designers need not only be able to draw people in with fantastic-looking content, but also be aware of the tricks they need to get their URLs into people's browsers. Yes we're talking about promotion this issue folks, and specifically what you need to do to rise to the top of search engines like Google. Unless you've thousands to spend on TV advertising campaigns or billboards and the like, this is the only truly effective chance you have of grabbing visitors by the proverbials.

So we've asked the ever-intrepid David Howell to delve deep into the murky world of search optimisation and seek out answers from the professionals themselves. What are the cool practical tips that actually work wonders overnight? Which myths and legends could end up crowning you a keyword king or a listings outcast? Turn to page 26 to find out. You'll then find the perfect solution for standing out from the crowds at December's Flash on the Beach show, with an exciting pre-show preview feature offering the low-down on the mouthwatering highlights. Anyone lucky enough to have a ticket for this sell-out event

can find insider information from the organisers, schedule picks, and words of encouragement from the incredible line-up of speakers.

Not to be outdone, we also have another awesome Behind the Scenes arriving courtesy of the beautiful people at 2Advanced Studios. Voted as most influential in last month's FWA poll feature, they kindly talk to us about work on their version 5 'Attractor' site and various other recent projects. Cap that lot off with some special tutorials on popular blog building tool WordPress and some seriously cool developer extensions for Firefox 2, and you've got a magazine capable of sticking its neck out of any crowd.

Mark Billen
DEPUTY EDITOR

Editor's picks

Those other things *Web Designer 125* will be remembered for...



44-49

Build an online 3D image-mixing application like the fantastic one found at www.nike.com



72-75

Learn PHP coding in an object-oriented style with Stefan Mischook's expert guide



86-88

Discover how to use web developer-based Firefox extensions with Steve Jenkins



*e***Mag**

gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



OWN YOUR C

www.ownyourc.com

Designed by: **AgencyNet and Cactus**

The surreal and rather quirky world of C-Ville is the Own Your C youth tobacco prevention and cessation media campaign. It's intent on reaching a target audience of impressionable 13 to 18 year-olds to help them learn about the facts and dangers of smoking. The website uses many different styles of animation, from the illustrative to the photographic, for maximum appeal. The navigation, though a little confusing at first, is full of many different delights in which to explore and learn.



In the Choices menu you can use the C-coins you've collected to change the look and feel of the whole site

ANOTHER CHANCE to wax lyrical over the utter loveliness of all things Flash and HTML, with this month's slightly revamped site showcase. Annotations are out, so just sit back and enjoy the finest eye-candy that the modern World Wide Web can muster!

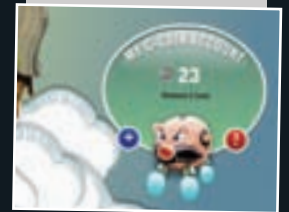
GOT IT? FLAUNT IT!
If you know of an exciting website or have perhaps built one you regard as being mighty fine then tell us about it. We're always interested to hear about great URLs or stunning site launches so don't be shy, drop us a line at webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk

This site is all about the idea of choices and each section of the island will take you to a different area for you to select and gain valuable advice in a fun and unique way



Site Highlight

The C-coins you pick up on your travels in C-Ville can be used to unlock smart downloadable content like new desktop wallpapers and messenger buddy icons



Roll over any of C-Ville's inhabitants and you're rewarded with a top quirky animation. Some will even give you a C-coin for your trouble!

gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



Site Highlight

The portfolio showcase is probably the biggest highlight of the website where you can select from the thumbnails to reveal a larger image, all set in fantastic background imagery



On selecting a page to navigate, the red spotted interactive elements are as superbly subtle as the animations that take you there

This website has moved away from the more traditional forms of website navigation, but this is one of the site's strengths as there's no chance of losing your way



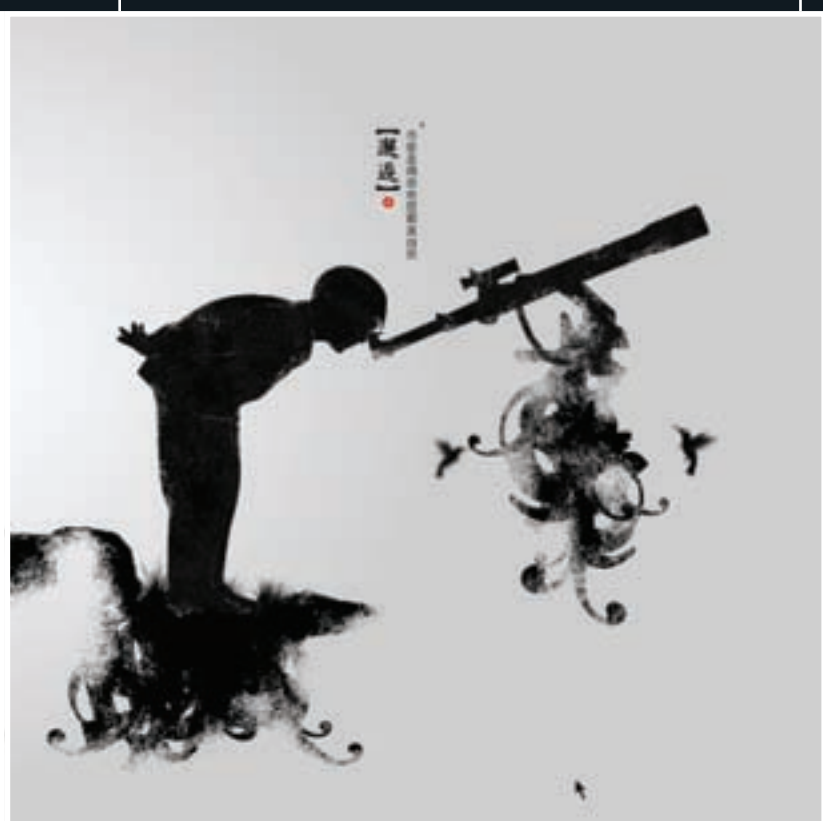


JONATHAN YEUN (2006)

www.jonathanyuen.com

Designed by: Jonathan Yeun

If you're looking for some design inspiration with a touch of substance and simplicity, take your browser for a treat by visiting the online presence of award-winning Singapore-based graphic designer Jonathan Yeun. What you'll find is a beautifully crafted website that can boast fluid animation and interactivity without arrogance, in turn putting many portfolio based websites to shame. The site's content is divided into relevant sections of creativity, origin, curiosity and opportunity all subtly identified by various animated wildlife. Most definitely a website to share with your web designer friends.



gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



The thumbnails tease you with the cropped images in black and white and highlight as you roll over, introducing each project in a perfect manner



Site Highlight

On viewing the body of works on show on this site you are taken to an instant movie clip so you can see for yourself the talent of the company. You can adjust the frame of each clip when your mouse hovers on top of the clip



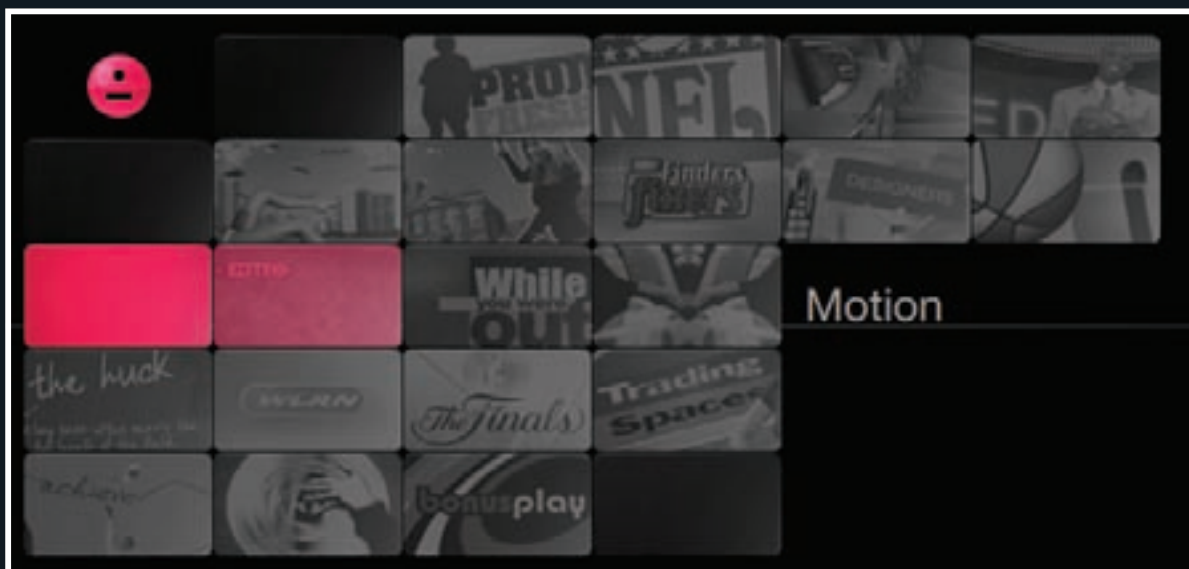
The layout of the tiles enables the website to add to their portfolio, with no major problems to the navigation making the website more versatile

THE THIRD EYE DESIGN GROUP

www.wearethirdeye.com

Designed by: The Third Eye Design Group

For those companies within the highly competitive digital media industries it's crucial that their website is that little bit more special in order for them to be able to dance on top of the pile of competitors, while also showing off their finely tuned skills. As for Miami based post production studio We Are Third Eye, they're moonwalking. The company is a hub of creative digital media, outputting projects for broadcast, print and interactive design industries. The website's interface is a grid of interactive tiles and provides the perfect interactive experience.





Site Highlight

The highlight of this site is the Laboratory section which is brimming with experimental flash projects of all shapes and sizes



SOULGRID ACTIVE MEDIA

www.soulgrid.com/archives06

Designed by: **Niklaus Gerber**

For a look at something that's that little bit more experimental why not take yourself over to the excellent personal portfolio of Swiss web designer Niklaus Gerber, for a website filled to the brim with experimental visual effects all embedded in a clinically clean and minimalist Flash environment. The navigation zips across the screen energetically for each of the different sections that you select and showcases his work from his portfolio archive starting from 2001. Most definitely a website worth checking out if you like your Flash websites and are keen to experience something unique.

Within the website's archives there are plenty of interactive play for you via the experiments that are being showcased



gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP

This icon on the top left enables the user to activate or deactivate subtitles to the website's video show reels, a fantastic feature that adds more usability

ADOBE ACROBAT EXPERIENCE

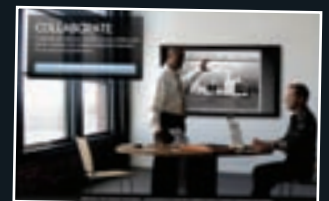
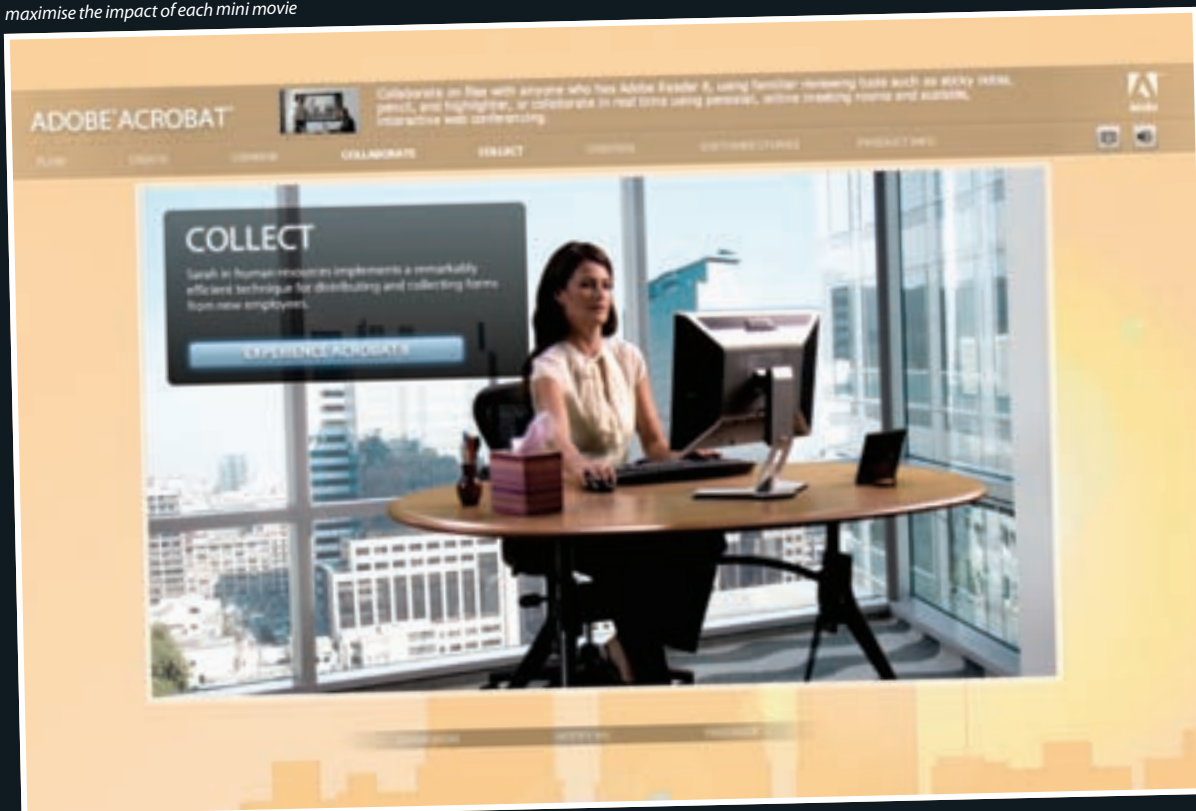
www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/experience

Designed by: 1st movement

If you take a trip to this site you'll no doubt be impressed by Adobe's highly polished new offering, an online showcase of their latest version of Adobe Acrobat. The website is certainly one of the most attractive sites online at the moment, and coming from a digital media software giant like Adobe you would expect nothing less. It's a broadband experience that is immersive and sticky and an absolute pleasure to visit due to its effortless navigation and entertaining video. Certainly a site to bookmark and emulate.



The simple web page layout and navigation enables the video to take centre stage in order to maximise the impact of each mini movie



Site Highlight

Each section on this website produces a mini video clip that educates each visitor about the attributes of Adobe's new package in a truly stylish manner that we'd expect from such an established brand





*e***Mag**

bulletin

HOT NEWS FROM THE WEB DESIGN WORLD



Rob Ford, Founder and principal of theFWA.com, gives his monthly pick of the coolest sites out there



Audi R8

www.audi.com/R8

Designed by: argonauteng2.de & rtt.ag

Full-on, high impact, pedal-to-the-metal site, with jaw-dropping 3D, motion and video FX. Prepare to be wowed!



Heiwa Alpha Inc.

heiwa-alpha.co.jp

Designed by: heiwa-alpha.co.jp

Pure eye candy from Japan. This CPU intensive site is totally unique and guaranteed to surprise.

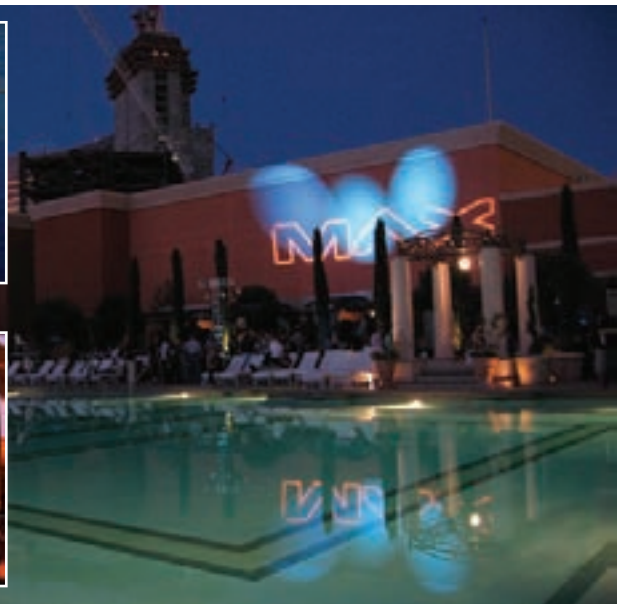


UNIQLO

www.uniqlo.com/us

Designed by: tha.jp

Head straight for the Uniqlo Explorer to get the best out of this site, with its progressive levels of actionscripting.



Apollo, we have lift-off!

LATEST PRODUCT DEVELOPMENTS ARE UNVEILED BY ADOBE DURING THEIR FLAGSHIP OCTOBER CONFERENCE IN LAS VEGAS

OCTOBER WAS another big month for new web design king Adobe, with its Las Vegas MAX conference causing a buzz around two hugely significant product developments. This year's show marked the first since Macromedia's acquisition and was always set to provide the most telling pointer to where Adobe wants to take this market.

Having first covered it in the Flex 2 feature in *Web Designer* 123, Apollo proved to be the biggest draw to the Nevada grounds with its intriguing capabilities for extending the reach of Rich Internet Applications. The theory is that content will be free to run outside the browser and offer genuine cross-operating system support, with dotcom heavy-weights MySpace and eBay both demonstrating prototype projects with the new technology.

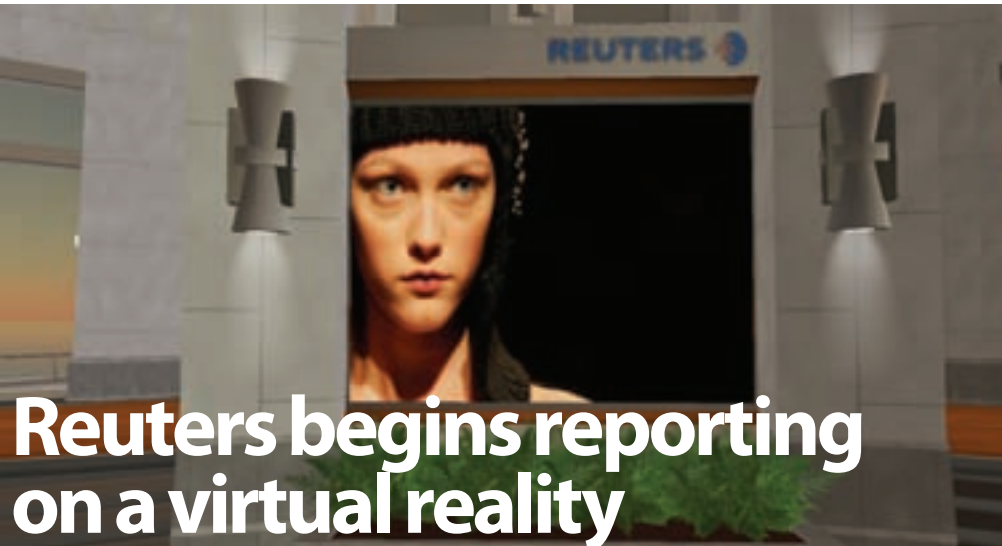
"Adobe and its community of customers and developers are reinventing the future of the internet and design in virtually every medium," says chief software architect for Adobe Kevin Lynch. "MAX 2006 is both a milestone in the integration of Adobe and Macromedia and a reflection of what's possible when all these creative forces come together. The power and expanding reach of Adobe's technologies are virtually unprecedented, and Apollo will give a glimpse of the future and the incredible

innovations ahead in the Web 2.0 world." The company plans to invest over £50 million in venture capital over the coming years, offering funds to those companies leveraging Adobe platforms and particularly those developing in Apollo. It all forms a core for something they're christening as an "ecosystem for the Adobe Engagement Platform", which will build on the ubiquity of the Flash Player and Adobe Reader software to create more effective application types.

It also announced a public beta of a Rich Internet Application for the digital publishing sector called Digital Editions. The Flash based tool has native support for the PDF format, as well as XHTML rendering for migrating between differently sized device displays. Also it should allow commercially distributed digital publications to be read more universally. "Adobe Digital Editions builds on the ubiquitous reach of PDF and Flash and will further energise the eBook and digital publishing market", enthuses chief operating officer at Adobe, Shantanu Narayen. Visit labs.adobe.com for more.

"APOLLO WILL GIVE A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE AND THE INCREDIBLE INNOVATIONS AHEAD"

ADOBE CHIEF SOFTWARE ARCHITECT, KEVIN LYNCH



Reuters begins reporting on a virtual reality

AS NEWS AGENCIES JOIN THE FOLD, THE LINE BETWEEN SECOND-LIFE AND REAL-LIFE BECOMES EVEN MORE BLURRED

POPULAR ONLINE WORLD *Second Life* is growing at such a rapid rate, even news agencies are now getting in on the act.

With almost one million members (400,000 of which are regular visitors), it's little wonder that huge corporations such as Nike and Amazon are eager to be virtually viable. Car maker Toyota is planning to offer a virtual version of its Scion xB van to *Second Lifers* and BBC Radio One has gone so far as to rent an entire island upon which to stage music concerts. Now the mighty Reuters news agency has opened, staffed by real-life media correspondent Adam Pasick (avatar name Adam Reuters). A virtual reporter in *Second Life*, Pasick will report on the lives and happenings of its residents. "As

strange as it might seem, it's not that different from being a reporter in the real world," he comments. "Once you get used to it, it becomes very much like the job I've been doing for years."

One issue that Pasick will be exploring is the intersection between real and virtual economies, something that has caught the attention of the external media. The currency in *Second Life*, Linden dollars (named so after the game's creator), can be converted into US dollars, meaning that many regular players can subsequently make a significant income from their game transactions. On an average day, the *Second Life* economy turnover is worth more than a staggering \$400,000 or £214,000.



Selling your skins online

A BRAND NEW CUSTOMISABLE COMMUNITY PROVIDES A MARKETPLACE FOR TRADING FUNKY FLASH WARES

WALLOP IS THE latest addition to the host of web communities that believes it offers an exciting twist. Not only a great way to communicate across the online ether, it also allows users to fully customise the way it looks and behaves. Citing the desire we have for individuality in the clothes we buy and mobile phones we chat on, this network uses a system of 'Mods' and 'skins' to tailor and tweak the client interface. It even hopes to convince professional Flash developers to submit and sell these widgets through a special channel found at designer.wallop.com. The Mods can be built from existing .swf projects or from

Wallop's own freely downloadable API kits; they can range from interactive backgrounds or desktops, animation sequences, mouse toys, games or unique interpretations on existing social software. These can then be uploaded to the community's integrated marketplace where an assortment of tools can be implemented to promote and sell each Mod, whilst being instantly available to Wallop users. Prices and other options remain firmly under your control regardless of whether you actually use the community itself recreationally, making this a highly entertaining and viable forum for making some extra creative cash.

NEWS in brief



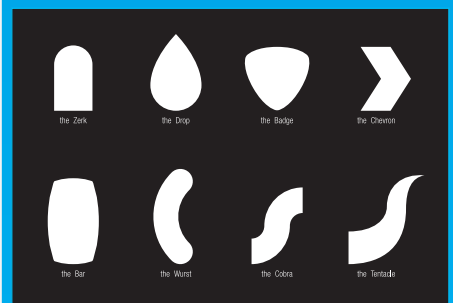
NEW BROWSERS

After more than five years, Microsoft has announced Internet Explorer 7. Following an arduous testing regime, the browser comes complete with new features such as tabbed browsing, the ability to search the web directly and an anti-fraud system. Mozilla's Firefox 2.0 browser is competing with this update with its own new features, including an in-line spell checker and anti-phishing facilities.



COOL SITE LAUNCH

Creative director Lisa Tse has created a new website for Nav Sidhu and Cécile Simon's communications agency. Its clientele are drawn from diverse luxury and automotive markets, so the site (sidhuandsimon.com) has to reflect the company's strengths in this particular field. Sidhu and Simon were pleased with the end result, proudly stating: "The site has been overwhelmed with praise and positive comment from our peers in the F1, automotive and luxury industry."



VORMATOR PROJECT

A new design project, Vormator, is giving artists a unique opportunity. Each artist is given the same eight shapes to create work for a new book exploring art based on limited means. If successful, artists get their 'creation' published as well as the opportunity to promote themselves with a short bio and mention of their website. Visit www.vormator.com.

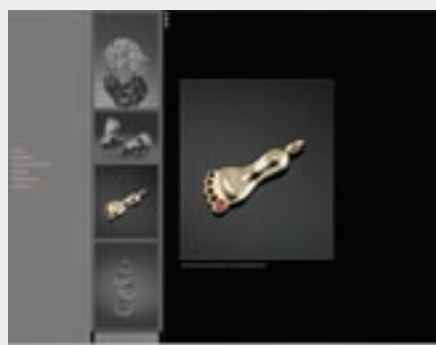


Google gobbles up YouTube

AS THE PREMIER SEARCH ENGINE BUYS THE TOP VIDEO BLOGGING SITE, COPYRIGHT ISSUES SPOIL THE PARTY

IT'S BEEN CONFIRMED that Google has acquired YouTube – which boasts 100 million videos viewed a day and an estimated 72 million visitors a month – for a staggering \$1.65 billion (£883 million). “The YouTube team has built an exciting and powerful media platform that complements Google’s mission to organise the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful,” says Google chief executive Eric Schmidt. He claims that the two companies are “natural partners” in the quest to

offer a media entertainment service to users. Despite the company’s optimism about the collaboration, some are concerned that it may morph into the next Napster, shrouded by copyright infringement and legal threats. “There are still some huge risks that Google could be stuck with some very expensive lawsuits,” warns Forrester Research analyst, Josh Bernoff. “Publishers at the heart of any infringements have put their lawyers on red alert.” Visit www.youtube.com to see what you think.



Instant websites go live

NEW DIY TOOL MAKES FLASH DEVELOPMENT TOO EASY

AS SEASONED WEB DESIGNERS and developers it can sometimes be very easy to forget how daunting the prospect of creating a web presence can be for a novice. However, a new service has just launched that promises to take the pain out of creating extremely interactive and slick sites for a yearly subscription of just £99. Digital Galleries is behind the easy-to-use template tool for advanced DIY web design, which gives even complete beginners the chance to construct Flash based websites in less than 24 hours. Not only are there a range of intuitive and versatile site templates

available to choose from, but the service also handles email facilities and additional eCommerce functionality via a simple control panel. Hosting and domain names are included, while subscribers can easily take control of content maintenance once their content has gone live. Founder Kinvara Rugge-Price remarks: “I wanted to give entrepreneurs and small businesses the opportunity to not only get online, but to create professional websites that can manage and update themselves at an affordable price.” Find out more and view a selection of sample sites by visiting www.digitalgalleries.co.uk.

TOP Downloads



FONTFACE

www.fontface.com

If you love your fonts, head to FontFace. This site is jam-packed full of them, including over one thousand that are completely free! Just check out ‘Font of the Day’ for the latest free font, browse through the archives for the best on the web, or check out the ‘Top 25.’ The site also contains links to recommended font sites.



MATTON IMAGES

www.matton.com

This site contains a comprehensive collection of digital royalty-free stock, including photography, illustrations, fonts, music and clipart. You’ll find the most comprehensive royalty-free image library of over five thousand CDs and over a million single images. They’re easy to search and ready for immediate download.



TEMPLATESBOX

www.templatesbox.com

This site offers web designers an abundance of high quality website templates, Photoshop web page layouts, Flash templates, logo templates plus many other high quality web graphics. In addition to subscription templates, users can choose from a wide range of free templates, available for download immediately.



DREAMSTIME

www.dreamstime.com

Dreamstime allows the user to browse through a wall of thumbnail images, all royalty-free and available for downloading. Extremely simply to use, all you need do is register and download the image you’re after. Registered members can choose from up to seven free images a week and use them for just about anything they want.

Spotted an über-cool gadget that every self-respecting web designer should own?

Tell us about it by emailing

webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk

A fresh pick of those funky designer gadgets that have grabbed our attention in the *Web Designer* office this month

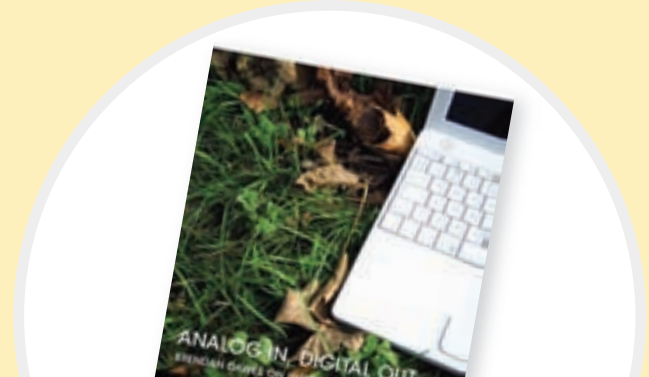


One For All's Kameleon Generation III universal remote

Price: **£99.99**

Web: www.oneforall.co.uk

If you're tired with having an abundance of remote controls with varying technological purpose, then why not have One For All? The company's universal remote offers you complete control over all your separate home devices including TV, DVD, Sat cable, Freeview, amplifier – and even lights! You might expect such a versatile remote to be a cumbersome beast, but the Kameleon Generation III is blessed with a stylish shape that fits perfectly in your hand. It also includes the ability to transfer functions from your existing remotes, and upgrade via the web or phone.



Analog In, Digital Out: Brendan Dawes on Interaction Design

Price: **£28.99**

Web: www.peachpit.com

Published by: **New Riders**

It's all very well learning the art of web design from a step-by-step instruction manual, but sometimes you want a more subjective, behind-the-scenes look. As creative director of reputable interactive design group magneticNorth, Brendan Dawes invites readers to share some of the key lessons he has learned within the industry, with over 30 personal and practical topics covered.

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

We hear what's on your mind about the magazine or the web design world at large with another delve into our postbag



One reader has written in with a solution to cross-browser issues in Web 2.0

Check list

Hello *Web Designer* mag,
Regarding issue 123 and the CSS tutorial on a Web 2.0 layout in CSS, although it has been great to see the project move from Photoshop into CSS, could the author not have tested it in IE on a Mac? The main menu list needs the line "display: inline;" in the #nav li declaration doesn't it? Otherwise it defaults to a vertical list!

Steve (via email)

Sorry to hear about the difficulties you've encountered with this tutorial Steve, it's always disappointing to find niggly errors across multiple platforms like that. Unfortunately it's not always feasible for our projects to be tested within every browser so little things like this can occasionally crop up from time to time. What we should say is that they're strategically dropped in to give you guys little tests, which you've passed in this case, but unfortunately we're neither that cold or calculating! Thanks for suggesting a solution and hopefully anyone with similar troubles will now be able to update their project accordingly.

Brussel shout

Hi,

I read your sister title *Advanced Photoshop* every month with pleasure. I'm going to be more and more involved in web designing and programming in the future and feel that *Web Designer* could be the magazine I'll need instead.
The trouble is, I can't find *Web Designer* in Brussels so I would like to find a place where I can buy one. I would also like to be sure that's what I need.
Could you help me?

Christian Saint-Viteux

Hey Christian, we'd obviously recommend *Web Designer* as the perfect companion title to *Advanced Photoshop* – so you should definitely buy both! Where you'd pick up the odd copy over in Brussels is a bit of a tough one to call to be honest, but you'll find all the information you need to subscribe each and every month on pages 90-91. This is probably the best way to guarantee that you won't miss an issue and possibly take advantage of lower prices too.

MAIL OF THE MONTH

Site proud

Hello *Web Designer*,

My name is Jackie Wu (aka GeckoKid), I'm a reader who studies in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. I'm from Hong Kong and I'd like to present my website to your magazine, which I find very inspiring.

The URL is www.geckokid.net, and the splash page is a PHP script that cycles through the hours. Each hour is different, some are half-an-hour as there are more than 24 of them. Other than that, during special occasions like a guest designer's birthday, Valentine's Day or Christmas the splash pages change to celebrate them. Within the website main page, I employed horizontal scrolling as an attempt to shy away from the norm. The top part is the Flash section that contains the menu system which serves as an online portfolio for myself. Overall I've tried to create a feeling that makes the user think they're underwater and calm. The menu items, when hovered over, create a different tune and allow the user to play a tune by hovering over the selections quickly. To the top left lies the volume control and the water effects modifier. After clicking on the sections another menu pops up to show my artworks. By combining PHP and Flash (if the computer is overloaded by the water effects the artworks may not show up but clicking the water icon twice fixes this), I don't have to rebuild the Flash file every time I create new artworks.

I hope you enjoy the website and it would be a great honour for me if you decided to feature this humble website in your magazine.

Thanks very much *Web Designer*. Yours sincerely,

Jackie Wu

Cheers Jackie, it's always nice to hear about the projects our readers have been working on. Your site looks great, particularly the background template textures and shimmering Gecko logo, so it looks like all the hard design work you've put in has really paid off. We hope you'll continue to find *Web Designer* as inspirational as ever while you continue studying up in Newcastle. Make sure you turn to page 108 to find your site featured in our latest portfolio section. If other readers out there want a chance to show off their websites then get writing and emailing in to the addresses above telling us what you've done and why it stands out.





2ADVANCED STUDIOS

When web design is good it can be a joy to behold. When web design is great it can be iconic. The latter shouldn't flatter California's 2Advanced Studios, particularly as we had the pleasure of crowning them the FWA's most influential Flash site of the past decade. So what better time for us to have a few words with its hugely talented team and discover the story of how they do what they do?

The latest incarnation of its famous series of company home pages, christened Attractor (V.5), has only recently gone live and looks like the best yet. In the first of a special series of *Behind the Scenes* interviews we talk shop and get an exclusive glimpse of some of the conceptual design assets that were drawn-up during the site's production. If you fail to be inspired by this little lot then you need your web designer pulse checking!

EJ: Eric Jordan, chief creative officer

TN: Tony Novak, chief operations officer

CN: Christi Nishiyama, marketing manager

How would you describe 2Advanced Studios and the work you do to anyone who has been scarily ignorant to the web design industry since, well, forever?

TN: 2Advanced Studios is an interactive design firm with 25 employees in the United States and Japan. Our services include Flash design, development, CMS solutions, motion graphics, 3D design, rich media, custom audio and video production. Some of our notable clients include Ford Motor Company, Nintendo of America, O'Neill Clothing, T-Mobile, Warner Brothers and Motorola.

How does the creative team or general 2Advanced operation fit together in terms of the staff base, sites, resources and general setup?

TN: We're a wacky and fun team that works in the dark (yes, that's right, no lights allowed in our studio) with stuffed monkeys hanging from the rafters. With 25 employees and about 40 plus projects in our production queue, it's not unlikely to find one of us asleep on the floor under our desk. We work long hours. But we make sure to dedicate time for 2A beach

bonfires, snowboarding/skiing trips in the winter and the occasional jaunt to Vegas to get away from the day-to-day office stresses.

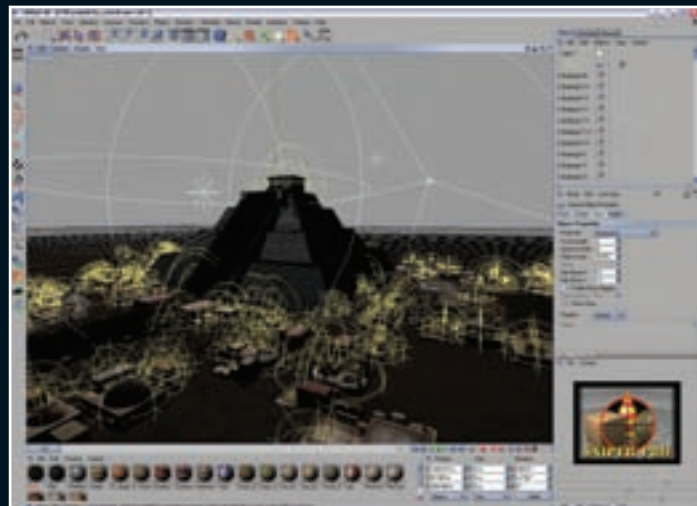
You recently topped the FWA's recent 'most influential Flash sites' poll, emerging as the public's favourite example from the past decade. How does it feel to get that kind of recognition and is there a pressure attached to having such high standards/expectations applied to the projects you take on?

EJ: To be considered as the most influential site in the past decade of Flash history is truly an incredible honour. There are so many amazing Flash designers that preceded us and so many more that are just being discovered, we're simply happy that we were able to make a small contribution to a very important time for the internet.

We realise there's a level of expectation from the design community with regards to 2A work. The important thing is to not let it get to you. Luckily, we're so busy we don't have time to think about it.



Early concepts for Attractor had an interstellar theme, as shown in this render



Cinema 4D was used to produce the 3D models used within the matte backdrops



V.5 “ATTRACTOR”

Your new (V.5) Attractor site is frankly breathtaking and maintains the tradition for great 2Advanced URLs. How much commitment do you put into designing these presences as a team and why are they clearly so vital to promoting your services?

EJ: It was extremely important for everyone on the team to be involved with the development of V.5. It was a team effort. Everyone put their personal lives on hold and really pulled out all the stops to make it something amazing. I've seen the team go 36 hours straight without sleep, live on diets of Redbull and give up weekend after weekend to make it something truly special. I'm proud of V.5 because I see first-hand how much heart and effort was poured into it.

The reason we do it is simple: we need a cutting-edge solution that showcases the broad range of 2Advanced's talents. V.5 communicates the company's

that we're never satisfied), the total time for V.5 was ten weeks of production time. Weeks that comprised of approximately: ten 'all-nighters', 314 Red Bulls, \$2650 in food, and a total of nearly four thousand man hours.

What particular software tools were used throughout the site's construction and were there any particular aspects that required certain tools or methods to achieve the desired effects?

EJ: We utilised a host of tools throughout the development of V.5, including: Flash, Photoshop, After Effects, Dreamweaver, Go Live, Illustrator, Cinema 4D, and Maya.

Are there any recent commercial projects you've done lately that you'd like to briefly plug a little – such as Capcom's Lost Planet site and T-Mobile's myFaves?

“Everyone put their personal lives on hold and really pulled out all the stops to make it something amazing”

mission to offer its clients innovative interactive solutions that achieve a careful balance between a superior backend technology and an appealing design style.

How long did V.5 take to construct? And also, were there any interesting stories attached to its development?

TN: Without a doubt, V.5 was the largest single initiative in 2Advanced history. Pretty much everyone in the studio played some role in the production of version 5. Right up to the end even the 2Advanced Sales Team did their part, assisting with quality assurance testing, bug tracking, asset gathering and CMS database entry.

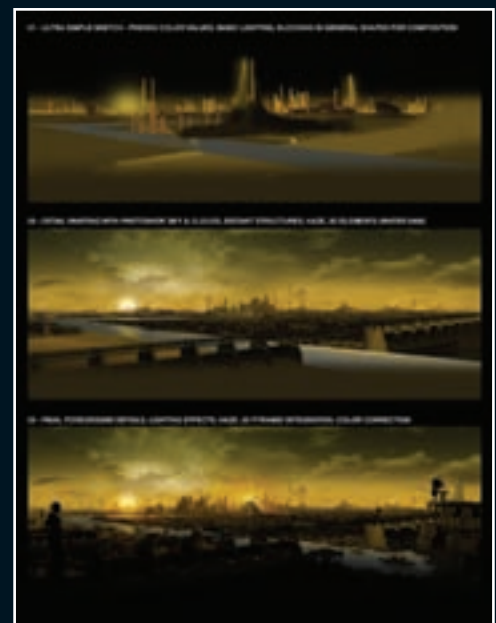
Originally, it had been anticipated that the entire project would be complete within six weeks; but given that we always tend to be our own worst clients (in

TN: We created the Fave-O-Tron rich internet application (RIA) for T-Mobile's current myFaves campaign. The fun, light-hearted and quirky RIA walks users through a series of questions to determine the five friends and family members to add to their myFaves unlimited calling plan. Our 3D artist created a host of incredible avatars for use on the site. T-Mobile found the avatars so valuable that they've decided to load them onto every T-Mobile phone sold. So now T-Mobile users can select our 3D characters as avatars for their friends and family, right on their own phone.

Next month we'll hear more from 2Advanced about Attractor's development, what they think of Web Designer and also sample more of their design assets in a special visual scrapbook that chronicles the site's exciting evolution... don't miss it!



A dedication to the finest details meant creating a whole new set of Attractor typefaces for use throughout the project



The site's breathtaking matte backgrounds were built up with layers of 3D work and intricate Photoshop painting



Search Engine Secrets

By placing high quality content at the centre of your website's design and by following some common sense rules, anyone can build a search engine friendly site says **Dave Howell**

According to research carried out by Forrester over 80 per cent of all websites are found via search engines. It's not surprising that search marketing has become big business. The industry is worth an estimated £1.4 billion with paid-for search forecast to top the £1 billion mark this year.

Ensuring that your website takes advantage of search engine optimisation (SEO) is now a commercial imperative. One that businesses can't afford to ignore. SEO has in the past been likened to a black art practised by HTML denizens. In reality there are no secrets to search engine optimisation. Anyone can have a go.

INSIDE SEARCH

Search engines stretch back to around 1993 when the first search engine Wandex appeared. Aliweb (www.aliweb.com) appeared the same year and still operates today. Search engine optimisation also began in the early Nineties with the first full-text webcrawler appearing around 1994. At the same time the first generation of search engines began operating including Excite, AltaVista, Lycos and Infoseek as well as popular directories such as Yahoo!

Google is clearly the market leader today and should be the focus of your search engine optimisation project, but how do search engines actually work? All of the search engines send

them down, which meant they had to develop their fledgling search engine themselves. Two years later Google as a business was ready to open its doors. Beginning with 10,000 queries a day, development was rapid to say the least. By 2000 Google had become the world's largest index of websites comprising of eight billion URLs. Today, Google has added a number of new elements to its search such as a dedicated image search function, AdWords, Google News, Google Print, Froogle for product searches and is now moving into replicating desktop applications online.

What is Google?

The roots of the Google search engine began in 1996. Larry Page and Sergey Brin began a project that they codenamed BackRub as the program could catalogue the 'back links' that a website contained. A 'Googol' describes a 1 followed by 100 zeroes. Coined by the mathematician Milton Sirotto, Google is a play on that term and accurately describes Google's mission to index the vast amount of data that the world wide web contains. Early users of the web soon realised what a great help this program could be to them. This interest forced Page and Brin to build the world's first Google sever with a terabyte of storage in their dorm room. To develop Google further Page and Brin needed backers. Famously, David Filo of Yahoo! turned

*The founders of Google:
Larry Page and Sergey Brin.*



Search king checklist

DOs

1 Use a text browser

Make sure you use a text browser such as Lynx to examine your site, because most search engine spiders see your site much as Lynx does.

2 Avoid session IDs

Allow search bots to crawl your site without tracking them. By using these tracking techniques it may result in incomplete indexing of your site.

3 Use If-Modified-Since HTTP header

Ensuring your site supports this will enable your web server to tell Google whether your content has changed. This saves you bandwidth.

4 Implement the 'robots.txt' file

Placing this file on your server tells crawlers which directories can or cannot be crawled. Make sure this file is always current.

5 Test content management systems

If you use a content management system to update your site, test the content it generates to ensure spiders can crawl your site comprehensively.

6 Limit page links

Links on your web pages are essential to gain a high ranking, but try and limit the number to less than a hundred.

DON'Ts

1 Avoid link schemes

Never use any links to web spammers as your own site's page ranking could be adversely affected by those links.

2 Never use hidden text

Look closely at how you display your content on each web page. Crawlers can only read plain text that isn't in an image or animation.

3 Create multiple domains

It's pointless creating subdomains that simply duplicates your web page's content. This'll not improve your site's page ranking.

4 Avoid dynamic pages

If you must create dynamic pages also create static versions as well. Don't forget to update your 'robots.txt' file.

5 Use excessive keywords

Don't fill your page with lists of keywords, attempt to 'cloak' pages, or put up 'crawler only' pages. Google considers those links and pages deceptive.

6 Build a site for a search engine

Focus on building the best site you can for your target audience and not your favourite search engine. Your hard work will eventually be rewarded.

Inside Knowledge

Learn from the search engines themselves to help you optimise your site



Name: Google

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/h5uja>

The guidelines for webmasters give a good overview of the issues you must address as you build your website. Essential reading for topping Google.



Name: MSN

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/gapov>

General as well as technical recommendations can be found on these pages. Plus, you'll find a useful guide on what to do if you move your site.



Name: Yahoo!

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/6ggjf>

A very basic overview of what Yahoo! wants to see on pages it indexes and, of course, what to avoid when you're actually coding your site's pages.



Name: ASK

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/yedzms>

The help centre includes webmaster information including how ASK works and a comprehensive FAQ section. Just remember that there's no Jeeves now!

Get noticed the right way

e-consultancy

www.e-consultancy.com

The e-consultancy has over 35,000 registered users and around 150,000 unique site users per month. They're the UK's leading online publisher of internet marketing reports and research.

1 Animation promotions

Animation is used sparingly on this site to draw attention to special offers or events.

2 Fast navigation

A potential customer can easily locate the section they're interested in. If they can, so can a search engine crawler.

3 Excellent content

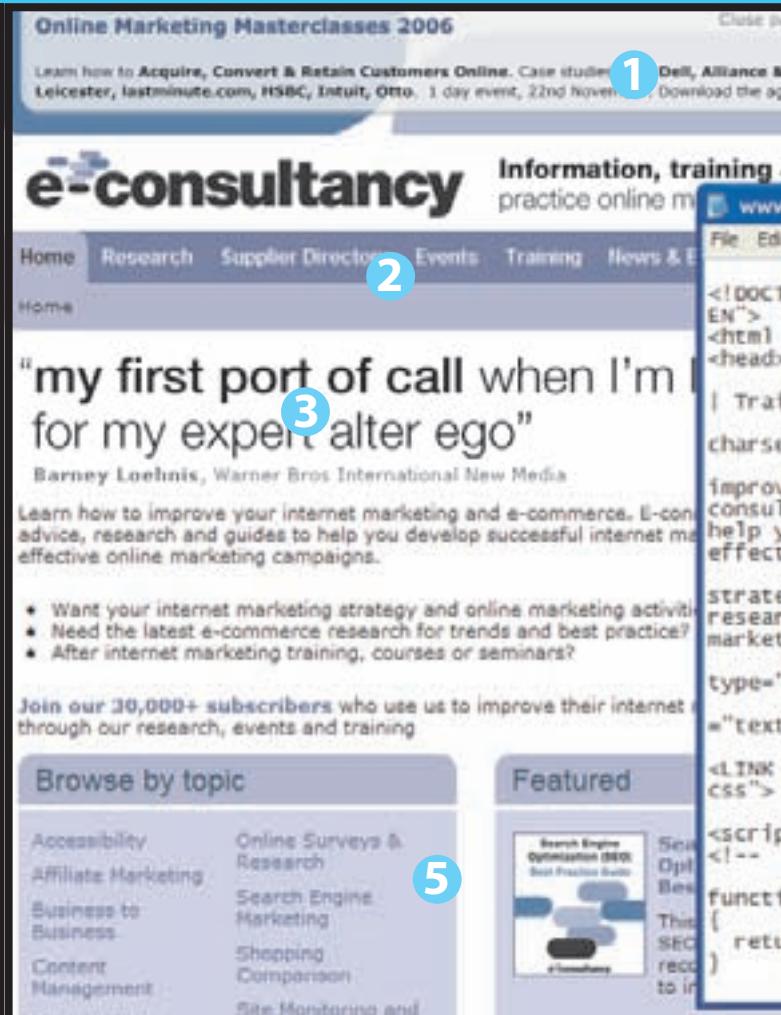
One of the best ways of ensuring a high page ranking is to commit time and resources to create professional content on every page.

4 Focused keywords

The keywords that you connect to your site are important, but don't overdo this element of your site. Choose your keywords carefully.

5 Page links

Links to other pages and content are important, but don't overload your pages. Try and keep links relevant and targeted.



out what are called 'crawlers'. These are very smart pieces of software that have artificial intelligence algorithms built into them. They're constantly trawling the web for any new information that they haven't indexed yet. They visit your site and look at specific elements of your site's content. Google's crawler is called Googlebot.

All crawlers look for plain text on your site's pages, the links you've placed on each page and any navigational aids you are using, plus how many other sites link back to yours. Once the crawler has gathered this information it reports back to its parent search engine which then evaluates your site and decides on its position on your category's results page. Googlebot, for instance, uses over 150 different criteria when it's scanning your pages. But as a general rule ensuring your site is easy to navigate, has great content and is linked to by other sites is the absolute minimum to do in order to get a high page ranking.

"We usually talk about the 20: 40: 40 rule," says Steve Leach, MD and founder, Bigmouth Media (www.bigmouthmedia.com). "What this means in practice is that 20 per cent of the value of a website is down to the actual infrastructure itself. Things like the ISP, the servers the site uses, that sort of thing. The next 40 per cent is down to the content. This looks at the visible content on the page. The last 40 per cent is about inbound links. The reason that Google finds these so important is because it's very difficult to manipulate these."

Understanding how search engines actually gather the information that influences the slot that your website will occupy on any given search page is crucial. Google uses its PageRank application. PageRank is a group of algorithms

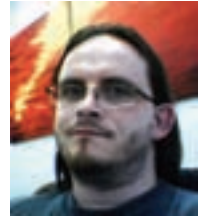
that evaluates the content that the Googlebot finds on each website that it visits. Google describes these pieces of software as: "PageRank relies on the uniquely democratic nature of the web by using its vast link structure as an indicator of an individual page's value. Google interprets a link from page A to page B as a vote, by page A, for page B. But Google looks at more than the sheer volume of votes or links a page receives; it also analyses the page that casts the vote. Votes cast by pages that are themselves 'important' weigh more heavily and help to make other pages 'important.'"

NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

Search engine optimisation should be built into your overall site design. David Barker, managing director, White Box Digital (www.whiteboxdigital.com) says: "Success or failure for search engine optimisation actually depends on successfully completing the research process. This falls into two areas: the first, keyword analysis, is the ability to look across key search engines for keywords being used by users to find products or services that a company offers. The second, site linking analysis, begins with using tools to find all the sites that currently link to your website (if you have one). Then identify the websites that are competitive to yours and find out which sites are uniquely linking to them and not you. The design process itself is then about structuring the site to be logical to a user journey ensuring that you use the keywords you identified in the research phase within the page content on a regular basis."

Above all other search engine optimisation concerns is your site's content. Crawlers are intelligent enough to make a decision about whether your site would be of interest to

Interview



**John Hughes, Proprietor,
Oyster Web**
www.oyster-web.co.uk

Q. How does SEO influence website design?

There are many important aspects of design that impact on SEO. We would normally ensure that the HTML is valid and that the site delegates as much layout and design to CSS as possible. But the single most important design feature that impacts the search engine 'friendliness' is the navigation, which must be HTML for a search engine to understand it properly.

Q. Do you think that Flash has had its day?

Flash has its purpose. Flash sites look great and often provide a more exciting user interface. However, it's unlikely that Flash sites will ever rank well in search engines. Search engines look for lots of text in order to understand a website, and if a designer is planning on using lots of text, they probably won't use Flash. Even if search engines become reasonably good at indexing Flash, it's unlikely that many websites that depend on Flash will rank well, because of the level of content they provide.

Q. Are more websites turning to paid rankings?

Many are, but not all. Often, we see it as a reaction to poor organic search listings. Paid ranking suits a purpose, but they'll always incur a cost and so should be an add-on to a good SEO, not a replacement.

Q. Can you offer any advice on how to choose a good SEO service?

First and foremost, make sure the SEO understands your business objectives. You'll presumably be looking to make sales or some other kind of acquisition. If the SEO prefers to talk about traffic or rankings, beware. It's important that marketing objectives always look to follow through to your *raison d'être*. Be wary of companies that seem too cheap, as they often will not put any effort into a service for you. Do not buy a submission service, buy an optimisation service. Submission is unnecessary if your site is properly optimised, and submission is pointless if your site is not optimised. Read a bit of background information about SEOs before you choose one.

Q. How influential are search engines in website promotion?

Search engines can make a website successful. However, a website that relies on search engine positions to generate business might be playing too much of a risk game. Search engine promotion is a very valuable part of the larger marketing mix. It's not a replacement for it.

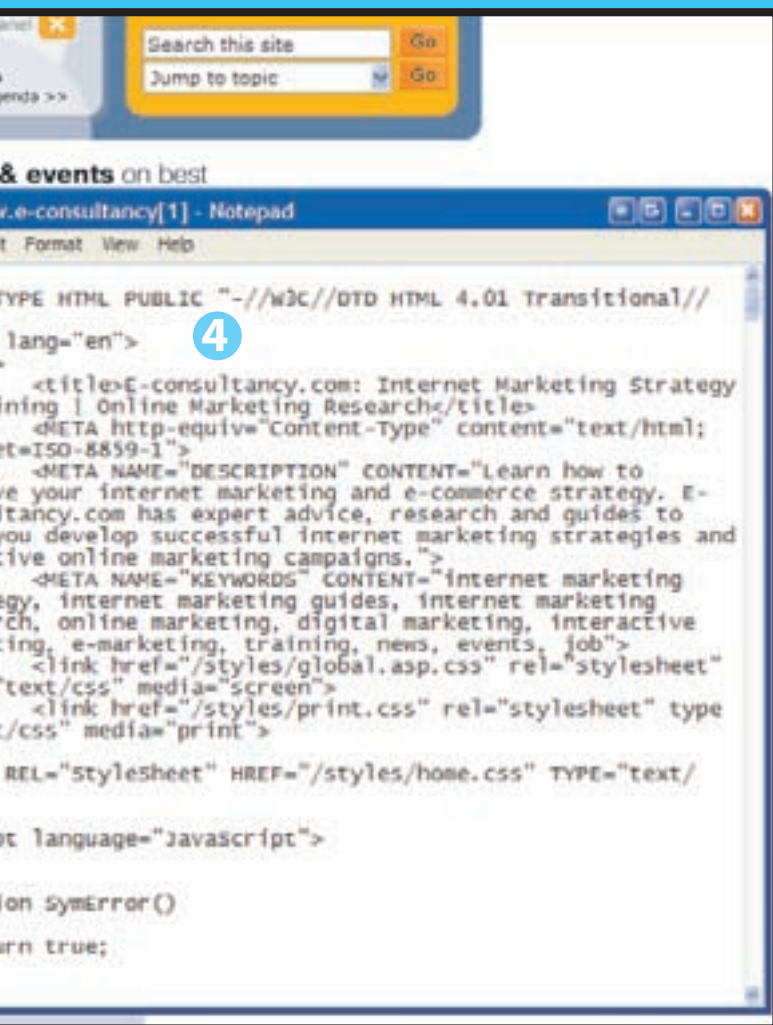
Q. Which popular myths for achieving search success can be exploded?

Meta tags must relate to actual indexable text content on your site, so only using your Meta tags to try to get search engine listings is next to useless. Likewise, popular 'tricks' such as cloaking or using hidden text are at best short term solutions which will end up doing your business more harm than good – remember, if you're banned from a search engine index, it's incredibly difficult to get back in. Finally, it's a myth that SEO is some kind of black art. SEOs are not witches sitting around a cauldron reciting secret spells! In fact, anyone with the time to learn from the considerable wealth of information online (and with the understanding to filter out the nonsense) could undertake their own SEO. The proper ethical SEO companies like us exist to save business from having to spend that time learning how to do it when it's not cost-efficient for them to do so.

Q. What do you think the future of search engines looks like?

Google already personalises their search results if you have a Gmail account or one of the many other Google services. The hybrid between personalised to your interests, and localised to a reasonable geographical boundary is the most effective way that search engines will provide relevant results to searchers.

However, I think the search engine's biggest challenge in this field is localising appropriately. What I mean by this is, for example, if you search for a plumber, I expect you would most probably prefer one nearby. But if you search to download music online, it's not so important whether the company you buy from is in Hong Kong or Hull.



anyone searching on your chosen category. Crawlers are looking for sites that give the best possible information to their users and that's what you must provide. Steve Leach of Bigmouth says: "Don't forget Google is a business. It wants to provide its users with the best experience it can. The best way of approaching the construction of your website is to try and produce the best site you can. Google will pick up on this."

After well written and targeted content, is how you handle links on your site's pages. Don't overload a page with links. Google recommends no more than a hundred per page. Don't have monster pages on your website that require lots of scrolling. Divide these into smaller pages, but don't forget to update your site map so the crawlers can easily find them. And don't forget

Paid-for search

If you can't wait for your site to slowly make its way up the search engine results pages, you could pay for a guaranteed slot. Paid search has become big business for search engines. But are they worth the cost? A recent survey from WebSideStory (<http://www.websidestory.com>) would seem to indicate they are. The results show paid search has a nine per cent edge in conversion rates over organic search. In a study of leading business-to-consumer eCommerce sites during the first eight months of this year, paid search had a conversion rate of 3.4 per cent. This compared to a conversion rate of 3.13 per cent for organic search results, defined as non-paid or natural search engine listings, during the same timeframe. Ali Behnam, senior digital marketing consultant

When all else fails you can always get your wallet out and pay for search privileges...

for WebSideStory says: "In the case of paid search, marketers have better control over the environment." Bigmouth MD, Steve Leach commented: "For transactional websites, paid search is extremely valuable. You do however, have to carefully consider what you spend your money on. If you're an SME, paid search is easy to set-up and you cap how much you want to spend."

"Pay-per-click is a great way for any business to invest and drive targeted, qualified traffic to a website," comments David Barker of White Box Digital. "However, a business should see this as a short-term strategy whilst they concentrate on making their website search engine optimised to appear in organic website listings."

Web Resources

The online places worthy of some attention in your battle to the top



Name: The Unofficial Google Weblog

URL: <http://google.weblogsinc.com>

This weblog is the place to bookmark if you want to keep bang up-to-date with what's happening in the Google universe. If it's Google news, read it here first.



Name: Search Engine Watch

URL: <http://searchenginewatch.com>

Google is, of course, covered on this site, but so are the other search engines. Hints and tips, articles and insider info can all be found on this comprehensive site.



Name: SEO Chat

URL: www.seo.chat

Search engine optimisation is something that all webmasters must take note of. This site has the latest news, developments and industry gossip.



Name: SEO Book

URL: www.seobook.com

If you're looking for SEO information in an easy to digest format, look no further. This PDF book has all the information you need to become a SEO expert.

Black Hat SEO

There are many ethical methods you can use to get your site to the top of your category listing, but there are also some unethical techniques that are employed. Today, the crawlers of the major search engines are intelligent enough to spot most black hat techniques, but this of course doesn't stop them from being used. Generally, black hat SEO falls into these categories:

Cloaking

This technique sits on the fence as far as the ethical debate goes. Cloaking is used to duplicate the contents of a web page that is then served to the visitor. Clearly in the unethical arena this technique could be used to try and dupe a crawler into believing that more unique content exists on your site than there actually is. However, duplicated content can be used legitimately to make your site more accessible. Ask yourself this question: does the duplicated information enhance your visitors' experience? If not, then it's a black hat technique.

Spam Indexing

This approach to SEO is now generally frowned upon by the web design community. This technique attempts to manipulate the crawler into believing that the content on any given web page is relevant to the search category. The website creates masses of additional pages to fool the crawler into indexing more of the site's content. This is similar to cloaking, but doesn't have a legitimate side to it. Spam indexing is simply used to try and gain a higher page ranking.

things like the alt tags on all images. They might not seem important, but to the crawler they mean a great deal and can be the difference between a high or low ranking.

It's a myth that search engines can't index Flash sites. Embed your Flash movie in an HTML page so that you can include a title tag that search engine crawlers can see. Peter Maycock, managing director, Search Engine Serious (www.searchengineserious.co.uk) comments: "There's still a case for Flash and I don't think it's going to go away anytime soon. The trick is to use Flash elements in an HTML page. Google sees every link to a site as a 'vote' for that site." Connectpoint's Peter Young says: "More recently, Ajax and other Web 2.0 technologies have given developers another technology medium that can often provide similar levels of interactivity to Flash and is therefore becoming a popular alternative."

If your site builds dynamically via a content management system you can still ensure your site gets a good placing on your search category results page. Take a look at Google's Sitemap initiative at <http://tinyurl.com/9a5nl>. This enables you to submit detailed information about your site thus avoiding Google's crawler missing some of your site's pages because they're dynamically created.

SEARCH GURU

If you intend to do the SEO work yourself, John Hill, E-Gain New Media Ltd (www.e-gain.co.uk) offers this advice: "If I was to choose a top three then I would say that content, structure and navigation were equally important. Well written, on-topic content is important. But unless the navigation and structure of your site allow it to be found then your content has no real value. A good themed structure can help when your website covers many areas or sub-areas of a particular subject or industry. But again if the navigation does not reinforce it then your efforts at building a good website structure are wasted. A good, indexable navigation is important. If you must use

Syndk8

www.syndk8.net

Depending on your morale standing about which techniques are legitimate to use this site could either be a paradise or a showcase for all that is bad about website optimisation. Read with interest but apply the techniques outlined with caution!



Link Spam

The world's search engine crawlers rank a website partly based on the number of links the site has to it. Consequently, unethical SEO will try and manipulate this fact. Link spam is often called Google Bombing as the technique attempts to manipulate Google's PageRank application. By placing a high number of links to a site the link spam should influence the crawler to give the destination site a higher ranking.

Keyword Stuffing

As keywords are one of the main ways in which a crawler indexes a page manipulating this page element has also become the focus of black hat SEO. In this technique additional keywords will be inserted into web pages in an attempt to build traffic and therefore page ranking. Hundreds of keywords are duplicated, which is why today's search engine crawlers have moved their focus away from meta tags.

JavaScript or Flash then back this up with equivalent text links elsewhere on the same page to allow the search engines to crawl your website. If the navigation does not lead to well structured areas or pages of on-topic content then you're not gaining the best from your website."

Handing your site's SEO to a specialised company is the alternative. There are hundreds of companies all promising to get your site to the top of Google and the other search engines. As with any service you buy, look carefully at what is on offer and the costs involved. Peter Maycock of Search Engine Serious pointed out: "There are many cowboys in this industry. A simple check is to see if the SEO Company is in the top 30 places at Google for the phrase 'search engine optimisation'. If they can't do it for themselves, they probably won't be able to do it for their clients."

As the number of broadband users reaches critical mass, they'll demand that the search engines they use give them targeted results first time. This'll inevitably mean that crawlers like Googlebot will become more intelligent and sophisticated. From your point of view developing and evolving your website so that it provides an even better service to your visitors should be your number one priority. All you really need to focus on is your site's visitors or customers and try to design the best site for them. If you do this your efforts will be rewarded.

Content is still king on the web and forms the most important element of any search engine's criteria. "The golden rule really is to not make any changes to your website simply for a search engines benefit," concludes Steve Leach. "What you should concentrate on is creating the best user experience you possibly can."

Search engine optimisation is certainly an element of good website design, but don't make the mistake of making it your only driving factor. If you focus on designing a site your visitors want to use and that others want to link to, your high ranking on the world's search engines is assured.



*e***Mag**

Flash on



Brighton welcomes the first UK-exclusive Flash festival in December. **Mark Billen** presents a preview of what's in store for the visiting crowds and why this is one show not to be missed...

There's a pretty cool vibe around Brighton just now. Always best known in the past as the favourite South Coast retreat for beach-hungry Londoners and more lately as a hedonistic playground for artistic folk, this stereotypical vision of an English seaside town has become something of a creative capital.

Immortalised in literary works such as Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* and Julie Burchill's more contemporary TV-serialised *Sugar Rush*, the city can also point to its appearance in classic screen outings such as *Quadraphenia* for considerable cult status. Superstar DJ Fatboy Slim and associated record label Skint also call it home, while a hugely popular university scene and famously liberal community also contribute greatly to Brighton's tourist appeal. Although strangely for a destination so rooted in sun, sea, and, well, the other one, the latest buzz centres around a happening descending on its shores amidst the harsh December chill. What's more, the ironic christening of said event pretty much sums up the exact opposite of what you'd want to try at that time of year, despite the council's leniency to nudist pursuits. Flash on the Beach 2006 is in fact the UK's first genuine attempt at staging an annual festival for web, animation and interactive

media development – and it's big. Exactly how big is open to conjecture given the fact that it hasn't actually happened yet and it's the inaugural one, but certainly the list of over 40 international speakers committed to attendance bodes very nicely indeed.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Produced by John Davey, a London-based Flash evangelist and author in his own right, the event runs over three days and gives the expected public crowds of over a thousand the rare chance to sit in on practical seminars on a host of hot topics. More generally, it represents a six-year vision inspired by Davey's own admiration for similar travelling shows like Flashforward and the unexplained lack of domestic conferences to get excited about. His experience of spending over £500 on a ticket back in 2000 amounted to pretty

good value given the amount of contacts made and ideas shared, so it was high time that British developers could say the same without having to jet off to LA or wherever. Early plans for FOTB meant London suggested itself immediately as the obvious location for staging something on any scale or importance, before the advice of friend and co-conspirator Pete Barr-Watson threw Brighton up as an alternative venue. A comprehensive series of visits to potential hosting spots then ensued with Davey uneasy about the prospect of venturing out of London, before Brighton's stunning Dome building provided the perfect host venue. In addition, sessions will be held in the nearby Pavilion Theatre and Corn Exchange where audiences can enjoy cutting-edge discussions on topics spanning Flash 8, Flex 2, ActionScript 3, and Flash Lite 2. Stop by the official web site at www.flashonthebeach.com

"THE LINE UP AT THIS CONFERENCE IS PARTICULARLY STRONG AND THE CHOICE OF BRIGHTON AS A LOCATION IS SORT OF ODD BUT VERY APPEALING. I LOOK FORWARD TO BOTH"

HILLMAN CURTIS, FOUNDER AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF HILLMANCURTIS INC

the Beach

BRIGHTON, UK 4-5-6 DEC 2006

Useful links

Those sites that show attendees might want to check out before they head down to Brighton

www.brightondome.org

This is the place for finding information about the main venue complex and its facilities

www.looseconnection.com

Brighton is famed for its wi-fi hotspots and here we have a handy guide for locating them

www.brighton.co.uk

The official city website is a hub for all the great things happening in and around Brighton

www.bbc.co.uk/weather

Head to the Brighton listings to learn whether packing the umbrella would be a good idea!



www.thebelgravehotel.com

With online booking from £49 per night and a nice site, this could be a good place to stay

www.flashonthebeach.com

The festival site is the very best way to find out the full show schedule and who'll be there

and you'll soon realise that the roster of speakers and scheduled workshops is nothing short of majestic, with luminaries like New York's Hillman Curtis, magneticNorth's Brendan Dawes, and Adobe's own Mike Downey dropping by. Again this can be attributed to the determination of Davey and his burgeoning black book of industry contacts that has been building up over the years. When you can happily call the likes of author Joey Lott, top young designer Eric Natzke, and all-round evangelist Aral Balkan your close friends, then you're on to a fairly good sure thing when it comes to the crunch.

GAINING SUPPORT

Davey's ability to secure the support of a core group of guys early on was therefore massively pivotal to convincing the final list of guests to jump aboard, with everyone involved thoroughly looking forward to taking FOTB from strength to strength in subsequent years. This continual drive from first year success to longer term establishment within the creative calendar will of course be largely dictated by the audience turnout and the satisfaction of some pretty impressive commercial sponsors. In many ways the acquisition of Macromedia by Adobe has made it doubly important for them

to endorse the show, while O'Reilly and Lynda.com are amongst the other advertisers who have helped to keep entrance ticket prices nice and affordable. Passes for the full three days have had staggered tariffs as the event draws closer since July's initial price of just £199. Even December's 'on-the-door' rates remain just south of the half-grand Davey shelled out six years ago – thus underlining the commitment to good value.



www.hillmancurtis.com is the web face for Hillman's influential web agency

Highlights guide

Those extra sessions that we reckon could turn out to be real gems within an awesome schedule

MONDAY 4 DECEMBER

Time: 13:30

Speaker: Mike Chambers

Session: This senior product manager for Developer Relations at Adobe gives an exclusive briefing on the brand new Apollo project. Get the inside track on this cross-operating system runtime for leveraging web technologies.

Time: 16:30

Speaker: Erik Natzke

Session: Recently voted one of the top 10 Young Designers by *HOW* magazine, Natzke brings his Keep Interest(ed) session to FOTB and examines projects and experiences that could help us all stay interested and inspired.

TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER

Time: 13:30

Speaker: Folkert Gorter

Session: Gorter's Tools for Evolution workshop will look closely at how practical internet projects can have a part to play in furthering scientific and human knowledge, with plenty of real-world examples on show.

Time: 16:30

Speaker: Richard Leggett

Session: London AKQA's senior creative developer goes mobile with a look at Flash Lite 2. Learn how to write and host your own socket server, whilst having the opportunity to pitch any technical questions to Leggett in person.

WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER

Time: 9:30

Speaker: Seb Lee-Delisle

Session: One for the gamers this one, with Lee-Delisle's special blend of animation and physics. 3D Flash techniques spanning texture mapping, light shading, projectile physics, and all kinds of cool simulations.

Time: 11:00

Speaker: Niqui Merret

Session: Macromedia instructor and respected author Niqui Merret will be testing the theory that Flash and accessibility can go hand in hand, covering various disabilities and the ways to overcome them.

Venue guide

Where it's all at as far as Flash on the Beach is concerned...



The Dome complex

Somewhat confusingly, Brighton's Dome complex actually encompasses three buildings, including the actual Dome building from the Thirties. Nevertheless, this is where the hoards of visitors will stream into the UK's first dedicated Flash festival and revel in some of the world's finest speakers. All should appreciate the acoustics of the three host venues, which include the Dome's neighbouring Corn Exchange and historic Pavilion Theatre structures. All are more recently associated with social events and artistic performances, having previously been used as concert halls, supper rooms, and even as archaeological museums!

THE ONES TO WATCH

So for those who grabbed their tickets quick, what highlights are likely to be worth the admission fee alone? Well it would be folly not to name-check again the man behind some of the most eminent web design work in recent times, Mr Hillman Curtis. His own name branded agencies in the big apple and San Francisco have worked with clients as big as AOL and MTV, whilst simultaneously broadening the internet landscape with its innovative approach. His books have sold thousands and been translated across the world, making him undoubtedly one of the premier voices in the new-media industry. His 4:30pm slot on day two, entitled *Hillman on video*, focuses in on his own excursions into digital video and how the lessons garnered from a career in web and interactive design can be applied to film-making. A showcase of short films, plus overviews of projects such as the recent redesign of **Yahoo.com** will make for fascinating stuff.

Next up on the 'Web Designer recommends' itinerary would have to be multi-award winning author and designer Hoss Gifford, and his day three session

entitled *Creative Evolution: Behind the Scenes*. This one promises to be a really inspirational journey from Flash designer to multi-talented creative force, talking over work with his own agency Flammable Jam plus anecdotes and case studies covering a hugely diverse range of projects. And if diversity happens to be your muse then you certainly won't want to miss Mario Klingemann's 11am stint on day three, as his Mashup Baby! seminar kicks off. This self-professed "computational artisan", also known as Quasimondo, will be exploring the phenomenon of APIs to talk about how Flash can liberate data mining, visualisation and remixing via a series of experimental projects. Watch in wonder as he takes a leaf from Brighton's favourite turn-table twiddling son and literally mashes up content from sources like Amazon, YouTube, Yahoo!, and Flickr. They'll be calling him 'Flashboy Klinge' by the time lunch comes around!

Awful puns aside, the next port of call for anyone trying to break into web design has to be with Chris Orwig, at 3pm on day two. This freelance designer and author will be holding a workshop on building the perfect portfolio site without the kind of excessive development times that none of us can afford. All the processes from initial conception to practical design will be covered, along with tips and tricks for creating more lightweight and usable Flash solutions. Early risers on day one will be well advised to show their faces at the 11am session from Stephen Downs, aka 'Tink', not least because he might get a bit cross. Here



The no-nonsense look of www.hossrifford.com gives a good indication of his seminar style

"I'M SUPER EXCITED ABOUT FLASH ON THE BEACH. I SEE IT AS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO FINALLY ESTABLISH AN EXCELLENT LONG-RUNNING UK-BASED CONFERENCE"

RICH SHUPE, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF FMA, NEW YORK

Flash on the Beach



www.fmaonline.com is the multimedia development home of Rich Shupe

he'll be espousing the benefits of Flex 2.0 development and answering questions on exactly what it is, what it represents, what it can do and importantly how the traditional Flash developer can start building components and applications. An awareness of ActionScript 3.0 is recommended, with a decent grounding in Object-Oriented Programming techniques and ActionScript 2.0 essential from attendees. On a similar note, Web 2.0 fans will also be pretty excited by two sessions taking place at the opposite ends of the final day. Schematic's senior software developer Geoff Stearns has a 9:30am start with Flash in a Web 2.0 world providing the ideal forum for discussing Flash accessibility standards and those websites or applications that best unite the technology with HTML, CSS, and Javascript. Then, just before last orders on FOTB are called, Brighton-based developer Jeremy Keith holds service on Ajax: Flash killer? – where Web 2.0 myths and hype are put firmly in their place. He'll be examining the pros and cons of both platforms within their correct contexts and hopefully making the boundaries clearer on when to use either across a range of applications. Then the whole show will be done and dusted, bar a closing ceremony, raffle and, well, probably a trip to the bar.

Whoever you end up seeing over this special event, it promises to be a truly memorable occasion that can only work wonders for reinforcing the UK Flash community for what we all hope will be many years to come. We'd like to end on a reminder to catch Adobe's senior product manager Mike Downey, who'll be delivering a keynote curtain-raiser for the conference on day one. We're approaching exciting times for Flash and if anyone is able to let slip on future releases and top-secret developments it'll be him. Free drinks for Mike please, and let's get on with the show!



You can find out about Mario Klingemann's work at his **www.quasimondo.com** site

What The Speakers Think

Ahead of their preparations for Flash on the Beach, we caught up with a few of the main guys appearing at the conference to find out what it was they were looking forward to most and get the inside word on their own sessions



HILLMAN CURTIS, Founder and Creative Director of Hillmancurtis Inc. (www.hillmancurtis.com)

"The line up at this conference is particularly strong and the choice of Brighton as a location is sort of odd but very appealing. I look forward to both.

I'll be shooting two new films between now and the conference so hopefully they turn out well and I can share the experiences. Regardless, my talk will be about how digital video has become a huge part of my new media practice, how I got into it and why it's become so important to me from a personal as well as a business standpoint. I'll also deconstruct a few of my films, from the *Designer* series and the *Films on film* series."

JOEY LOTT, Co-founder of RightSpring Inc. (www.person13.com)

"I'm looking forward to what looks to be a really superb conference. John Davey is an outstanding conference organiser and an all-round fantastic person and I think he's done great things for this conference. He's brought together the best in terms of speakers, sponsors and, no doubt, attendees. As an American one of the perks for me is getting to visit the UK, even if it's in the middle of the winter. I'm looking forward to meeting with the European Flash community who might not often attend conferences here in the US. As for my session, my topic is design patterns, and I see this as part of a larger discussion answering one of the things that I hear people asking about over and over again: How do you know where to begin and how to structure an application? I certainly intend the presentation to be informative, but I also want to keep it fun and entertaining. Often these technical sessions can be rather boring. I've given a few of those boring presentations previously. But I've realised that if people are bored they won't learn, so I'd rather err on the side of too entertaining than too boring and we'll see what educational content we can mention at the same time!"



HOSS GIFFORD, Founder of Flammable Jam (www.hossrifford.com)

"I'm looking forward to that bittersweet feeling that's equal parts despair and delight caused by seeing the world's most inspirational designers, animators and programmers all creating stuff that they thought of before me! Ill leave the conference fired up to go home and make beautiful, engaging work that was conceived by the magical brew of peers, beers, thrills and pills. Anyone that manages to make it back from their pub lunch to my presentation will be showered by a golden selection of animated goodness and will learn at least some of this: How and when to get fired, how to get noticed, how to spot the w**nker client, the top ten things to do to keep yourself out of trouble, how to go bankrupt, how to get your dream project, plus how and why to pretend to be an artist. Rock and roll!"



RICH SHUPE, Founder and President of FMA, New York (www.fmaonline.com)

"I'm super excited about Flash on the Beach. I see it as a great opportunity to finally establish an excellent long-running UK-based conference. I believe this because it's being created by John Davey, a leader in the Flash community and someone who has experience with prior conferences and knows what it takes to do it right."



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
article.fla, Coin.as
glow.fla and more

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Learn how to create cool interface that emulates gravity (Part 1)

TIME REQUIRED


2 hrs

SKILL LEVEL



Explore gravity with **PART 1** Flash 8 and ActionScript

STAND OUT FROM THE REST AND ADD SIMULATED GRAVITY AND MOTION BLUR TO YOUR INTERFACE USING FLASH 8 AND ACTIONSCRIPT

 **AS FLASH** and ActionScript are moving so fast into an Object-Oriented language, this opens the doors to advanced programming using the built-in Flash classes. So knowing a little about the Math Class and a few formulas, you're able to turn an interface that you've created which already looks aesthetically pleasing with all its tweening and interaction into an interface that acts like the real world. What do we mean by the real world? Well if you drop a Movie Clip of

a ball and tween the bouncing it can take, well, forever to get the animation to look even a little realistic. But using maths and formulas you can actually tween the ball in code which will make the ball fall as if it were in real gravity, in the real world. Here we'll use these very techniques to put together an experimental interface that relies on gravity effects, as well as drag and drop interactions. Finally, a quick thanks to Samantha Moore for creating the interface assets for this tutorial.



YOUR EXPERT

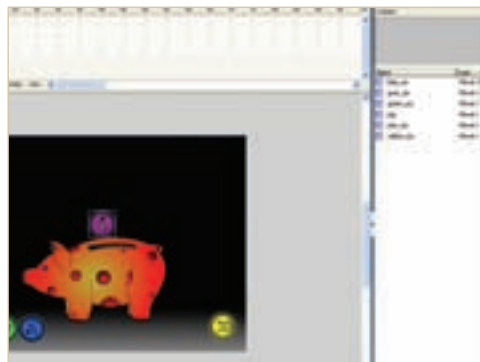
Darren Richardson works as a tech lead for Magic Lantern Production based in London and has been in the business for 10+ years. In his spare time he runs flash sites at www.actionscripts.co.uk and www.flashgroup.net as well as other exciting portal sites.

Explore gravity with Flash 8 and ActionScript



01 Organise everything

Open up the 'article fla' from our cover disc this issue. We have left this a little disorganised on purpose so we can do it now. It's good practice to keep a clean timeline and library. In the 'numerals' layer are all the coins; select one and cut (Ctrl+X).



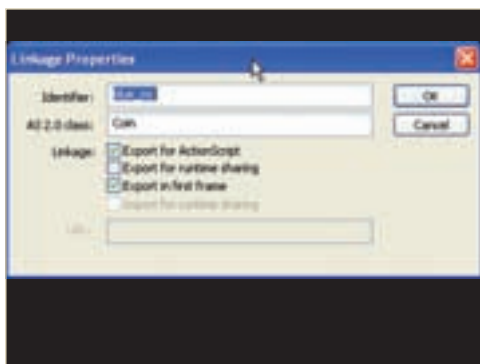
02 Adding layers

Add a new layer calling it the colour of the coin that you are going to do first and paste (Ctrl+V) the coins from the first step. Repeat for all the coins so they're all in their own layers. Next create a folder in the layers and drag all the coins into it to keep things organised.



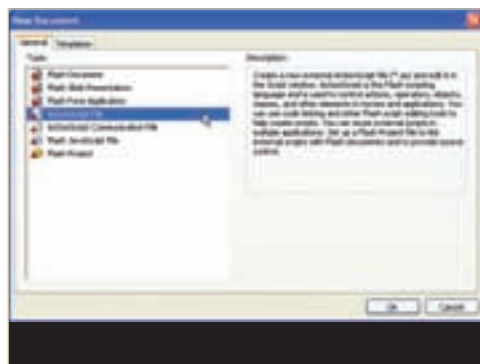
03 Give it a title

Now let's add a title to the project. Add a new layer in your document and call it 'title'. In your favourite font type 'piggy bank', break apart twice (Ctrl+B), then group (Ctrl+G) and make it into a graphic symbol (F8). Call this new group 'title_gfx'.



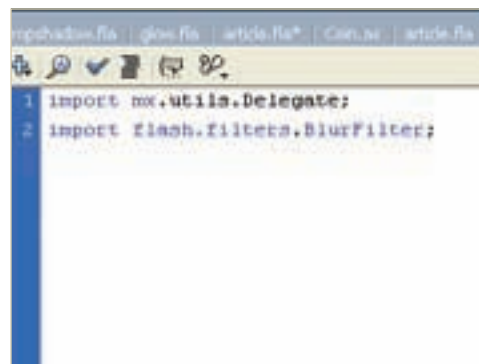
04 Coin linkage

The next job is to link your coins to a class, which you're going to create next. To do this, in the Library right-click and select Linkage on one of the coins. Now select the Export for ActionScript checkbox and in the AS 2.0 class enter 'Coin'.



05 What class?

It's time to say goodbye to the timeline and enter the realms of ActionScript. Open a new ActionScript file and save it as 'Coin', in the same directory as your 'article fla'. This is so you don't have to think about changing your class path or packages.



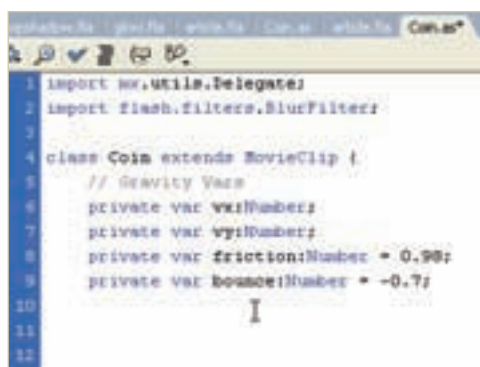
06 Import statements

The first two lines of your class are import statements; this pulls in all of the methods and properties from the built-in Flash classes BlurFilter and Delegate. Delegate is a very useful class that helps a coder get round all the scope issues related to Flash. We'll explain more when you use it.



07 Extending objects

Line four in the class declares the class and extends from the class Movie Clip. This means that you can use functions that a Movie Clip uses in this class like onEnterFrame and onPress, when you extend an object you inherit their behaviour into your class.



08 Velocity variables

The first two variables, vx and vy, are for velocity, which controls the speed and direction in which your coin will go when released by the mouse. Next is friction or damping, this is negative acceleration, bounce is to detect when the coin has left the screen and when you adjust the velocity.



09 Gravity variables

The gravity variable is used to reflect real life gravity therefore it pulls things down. The next four variables are your stage size. These variables are important as without them your coins wouldn't know where to bounce off the walls.

Tutorial

```
1 class Coin extends MovieClip {
2     // MovieClip Variables
3     private var vx:Number;
4     private var vy:Number;
5     private var friction:Number = 0.98;
6     private var bounce:Number = -0.7;
7     private var gravity:Number = 0.5;
8     // Stage Size
9     private var stageWidth:Number = 0;
10    private var stageHeight:Number = 0;
11    private var left:Number = 0;
12    private var right:Number = stage.width;
13    // X and Y Center of screen
14    private var centerX:Number;
15    private var centerY:Number;
16    // MovieClip Variables
17    private var bounceStarted:Boolean;
18    private var bounceTimer:Timer;
19}
```

10 Event variables

The following two variables are used to store X and Y coordinates from your coin and used to calculate new coordinates. After these you have a Boolean variable, which means true or false, and last a number used to set a timer to check when the bouncing has finished.

```
1 // X and Y Center of screen
2 private var centerX:Number;
3 private var centerY:Number;
4 // MovieClip Variables
5 private var bounceStarted:Boolean;
6 private var bounceTimer:Timer;
7 // Stage Size
8 private var stageWidth:Number = 0;
9 private var stageHeight:Number = 0;
10 private var left:Number = 0;
11 private var right:Number = stage.width;
12 // X and Y Center of screen
13 private var centerX:Number;
14 private var centerY:Number;
15 // MovieClip Variables
16 private var bounceStarted:Boolean;
17 private var bounceTimer:Timer;
```

11 Blur variables

On the declaration side of things you have to declare your blur variables. The blurX and blurY set how large on the X and Y axis you want the blur to be (you set this later in code), quality is set to 2 and has a max of 3, next is an array to store the filter and last is the filter declaration.

```
14 private var blurX:Number = 0;
15 private var quality:Number = 2;
16 private var filterArray:Array = new Array;
17 private var filter:BlurFilter;
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
```

12 The constructor

Every class has a constructor as one is placed there for you. In your constructor you're setting a variable for the finished bouncing event and also calling in an 'init' function, which is standard practice, so your initialisation code is not in the constructor.

```
1 private var vx:Number = 0;
2 private var vy:Number = 0;
3 private var friction:Number = 0.98;
4 private var bounce:Number = -0.7;
5 private var gravity:Number = 0.5;
6
7 // Stage Size
8 private var stageWidth:Number = 0;
9 private var stageHeight:Number = 0;
10 private var left:Number = 0;
11 private var right:Number = stage.width;
12 // X and Y Center of screen
13 private var centerX:Number;
14 private var centerY:Number;
15 // MovieClip Variables
16 private var bounceStarted:Boolean;
17 private var bounceTimer:Timer;
```

13 It's all in the init

Set the start position of the coin and the velocity. You also have the blur filter code – you create a new blur filter, set the three parameters and then add the filter to the filter array. Now you Delegate the onEnterFrame method to a new method called coinOnEnterFrame.

```
1 // Stage Size
2 private var stageWidth:Number = 0;
3 private var stageHeight:Number = 0;
4 private var left:Number = 0;
5 private var right:Number = stage.width;
6 // X and Y Center of screen
7 private var centerX:Number;
8 private var centerY:Number;
9 // MovieClip Variables
10 private var bounceStarted:Boolean;
11 private var bounceTimer:Timer;
```

14 onPress event

You need to add an onPress event, which you're able to do because you have an extended Movie Clip. First, set the two variables to the current X and Y coordinates, then set the Boolean variable. You're ready to tell your interface to start dragging the coin and run the onEnterFrame code.

```
1 // Stage Size
2 private var stageWidth:Number = 0;
3 private var stageHeight:Number = 0;
4 private var left:Number = 0;
5 private var right:Number = stage.width;
6 // X and Y Center of screen
7 private var centerX:Number;
8 private var centerY:Number;
9 // MovieClip Variables
10 private var bounceStarted:Boolean;
11 private var bounceTimer:Timer;
```

15 onRelease event

The following two functions do the same, hence why they're grouped together, but they trap different events. The code releases the onEnterFrame movement code you'll be writing in a moment and also stops the mouse from dragging the coin around the stage.

```
1 // Stage Size
2 private var stageWidth:Number = 0;
3 private var stageHeight:Number = 0;
4 private var left:Number = 0;
5 private var right:Number = stage.width;
6 // X and Y Center of screen
7 private var centerX:Number;
8 private var centerY:Number;
9 // MovieClip Variables
10 private var bounceStarted:Boolean;
11 private var bounceTimer:Timer;
```

16 coinOnEnterFrame

Before running any code you do a check to see if you're still dragging the coin using an 'if' statement. Because 'dragging' is a Boolean you can check by saying if dragging is not equal to true. Next you're assigning your velocity variables to the X and Y of the coin.

```
1 // Stage Size
2 private var stageWidth:Number = 0;
3 private var stageHeight:Number = 0;
4 private var left:Number = 0;
5 private var right:Number = stage.width;
6 // X and Y Center of screen
7 private var centerX:Number;
8 private var centerY:Number;
9 // MovieClip Variables
10 private var bounceStarted:Boolean;
11 private var bounceTimer:Timer;
```

17 Make it bounce

In the next 14 lines you're checking if the coin has made a connection with the sides or the bottom of the main stage from variables you set earlier. If a connection has been made then bounce is added to the vx and vy variables and new X and Y coordinates are added to the coin.

```
1 // Stage Size
2 private var stageWidth:Number = 0;
3 private var stageHeight:Number = 0;
4 private var left:Number = 0;
5 private var right:Number = stage.width;
6 // X and Y Center of screen
7 private var centerX:Number;
8 private var centerY:Number;
9 // MovieClip Variables
10 private var bounceStarted:Boolean;
11 private var bounceTimer:Timer;
```

18 Event checker

This next 'if' statement checks to see if your movement has finished. Depending on the answer it then sends a request to another function called startBounceTimer or clears an interval and resets a Boolean variable that is associated with the event finishing.



19 Else statements

The first 'if' statement had an 'else clause' attached to it, so it reads 'if dragging equals true run the code you have just written, else run this next code', which assigns new values to the vx, vy, oldX and oldY variables, as shown in the screenshot above.



20 Blur me

When the new coordinates have been set, add the new blur properties, because the faster the coin moves the more it'll blur. Use the vx and vy variables, which are the speed, so when the coin slows down the blur decreases. To add a realistic touch add a little rotation when moving.



21 startBounceTimer

The startBounceTimer is used to start off a timer that'll trigger a function call in 1000 milliseconds (or one second to you and me) this then sets the Boolean variable to true to indicate that the onEnterFrame has started to be removed.

IN DETAIL

More on Flash 8 Filters

This tutorial has only touched on one of the Flash 8 filters, the Blur filter, so let's have a look at two more – the DropShadow and Glow filters

WITH THE RELEASE of Flash 8 came a lovely set of filters that could be set on the timeline via the Properties panel to any Movie Clip and Button symbols that were placed on the stage. You might well ask, what's so special about them? Well before Flash 8 if you wanted a drop shadow on a graphic you would have had to create the graphic in Photoshop or Fireworks and import the PNG into Flash to preserve the alpha channels used to create a drop shadow effect; the same applies to the GlowFilter.

Creating these filter effects in Flash will reduce the file size and give you more control over your graphics. You can timeline tween the filters to different settings, which is great news for animators and Flash designers. But the Flash developer has a lot more to play with. As you've seen in this tutorial you can change the settings via code and therefore change the appearance of your Movie Clip on triggered events.

First, let's have a quick look at what you could use the Flash DropShadow filter for. Imagine you want your user's mouse to act as a light source. You have a cup on a desk and when the mouse moves around the stage so does the light source; a neat effect would be to change the shadow depending on where the light source is coming from. To do this you calculate how far the mouse is from the centre, then calculate the angle from the centre and assign that to your drop shadow angle property. Below is some pseudo code to calculate the steps described above:

```
var offX = this._xmouse;
var offY = this._ymouse;
var dist = Math.sqrt(offX * offX + offY * offY);
var angle = (Math.atan2(-offY, -offX) / Math.PI) * 180;
```



The Flash 8 DropShadow Filter has been applied to the whole stage here



In this example the Flash 8 GlowFilter has been applied to the ball Movie Clip only



22 removeOEF

Remove the onEnterFrame function so the coin doesn't move unless told to by the onPress event you created earlier. Then clear your interval and reset your removeStarted Boolean variable. Add this to the variable declaration: 'private var dragging:Boolean = false'.



23 Testing it out

Go back to your movie and make it the size you want. If you change the height of your movie change the variable 'bottom' in your class. We recommend playing with some of the gravity variables too. Next month we'll add collision detection and various other interface functionality!



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
Start.fla, Finished.fla
Actionscript.txt

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create a web video mixing application using Flash Video and animations

TIME REQUIRED


1 hour

SKILL LEVEL



Build an interactive vision mixer with Flash

PUSH FLASH TO ITS LIMIT WITH RICH MEDIA CONTENT, BUILDING AN INTERACTIVE VIDEO MIXING APPLICATION FOR YOUR VISITORS

 **VISUALLY RICH** media is beginning to seep through and become ever more pervasive on the web. Take a look at any of the sites featured in the Gallery section at the beginning of the magazine, and the chances are you'll be bowled over by the content. It's big budget, TV commercial quality interactive webmedia. Now with the ability to bring in video with an alpha channel, the mix between webpage and rich media is becoming ever more blurred. To help you take advantage of

these exciting possibilities, we're producing a vision mixer that will trigger clips when a certain keyboard input is detected. You can also press another key before the clip finishes to cue up another clip ready for when the first is over. There will be three layers to interact with, all the while, we'll feature a runner in the central display. As well as video backgrounds and special effects layers, we'll add some vector animation over the top as well.



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.

Build an interactive vision mixer with Flash video



01 Setting up the document

From the cover CD open the Flash document 'start.flx' and in the Properties palette click on Settings next to Publish. Make the document 620 pixels wide by 380 pixels high. Increase the frame rate to 24fps and change the background colour to black. Close the pop-up window.



02 Rename the layer

Double-click on 'layer 1' to rename it 'Run'. Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new symbol in the library, select Movie Clip as the type and name the symbol 'run'. Click OK and a new stage will be visible. Open the library (Ctrl+L) and drag the 'run.flv' to the stage. Click Yes to extend the timeline.



03 Position the runner

Using the Properties palette change the X and Y locations of the video clip to 0 pixels. Now click the 'Scene 1' icon just above the timeline to return to the main stage. From the library drag the 'run' Movie Clip to the stage. Position at 140 pixels on the X axis and 10 pixels on the Y axis.



04 Quick test

If you hold Ctrl+Return you can test your movie and you should see the man running in a loop. We placed the video file into a movie clip so that it would just keep looping, giving us a good run cycle. Now close this down in order to make the interactive mixer elements to go with this.



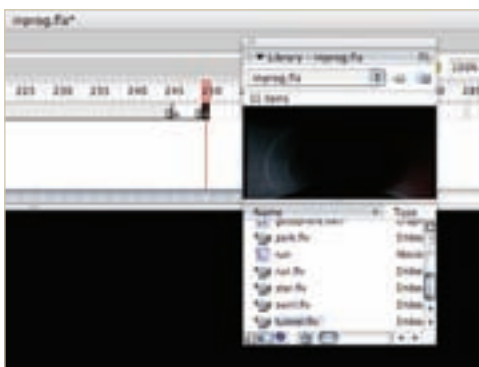
05 A new layer

Create a new layer and drag this below the first layer. Name this layer 'Background'. Now press Ctrl+F8 to create a new Movie Clip symbol. Name this symbol 'backClip' and click OK. Select Frame 2 and press F6 to add a keyframe, from the library drag the 'city.flv' onto the stage.



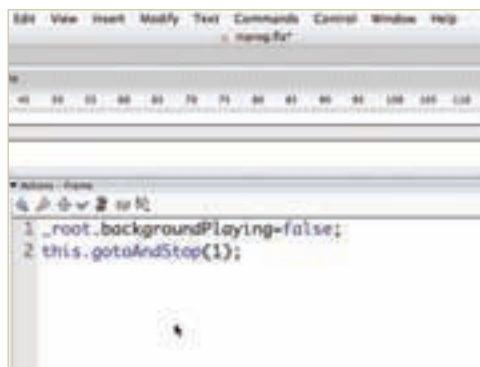
06 Position the movie

Click Yes to add 120 frames to the Movie Clip. Select the movie on the stage and position it at 0 pixels in the X and Y coordinates in the Properties palette. Select Frame 121, press F7 to add a blank keyframe. Add a keyframe at Frame 125. Drag the symbol 'park.flv' to the stage.



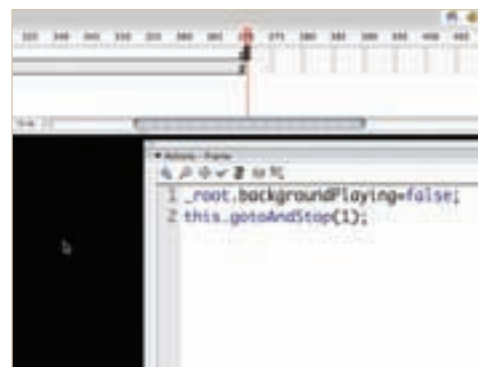
07 More video clips

Again you will be prompted to extend the timeline, this time by 120 frames. Position at 0 pixels on both the X and Y axis. This movie should finish on Frame 245; select Frame 246, press F7. Add a keyframe at Frame 250 and drag the 'tunnel.flv' symbol from the library onto the stage.



08 Add a code layer

Click Yes to extend the timeline and position in the Properties palette at 0 pixels on the X and Y coordinates. Add a new layer. Select Frame 1 and open the ActionScript editor. Add a 'stop();' command to hold the playhead here. Add a keyframe at Frame 122 and copy in the above code.



09 Copy the actions

Right click on Frame 122 and choose Copy Frames. Right-click on Frame 246. In the drop menu select Paste Frames to add the code. Select Frame 371 and repeat the Paste Frames. This will tell our main code that we've reached the end of a clip.



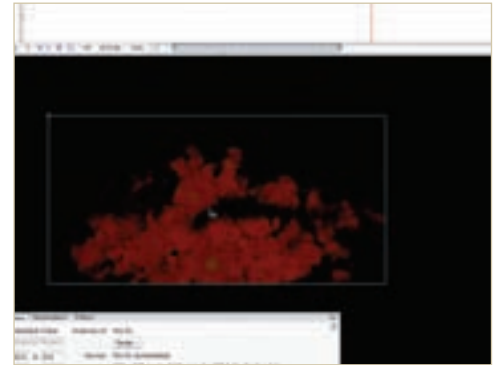
10 Return to the main stage

Click Scene 1. Drag the 'backClip' symbol from the library onto the Background layer and lock the Run layer. The Movie Clip will appear as a white dot. Position this at ten pixels on the X and Y axis in the Properties palette. Name the instance 'background_mc' and hit Return.



11 Start the FX layer

Create a new layer and name this 'FX'. Position this between the Background and Run layers. Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new Movie Clip in the library. Name this 'fxClip', press OK. Select Frame 2, press F6 to add a Keyframe. Now drag the 'star.flv' onto the stage and extend the timeline.



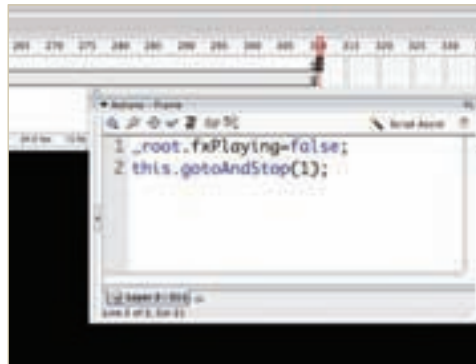
12 Add some heat

Click Yes and position the video at 0 pixels on the X and Y axis. Select Frame 122, press F7 to add a blank keyframe. Add a new keyframe at 126 and drag the symbol 'fire.flv' to the stage. Again click Yes to extend the timeline and position at 0 pixels on the X and Y axis.



13 Swirl video

Select Frame 186, press F7. Then select Frame 190 and press F6. From the library add the 'Swirl.flv' to the stage and click Yes to extend the timeline. As before, position at 0 pixels on the X and Y coordinates. Now add a new layer for ActionScript. Select Frame 122 and add a keyframe.



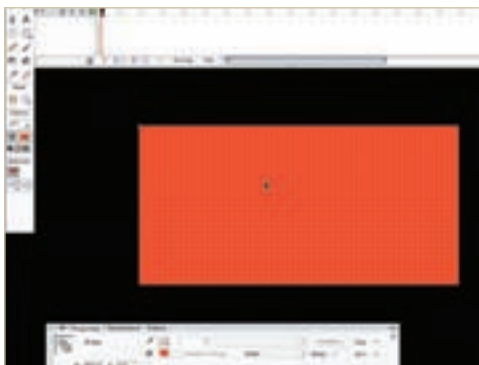
14 Add code

Open the ActionScript panel and add the above code. Right-click this frame and choose Copy Frames from the drop menu. Select Frame 186, add a keyframe and right-click the keyframe, choosing Paste Frames from the drop menu. Repeat with Frame 311 at the end of the sequence.



15 Add the FX

Return to Scene 1 and make sure all layers are locked except the FX layer. From the library drag the 'fxClip' to the stage and using the Properties palette position at 10 pixels on the X and Y coordinates. Add an instance name of 'fx_mc' and change the Blend drop menu to Add.



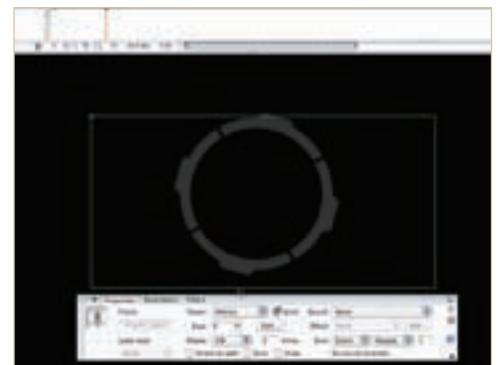
16 Overlay material

Create a new layer and name this 'Overlay'. Position this above all other layers. Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new Movie Clip symbol. Name this 'foreClip' and click OK. On the new stage draw a rectangle, making it 600 pixels wide by 300 pixels high, which can be resized in the Properties palette.



17 Outline view

Position the rectangle at 0 pixels on the X and Y coordinates in the Properties palette. Click the coloured square by the timeline, which will show you an outline of the rectangle; we'll use this as a guide to the size of the stage. Create another layer and drag it below the first layer.



18 Add a circle

Drag the circle symbol from the library onto the stage and position centrally within the rectangle. Drag this keyframe to Frame 2, leaving Frame 1 empty. Add a keyframe at Frame 120 and scale the circle to 150%. Add a motion tween between these keyframes adding clockwise rotation.

Build an interactive vision mixer with Flash video

IN DETAIL

Creating content for your mixer

In the tutorial we've supplied video content for use on your vision mixer. We take a look in detail at how this content was created so that you can gain an insight into creating your own video content

IN MUCH THE same way as Photoshop has become every designer's favorite tool for creating great illustration, photography and content for web pages, the web designer is now having to look at the production of rich media tools to bring cutting edge content to the web page.

This new breed of tools in the web designer's tool box includes sound, video and even 3D animation. The thought of working with some of these tools may seem a little daunting at first but most are easy to work with. While in this tutorial we didn't get a chance to add sound because of space, it certainly would enhance the experience of the end user. The use of video has been produced by taking 3D pre-rendered animation and converting it into FLV (Flash Video). There is an advantage in working with 3D because the packages will export alpha channels with the animation and this can be encoded with the Flash Video Encoder. This allows characters to walk across screens in front of existing web page material and interact with the user in new, exciting ways. The best application for creating animated characters is called Poser, and we used this to create our running man.

If this sounds a little complicated then you can always turn to video producing. You need to invest in a very large blue or green cloth, some decent lights and a video camera – quite a small setup compared to TV production. Use the lights to evenly light the blue or green screen then place your actor/prop in front of the screen and start filming. Using compositing software such as After Effects, the blue or green can be removed. Blue or green is used because neither colour is found in skin tones. Again this can be exported straight from After Effects into a transparent FLV ready for import direct to Flash.

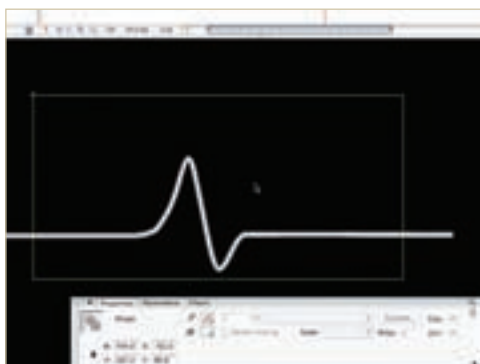
It is now the responsibility of web designers to have much more of a wider media interest, looking at ways to effectively deliver these to the browser.



Poser is a great character animation software package that can produce content for Flash in the form of video or vector animation

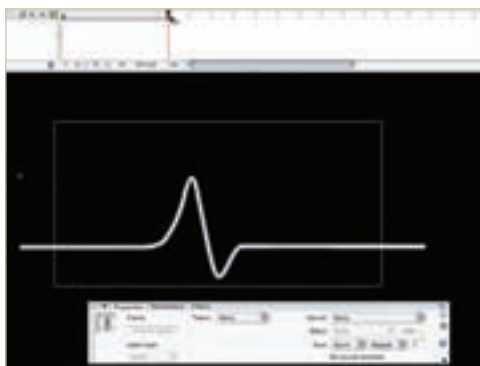


After Effects is the Photoshop of Video. Use this for preparing blue/green screen video for web



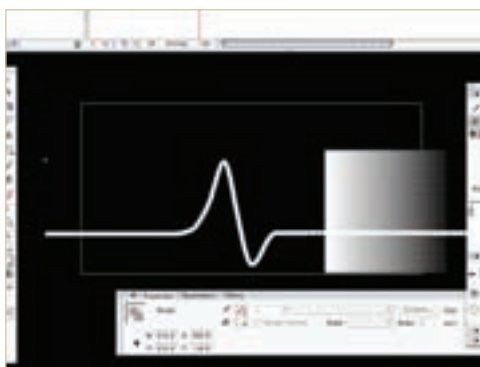
19 Extend the timeline

Select Frame 130 of the rectangle layer, press F5 to extend the timeline. Now select Frame 121 of the circle layer and press F7 to add a blank keyframe. Select Frame 125 and add a keyframe using F6 key. Use the Pen tool to draw the life line as shown on the screenshot above.



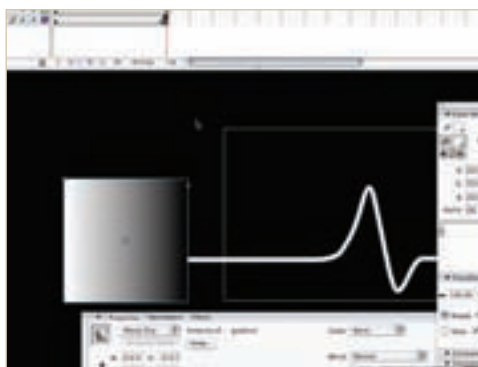
20 Convert to symbol

Ensure the line width is 10 pixels then go to Modify>Shape>Convert Lines to Fills. Convert this to a symbol (Modify>Convert to Symbol), name it 'beat' and ensure it's a Movie Clip. Double-click the symbol on the stage. Select Frame 25 and press F5 to extend the timeline.



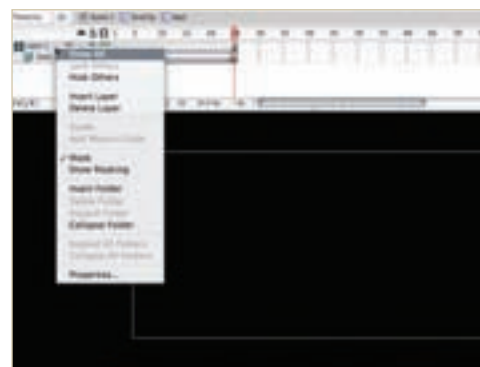
21 Alpha gradient

Create a new layer and drag it below the first. Draw a rectangle large enough to cover the peaks and troughs of the life line. Delete the stroke from the shape and change the fill in the mixer palette to a linear fill. Make one side white and the other white but with 0% alpha.



22 Convert to symbol

With the rectangle selected, go to Modify>Convert to Symbol. Make the symbol a Movie Clip and name it 'gradient'. Now move the left edge of the rectangle to the right of the lifeline. Add a keyframe at Frame 25 and move the whole gradient to clear the left hand edge of the lifeline.



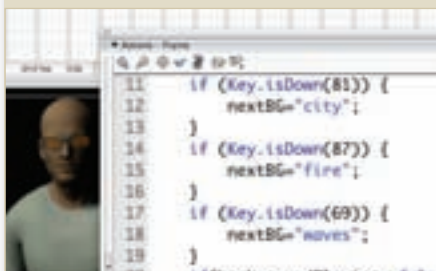
23 Between the symbol

Add a motion between the two keyframes. If you play the timeline you will see the gradient play past the lifeline. We want the lifeline to mask this so right-click on the top layer and choose Mask from the drop-down menu. Now play the timeline again and it looks much better.

TECHNIQUE

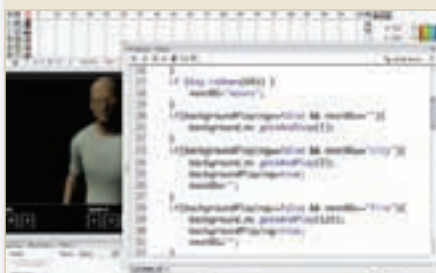
Detecting keypresses

There's a number of ways to tell if keys have been pressed with Flash. We'll look at how we've done it for the vision mixer



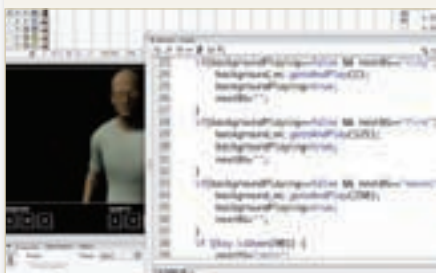
01 Which key

To detect keypresses we are using an 'if statement' to simply check which key is down. This is by far the easiest way of detecting keypresses. Line 11 of the main code checks to see if key 81 is down.



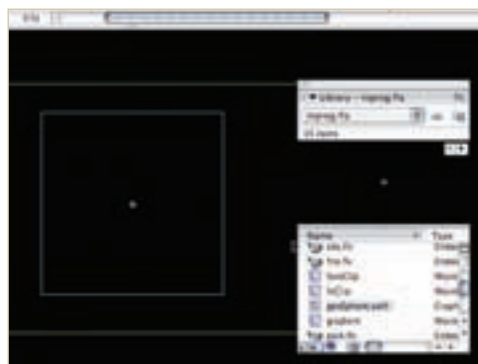
02 ASCII what?

Key 81 is the Q key on the keyboard, with 81 being the ASCII code for the key. This is how you detect which keyboard key has been pressed, for a full listing of ASCII codes see the ActionScript help file.



03 Go to the frame

This code sets a variable to the right clip. Using an 'if statement' this will cue up or play the right clip. This is done by accessing the instance name of the clip on the stage and playing the appropriate frame.



24 Back to the foreClip

To return to the Movie Clip above the timeline, click 'foreClip'. Select Frame 235 of the top layer, press F5. Select Frame 225 of the bottom layer, press F7. Then select Frame 230, press F6. Drag the symbol 'geosphere.swf' onto the stage.



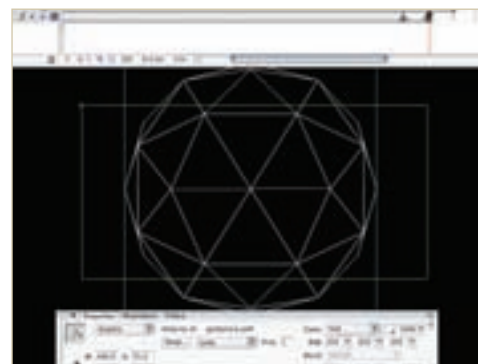
26 Add code

Select Frame 275 of the bottom layer, press F5. Repeat the process with the top layer. Right-click the top layer and from the drop-down menu choose Mask. Add a new layer for the code, select Frame 121 and a keyframe. Open the ActionScript panel and add the code shown.



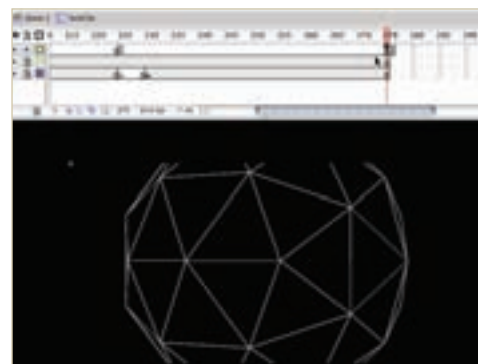
28 Create a GUI layer

Add a new layer above the others and name this 'GUI'. Draw a rectangle 600 x 300 pixels. Delete the fill and change the stroke colour to white. Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new symbol, name it 'Key' and make it a Movie Clip. On the new stage select the option for rounded corners.



25 Invisible symbol

You can't see the geosphere symbol that you added because it is black. Select it, go to Properties palette>Colour drop>Tint. Make the tint colour white. In the Transform palette increase the size to 200%. Position the sphere central to the outline rectangle.



27 Repeat code

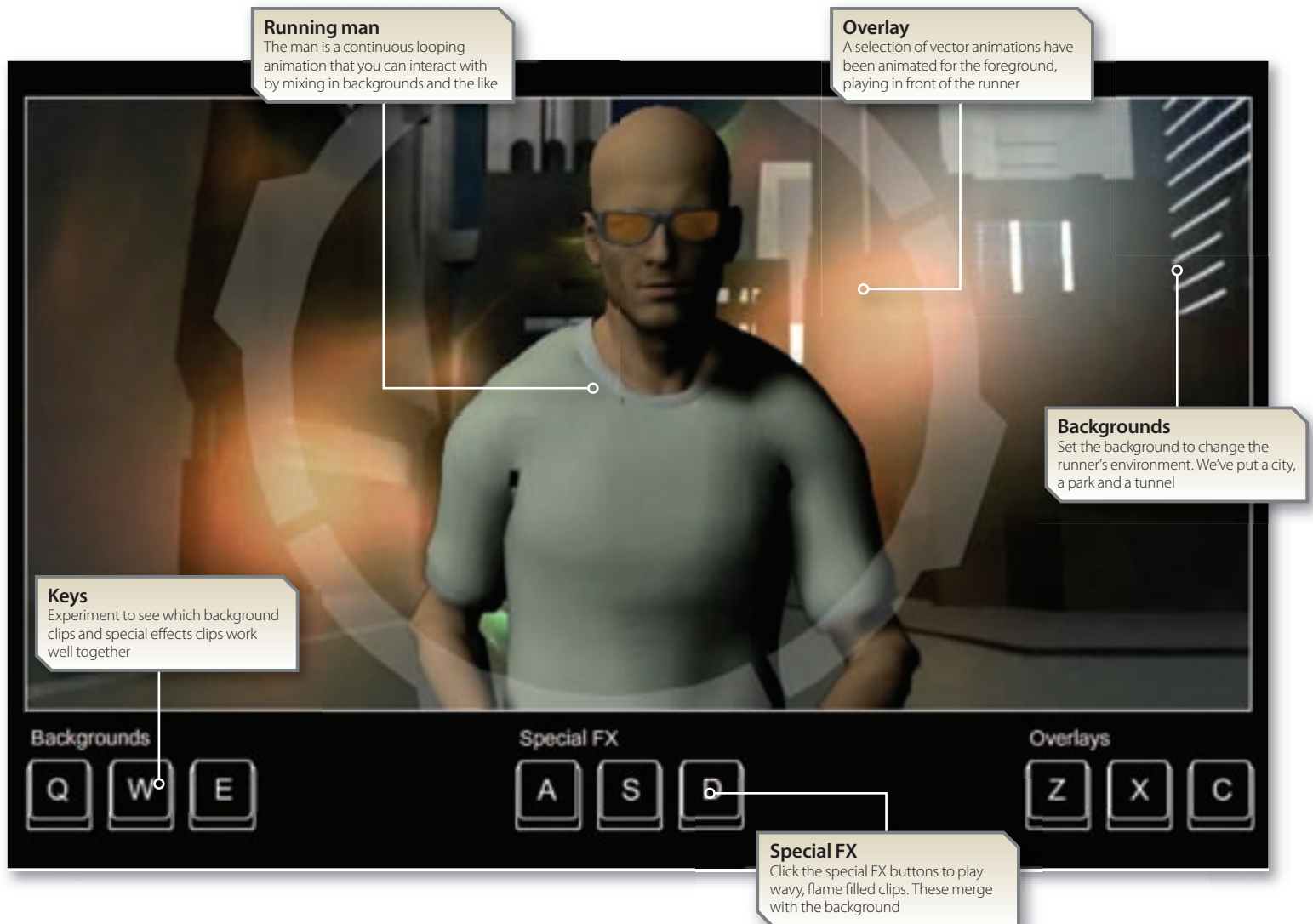
Right-click on the keyframe at Frame 121 choose Copy Frames. Select Frame 225, right-click on it and select Paste Frames. Then select Frame 276, right-click choosing Paste Frames from the drop down menu. Return to the main stage and drag the 'foreClip' to the Overlay layer.



29 Rounded rectangles

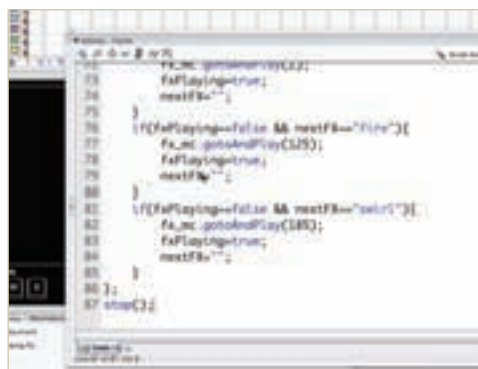
Set your corner radius to five points, click OK. Draw two squares slightly overlapping with one larger than the other. Select the inside line of the top of the square, and delete this, your line drawing should represent a keyboard key. Return to Scene 1 and add this to the GUI layer.

Build an interactive vision mixer with Flash video



30 Mixer instructions

You may need to resize your key to make it fit within the space at the bottom of the document. Add three sections of three keys and use the Text tool to add a capital letter. Add three headings, as shown, to let your users know which components the keys will trigger in the vision mixer.



31 ActionScript Code

Add a new layer and name this layer 'Code'. Select Frame 1 and open the ActionScript editor. From the cover CD, open the text document 'Actionscript.txt'. Copy and paste the code into the ActionScript Editor. This links the keys pressed with the appropriate section of the Movie Clip.



32 Finishing touches

We've added a preloader as there are several video clips to load, make sure they're loaded before using the vision mixer. All content on Frame 1 has been moved to Frame 2 with the preloader holding the playhead on Frame 1 until the content is ready. See the finished project for more info.



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

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

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create a stylish music-themed website to explore designing Flash templates

TIME REQUIRED

2 hours

SKILL LEVEL



Creating Flash templates with a themed style

IF YOU WANT TO GET A SITE ONLINE THAT SUMS UP YOUR IMAGE THEN THIS EXERCISE IN CREATING A MUSIC-INSPIRED TEMPLATE SHOULD HELP

THERE ARE TWO schools of thought when it comes to displaying work on the internet. First up, there's the well-established HTML, which enables you to effectively fill up many pages of bespoke content but can tend to feel a little bland due to the static nature of an HTML page and the lack of animated transitions. Alternatively, there's the more fun but occasionally constrictive Flash interface, which is what we'll be attempting. As the Flash interface will be fixed at

a predetermined size the overflow of information will be controlled through a series of scrolling content boxes. To start us off we'll mock up the interface in Photoshop then use some of the components in the Flash movie while recreating others using the background image as a template. This approach will ensure the swf size will be kept low and reduce the loading times whilst also ensuring that all of the graphics will be as clean and crisp as possible.



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.

Creating Flash templates with a themed style



01 Start in Photoshop

Open up Photoshop (CS2 – but older versions are fine) and create a new document to 750px x 500px. Select RGB in the Color Mode and click OK. Now set the background to solid black. Make a note of this dimension, as we'll be creating a Flash movie to the same size a little later on.



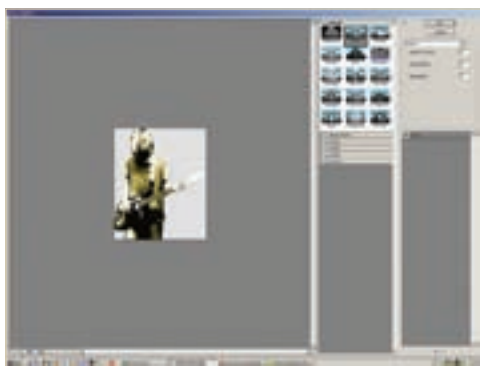
02 Add the foreground

There are four main elements that make up the graphics for the interface. Select the Vector Shape tool and then Ellipse, ensuring Shape Layers are selected. Holding down the Shift key to maintain proportion, draw out plenty of small to large circles covering the bottom.



03 Add the focal point

Find an image of you or your band and open it in Photoshop. Using the Pen tool cutout the main subject and drag it into your document. Convert it to a new Smart Object (CS2 only) and scale down the image to fit in the interface. Position the layer below the foreground layer.



04 Vector effect

Double-click on the Smart Object layer. Select Image>Adjustments>Posterize, enter a level of around 8 and hit OK. Select Filter>Artistic>Cutout, enter No. Levels = 8, Edge Simplicity = 3 and Edge Fidelity = 3 and hit OK. Clean up with the brush as needed and close the doc to save it.



05 Background elements

Position the Musician layer below the foreground. Select the Ellipse tool and add some more circles, position the layer directly above the background layer. Create a new layer and select the Brush tool with a tip of 3px and 100% hardness. Draw some drips falling from some of the circles.



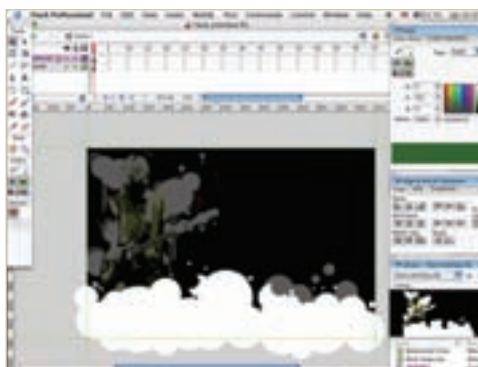
06 Save For Web

Select File>Save For Web and export the artwork as a JPEG. Now go back to your document and hide all the layers apart from the musician layer. Hold down the Ctrl key, select the Musician layer and go to Image>Crop. Now export the image as a png with a transparent background.



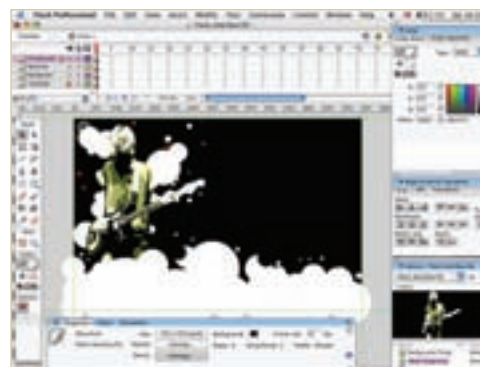
07 Open up Flash

Open up Flash (version 8, but 7 will work fine also) and create a new movie with dimensions set to 750px x 500px running at 30fps. Set the background colour to black. Now import your background image and band image direct to your library.



08 Recreate the graphics

Create a new layer, name it 'Template', drag in the background image. Use the Align tool to position in the centre. Create a new layer and name it Foreground. Select the Ellipse tool and with a white fill and stroke recreate the foreground. Make the circles a graphic symbol.



09 Finish the graphics

Create a new layer and name it 'Musician', drag in your graphic and position on the stage. Place this layer below the Foreground layer. Now create another new layer and name it Background and finish creating the graphics. Once you've finished place this layer below the Musician layer.

Tutorial



10 Add menu items

Create a new layer named Menu Items positioned at the top of the stack. As we're looking for a grunge effect try using a distorted font but remember that you have to convert the font to a vector graphic. Select the Text tool and in the Properties window select your font, size 16pt.



11 More menus

On the stage add the menu items: News, Bio, Gallery, Discography, Tour, Links and Contact. Convert them all to buttons with the same name. In your first button select the font, then Modify>Break Apart to separate the individual letters. Select Break Apart to make it a vector graphic.



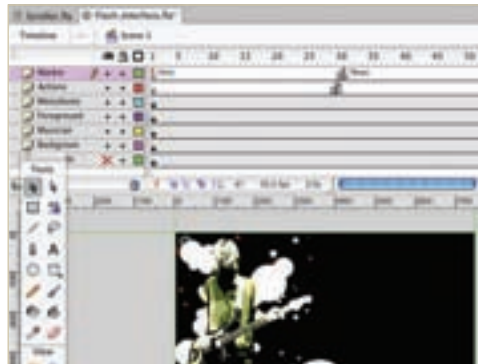
12 Modify the button

Still within the Button symbol copy the Up frame and paste it into the Over state. Select the Rectangle tool and draw a rectangle over the text in the Hit state. Move the rectangle away by holding down the Shift key and moving up four times. Delete the text and replace the rectangle.



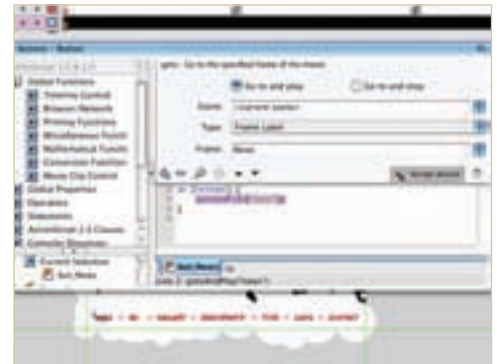
13 Animate the button

To give our interface that extra edge we're going to add an animation in the over state of our button. First, change the colour of the font to #FFCC00; second, create a new layer duplicating the key frame on layer 1. Now on layer 2 add an animation across 40+ frames.



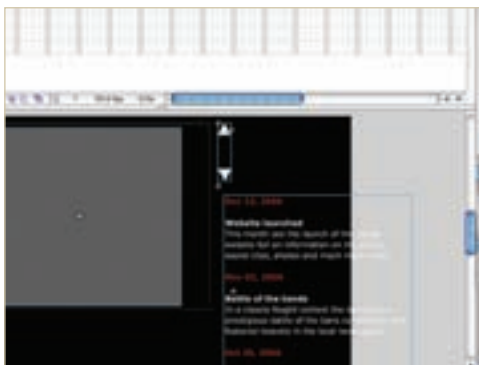
14 Add the markers

Create two new layers: name one 'Actions' and one 'Marker'. Add seven keyframes every 30 frames and seven stop functions to each. On frame 1 add a frame label 'intro' and on frame 31 add a label 'news'; continue this on frame 61 and 91. Stretch out the other layers across the timeline.



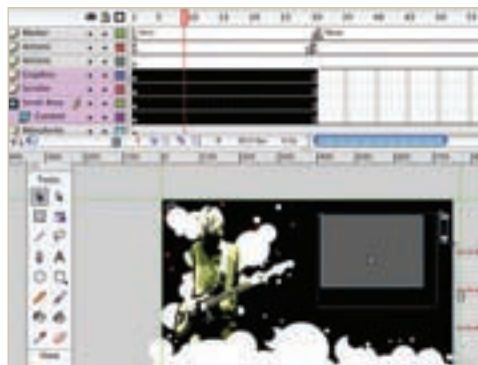
15 Button scripts

Add: on (release){gotoAndPlay ("News");} to each of your buttons replacing ("News") for your label name. The benefit of using frame labels over numbers is if for any reason you need more space in the timeline then you need only move the labels.



16 Add the scrolling text

Open the 'Scroller.fla' from the CD provided. Copy all of the frames, go back into your main movie and paste in the frames. Drag out the new frames to the stop frame on frame 30. Open the library and create a new folder named 'scroller_01' and add all the new elements into this folder.



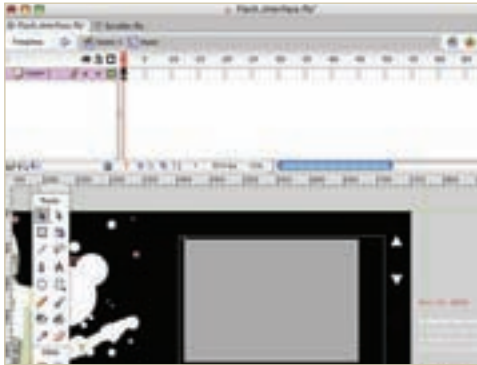
17 Adding more scrollers

If you require more scrolling text fields simply copy the folder and rename it 'scroller_02', etc. Copy the Actions frame located on frame 1 and paste directly under the Marker, rename the instance names on each of the symbols and within this Actions frame.



18 Additional scroller items

Hyperlinks and images can be placed within the scrolling text file to make the interface more functional. Add a new layer within the symbol and place images on this layer. Try and keep all of the additional elements in the same scroller folder to keep things neat and tidy.



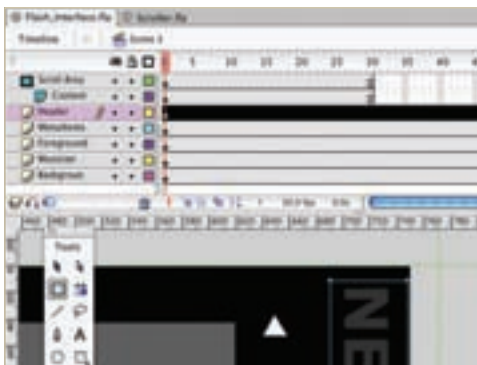
19 More scroller attributes

The 'scroll area' masking layer determines the dimensions of the scroller and its associated slider. If you wish to make the area wider or taller then all that needs to be transformed is the symbol located on this masking layer, the slider and content will fit to match.



20 Add your logo

Now all of the main components are in our movie, it's time to start personalising it by adding a logo and headers. If you have a logo import it to the library and place it on the foreground layer symbol, as this is already stretched out over the entire timeline no additional work is required.



21 Section headers

You need to tell the user what section they're in, so create a new layer and name it 'Header'. Select the Text tool and on the stage enter 'NEWS'. Ensure the font is Verdana and size 45pt. Set the colour to #666666 at 50% opacity, rotate 90 degrees and position in the top right-hand corner.

IN DETAIL

Adding sound to a movie

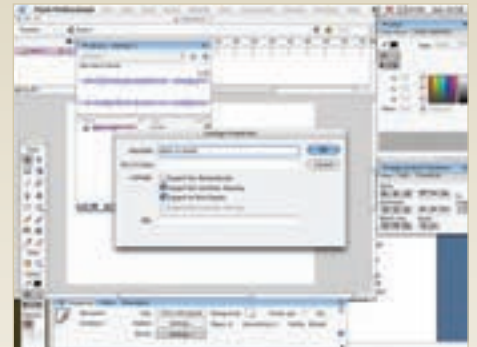
In a project such as this you may require the added element of sound in your movie. This can be in the form of sound effects or a background sound track

THERE ARE many different ways of adding sound into your Flash movie on your website and depending on how you want to control your sound will affect the method that you use.

The easiest way to add sound to your movie is to first import your sound direct into your library then simply create a new layer and drag the sound into this. This method is best used for sounds that have a short duration such as blips and clicks. It's most effective in a button symbol where the sound can be placed in a keyframe on the Over or Down state. Controlling sound in this manner is simple as there's no need for additional action scripting and there is no danger of the sound getting out of control as the effect will have most likely finished playing before you rollover another button to play the sound again.

The other main method is best used for a longer sound track such as some background music. Once again, import your sound direct into your library, with the library member selected right-click and then in the menu select Linkage. A dialog box will appear and in the Identifier box add a relevant name, this will give the sound an Instance name and therefore can be controlled direct from the library through scripting and need never be placed on the stage. This method will ensure that the sound will only play or stop playing once a button is pressed or is told to play by some script placed on the timeline. It'll also play the track without playing the same track over the top of it which is what would happen if a longer track is placed in a button symbol.

The main problem with sound in Flash is that it can be quite large in size and therefore affect loading times. There are some funky little media players that can be found on any reputable Flash resource site that you can place into your own movie and control the sound externally removing increased loading times.



Control a sound direct from the library using the Linkage function. This is best used with longer sounds



Control a sound by simply placing it on a keyframe in the timeline. This is best with small sound effects



22 More page elements

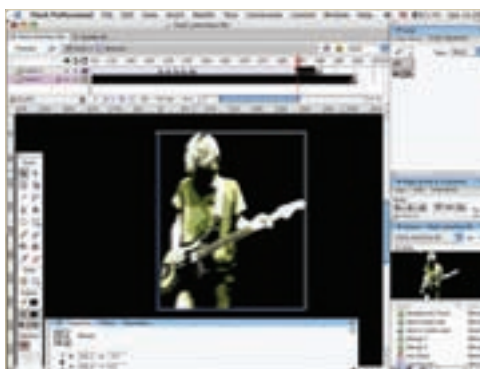
We need to start making the page look more like an information portal. So select the Text tool and on the Header layer type 'What's new' set the size to 18pt and the colour to #FFCC00. Add a dashed white line underneath this and position both objects above the scroller mask.



23 Add more info

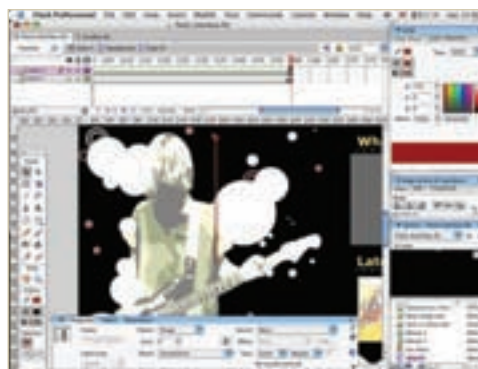
On the front page we want to highlight the main section of the interface so create a new layer and name it 'Content'. Insert a header named 'Latest album' to the same size and colour as the previous header. Add your own artwork and text, add a 'read more' link linked to the Discography page.

Tutorial



24 Distressed effect

Click your musician, convert to a symbol, open it up and duplicate the layer. Stretch out the bottom layer over 200 frames. At various points along the timeline add keyframes to the top layer and shift the image. Change the opacity and create motion tweens, but over no more than ten frames.



25 More effects

Select your background layer and convert to a symbol. Go into the symbol and create four or five more individual symbols of the circles. Now, using your background template as a guide, add some shape tweens over 1000+ frames of a slow moving drip of paint.



26 And finally...

Add to your foreground and background symbols a drop shadow filled to #666666 and set to 50% opacity. Add the same distressed effect as the Musician symbol and you are done. Fill in the additional sections with your own content and add a preloader as required.



Tech Support Flash

A coding problem is corrected from issue 122 and help is given to a number of projects including making a DVD from Flash animation and randomly loading images



Here the browser passes a variable to Flash which it uses to tell Flash that it is on the 'contact' page. Flash responds by highlighting that word and giving feedback to the user

Q MP3 grumbles

I have one slight grumble regarding the Flash MP3 player in issue 122. After spending the best part of an hour reading through the tutorial and typing in the code verbatim into Flash 8, I tested it locally and was very pleased to see and hear it all working. However, when I tested it on my website it was a different story! It is a shame because the player looks great and is well coded. Overall the tutorial has really opened my eyes to the practical integration of XML and Flash, however I think the selling point of the tutorial was a little misleading as it promised to give a fully functioning MP3 player for inclusion on a website, when actually the lengthy download times make it impractical. Is there any chance of some revised code in a future issue to make the player progressively download the music?

Richard Escott

A Sorry you had difficulties with this – it had us puzzled for a while. There are two small but costly mistakes in the code. The first, we referenced an XML file 'trackList.xml'. However

we named the XML file 'tracklist.xml'. A small, subtle difference of a lowercase 'l'. This works fine locally but causes problems online. Second mistake is that we needed to tell you to export the HTML and SWF from the Publish Settings under the File menu. This puts two lines of code into the HTML:

```
<param name="allowScriptAccess" value="sameDomain" />
<param name="bgcolor" value="#ffffff" />
<embed src="player.swf"
quality="high" bgcolor="#ffffff"
width="800" height="569" name="player"
align="middle" allowScriptAccess="sameDomain" type="application/x-shockwave-flash"
pluginspage="http://www.macromedia.com/go/getflashplayer" />
```

The code in bold allows Flash to read local files on your webserver. Without that, Flash is completely blind!

To get the MP3 to progressively download, simply change line 13 of the main code to:

```
song.loadSound("tracks/"+this.
firstChild.childNodes[record].
childNodes[0].firstChild.nodeValue,
true);
```



Getting the right animation to stop will depend on whether you are referencing the correct instance name

The 'true' at the end is a switch to say whether streaming or not, true sets the file to stream. Also you will need to get rid of the 'song.onLoad' function, as this isn't needed when set to streaming. To speed up downloads, you can encode your online version of MP3 files at a much smaller data rate to get the file to start playing faster. While you might not like the lower quality for offline listening, compromises have to be made online.

As for the ID3 information, this is entirely out of my control as this is set up in the MP3 and you can easily add this information in iTunes or a similar music catalogue application.

Q Mouseover animations

Hi Web Designer. Hope you can help. I have been trying to implement an animation that plays when I place my mouse over a button, but I haven't had much success. I think I know how to do it as I've tried using ActionScript to swap instances on the stage but I haven't managed to get this to work, so if you could point me in the right direction then I'd appreciate it.

James Fuller

A You've actually been tackling this in a much more complicated way than you need to. While it's possible to swap instances on the stage and trigger the new instance to start playing, it can be achieved much easier without the need to even write a single line of code. As you already have a button we'll take that as the starting point. Double-click your button in the library and select the Over state. If this is not a keyframe, first hit F6 to turn the frame into a keyframe. Make sure that the Hit state is also a keyframe. Select the Over state and hit the delete key to remove the content from this keyframe.

Either make your animation in a separate movie clip or, if you have it in a separate symbol already, drag this onto the Hit state. If necessary turn the onion skinning on, so that you can align this animation with what is already there so that it doesn't jump out of place as you roll your mouse over. Now place this button on the stage and hit the Ctrl+Enter key together to test the button. As you roll your mouse over the button the playhead in the button

"IT IS A SHAME BECAUSE THE PLAYER LOOKS GREAT AND IS WELL CODED"



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

Q&A Tech Support

KILLER SHORTCUTS

Power up your workflow with these top timesavers

STAGE

Import to stage: **Ctrl + R**
Undo: **Ctrl + Z**
Redo: **Ctrl + Y**
Duplicate: **Ctrl + D**
Preview outlines: **Ctrl + Alt + Shift + O**
Snap to grid: **Ctrl + Shift + '**
Snap to guides: **Ctrl + Shift + ;**
Snap to objects: **Ctrl + Shift + /**
Optimise shape: **Ctrl + Alt + Shift + C**

Make same width: **Ctrl + Alt + Shift + 7**
Make same height: **Ctrl + Alt + Shift + 9**

TIMELINE

Add a frame: **F5**
Delete a frame: **Shift + F5**
Cut frames: **Ctrl + Alt + X**
Copy frames: **Ctrl + Alt + C**
Paste frames: **Ctrl + Alt + V**

Clear frames: **Alt + Delete**

SCRIPTING

Auto-Format script: **Ctrl + Shift + F**
Check Script syntax: **Ctrl + T**

INTERFACE

Hide Panels: **F4**
Toggle Actions Panel: **F9**

moves to the Over state. On this state your animation should start to play. Very easy and very effective.

Q Export to DVD

I have done an animation and I am trying to get it onto a DVD. I have exported the animation as both an uncompressed QuickTime and AVI file, but have had little success at getting this content into my DVD software. I am keen to get this done but seem to be having immense difficulty in doing this.

Rachel Barnsby

A DVDs are actually encoded using MPEG-2, which is specially wrapped up in separate video and audio files as it is mastered to the DVD. Most home DVD authoring software assume that you are bringing content from a DV camera that you've saved to your hard drive. With that in mind it should be able to read either a QuickTime or AVI movie that is encoded in DV PAL. Make sure as you export your movie from Flash that you use the same dimensions as a TV

screen which is 720 x 576 pixels and in the DV PAL compressor; it shouldn't matter whether it's AVI or QuickTime.

This should import into your DVD authoring package. If it doesn't work then your DVD authoring package might well be assuming that you have already converted the video to MPEG-2 in which case you might need a third-party piece of software to get the video into MPEG-2 format, but this is highly unlikely.

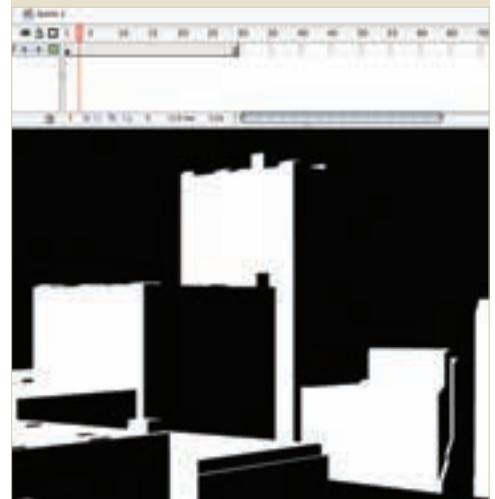


Flash decompilers are cheap and could save you time. Find independent testimonials rather than just taking the sit

Expert advice

All singing and dancing

Flash has established itself as one of the leading applications for producing content for the internet. However its ease of use and superb animation facilities make it the ideal choice for producing content for other media as well. Hence why Rachel Barnsby is converting her animation into a DVD. Because Flash can easily be output to video formats it is ideal for producing traditional cartoons, titles and anything that needs animating. The core principal to keep in mind is to use graphic symbols over movie clips and ensure that there are enough frames on the main timeline to allow the graphics to play. With that in mind it's easy to produce video.

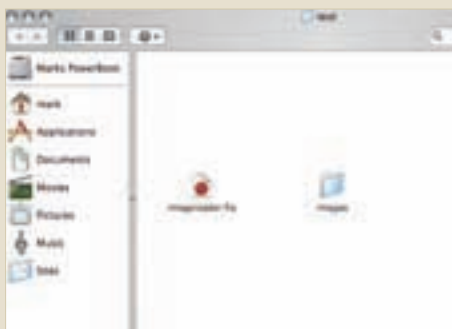


Technique: Highlighting

Q I saw a website recently that, when I returned to it, the image had changed. This got me curious, so I hit the refresh button on my browser and each time I did this the image on the homepage changed. I'd quite like to be able to do something like this on my own site, but I'm not sure where to start. Can you help me out?

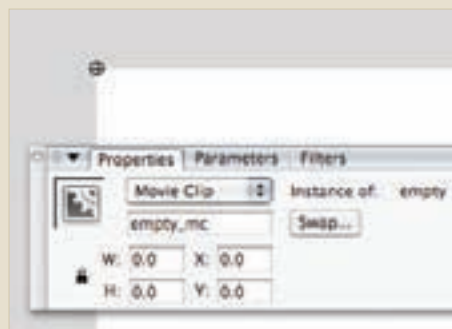
Charlotte Jenkin

A Generate a random number using ActionScript and, depending on what number is returned, grab the appropriate image from an array. An array is just a list and, in this case, a list of images. You'll need to assemble your folder of images beforehand and put an empty movie clip on the stage in Flash to load the relevant images into.



01 Get the images

Create a folder called 'images' and place this in the root folder of your website. Place the appropriate images in here and they will be called from the ActionScript code to load from this folder when we add the code. Open Flash and save your document into the main folder.



02 Load into a movie clip

Create a new symbol (Ctrl+F8). Make the symbol a Movie Clip and name it 'empty'. Click OK then click the 'Scene 1' icon above the timeline. From the library drag the 'empty' symbol to the stage, place in the top, left and name the instance 'empty_mc'.

03 Add the code

Create a new layer and open the ActionScript panel. Next add the code exactly as listed below, but put the names of your images into the array rather than the default ones we've used. Now press Ctrl+Enter to test the SWF and you will load one of your images into the empty Movie Clip. Try it again and you'll get another one, giving the effect of an image changing on your home page each time it is refreshed.

```
var imageList:Array = new Array("images/  
image1.jpg", "images/image2.jpg", "images/  
image3.jpg", "images/image4.jpg");  
var randomImage:Number = random(imageList.  
length);  
var imageLoad:String =  
imageList[randomImage];  
trace(imageLoad);  
empty_mc.loadMovie(imageLoad);
```



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
Final_interface.psd
'Grunge kit'

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Find out how to create a unique grungy styled layout for your very own website

TIME REQUIRED

30 minutes

SKILL LEVEL



Create the effects of a grungy styled website

LEE GROOMBRIDGE SHOWS YOU HOW TO USE A COMBINATION OF EFFECTS TO CREATE UNIQUE GRUNGY ARTWORK FOR YOUR SITE DESIGNS

ONE OF THE coolest and most common styles used by web designers at the moment is the grunge style, basically making things dirty! Using this tutorial you'll see just a few of the methods used to create some grunge of your own. You'll learn about methods and effects like displacement maps, layer blends and texture usage. This tutorial also shows you that your use of fonts is just as important in a design as the images. By completing the tutorial you won't recreate the exact effect

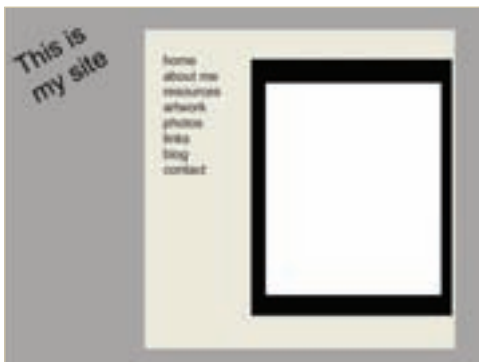
of our final interface. What we want is for you to follow the steps and create your very own masterpiece. To help you do this we've supplied you with what we've called the 'grunge kit' on the disc accompanying the magazine this month. Here you can select from a number of fonts, textures and displacement maps so that you can experiment away. This isn't a tutorial for absolute beginners and you'll need to know your way around Photoshop – you have been warned!



YOUR EXPERT

Lee Groombridge is Imagine Publishing's interactive media manager. With over ten years' experience in the digital arts industry and boasting a portfolio with clients such as NTL, Telewest and ITV, it's safe to say he knows his stuff when it comes to Photoshop!

Create the effects of a grungy styled website



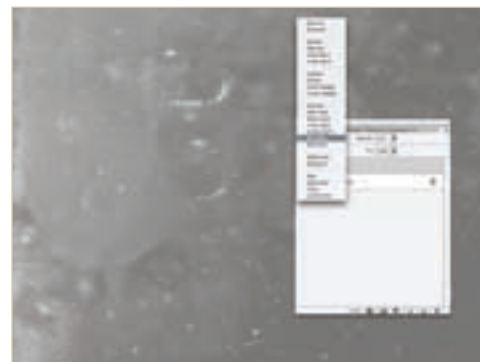
01 Before you start

Before you start it's important to plan out the components your design has to incorporate. In this example we need to have a clear menu and an area where the page content will be displayed. You can plan out the rough layout on a piece of paper or by using Photoshop as we have here.



02 Scanning resources

The way to get true textures is by taking photographs or by scanning in your materials. On the CD we've given you seven texture photographs and scans. In this instance we've created a new document in Photoshop at 1024 x 768 and placed the 'Paper01' image on layer one.



03 Initial effects

The first thing we're going to do is invert this layer by selecting Image>Adjustments>Invert. This'll turn the paper into more of a scratch pad. You can now change the layer blend to Pin Light. This'll just exaggerate the effect of the scratches and dust on the textured scan.



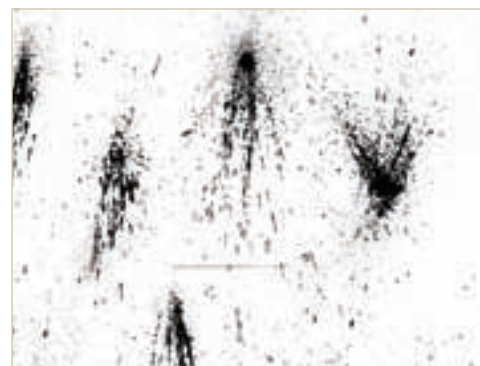
04 Add more paper

The next step is to start stacking the textures. Add a new layer and place a second scan or texture in it. Using Edit>Transform>Skew tilt this layer in an anti-clockwise motion. With the layer still selected go to Filters>Distort>Displace. A pop-up dialog box will appear.



05 Displacement filters

From this filter you can create a random torn effect. Use Horizontal Scale 10, Vertical Scale 10, Displacement Map: Stretch To Fit, Undefined Areas: Repeat Edge Pixel and click OK. Select one of the displacement PSD files from the disc. We chose 'displacement_03.psd', but choose what you like.



06 Ink splat 1

You'll now have two layers creating the basis of your design. It's now time to add some ink splats. Open the PSD file from the disc called 'splats__splattered_india_ink.psd'. Here you'll be faced with a selection of ink splats for you to drag into your site design.



07 More ink splats

Drag a few ink splats into the design. We've placed three ink splats and arranged them in the bottom left of the design. It's important to keep some kind of composition to your design even though you're essentially importing random images and shapes; don't go over the top!



08 Hue and Saturation

In order to get more variation, change the colour of one of the splats. Select the layer with the splat that's on top of all the others and select Image>Adjustments>Hue and Saturation. Select the Colorize option in the bottom right then use the sliders to pick a colour. Then click OK.



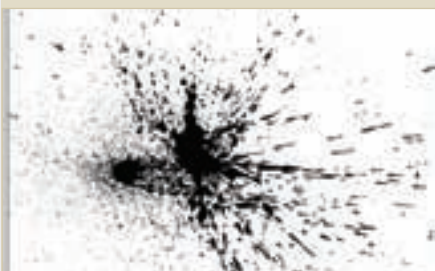
09 Add more paper

The next layer is added to give the site some depth. Select from the CD a paper texture. Place this on a layer above all the others and position it so it covers everything. Go to the layer blend mode and select Multiply. This'll reveal the layer underneath but add texture spots to the design.

ON THE DISC

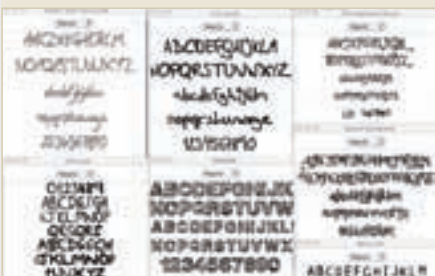
All you need to make grunge

On this month's disc we've collated a collection of resources to experiment with when creating your grungy designs



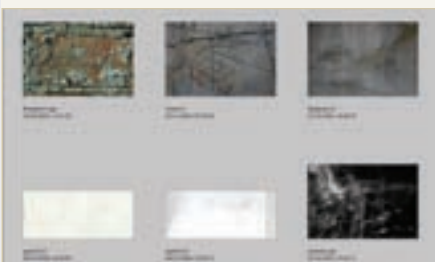
01 Seven ink splats

The ink splats provided on the disc were created and supplied by Tom Tirins. They were created by actually splattering ink onto paper and scanning the results. You can view his impressive gallery of work at www.tomtirinscreations.co.uk.



02 Fifteen fonts

The fonts within the grunge kit are supplied by Acid Fonts and are great to use when creating this particular style. The selection includes handwriting fonts, displaced fonts and scribble fonts. You can find many more fonts at www.acidfonts.com.



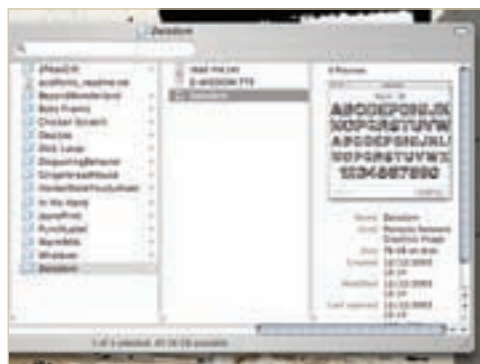
03 Scans, textures & maps

The scans, textures and displacement maps are exclusively selected from Imagine Publishing's very own archive of stock images. They'll give you a great start into thinking about what sort of images can be used in Photoshop to create your grunge designs.



10 The content frame

On every site, no matter how grungy you make it, you need to have a clear area to place the actual page content such as text and pictures. We're going to draw a white rectangle on the interface. However we don't want a clean edge so we're going to create a border to fit around this area.



12 Working with fonts

The first use of fonts on this design will be for the menu. Browse the grunge kit and select one of the fonts to install. If you're on a Mac then you can double-click the font; if you're on a PC then use a Font Manager or place the font inside your Fonts folder. See the CD for more help.



14 Site border

The displaced site border is a layer above all layers that'll be the same colour as your website background, so you can centre the site design in the middle of the screen and have no hard lines. To create the site border use the same cut out and displacement method as used previously.



11 Adding a border

Draw a black rectangle that's slightly larger than the white one. Cut a hole out of the middle. Using the displacement method previously used apply a displacement map. If the effect isn't what you want, cut and paste the edges of the your shape and make up the border.



13 Fonts continued

Now you have your font installed, type out your menu. In the example we've used the Zwisdom font for the menu. We've also used another font called In His Hands for the text 'This is my site'. Experiment with the other fonts on the disc and see how it affects the final feel.



15 Page content

Last and by no means least you need to design the page content layout within your content frame. In this example we've designed a fairly clean layout for the text and pictures to contrast with the dirty unorganised feel of the rest of the site. This, of course, is entirely up to you.



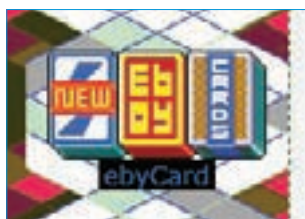
*e***Mag**

EbOY

http://hello.eboy.com



TOP TIP



Menu buttons

Pixel art menu buttons are practically essential

One of the best elements of the EbOY site is its attention-grabbing list of pixel art links that runs along the left-hand side of the page. These buttons have been designed to give users an immediate impression of the linked artists. They vary in form from small isometric scenes, through traditional 2D logos, to more dramatic (and manic) tag designs. They're impossible to ignore and practically scream out to be clicked!

Although it has its origins in the cream of Eighties nostalgia, pixel art is currently enjoying a huge resurgence in interest by web designers across the globe.

Perhaps now more than ever, its stylings are becoming favoured by web designers who are looking to employ a touch of retro magic into their work. Web designers are rediscovering the way pixel art's elements of simple yet eye-catching detail can engage people in an image in a way that few other digital art genres can achieve.

But pixel art isn't just about creating large and intricately detailed images. In fact, one of the most useful ways in which you can use it is to make up page furniture like navigation buttons, logos, splash screens and backgrounds. Once you've picked up the rules, it's pretty easy to turn your hand to any type of pixel art design – so long as you have the time and patience, that is.

In this month's Tech Support, we're exploring how the pros employ pixel art elements into their sites by taking an in-depth look at the famous pixel art emporium, EbOY. Mixing impressive imagery with novel menus and one or two innovative game-style additions, this site represents some of the most imaginative uses of pixel art. Alongside this, the clever little EbOY site manages to create an incredibly nostalgic and fun ambience for its users – and does so in a seemingly effortlessly manner.

Shine on

Using glints of light is a tried and trusted method of adding life to pixel art images

The best way to add a sense of life to a pixel art design is by adding in some flicks of sunlight. These can glint off surfaces to provide highlights that counter shadows and shading, immediately preventing the picture from looking flat and dull. But as with most techniques, highlights have to be applied according to the rules. Basically, for regular block-based objects you select a pure white foreground colour, and then paint the highlights in so that they appear on the facing edges and corners. For more non-conformist shapes, such as the vegetable leaves



here, apply the highlights on facing elements so that the direction of the cast light matches that of the blocks.

Pixel art buttons

These buttons link to different pixel artists and give users an immediate sense of the artist's style



Repeating objects

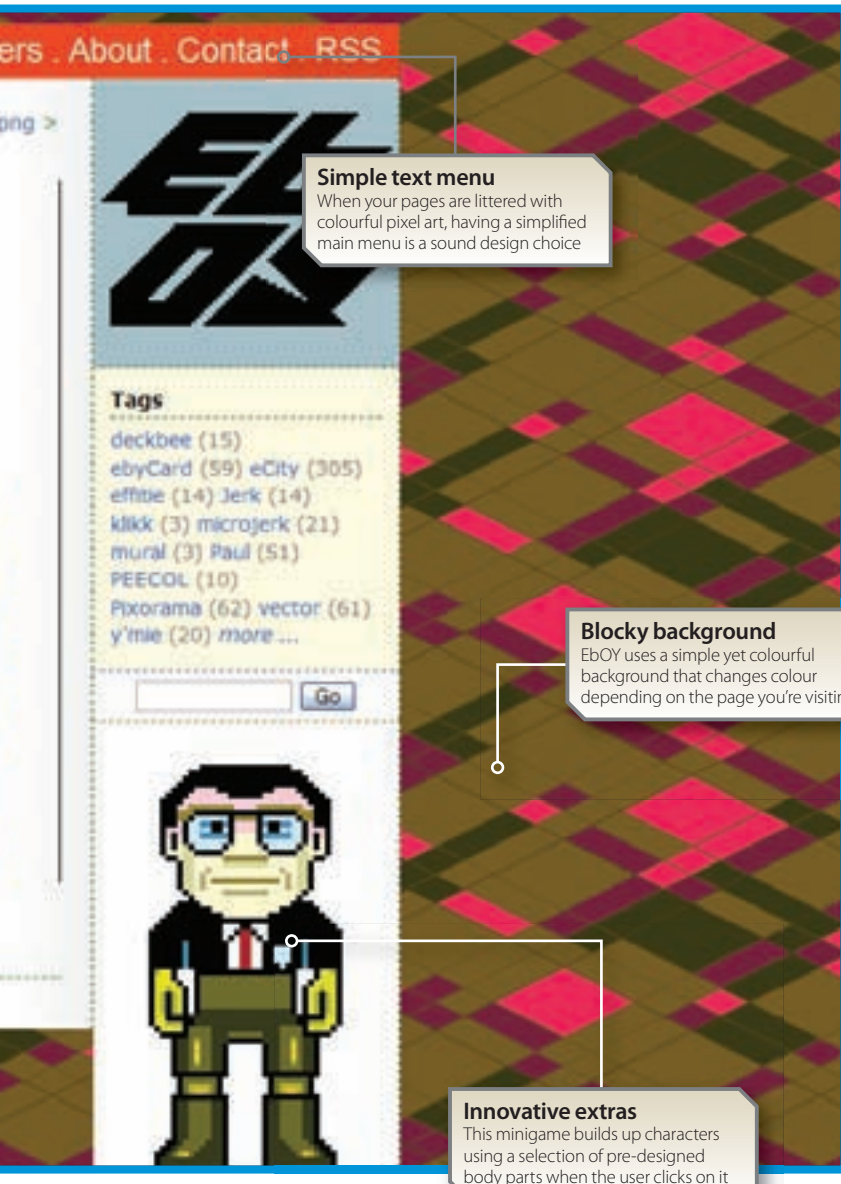
Shave hours off your design time by copying and pasting items

While pixel art can be very time-consuming, there are numerous techniques that you can use to cut down on design time – and one of the most obvious (and useful) is the old copy-and-paste trick. In other digital art disciplines, this can seem a bit of a cheat, but in pixel art, it's a standard and established method of design.

Take the vegetable patch in this drawing, for example. The artist has created two different carrot plants, and then copied and pasted them into the design in alternating steps. This makes the leaves in the carrot patch appear to



be varied and uniquely designed, when in fact they're really just copies of the one before its neighbour! A clever trick that saves a lot of time!



Simple text menu

When your pages are littered with colourful pixel art, having a simplified main menu is a sound design choice

Blocky background

EbOY uses a simple yet colourful background that changes colour depending on the page you're visiting

Innovative extras

This minigame builds up characters using a selection of pre-designed body parts when the user clicks on it

Smooth designs

One of the best ways of making objects stand out is to break the rules

We've already established that pixel art is based on a set of strict isometric rules, which mean that artists have to adhere to them if they want to create a consistent and recognisably pixel art look. The artwork opposite however is a good example of how breaking (well, bending) the rules can make objects really stand out.

If you take a closer look, you'll see that the male character featured in the picture holding the sign has been given a softened appearance. The artist has used curved edges, instead of the standard harsh lines to achieve this



effect. Areas around the face and neck (including the coat hem) have been subtly rounded through careful shading and highlighting.

STEP BY STEP

Blockbusters

EbOY's colourful blocky background design is striking – and supremely simple to create



01 Lay the foundations

The first step is to create a canvas of 72dpi then fill it with the background colour (here, a sort of brownish-green). Next, select a darker shade of green and start to use the Pencil tool, set to 1px, to draw out a basic square grid design. Remember to place points using the 'two along, one up' rule.



02 Divide and conquer

Next, set a slightly lighter shade of green as the foreground colour, then use the Pencil tool to add in some more lines that create a more intricate grid inside the darker grid squares. Remember to position them around the edges of the grid frame so that they leave a large square in the centre.



03 Colour me bad

Finally, grab the Paint Bucket tool and start to fill in your design. We placed blocks of colour randomly around the pattern. You can either build up the entire pattern manually, or use Photoshop's Pattern Maker tool to do the hard work for you once you have a large enough section to replicate.

Keeping it real

Replicating real-world items in pixel art is an art in itself

While it's fairly easy to come up with grand pixel art images just by letting your imagination run free, it suddenly becomes much harder when you're looking to add in real-world objects.

When you're considering which item to include, start off with something that's simply constructed and won't cause too many problems to replicate. Objects like logos can be fairly straightforward, because they're essentially two-dimensional and don't involve intricate shading.

In the artwork featured opposite the artist has included a VISA and



MasterCard sign that employs both the companies' logos.

As you can see from the graphic, the sign is constructed very simply, is colourful so it stands out and is easy to reproduce in pixel art.



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files
The files for this tutorial are on your CD

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Add an administration panel to your cart to manage products and orders

TIME REQUIRED

2 hours

SKILL LEVEL



Build a PHP and MySQL shopping cart

PART 2

DISCOVER HOW TO CREATE A SIMPLE ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM IN ORDER TO ADD PRODUCTS AND VIEW ORDERS PLACED ONLINE BY CUSTOMERS

IN THE FIRST PART of this tutorial we created a simple shopping cart where visitors could add products to a cart and create an order which was then submitted to the database. In this part of the tutorial, we'll look at how you might create a simple system to view the orders as they're submitted and to add and delete products in the store. We'll be using the Server Behaviors in Dreamweaver for most of this tutorial, with a small amount of handcoding to handle

the image upload and resize. Our admin section will be secured with the User Authentication Behaviors in order to keep it private.

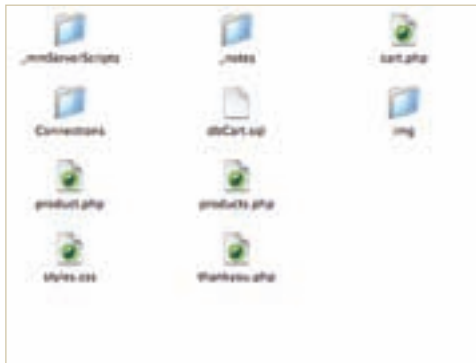
In order to follow along with the tutorial you'll need Dreamweaver, along with a working installation of PHP and MySQL. To complete the image upload and resize section you'll need to have the GD libraries installed; these are installed on most hosting accounts by default.



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

Build a PHP and MySQL shopping cart



01 Your starting point

Your starting point is the basic shopping cart application we created last time. If you missed that tutorial the files and database script are available on the CD so you can catch up with this second part. The SQL script 'dbCart.sql' needs to be imported into a database named 'dbCart'.



02 The admin users table

We're going to create a login for administrators to get to their cart admin. In MySQL create a new database table 'tblUsers'. This table should contain a field for 'userID', 'userName' and 'userPassword'. The SQL below will create this table at the MySQL command line, or you can use your MySQL GUI.

```
CREATE TABLE tblUsers (  
-> userID INT NOT NULL AUTO_INCREMENT  
PRIMARY KEY,  
-> userName VARCHAR(50),  
-> userPassword VARCHAR(50));
```



03 Administration login

In Dreamweaver create a new page and save it as 'index.php' in a new folder named 'Admin'. Your administration pages will go into this folder. Using the Forms pane of the Insert Toolbar insert a form in to this page with fields for username and userpassword and also a submit button.



04 Log in user

In the Server Behaviors Panel select User Authentication>Log in User. A dialog will open. In the top part of the dialog select the username and password fields from your form. In the next section select the connection, the table 'tblUsers' and the 'userName' and 'userPassword' fields.



05 After log in

In the dialog, enter 'home.php' as the page that the user should be directed to after a successful login, and 'nologin.php' as the page to go to if not successful. Click OK to add the behavior and then create the two new pages adding text on 'nologin.php' to explain the login has failed.



06 Administration homepage

The administration homepage should explain what an administrator can do. Add links on this page to 'orders.php', which is the view orders page, and to 'products.php' which is the products management page; giving the administrator access to add, edit and delete products.



07 Test the login

To log in you'll need to enter a username and password. These first need to be added to the database table 'tblUsers'. The below SQL will add a user with a username of 'admin' and a password of 'letmein' – you can add any users that you want and are not restricted to just one username and password.

```
INSERT INTO tblUsers (userName, userPassword)  
VALUES ('admin','letmein');
```



08 Secure home.php

In order to secure the page, in the Recordset Panel select User Authentication>Restrict Access to Page. Restrict access to Username and password and set 'index.php' as the login page. You'll need to add this behavior to every page in the administration section as you create them.



09 The order view page

Create a new page saved as 'orders.php' and add the Restrict Access behavior. This page will list the orders that are held within the database. Start by creating a Recordset named 'rsOrders', which selects all of the records from tblOrders. Click Ok to create the Recordset in this page.

Tutorial



10 Display the data

Add a table to the page, it should have five columns but you only need to add one row plus the table headings as we'll be looping through the data. Add headings for each of the fields (except ordered) in tblOrders. In the cells underneath add the data from the Recordset rsOrders.



13 The order detail page

Create and save a new page as 'orderdetail.php'. Add a Recordset that selects all data from tblOrders filter where 'orderID = URL parameter orderID'. From this Recordset display the basic order details that were displayed in the orders list on the page.



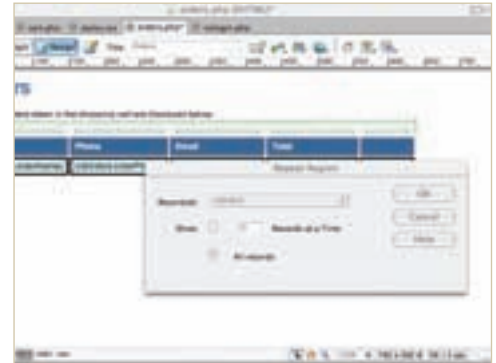
11 Add link to detail page

In the final cell add the text 'view order'. Select the text and type 'orderdetail.php' in the Property Inspector. Still in the Property Inspector click the Folder icon and select Parameters to add the URL Parameter ordered with a value of 'ordered from the Recordset rsOrders'.



14 Displaying sold products

Create a Recordset named rsProducts. This selects all products from 'tblOrderProducts' filtering where orderID = URL parameter orderID'. Put the products in a table below the order details using a Repeat Region to loop through all purchases. Add the total from the first Recordset below.



12 Loop through the data

Select the table row, taking care to get the complete row, and select Repeat Region in the Server Behaviors Panel. In the dialog that opens, select to 'Show All records' and click OK. The script will now loop through all of the records displaying one row for each order held in the database.



15 Test the application

Log into your administration section in your web browser and go to the orders page. You should see all the orders in the database listed and be able to click through to an individual order and view the full details. Add a new order and refresh the list to see it appear.



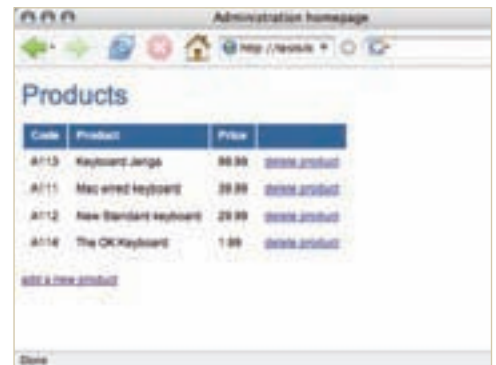
16 Products admin page

Create a new page and save it as 'products.php'. Restrict Access to this page and then create a Recordset named 'rsProducts' which selects everything from the table 'rsProducts'. Sort this Recordset by 'productName'. Click OK to create the Recordset.



17 The products table

Add a table with two rows and four columns, with headings Code, Product and Price. Insert the fields from the Recordset in the cells below. Add a link in the final cell, this link will be to a delete product page ('deleteproduct.php') and needs a URL Parameter of productID.



18 Show all product data

Add a Repeat Region to loop through the rsProducts Recordset. Underneath the table add a link to add a new product that links to 'addproduct.php'. Next create and restrict access to the two pages – 'addproduct.php' and 'deleteproduct.php'.



19 Add a product

On 'addproduct.php' add a form with the fields: Product name, Product code, Description, Product price and a Product image field which is a File Field. Select the form element and, in the Property Inspector, set the Enctype value to 'multipart/form-data'.



20 Insert Record Behavior

With the form selected apply the Insert Record Server Behavior. Dreamweaver should match the fields correctly. Select the 'productImage' field and set its value to None. After inserting, redirect back to 'products.php'. Click OK to apply this behavior to the form.



21 The image upload class

As Dreamweaver doesn't have any in-built functionality to upload and resize images, use a third-party PHP script to do this. Download the PHP class from www.verot.net/php_class_upload. Unzip the directory and add 'class.upload.php' to your site folder.

23 Create the main image

We want an image with a width of 360. Using 'time()' to create a name for the image, set 'resize' to 'true' and give the width; 'image_ratio_y' will keep the height in proportion. Process the image using the \$path variable.

```
if($obj->uploaded) {  
    $newname = $time();  
    $obj->file_new_name_body = $newname;  
    $obj->image_resize = true;  
    $obj->image_x = 360;  
    $obj->image_ratio_y = true;  
    $obj->process($path);  
    if ($obj->processed) {  
        $productImage = $obj->file_dst_name;  
        $size =  
        getimagesize($path . $productImage);  
        $productImageWidth =  
        $size[0];  
        $productImageHeight =  
        $size[1];  
    }  
}
```



22 Include the class

After the code that checks to see if the form is posted, add the lines shown in bold below. Change the variable \$path to the location of the 'img' file on your computer, include the 'class' file and then create an object using the uploaded image in \$_FILES as a parameter.

```
if ((isset($_POST["MM_insert"])) && ($_POST["MM_insert"] == "form2")) {  
    $path = '/Users/rachel/Sites/testsite/cart/  
    img/';  
    require('class.upload.php');  
    $obj = new upload($_FILES['productImage']);
```

24 Create the thumbnail

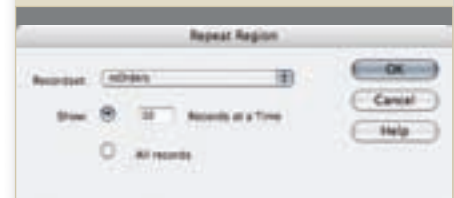
Use the same object to create a thumbnail for the listing page. This time resize the image to 120 pixels wide and add '-thumb' onto the image name. Call 'clean()' to tidy up.

```
$obj->file_new_name_body = $newname . '-  
thumb';  
$obj->image_resize = true;  
$obj->image_x = 120;  
$obj->image_ratio_y = true;  
$obj->process($path);  
if ($obj->processed) {  
    $productThumb = $obj->file_dst_  
name;  
    $size =  
    getimagesize($path . $productThumb);  
    $productThumbWidth =  
    $size[0];  
    $productThumbHeight =  
    $size[1];  
    $obj->clean();  
}
```

TECHNIQUE

Paging large Recordsets

How to use the Server Behaviors in Dreamweaver to create a pages Recordset with previous and next links



01 Showing records

On the page 'orders.php' edit the Repeat Region to display only ten records at a time. This will prevent the page from becoming very long as orders come in and loading too slowly. Click below the table and select Recordset Paging>Move to Previous Page.



02 Previous +Next links

In the Move to Previous Page dialog create a new link 'Previous' and click OK. Repeat the process this time selecting Recordset Paging>Move to Next Page and adding a link 'Next'. You should now be able to page through the records in the table.



03 To hide the links

To hide the links when there's no more data, use the Show Region Server Behaviors. Select Previous and apply the Show If Not First Page behavior. Select the next link and apply the Show If Not Last Page behavior. The links will only display if there is data.

25 Edit the insert

We now have the images saved in our directory and all we need to do is add the image details to the insert SQL. Find the section as below and add the image fields in the INSERT INTO, matching %s into values. Then copy the format of the other fields using GetSQLValueString.

```
$insertSQL = sprintf("INSERT INTO tblProducts
(productName, productCode, productDesc,
productPrice, productImage,productImageWidth,
productImageHeight,productThumb,productThumb
Width,productThumbHeight) VALUES (%s, %s, %s,
%s, %s, %s, %s, %s, %s, %s, %s)",
GetSQLValueString($
POST['productName'], "text"),
GetSQLValueString($
POST['productCode'], "text"),
GetSQLValueString($
POST['productDesc'], "text"),
GetSQLValueString($
POST['productPrice'], "double"),
GetSQLValueString($product
Image, "text"),
GetSQLValueString($product
ImageWidth, "text"),
GetSQLValueString($product
ImageHeight, "text"),
GetSQLValueString($product
Thumb, "text"),
GetSQLValueString($product
ThumbWidth, "text"),
GetSQLValueString($product
ThumbHeight, "text")
```

26 Test the upload

You can now test your upload script by logging in to the administration section and navigating to 'add a new product'. Complete the form with your new product details and select an image from your hard drive and submit the form. You may need to set permissions on the 'img' folder to make it writable.

IN DETAIL

SQL Basics – how to talk to databases

By using the Dreamweaver Server Behaviors we can avoid writing too much SQL by hand, however learning the basics will help you when you need to write your own queries

WHEN YOU CREATE a basic Recordset in Dreamweaver, selecting everything from a table, the SQL you will end up with is:

```
SELECT * FROM tblOrders
```

This tells the database that you would like all the columns from tblOrders and all of the rows. If you only want certain columns, for example the 'orderId', 'orderName' and 'orderEmail', you can tell the database this by listing the fields you want instead of * which means 'everything':

```
SELECT orderId, orderName, orderEmail FROM
tblOrders
```

You can order your Recordset using the statement:

```
SELECT orderId, orderName, orderEmail FROM
tblOrders.
```

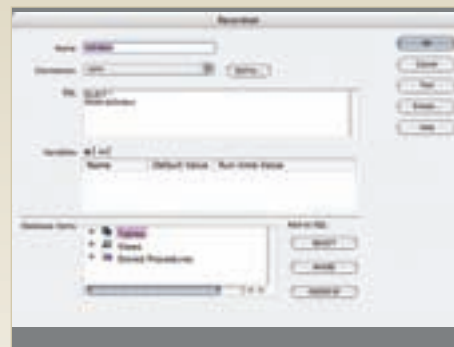
'ORDER BY orderName' will order the data alphabetically by order name. If you add 'DESC' on the end it will order the data in descending order. You can use a numerical field such as the orderId to order according to number. When you create a filtered recordset you use a WHERE clause to tell the database that you only want records where a certain condition is met. In our tutorial we have often selected records based on their Primary Key value, for example to get an individual order:

```
SELECT * FROM tblOrders WHERE orderId = 1
```

In this case we wanted to get the record from the database where in the 'orderId' Field, the Primary Key is equal to 1. This should only return one record as the Primary Key is unique, however you can use this filtering to get all records where any condition is met. If you wish to restrict your Recordset to only a certain number of records then you can use LIMIT. This will return the specified number of records.

```
SELECT orderId, orderName, orderEmail FROM
tblOrders ORDER BY orderName LIMIT 5
```

would get you the top five records from the tblOrders table after they have been ordered by orderName.



In Dreamweaver if you switch from the Simple Recordset view to advanced you can see the SQL that Dreamweaver adds



When there is a parameter in the SQL for a WHERE clause Dreamweaver adds this in the Variables box



27 The delete page

On your page 'deleteproduct.php' create a Recordset which selects everything from 'tblProducts' filtering on 'URL Parameter productId'. We need to display some details so the user can check they're deleting the right record. Add the product code and name to the document.



28 The delete form

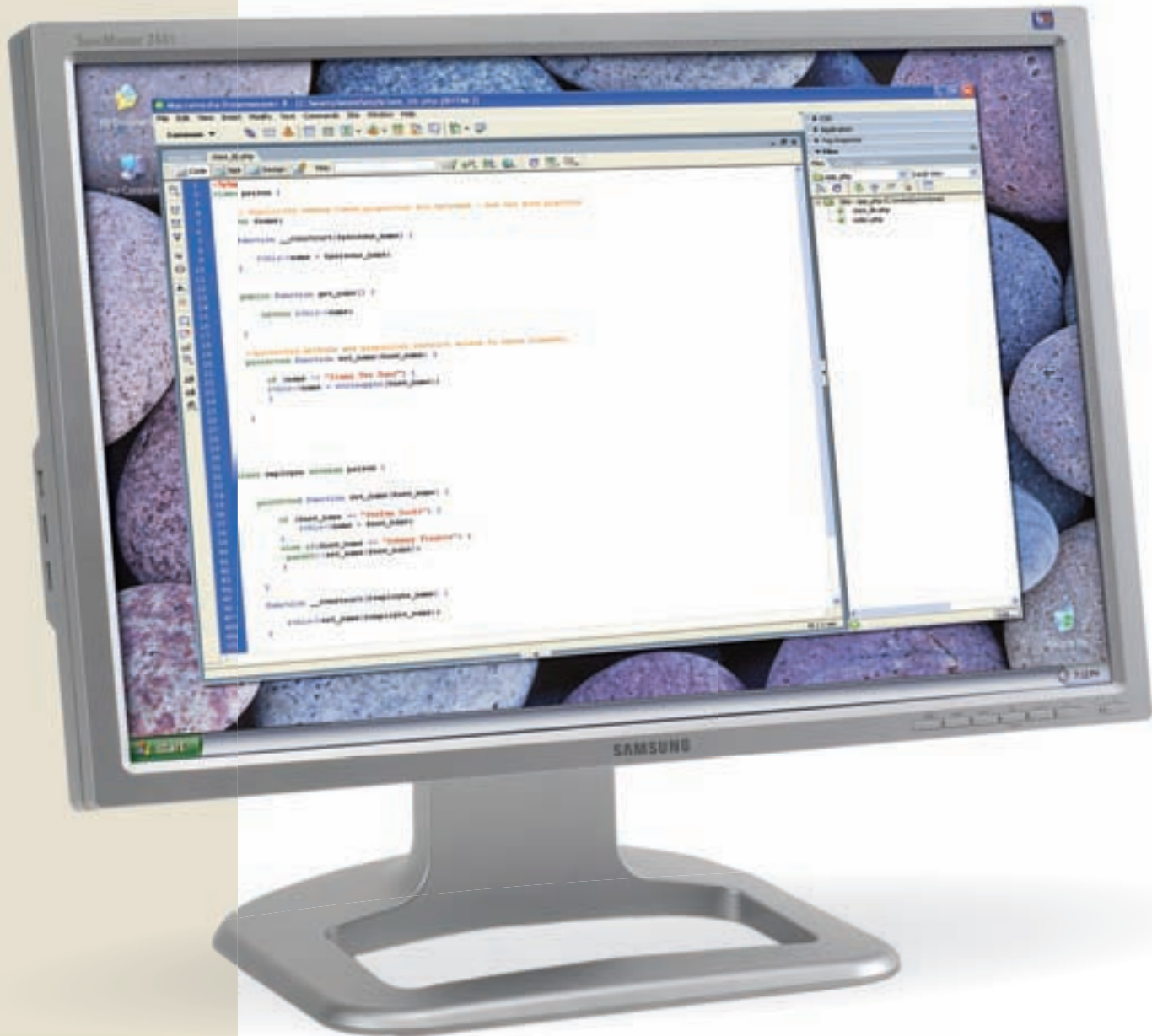
Insert a form to the page and then add a hidden field named 'productID'. Then add the 'productID' value from your Recordset as the value by clicking the lightning bolt in the Property Inspector. Finally add a submit button with a value of 'delete' to the form.



29 The delete record behavior

In Server Behaviors, select Delete Record. Complete the dialog, we want to check that the field 'productId' is in the form POST and use the field 'productId' to delete the record. The value of productId will be the value of the Primary Key of the record we want to delete.





THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
class_lib.php
index.php

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Learn to use OOP in PHP by creating and using your own PHP objects

TIME REQUIRED

20 minutes

SKILL LEVEL



Learn Object-Oriented Programming in PHP

OBJECT-ORIENTED PROGRAMMING (OOP) MAKES BUILDING COMPLEX, MODULAR AND REUSABLE WEB APPLICATIONS MUCH EASIER

WITH THE RELEASE of PHP5, PHP programmers finally have the power to code with the big boys. Like Java and C, PHP has (at last) a complete OOP infrastructure. In this tutorial, you'll be guided through the process of building and working with objects using PHP's built-in OOP capabilities. At the same time you'll learn:

- The difference between building a PHP application the old-fashioned way, versus the OOP way

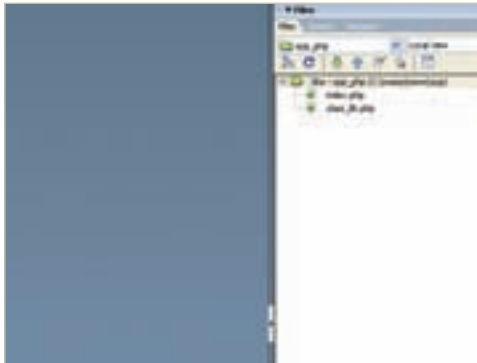
- What the basic OOP principles are and how to use them in PHP
 - When you would want to use OOP in your PHP scripts
- People often encounter confusion when programming due to a lack of understanding of the basics. With this in mind, we'll slowly lead you through the key OOP principles. For this tutorial, you should understand a few PHP basics: functions, variables, conditionals and loops.



YOUR EXPERT

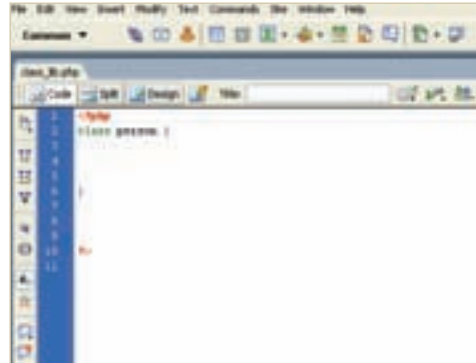
Stefan Mischook has been designing webpages since 1994. His work on web projects of all sizes and types has given him a broad perspective on web design. He's also fluent in programming languages and web technologies including PHP, Java, ASP, ASP.net, SQL, Javascript, VB Script.

Learn Object-Oriented Programming in PHP



01 Create two PHP pages

Most of our OOP PHP will be contained in dedicated files that we'll insert into our normal PHP page using PHP 'includes'. OOP revolves around a construct called a 'class'. Classes are the cookie-cutters or templates that are used to define objects. Create 'index.php' and 'class_lib.php'.



02 Create a PHP class

Instead of having a bunch of functions, variables and code floating around, to design your PHP scripts or code libraries the OOP way, you'll need to define your own classes. You do this by starting with the keyword 'class' followed by the name you want to give your new class.



03 Add data to your class

Classes are the blueprints for PHP objects – more on that later. One of the big differences between functions and classes is that a class contains both data (variables) and functions that form a package called an 'object'. When you create a variable inside a class it's called a 'property'.



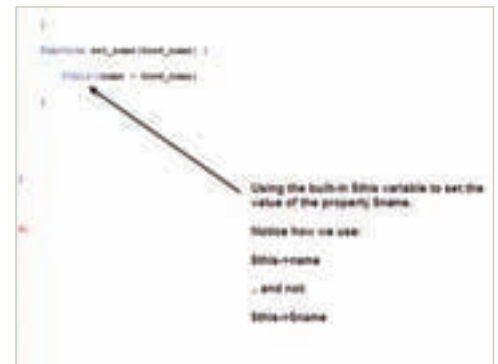
04 Add methods to your class

Just like how variables get a different name when created inside a class, functions are also referred to by a different name when created inside a class – they're called 'methods'. The methods are used to manipulate the data/properties of that particular class.



05 Getter and setter functions

We've created two interesting functions: 'get_name()' and 'set_name()'. These functions follow a common OOP convention – where you create methods to 'set' and 'get' properties in a class. Another convention is that getter and setter names should match the property names.



06 The \$this variable

You probably noticed this line of code: '\$this->name = \$new_name'. The \$this is a built-in variable that points to the current object. Or in other words, \$this is a special self-referencing variable. You use \$this to access properties and to call up other methods of the current class.



07 Include your class

You would never create your PHP classes directly inside your main PHP pages. Instead, it's always best practice to create separate PHP pages that only contain your classes. Then you would access your PHP objects/classes by including them in your main PHP pages with either a PHP 'include' or 'require'.



08 Create your object

Classes are the blueprints/templates of PHP objects. Classes don't actually become objects until you do something called 'instantiation'. When you instantiate a class you create an instance of it, thus creating the object. In other words, instantiation is the process of creating an instance of an object in memory.



09 The 'new' keyword

To create an object out of a class, you need to use the 'new' keyword. When creating an object, be sure not to quote the class name: '\$stefan = new 'person'' will get you an error in your coding. When creating or instantiating a class, you can optionally add brackets to the class name, as shown in the screenshot above.



10 Set an object's properties

Now that we've created our two separate 'person' objects, we can set their properties using the methods we created. But keep in mind, though both our person objects (\$stefan and \$nick) are based on the same 'person' class, as far as PHP is concerned, they're totally different objects.



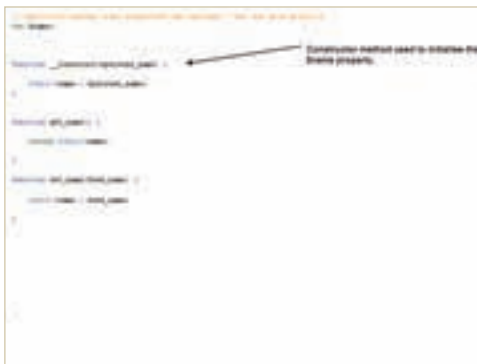
11 Accessing an object's data

Now we use our getter methods to access the data held in our objects, this is the same data we inserted into our objects using the setter methods. When accessing methods and properties of a class you use the arrow operator.



12 Accessing properties

You don't have to use methods to access an object's properties, you can get to them directly using the arrow operator and the name of the variable. For example, with the property \$name (in object \$stefan) you could get its value like so: \$stefan->name.



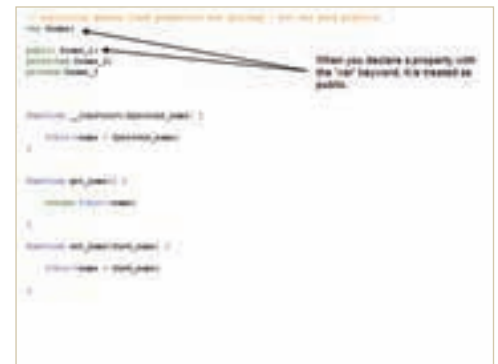
13 Constructors

There's a built-in method called a 'constructor' that allows you to initialise its properties when you instantiate (create) an object. The method starts with two underscores (__) and the word 'construct'. You feed the method by providing a list of arguments after the class name.



14 A constructor object

Now we've created a constructor method, we can provide a value for the \$name property when we create our person objects. For example: \$stefan = new person(Stefan Mischook). This saves us from having to call in the set_name() method, reducing the amount of code.



15 Restrict property access

One of OOP's main principles is 'encapsulation'. The idea being you create cleaner, better code if you restrict access to the your objects' properties. You restrict access to class properties using 'access modifiers'. There are three access modifiers; 'public' is the default modifier.



16 Private property

When you declare a property as 'private', only the same class can access the property. When a property is declared 'protected', only the same class and classes derived from that class can access the property. Properties declared as 'public' have no access restrictions.



17 Restrict method access

Like properties, you can control access to methods using one of the three access modifiers. The reason for access modifiers comes down to controlling how people use classes. Many OOP constructs exist with the idea that many programmers may be working on a project.



18 Reusing code

Inheritance allows you to use one class as the base for another. Doing this allows you to efficiently reuse the code in your base class. Say you wanted to create an 'employee' class; since 'employee' is a type of 'person' they'll share common properties and methods.

IN DETAIL

Why learn OOP in PHP?

For people new to OOP and used to procedural PHP, you may be wondering why you should even bother to learn Object-Oriented concepts – why go to the trouble?

OBJECT-ORIENTED PHP really begins to shine as the project becomes more complex and when you have more than one person doing the programming. If you find that you have, say, ten or more functions and you find that some of the functions are doing similar things – it's time to consider packaging things up into objects.

OOP is the modern way of software development and all the major languages – Java, Perl and Ruby – use this style of programming. As a programmer, it makes sense to keep your skills up-to-date. Besides making you a more valuable PHP coder, understanding OOP in PHP will give you knowledge (OOP knowledge) that you'll be able to take with you. When you learn OOP in PHP, you'll learn OOP for any OOP-based language.

Beyond that, you'll find with time, that creating OOP-based PHP projects will just make your life easier. Soon you'll develop your own collection of reusable objects, which you'll be able to use in other projects. You'll also find that OOP-based PHP software is much easier to maintain and update – and we all know that most software will have to be updated at some point.

OOP in PHP does present some challenges, mainly because you'll need to learn to think about your PHP projects in a totally different way. When you begin an OO (Object-Oriented) PHP project, the first thing you need to do is conceptualise the project in terms of objects.

The best thing to do is to draw up a few simple diagrams that represent the objects in your new PHP program. There are software tools that are designed to do this and some will even generate the code based on the diagrams you draw! But using a simple drawing program on your computer, or better yet, a pencil and paper, is good enough for the most part. As you begin to work with object diagrams, you'll find that they help make developing OOP-based PHP projects much easier.



PHP is moving in an OOP direction. For example, important PHP extensions like PEAR and Smarty are OOP based



Simple object diagrams help you plan and organise your PHP projects. This is useful when working with many programmers



19 Class employee

Because the class employee is based on the class person, employee automatically has all the public and protected properties and methods of person. Notice how we're able to use set_name() in employee even though we did not declare that method in the employee class.



20 Reduce your coding

As you can see in the above screenshot, we can call set_name on our employee object, courtesy of person. This is a classic example of how OOP can reduce the number of lines of code while still keeping your code modular and much easier to maintain.



21 Overriding methods

You may need to change how a method works from the base class. Eg, say set_name() method in the employee class had to do something different than in the person class. You override the person classes version of set_name() by declaring the same method in employee.



22 Access base class version

You may need to access your base class's version of a method you overrode in the derived class. We overrode the set_name() method in the 'employee' class; we've now used this code: 'person::set_name(\$new_name)' to access the parent class's version of the set_name() method.



23 Specify the class

Using :: allows you to specifically name the class where you want PHP to search for a method – 'person::set_name()' tells PHP to search for set_name() in the person class. There's also a shortcut if you just want to refer to a current class's parent – by using the 'parent' keyword.

THICK RECORDS

www.thickrecords.com



TOP TIP

Scrollbars

The opening page of THICK RECORDS contains a logo alongside some background colour text and background colour scrollbars. This essentially makes the scrollbars of the page invisible. To achieve this within a web page the assistance of CSS is needed. Within the <body> tag of the page the following code can be added:

```
SCROLLBAR-FACE-COLOR:
#b5b5b5; FONT-SIZE: 7px;
SCROLLBAR-HIGHLIGHT-
COLOR: #b5b5b5; SCROLLBAR-
SHADOW-COLOR: #b5b5b5;
COLOR: #b5b5b5; SCROLLBAR-
3DLIGHT-COLOR: #b5b5b5;
SCROLLBAR-ARROW-COLOR:
#333333; SCROLLBAR-TRACK-
COLOR: #b5b5b5; FONT-FAMILY:
Verdana, Arial, Helvetica,
sans-serif; SCROLLBAR-
DARKSHADOW-COLOR: #b5b5b5.
```

To style the scrollbars, simply change the colour to suit.

THICK RECORDS is a Chicago-based punk rock independent record label, which has been established since 1994.

The company, and we quote, is 'a shining beacon of DIY integrity; a home for truly independent, original and idiosyncratic artists that, in the words of the great Johnny Rotten, "mean it, man".' The label boasts over a hundred releases from lesser known independents such as At The Drive-In, The Arrivals, Commander Venus, The Blue Meanies, Alkaline Trio, The Tossers, Season To Risk, The Methadones, All, Citizen Fish and Local H.

The label has a DIY philosophy that has transposed some of its ethics into the site design. The website doesn't boast vast amounts of complicated code and techniques, but still provides an effective and handsome presence. The homepage is a simple introduction that sports the company's logo, a few lines of CSS to colour the scrollbars and background colour text, effectively making it invisible. Heading into the front page of the rest of the site THICK RECORDS has created a frame based affair. The use of some background images is matched with a simple two-row frameset.

The top row is fixed to keep the navigation elements and essential links constantly in view at the top of the page. The alternative row is dedicated to the main content of each page with scrollbars activated should the content stretch beyond the screen dimensions.



Frame top

Add all the navigational elements of the website into a fixed frame at the top of the page for instant access

Sliced images

To help a page load that little bit quicker divide any large images into a number of slices

Site directory

Navigation around the site is provided via the site directory drop-down box

THICK RECORDS abandons the more traditional option of placing links at the top, left and bottom of the page and instead decides to use a drop-down list. This is placed in the top right corner giving users easy access. The list itself contains links to all pages plus a selection of artists' biographies. Adding such a navigational aid in Dreamweaver is pretty simple. Head to the Insert menu and select Form>Jump Menu to reveal the Insert Jump Menu dialog window. In Text, type the name, (ie, NEWS) to appear in the list plus the URL when selected. Alternatively,

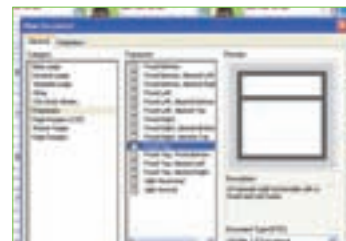


click Browse to locate the HTML page that the name should link to. Repeat the process for each link to appear in the list. The list can be formatted by selecting a style from the Class drop-down list in the Property Inspector.

Frames, glorious frames

A simple frameset of two rows and one column is put to effective use

The website uses frames as the basis of its site, with a two-row and one-column frameset being the main player. The frameset uses a fixed top row and a second or bottom row that contains the main content for each page. This includes scrollbars, so if any content extends beyond the dimensions of the page, viewers can scroll and view it. Adding a frameset within Dreamweaver is a very simple affair. Head to the File menu, select New>Framesets>Fixed Top and press OK. This'll now present the Frame Tag Accessibility Attributes dialog window. It's here that each frame



in the frameset is given a title. Select an option from the Frame list and give it a title. Repeat the process for each frame in the frameset. The frame's Property Inspector allows you to determine borders and height for each frame.



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.

Site doctor

www.thickrecords.com



Iframe

Introduce a rectangular space within the content of the page to allow the introduction of large documents

Image field

Create your own images to ensure that any Submit and Reset buttons match the colour and style of the page

STEP BY STEP

Frame-based sites

Frames can be used to create all types of site layout. Here we introduce what's on offer



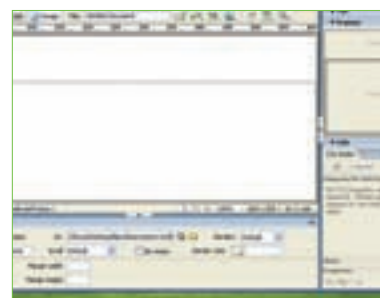
01 New frameset

To start, go to File>New and choose Framesets from Category. Now select a frameset that best suits your requirements – for example, Fixed Top – and press Create to start the process. This will open the Frame Tag Accessibility Attributes dialog window. Name each frame accordingly and press OK.



02 Save frameset

To save the frameset, head to the File menu, select Save Frameset As, give it a name and press Save. This only gives the complete frameset a name. Each individual frame also needs to be saved. Click inside a frame and go to File>Save Frame As and name it. Now repeat this process for all the frames.



03 Format frame

To take control of the frameset, click on a frame edge. This will allow for the selection of borders and attributes for the frameset. To view the Properties of an individual frame click the appropriate frame element in the Frames panel. This shows the frame name, the source of the frame and other attributes.

Submit and Reset

The thick email list option makes good use of the customised buttons

When a form is placed on a page it will need at least one button to make it operate dynamically. Commonly a form boasts a Submit and Reset button. These are, by default, rather dull, however they can be given an overhaul by using a style from the Class drop-down list in the Property Inspector. This only changes the style of the text and not the button itself. To incorporate buttons that match the style and scheme of a page a button image needs to be introduced. First make sure you have an image ready to go. Now head to Insert menu and select Form Image



Field, select the appropriate image and press OK. Finally, to make the button perform its intended task its name will need to be modified. Change the default name, imageField, to either Submit or Reset.

The Iframe tag

The site's news is contained within an often forgotten tag, the iframe

The iframe tag is described as an element that creates a rectangular space into which HTML documents and scripts can be loaded. The THICK RECORDS news section provides an example of how the tag can be used. To insert the iframe tag, first select the insertion point on the page. Switch to the Code view, identify the position, right-click and select Insert Tag to open the Tag Chooser. Now open the HTML tags folder and select Page elements. You'll see the tag in the list on the right, select and press Insert. This will open the Tag Editor window, with the General



category selected by default. It's here that you can choose the source, HTML or script, to populate the tag. There's the chance to give the tag a relevant name, select the Width and Height and decide if the tag should be able to scroll.



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
plugin, demo html and WP
Theme

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Learn the easiest way to design your
own custom WordPress blog theme

TIME REQUIRED


3 hours

SKILL LEVEL



Design your custom WordPress theme

AREN'T YOU TIRED OF THE FREE WORDPRESS THEMES AVAILABLE ONLINE?
HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO DESIGN YOUR OWN CUSTOM THEME?

 **BLOGGING IS PROBABLY** one of the hottest current web trends. Most corporations, developers, marketers, designers and even celebrities have a blog site. Blogging is one of the best marketing tools to keep your audience in touch with your site. It has a built-in content management system (CMS) that allows you to quickly update it and allows your visitors to post comments. Blogging software is readily available online and WordPress is highly ranked.

In this tutorial we'll demonstrate how to design your own WordPress theme. You'll learn everything from installing a local WordPress site, setting up your blog, adding plug-ins, making posts and switching themes. We've also included a demo HTML template for you to follow. You will need to obtain the WordPress 2 .zip file from <http://wordpress.org/download/> to continue, while we must thank www.coffee2code.com and author Scott Reilly for the plug-in included on the disc.



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.ndesignstudio.com to see his portfolio and goodies.

Design your custom WordPress theme



01 Apache and MySQL

First we need to install a local server that supports PHP and MySQL so you can work locally without an internet connection. On a Mac use MAMP, a combination of: Macintosh, Apache, MySQL and PHP. Download MAMP from www.mamp.com. On Windows, use XAMPP.



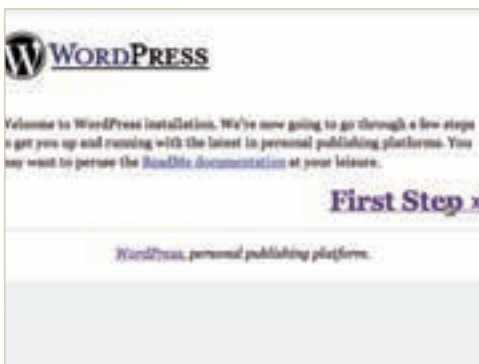
02 Create a new database

Start MAMP, click Open Start Page. This page tells you all the information about your local server. Click on 'phpMyAdmin'. Enter a new database name for your site, and click Create. Make a note of your server settings and database name. You'll need these to install WordPress.



03 Extract WordPress

Download and extract all files from the WordPress zip to your MAMP>htdocs>mysite folder. Open 'wp-config-sample.php' with a plain text editor. Change the MySQL settings to your settings. In our example: 'DB_NAME'='mysite_db', and so on. Save this as 'wp-config.php'.



04 Install WordPress

Open a browser, run 'localhost/mysite/wp-admin/install.php' to install WordPress. This will install all database tables to run WordPress. Log in to the administrator area. Go to Options, enter your blog title and tagline. Go to Users to change the default password.



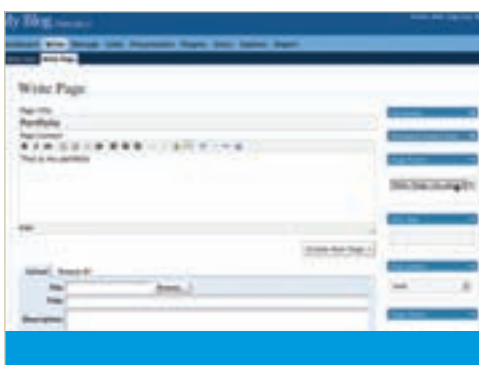
05 Blog settings

You may want to change some other default settings such as how many posts to display in a page (Options>Reading) or your comment settings (Options>Discussion). Change the default Permalinks option so that your page URL will be 'mysite.com/about'.



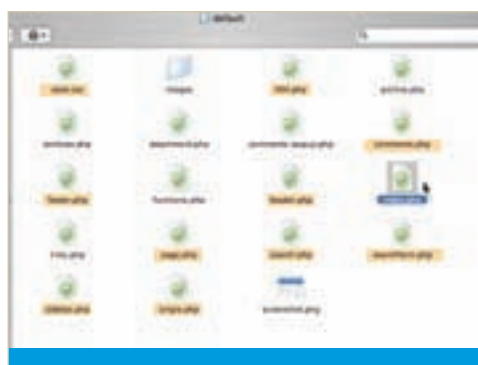
06 Writing posts

Go to Write>Write Post to write some blog posts. On the right, there are a number of palettes that allow you to apply additional settings to your post. For example, the Categories palette allows you to quickly assign new categories to your post. Click Publish when you're done.



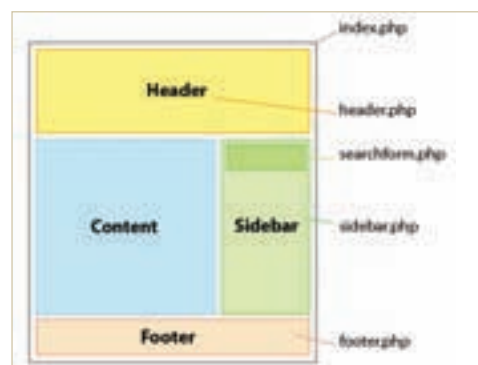
07 Writing pages

Go to Write>Write Page to create a new static page for Portfolio and Contact. Apply additional settings such as Page Parent, Post slug or Password Protect it. Use Page Parent if you need to create a sub-page of a certain page. Post slug defines how you want to display the post.



08 Template files

Log out and go to the front end of your blog. Open the theme folder: wp-content>themes>default. You'll find all template files that are used to generate the HTML page. For example, 'homepage' is generated by 'index.php', 'single-post view' is generated by 'single.php'.



09 Page structure

Here's the default WordPress structure. If you open 'index.php', you'll see WordPress uses a 'get' template tag to call for external files such as 'header.php', 'sidebar.php', 'footer.php' etc. You can also include template files within another one, eg 'sidebar.php' includes 'searchform.php'.

Tutorial



10 The Loop

WordPress uses The Loop to display each of your posts. The Loop gets the post's information from the database, displays them, and if the post(s) is not found, displays 'Not Found'. The number of posts to display on a page can be set at Option>Reading as mentioned before.



11 HTML source breakdown

The 'header.php' starts with the <html> tag. 'Sidebar.php' contains the 'search' form and sub-menus. 'Footer.php' starts at the footer opening tag and closes with </html> tag. 'Index.php' pulls in the header, displays the posts and then pulls in the sidebar and footer.



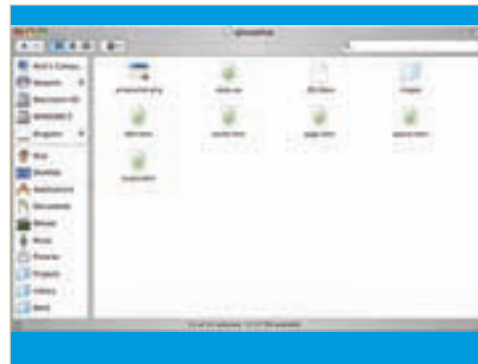
12 Visual mockups

Design a visual mockup of each page view. You should have the following in the layout: blog's title, menu, post titles, date, comment list and form, category list, search form etc. To find out all template tags that you can include in the template, visit codex.wordpress.org/Template.



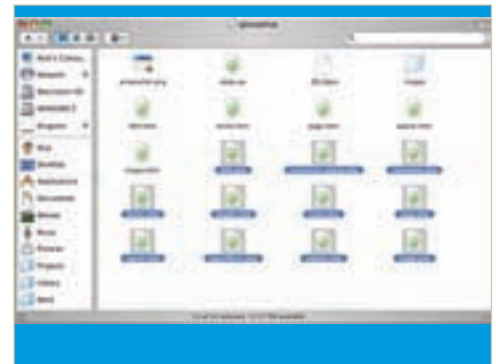
13 CSS and HTML

Create a sample CSS and HTML page of each page. Or use the files on the CD. When coding the HTML, follow the same page structure as the default theme. Comment label each main panel. Eg: <!-- header starts -->[code]<!--/ header ends -->. This helps split up the HTML page.



14 New theme

Make a new folder for your theme called 'glossyblue' in htdocs>mysite>wp-content>themes. Copy all your HTML sample files into the glossyblue folder. Make sure your CSS file name is 'style.css'. Also, include a 300 x 225 'screenshot.png' of your theme.



15 Copy existing templates

The best way to make a theme is work from the existing default theme so you don't have to rewrite the PHP codes. Go to the default theme folder, copy all the PHP files that are highlighted in the above screen shot into the glossyblue folder.



16 Start from header

In the glossyblue folder, open 'home.html' and 'header.php'. From the 'home.html', copy code from <div id="page"> to <!-- /header -->, paste it at the bottom of the 'header.php'. Delete code from line 15 to 26. We're using the existing default codes.



17 Make menu

Replace the <h1> and the description <div> tag with the default codes. Delete lines 18 to 27. In the "nav" <ul list, replace the fake link (#) with <?php echo get_settings('home'); ?> and the respective pages' names. WordPress will replace the URL path with your URI setting.



18 Index

In 'home.html', copy lines 2 to 18, paste on top of 'index.php'. Then copy+paste the 'get_header' tag above the <"content"> tag. Finally, copy+paste the 'get_sidebar' and 'get_footer' below the <!-- /content --> tag. This'll call the header, sidebar and footer template files into the template.



19 The Loop code

Copy the Loop (highlighted codes) and paste it as shown. If there are posts, WordPress will get information from the database of each post and display it between the <div class="post"> tag. The number of posts displayed on a page depends on the setting: Admin>Options>Reading.



20 Template tags

Our date format, 'Oct 23', is slightly different from the default, 'October 23rd, 2006'. The PHP code to display the abbreviated month is 'the_time('M')'. 'the_time('d')' will display the day in two digits. Add or replace all template tags as shown (highlighted). Delete the default codes.



21 Sidebar

In 'home.html', copy lines 2 to 15, paste on top of 'sidebar.php'. Copy and paste 'include searchform' above the <div id="sidebar"> tag. Replace the Categories tags with 'wp_list_cats' template tag. Then replace Archives tags with 'wp_get_archives'. Delete default codes.

IN DETAIL

More in-depth

Here we'll provide a more in-depth explanation of the installation process for WordPress and provide a summary of this tutorial to iron out any lingering questions you may have about it

THE FIRST THING we showed you was how to set up a local WordPress site on your computer. There are many benefits to working locally rather than remotely. Working locally allows you to work without an internet connection or host. It saves you time when uploading files to your server. You can also hook up your theme folder with your favourite HTML editor, ie, Dreamweaver. You also don't have to worry about your content or uncompleted site being exposed to the public internet before it's ready. Furthermore, you can keep a copy of your site for backup and future update purposes. A good idea is to use the local version to update templates, play around with content or test new plug-ins, then promote it to your live server when you're satisfied that everything works and you're happy for the public to see your work. Don't worry, your site's visitors will never see your testing codes.

We've showed you how to make your custom template based on the existing template. Alternatively, if you're satisfied with the default theme structure and have some good CSS skills, you can change the layout completely without touching the php source code. In other words, assume that you want to change the layout design in the future, all you have to do is edit the 'style.css' file. Pay a visit to the lovely website www.csszengarden.com for more information and ideas on how to do this.

Below we've provided some useful WordPress links to have a look at and use in conjunction with this tutorial. The WordPress official site can be found by clicking on www.wordpress.org. From this website visit the codex section for WordPress documentations: www.codex.wordpress.org. Support forums for troubleshooting any problems you may be experiencing are very useful and can be found at: www.wordpress.org/support. In order to download free plug-ins visit www.wp-plugins.net. You can download themes from themes.wordpress.net.



Visit www.csszengarden.com for more CSS techniques on how to change the layout visually



Download free WordPress themes by contributor designers



22 Footer

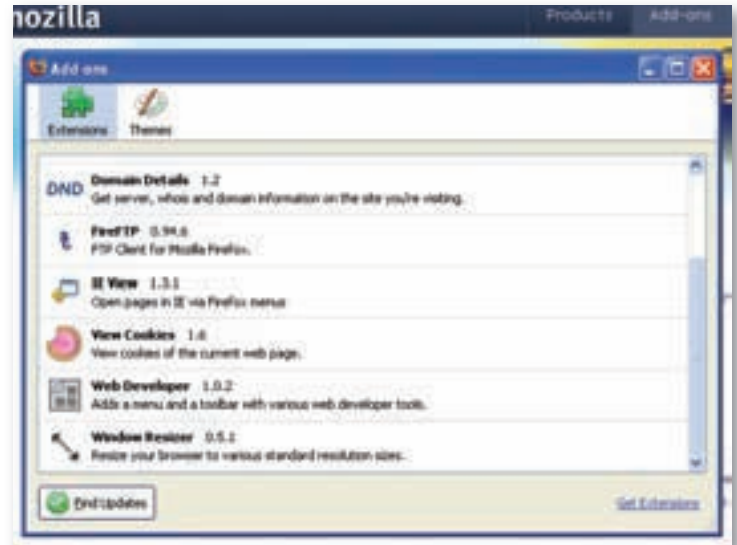
In 'home.html', copy lines <div id="footer"> to </html> and paste on top of 'footer.php'. Replace RSS link buttons. Then replace the 'contact me' link with the get_settings('home') tag. WordPress will replace the get_settings('home') tag with your blog's URI setting.



23 Activate new theme

The theme is basically ready to use. Go to Admin>Presentation>Themes, click on the glossyblue thumbnail to switch theme. Go to the site front end, your homepage should be ready! We still need to do single, 404, search, and page. Repeat the steps to finish off the rest of the files.





THE BRIEF

ON THE CD
 Tutorial files:
 N/A


TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
 To demonstrate the power and flexibility of Firefox extensions

TIME REQUIRED
 20 minutes

SKILL LEVEL

Power up Firefox with essential extensions

DISCOVER HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR WEB BUILDING EXPERIENCE WITH A COMBINATION OF ESSENTIAL FIREFOX EXTENSIONS

 **THE INCREASINGLY** popular Firefox browser provides a true alternative to the Microsoft monopoly. Many converts have vowed never to go back and the latest release, version 2.0, is set to make the transition back an even harder choice. The latest and greatest Firefox provides improved performance, security and options to customise and personalise. Any number of extensions can be integrated into the Firefox 2.0 framework for greatly improved productivity.

This tutorial brings together a selection of the available add-ons. Developer tools are the prime target and we've included indispensable items that every developer can make good use of. First up is Web Developer, an all embracing toolbar that provides power and functionality. FireFTP integrates itself into the browser for intuitive, fast and efficient file transfer. The next, Domain Details, helps users gather essential inside information and IE View offers a one-click browser switch.



01 Get version 2.0

The Firefox browser is the main attraction here and the latest version was recently released. For those who have yet to get their hands on a copy of version 2.0, we recommend that you give it a try. Head to www.getfirefox.com to download the version we're using.



02 Developer Tools

To start customising and personalising Firefox 2.0, Mozilla provides a central location for its impressive collection of add-ons. Head to addons.mozilla.org/firefox/. Hit the Extensions link. All the extensions chosen for this tutorial can be found here under the Developer Tools banner.



03 Install extension

Once an extension has been located, hit the Install Now button and wait. A point to note is that it's worth reading the accompanying notes to discover the location of the new addition. Once installed, extensions can be managed via Add-ons on the Tools menu.



YOUR EXPERT

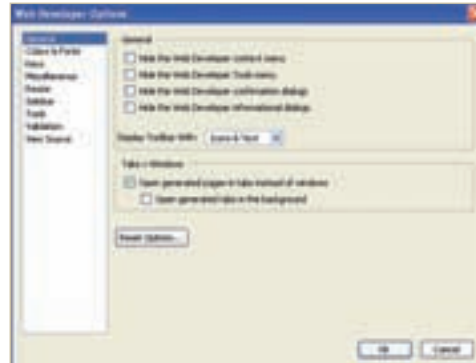
Steve Jenkins is a keen designer and developer who started creating websites after attending Bournemouth University, and loves tackling the most testing of Dreamweaver problems. To see a sample of Steve's work, take a visit to www.thesouthend.co.uk.

Power up Firefox with essential extensions



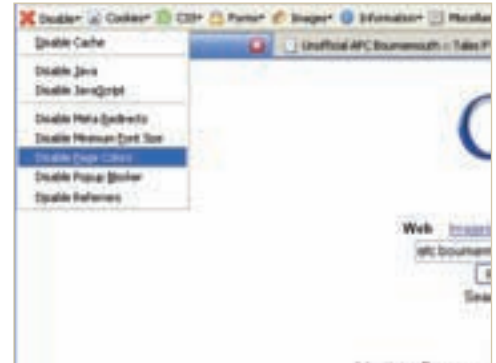
04 Web Developer

The first addition to the collection for this tutorial is known as Web Developer (v1.0.2). This installs itself as an additional toolbar alongside the duo of defaults. The toolbar can be hidden by right-clicking on the existing toolbars. Alternative access is via Tools.



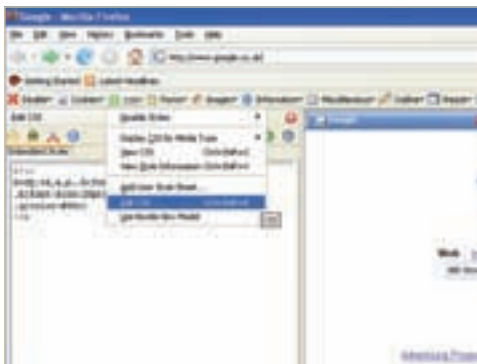
05 Options, Options, Options.

Have a quick browse through the many available options, enabling a perfect setup for future use. The Options can be accessed via Tools>Web Developer>Options. Alternatively, head to Tools>Add-ons and locate the Web Developer extension which boasts an Options button.



06 Disable options

Starting to the left of the toolbar the first menu is Disable, click to reveal more options. This menu includes the option Disable Cache, Java or Javascript plus Page Colours and a more popular choice, Popup Blocker. A single option or all the options can be chosen. Simply select and click.



07 CSS

The CSS menu provides an interesting array of options. Disable Styles allows the user to view the page without any applied styles in action. View CSS shows any embedded styles. Finally, there's Edit CSS, which allows for the online editing of embedded styles.



08 Images

This menu follows in the same footsteps with plenty of image related options. Select Disable Images>All Images and each image on the page disappears. Other options include the choice to Display Alt Attributes, an image's dimensions, its file size, plus the file path.



09 Image information

A useful addition to any developer's armoury is the View Image Information option. This displays a host of information for each image on the page. Select the option to reveal a full-size image plus its location, width, height and file size. The source of the image is an active link.



10 Information

This menu boasts an impressive range of Display and View options. Options include Display Link Details, Display Table Depth and Information, Display id and Class Details and View Color Information (with hexadecimal codes) to mention but a few.



11 Validation

Head to the Tools menu for a host of validation tools, again a very useful addition to the developers toolbox. Hit Validate CSS to open a new window with results comparing the page against W3C standards plus a few tips. Try Validate HTML for similar results.



12 FireFTP

This FTP tool integrates itself into the Firefox framework and can be found via the Tools menu. Selecting from the menu will open up a new tab dedicated exclusively to the program. Head to Manage Accounts and click Create an account, this'll open the Account Manager window.

TECHNIQUE

A different resolution

How to resize a window to view pages at alternative resolutions with the help of the Web Developer add-on



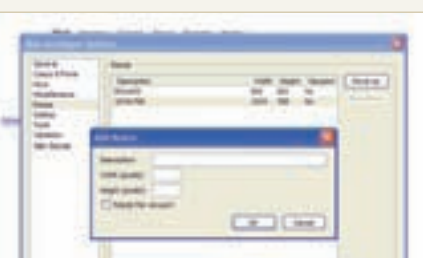
01 Display size

From the Web Developer toolbar click the Resize menu to reveal its options. The first set offers a few Display options including Display Window Size. This opens a dialog box. Select the alternative, Display Window Size in Title, to get a real-time reminder.



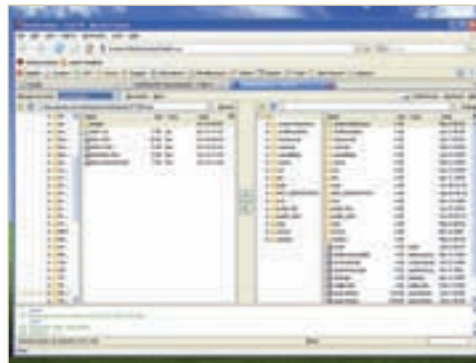
02 Resize

By default, Resize offers two routes to resizing a window. First there's the straightforward selection of the only available resolution, 800 x 600. However, for more flexibility the Resize Window option can be selected. This allows for the input of custom sizes.



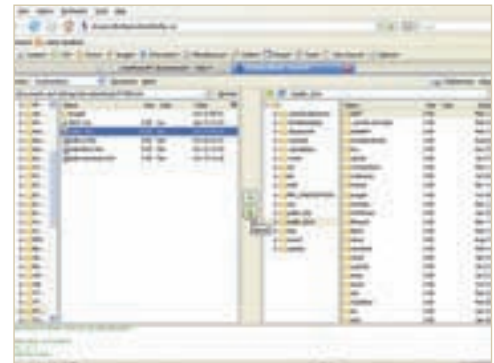
03 Add your own

The previous step shows only two resize choices. A visit to Options allows for the introduction of further presets. Go to Options>Options>Resize, now press Add, enter details and press OK. Repeat the process for each new resolution to appear on the menu.



13 FTP details

Now enter your FTP details and press OK to add the account to the drop-down list. To create additional accounts you'll now need to press Manage Accounts and select New. To activate any account you have set up, first select from the drop-down list and then press Connect.



14 Upload, Download

Once connected FireFTP operates in much the same vein as any other FTP program. To upload a file, select from the left or local computer and hit the Upload button. Alternatively, to download a file, locate the file from the right, the server, and hit the download button.



15 Domain details

Once installed the extension is in the Context menu of any page on display under the heading Domain Info. This provides four categories. Select the option to open a new tab with a list of information including the registrant, their address, agent and the date registered.



16 Website Details

Select Website Details from Domain Info and another tab opens relaying a number of details. Alongside the IP Address there's a thumbnail of the page, the site's search rankings in various search-engines, page design details and an estimate of the domain's minimum value.



17 IP address details

For those with an interest, Domain Info also provides an in-depth look at the domains IP address. This boasts the site's IP address plus its location and an IP address Whois, which provides the physical address of the owners plus the NameServer that the domain resides upon.



18 A different view

The final extension we've included is known as IE View and is simple but effective. This add-on allows users to switch to viewing a page in Internet Explorer. The ideal solution when testing pages across multiple-browser platforms. Right-click on the page and select View This Page in IE.

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Mobile domains

THE NEW DOTMOBI WEB ADDRESSES GO ON GENERAL SALE TO ANYONE WHO WANTS TO MAKE THEIR CONTENT MOBILE

SEPTEMBER SAW the development towards a truly mobile web take a big leap forwards with dedicated dotMobi internet addresses finally made available to the public. Top-level domains have in fact been up for registration since 12 June, but a 'sunrise' period for deterring cybersquatters has been enough of a success to now open the floodgates for any eager takers. What this move means, according to the high-profile consortium behind it all, is that the mobile web community can begin to look forward to content that isn't populated by paired down desktop-based pages. The likes of Microsoft, Nokia, Google, Ericsson and Vodafone have all clubbed together to agree open standards with the W3C and forge an umbrella company in dotMobi. A total of 77 of the main domain name registrars have also signed up to back the scheme and sell the new addresses for nearly double the price for buying a regular dotcom URL. Apparently the extra funds are required for performing mandatory monitoring to check that content conforms to the agreed standards. Interested parties can of course find out more about the programme by visiting **pc.mtld.mobi**, which also boasts a mobile phone emulator for testing existing sites for dotMobi optimisation. The dream of a truly pocket-based web could finally be upon us!



Visit the dotMobi home page to test if your content's ready for the mobile web



Domain name registrars are selling mobile URLs now

Tracking your traffic

NEW ONLINE TOOL AIMS TO MAKE MONITORING THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR SITE A REAL BREEZE

WITH THE WEB becoming increasingly critical to making it big in business these days, it's vital to know how effective your content is in attracting potential customers. Small to medium enterprises (SMEs) can now do exactly that within the comfort of their browsers with a new real-time tool from HitEye.com, which can be

trialled immediately via a 30-day download. Designed to assess the efficiency of any type of online marketing such as pay-per-click, cost-per-click, search engine sponsored links, natural rankings, banner advertisements and more; the system offers immediate results that could influence day to day marketing strategies. Web presences can be compared with competitor equivalents to determine why the dotcom bigwigs are stealing your target market, while a unique health checking feature gives you email and SMS alerts if the site falls down. "Online marketing is the most powerful way to reach a target market audience but companies throw thousands of pounds at every means available without being able to track what's working and what isn't," admits HitEye.com's Jon Kelly. "The primary aim of HitEye.com is to enable SMEs with online exposure to qualify and quantify marketing spend, so that they can minimise their spend and maximise their profits." Any size business is welcome to take advantage of the service which goes on to cost just £25 per month, with no hidden stipulations or minimum tie-in periods whatsoever.



HitEye.com offers anyone the chance to obtain valuable information about the performance of their critical online presences

eCommerce

MONEY MATTERS



With consumers now confident spending online, offering multiple payment systems on your site is a commercial imperative says
Dave Howell

SHOPPING ONLINE is now a part of the retail landscape. Figures for 2005 indicate that over £8 billion worth of goods were purchased last year – an increase of nearly 29 per cent on the previous year, which equates to an average of £458 per person.

Consumers are embracing the internet as a safe and secure place to shop. Commercial websites that are eCommerce-enabled have learnt that they must offer a fast checkout system and multiple payment options. As a web designer you are spoilt for choice when choosing which payment systems to offer on the site you are building or updating.

Having a fast and efficient trolley and checkout system is essential, as many commercial sites limit their earning potential with flawed checkout systems. Research carried out by web testing specialist SciVisum (www.scivisum.co.uk) makes stark reading. On average UK shopping carts in the study were out of action for more than ten times the accepted industry standard. One in five carts did not function for 12 or more hours a month and over three quarters failed to meet the standard service level of availability of 99.9 per cent equating to a maximum 43 minutes of accumulated failures a month.

Deri Jones, CEO at SciVisum says: "UK eCommerce sites are slapping customers in the face, rather than shaking them by the hand. Turning consumers away once

they have made the decision to buy is commercial suicide. Although specific steps of a transaction may fail to complete, in most cases the website itself is still functioning, so it is likely that many online managers are completely unaware of the problems."

FLEXIBLE FRIEND

2006 marks the 40th anniversary of the credit card. Now ubiquitous, credit cards have revolutionised our spending power and transformed the way we manage our money. In addition to the increase in the number of adults spending online, the number of purchases being made is growing. The average number of purchases made by online shoppers in 2005 rose from 13.6 in 2004 to 18.5 in 2005. This was reflected in total online card spending figures, which were up from 262 million transactions in 2004 to 310 million in 2005. The value of these transactions increased from £16 billion in 2004 to £22 billion last year. Unlike the high street where credit cards represent just 6 per cent of payments, on the virtual high street credit cards are used much more regularly making up 49 per cent of all payments. About 13 per cent of all personal credit card spending is made online.

"At the end of 2004, we saw total UK spending on plastic overtake cash for the first time, signalling a real change in our payment

PLASTIC PAYMENTS

Plastic cards in the UK and how we used them in 2005

The number of personal debit cardholders reached 40.8 million.

The number of personal credit cards reached 31.6 million.

The average number of cards per person was 2.4 credit cards and 1.6 debit cards.

Credit card spending amounted to £122.2 billion spread over two billion transactions; this equates to an average of £60.67 and 64 transactions a second.

The average value of a debit card transaction was £41.40. The average value of a credit card purchase in the UK was £59.48.

By mid 2005, 39.9 million cardholders had at least one chip and PIN card in their wallet.

84 per cent of all face-to-face transactions were made using chip and PIN technology.

By the end of 2005, 825,000 terminals out of a total of 900,000 had been upgraded.

Source: APACS

habits," says Sandra Quinn, Director of Corporate Communications at APACS (www.apacs.org.uk). "This change was mainly driven by debit card use. The 2005 figures show that this trend is continuing with debit card spending in retail outlets crashing through the cash barrier for the first time ever. It is clear that there are certain situations when we tend to use a credit card rather than a debit card – for bigger items and when buying online or overseas. Consumers welcome the convenience and security credit cards bring."

Credit and debit cards are now a familiar part of the payment landscape with chip and PIN, introduced on Valentine's Day last year, being a resounding success. Thanks to chip and PIN, there has been a reduction of nearly £60 million in counterfeit and fraud on lost and stolen cards (a drop of 24 per cent) compared to 2004.

On the internet, chip and PIN can still be used of course, but is less convenient a method as on the high street as the card holder isn't present for the transaction. In some cases retailers have to resort to requesting address confirmation via fax to authenticate their transactions. Chip and PIN is now a part of all retailers' payment systems, so it is important that you completely implement this system in the store you are building, but look carefully at the mechanics of the system and how you must support its security features. Fraud is still a major problem with online transactions. Chip and PIN can help your client reduce its exposure to fraudulent card payments.

Online, your choice of payment systems you have available to include in your store design can seem bewildering, but ultimately

"HAVING A FAST AND EFFICIENT TROLLEY AND CHECKOUT SYSTEM IS ESSENTIAL"

"THE PHONE IN YOUR POCKET OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS COULD ALSO BE YOUR E-WALLET"



The customers to the site you are building want fast and easy payment options. Can you afford to disappoint them?

the choice is good for business and consumers alike. If they happen to be eBay users, offering them the options to pay via their PayPal account makes perfect commercial sense. BT's Click&Buy that enables e-payments via a normal phone bill is another example of how today's merchants and consumers want to operate. Launched in 2002, BT's service now has 300,000+ subscribers and is used by 180 retailers. BT intends to push their payment system to gain 10 per cent of all online payment transactions next year, which could net it an estimated £5 billion. BT's payment system isn't suitable for all online retailers, but you should investigate its features as they could be an ideal match with the site you're building.

The card payment systems you decide to accept on the site you are designing or updating will be governed by the consumers who will visit and buy from the retailer. The value of your clients' merchandise will usually give you a clear indication of which payment systems must be implemented, so talk to them about their customer's profile and get the payment system right.

GOING, GOING, GONE!

The runaway success in online payment systems is of course PayPal. Its links to eBay have not only given eBay itself a completely integrated payment system but also given any other business trading online the ability to offer e-payments without setting up a full merchant account to accept credit cards. PayPal has over 63 million subscribers in 45 countries. With transactions currently standing at nearly \$19 billion last year alone it's a payment system you can't ignore. With a

simple implementation of code into your site's checkout system, every commercial website can offer PayPal as an option.

Figures released by APACS for 2005 show that 14 per cent of the 34 million adults who use the internet (4.9 million) made their most recent purchase from an auction site in 2005. There were 79 million transactions over this period, and £2.8 billion was spent. Looking at the wider eCommerce market for the first time more than half of all adults made an online purchase during 2005, this equates to 25 million adults (and 74 per cent of internet users). This is an increase of 11 per cent of internet users over 2004. "12 per cent of our Visa transactions in the UK are online today, and that's clearly the fastest growing part of our business. And we'll see that getting even larger" says Colin Grannell, Managing Director of Visa UK.

"I think PayPal works on the back of eBay but who knows what's going to happen with that in five years' time," commented Sandra Quinn of APACS. "These things can look as if they're going to stay around forever and actually in three years' time, people will wonder what on earth they were. I'm not predicting the death of eBay, but the market does change very quickly in this type of area."

FUTURE MONEY

Card payments will be transformed over the next few years as the industry moves towards contactless cards.

Currently chip and PIN requires that the card is placed into the reader at the retailers till. Contactless cards don't require readers as they use RFID technology to send the payment wirelessly to the till. Online,



The clearing banks now have an infrastructure to support chip and PIN as well as card payments online

contactless cards may not have a massive impact, but as more goods and services are sold through mobile phones and other devices, contactless payments could become big business as contactless payment systems will be built into mobile phones. The phone in your pocket over the next few years could also be your e-wallet.

Colin Grannell outlines his vision of future payments: "We would envisage contactless technology sitting on your existing card. So, it would be on your debit card, or it could be on your credit card. Or you might be able to purchase a standalone low-value contactless card, and/or it might be in your telephone too. We've already done some pilots with Nokia. What we will see is a whole range of options for consumers. Let's not call them cardholders, because they might not be cards. As we go into the future, the payment system can be your phone, your key fob or your card, or whatever it is you're using for payment in that circumstance on that day."

The payment systems that customers want to use and merchants must offer have changed radically over the last five years. These changes show no sign of abating as new e-payment systems come on stream. MasterCard Europe and Advanced Payment Solutions have teamed up to create a card that will work in a similar way to WWW mobile phones. The card will be targeted at the households in Britain that do not have a current or savings account. Systems will see an increase in online transactions as more consumers obtain a payment method they can use online. Whatever payment options you choose ensure that they are fully integrated into your site's checkout system.

PAYMENT SYSTEMS



PayPal

www.paypal.com

Fast and easy to implement on any website, anyone with an email address use the system



WorldPay

www.worldpay.com

If you want full credit card versatility on your site, WorldPay can offer this



Protx

www.protx.com

Perfect for the smaller business that wants to offer full payment options but can't afford high set-up fees of a full merchant account



NetBanx

www.netbanx.co.uk

Offering similar services to WorldPay, they are UK based and one of the longest running online payment services



BT Click&Buy

www.btclickandbuy.com

Often used to pay for goods of low cost, Click&Buy can offer a professional micro payment system

eCommerce inside view

eCommerce site development: Bespoke or boxed?



CHRIS BARLING, CEO OF ACTINIC & SPECIALIST IN ECOMMERCE SYSTEMS FOR SMES, TALKS US THROUGH WHETHER IT'S BEST TO GO BOXED OR BESPOKE

Ten years ago, if you needed to develop an online shop, you were on your own. There were few commercial solutions available, development was long-winded and costly and entirely based on hand-coding.

Web designers who had the knowledge and skills to do it were in the minority, and retailers who could afford it were even fewer. Today, eCommerce is part of almost every web designer's portfolio. There's a plethora of 'shop-in-a-box' packages, hosted shopping cart solutions and open-source scripts available. Often the biggest challenge is deciding which solution to use.

Hosted solutions are mainly split between low-cost entry level and high-cost enterprise systems. For the average eCommerce application, the choice is usually between a boxed solution and bespoke development using a library of scripts. Many web designers are fiercely loyal to their familiar script libraries. But the tide is turning. A series of surveys conducted by PFA Research have found increasing numbers of web designers turning to packaged solutions for their eCommerce development. What are the attractions and shortcomings of modern eCommerce packages?

In application development generally, we see a pattern of migration from the starting point of bespoke development towards the use of packages. For example, no one today would think of writing a new word processor. Microsoft Word incorporates millions of pounds worth of code that can do pretty well anything you want, and is available for less than £100. Wherever packaged solutions emerge, they eventually dominate, and do so for a number of reasons.



There are a number of bespoke design services on the internet that provide an alternative to boxed options

REDUCED DEVELOPMENT TIME

Using a packaged eCommerce solution, all the functionality that most users will require is available out of the box. It just has to be configured to the individual user's specification and tailored to their design. This eliminates a lot of laborious and repetitive coding, and dramatically reduces the lead time to deployment. The outcome is a more satisfied customer and a less stressed designer!

Jez Wilson, CEO of west London-based web design firm ProSite, is one who has made the shift from bespoke eCommerce development to off-the-shelf software. He's seen a dramatic reduction in development time as a result. "It takes us a month tops with a packaged solution, instead of the three to four months it took for a purely bespoke site."

ECOMMERCE WITHOUT CODING

ProSite employs a mix of graphic designers and web programmers who work in a variety of development environments, including ASP, Microsoft .NET, PHP/SQL and Actinic.

In contrast, Chris Lamle, a partner in Northstar Design, based in Lancashire, cheerfully admits that there are no coders at all in his three-person outfit: "We'd been an established graphics design company for eight years when in 1999 we simply transferred our design skills online. Web design now represents around 40 per cent of our total work."

The existence of shop-in-a-box solutions made it possible for Northstar to take on eCommerce as well as straightforward web design. The company's initial experience was not a happy one, however. "Our first e-store was based on a Javascript cart," recalls Chris. "It was extremely hard work. I'm not a programmer, which is why I struggled. Then in 2000, we were introduced to some boxed eCommerce software, which made life much easier. Now, if a customer needs bespoke elements, we can always call upon associates to provide the necessary coding."

Most web designers already use a package for the majority of their work, and very few code entirely by hand anymore. So it's a small step to adopt a package for delivering eCommerce, especially if it integrates easily with your preferred web design application. Look at your options and you could save time and money.

LOWER COST

Packaged solutions reduce the cost per site deployed because the cost of development is spread across thousands of users. According to PFA Research, the average cost of deploying an eCommerce site fell by almost 25 per cent between 2004 and 2005 alone, and it's hard not to believe that the spread of packages has contributed to this. This downward pressure on price puts web designers at a competitive disadvantage unless they at least have a package to fall back on for their more price-sensitive clients.

Fortunately, the cost of professional eCommerce design packages is also falling. This year, for example, Actinic slashed the entry cost in this market from £1250 to £350 with the release of Actinic Designer. Others are bound to follow.

As prices fall, custom-designed trading sites come within the reach of more and more businesses, fuelling further demand. Which is obviously good news for everyone concerned!



GREATER SOPHISTICATION

As costs are spread and packages mature, they provide access to more sophisticated functionality than most users could afford by themselves. This is becoming increasingly important as the market itself matures and expectations rise.

According to Mike Sharpe of Smart Decision Dot Net, SMEs have become increasingly sophisticated in their requirements. "In the early days it was more about just getting online and selling the product any-old-how," he recalls. "Now, our customers want eye-catching sites that deliver information quickly." Mike believes the availability of affordable but powerful eCommerce functionality out of a box has made online trading an easier sell. Such are the advantages of using packaged products that most developers accept the inevitability of their eventual dominance.

But that doesn't mean there won't be a place for manual coding. ProSite's Jez Wilson believes: "Bespoke coding enables the developer to match defined user requirements exactly. Which methodology we use really depends on what the customer is after." However, as eCommerce packages continue to mature, hand-coding will be used as a means of extending them rather than being used instead of them.

eCommerce gallery

Unleashing your successful retail company online is a giant leap for any business, one in which all areas of online service need to be covered to guarantee success

Newitts.com gets it right

www.newitts.com

AS A RETAILER the potential of jumping into eCommerce is an exciting challenge and one that can reap immense rewards, when done correctly. A successful online shopping experience is about building relationships in order to make money, so understanding eCommerce with a sound business plan is imperative. **Newitts.com** is a good example of a company who has embraced the core concepts of online shopping, taking its small retail business to a global customer base.

Newitts is a highly successful UK-based mail order supplier of sports equipment and has been trading since 1902. It's a company that has leaped onto the eCommerce train, investing in new technology and has brought a high-quality user-friendly store to the marketplace.

This website has been thoroughly conceived with the customer's every click in mind. The ease in which to search for the product you're looking for by brand, equipment, sport type, product type or price is the website's strongest attribute; all clearly defined and well organised in professionally designed pages.



A shopping basket should leave no stone unturned in terms of quantity, cost, VAT and delivery it also provides another opportunity to offer the customers more cheap deals



Showcasing your hot deals on your initial page immerses the customer straight into the shopping experience from the off

Understanding the customer's needs and providing a fully functional search experience, gives the customer a reason to return

“This website has been thoroughly conceived with the customer's every click in mind”



Clearance items and top selling goods always remain on the right hand side of the page. A ruthless but smart inclusion for any eCommerce website

Newitts provides a traffic light system for the status of goods that you're looking to purchase, preventing any disappointment for the customer

Making service information like delivery times or returns obvious to the customer from the outset will inspire purchasing confidence

VERDICT

Newitts.com

You can only exit this store with a positive view about the company, its products, service and website. It'll leave you with a lasting impression that'll make you come back time and time again for some trolley dashing

You can change how many products you want to view on a page each time you're searching for a particular product by clicking the small icons



WEB HOSTING guide

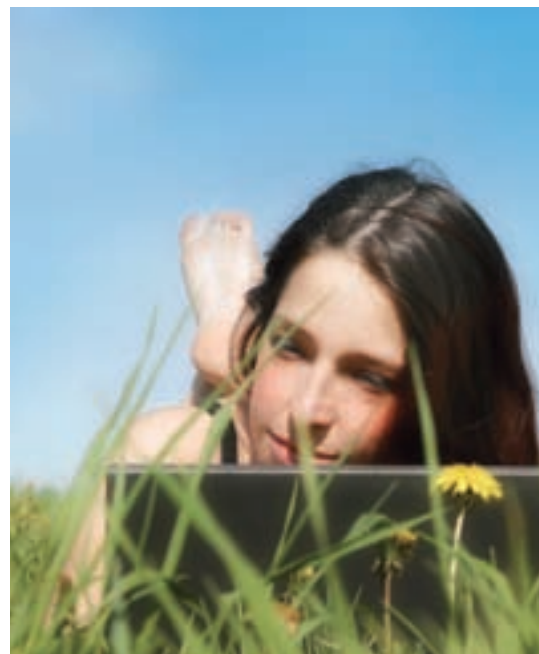
KEEP AN EYE ON THE LATEST WEB PACKAGES AND DEALS WITH OUR COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ISPS

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.

If you want people to enjoy and appreciate your hard work, then it will need a spot on the web to call home. Many choices will also expect 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 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

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
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Basic5S	0845 641 0776	£24	100 MB	1500 MB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Standard5S	0845 641 0776	£45	200 MB	3000 MB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Business5S	0845 641 0776	£70	500 MB	7500 MB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Advanced5S	0845 641 0776	£110	1000 MB	15000 MB	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Professional5S	0845 641 0776	£150	1500 MB	25000 MB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Basic1R	0845 641 0776	£125	1000 MB	10500 MB	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Standard1R	0845 641 0776	£180	1500 MB	15000 MB	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Business1R	0845 641 0776	£250	2800 MB	28000 MB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Advanced1R	0845 641 0776	£350	4000 MB	40000 MB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Professional1R	0845 641 0776	£500	6000 MB	60,000 MB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HaiSoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft Pro	0870 080 4247	£49.90	500MB	10GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HaiSoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft eCommerce	0870 080 4247	£99.90	750MB	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Free Starter Professional	0845 644 7750	Free	2.5GB	100MB	1000	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Starter Professional	0845 644 7750	£29.80	2.5GB	10GB	1000	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Home Professional	0845 644 7750	£89.99	10GB	50GB	10,000	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Business Professional	0845 644 7750	£129.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Reseller Professional	0845 644 7750	£299.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Professional	08712 773494	£68.99	250	1GB	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Business	08712 773494	£119.99	500	1GB	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Corporate	08712 773494	£199.99	1000	1GB	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Basic 50	0870 160 5555	£70	50	1GB	5	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Frontpage 50	0870 160 5555	£100	50	1GB	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Standard 200	0870 160 5555	£160	200	2GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Superior 500	0870 160 5555	£220	500	3GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 50	0870 160 5555	£100	50	1GB	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 200	0870 160 5555	£190	200	2GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 500	0870 160 5555	£260	500	3GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk)	Amethyst (Linux)	0845 2000 699	£24.99	50MB	2GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk)	Topaz (Linux)	0845 2000 699	£49.99	250MB	10GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk)	Ruby (Linux)	0845 2000 699	£99.99	750MB	30GB	300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk)	Emerald (Linux)	0845 2000 699	£149.99	1500MB	60GB	600	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk)	Diamond (Linux)	0845 2000 699	£199.99	3000MB	120GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Entry	0115 917 0000	£79.50	600MB	7GB	300	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Business Professional	0115 917 0000	£199	5GB	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Business e-commerce	0115 917 0000	£499	5GB	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Reseller	0115 917 0000	£500	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Media Temple (www.mediatemple.net)	Shared-Server Pro	+1-310-841-5500	£64	2Gb	1TB	1,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Media Temple (www.mediatemple.net)	Shared-Server Advanced	+1-310-841-5500	£109	5Gb	1.5TB	5,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Standard Package	0845 6120330	£35.25	100MB	4.5GB	10	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Home Package	0800 2987 214	£60	1GB	5GB	100	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Developer Package	0800 2987 214	£100	4GB	10GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
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	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netscalibur (www.netscalibur.com)	Netscalibur Web Windows	0800 072 0000	£324	100MB	5GB	1	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Lite	08700 599 599	£29.90	200MB	1GB	1	£1.50	✗	✗	£1.50/mailbox	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Plus	08700 599 599	£49.90	400MB	2GB	5	£1.50	£1	✗	£1.50/mailbox	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Advance	08700 599 599	£99.90	1GB	5GB	10	✓	✓	✗	£1.50/mailbox	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Pro	08700 599 599	£199.90	3GB	15GB	50	✓	✓	✗	£1.50/mailbox	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Enterprise	08700 599 599	£499.90	10GB	25GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

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 have them as standard, although you might like to ask your chosen vendor

just to make sure, if you think that this may apply 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,

In association with



www.strato-hosting.co.uk



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
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
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
STRATO Hosting (www.strato-hosting.co.uk)	STRATO EasyWeb	00800 800 700 70	£41.88	1GB	10GB	500	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
STRATO Hosting (www.strato-hosting.co.uk)	STRATO PowerWeb	00800 800 700 70	£58.68	3GB	20GB	1000	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
STRATO Hosting (www.strato-hosting.co.uk)	STRATO AdvancedWeb	00800 800 700 70	£131.88	4GB	50GB	1500	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
STRATO Hosting (www.strato-hosting.co.uk)	STRATO EnterpriseWeb	00800 800 700 70	£179.88	20GB	100GB	5000	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Switch Media (www.switchmedia.co.uk)	Home	0151 236 9111	£53.88	500MB	4GB	100	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
Switch Media (www.switchmedia.co.uk)	Professional	0151 236 9111	£186	3GB	25GB	1200	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	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebServ UK (www.webservuk.com)	Basic	n/a	£47.99	300Mb	3GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
WebServ UK (www.webservuk.com)	Standard	n/a	£95.99	600Mb	6GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
WebServ UK (www.webservuk.com)	Professional	n/a	£179.99	1000Mb	10GB	500	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Standard	0870 050 0080	£39.95	50MB	1GB	5	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Standard Plus	0870 050 0080	£99.95	50MB	2GB	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Business	0870 050 0080	£79.95	100MB	3GB	15	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Business Plus	0870 050 0080	£159.95	150MB	4GB	30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Professional	0870 050 0080	£179.95	250MB	7GB	50	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Professional Plus	0870 050 0080	£299	500MB	10GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Standard Multiweb	0870 050 0080	£64.95	75MB	1.5GB	10	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Standard Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	£149.95	100MB	2.5GB	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Business Multiweb	0870 050 0080	£149.95	200MB	4GB	25	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Business Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	£299	250MB	5GB	40	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Professional Multiweb	0870 050 0080	£249	500MB	7.5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Professional Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	£499	500MB	10GB	150	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zen Internet (www.zen.co.uk)	ActiveSpace	0845 058 9000	£100	50MB	2GB	0	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Zen Internet (www.zen.co.uk)	.NETSpace	0845 058 9000	£250	100MB	4GB	0	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X

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

VIRUS FILTER

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

FIREWALL

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

WEB CONTROL PANEL

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

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

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

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

portfolio

THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING

Ross Mawdsley

www.53degreesnorth.net

Skills: Flash, Photoshop, etc...

Employment status: Senior Art Director, Liverpool & New York
It becomes apparent very quickly when you visit the online home of Ross Mawdsley that this isn't just any portfolio. No, Ross clearly doesn't need us to champion his talent on these pages - it speaks volumes on its own. The site itself is pretty much a lesson in beautifully functional Flash work, with its compact template, slick navigation structure and subtle animation effects. Luckily it goes on to house examples from an already glittering career forging content for the likes of Harley Davidson, Sony BMG and a whole host of illustrious beverage makers. Still, it's sobering stuff and provides a great benchmark for where aspiring web slingers would do well to aim for when presenting their wares online.



This artwork for a pop album carries the trademark paint splatters we show you how to achieve on page 58's tutorial - nice!



GETTING NOTICED within the dog eat dog web industry can be a pretty tough task in such a competitive world. These pages are a visual forum for you to achieve that exposure and showcase the stunning work that could easily catch the eye of eager talent spotters

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



Everything about this portfolio and the work it contains is really polished and exciting to the eye

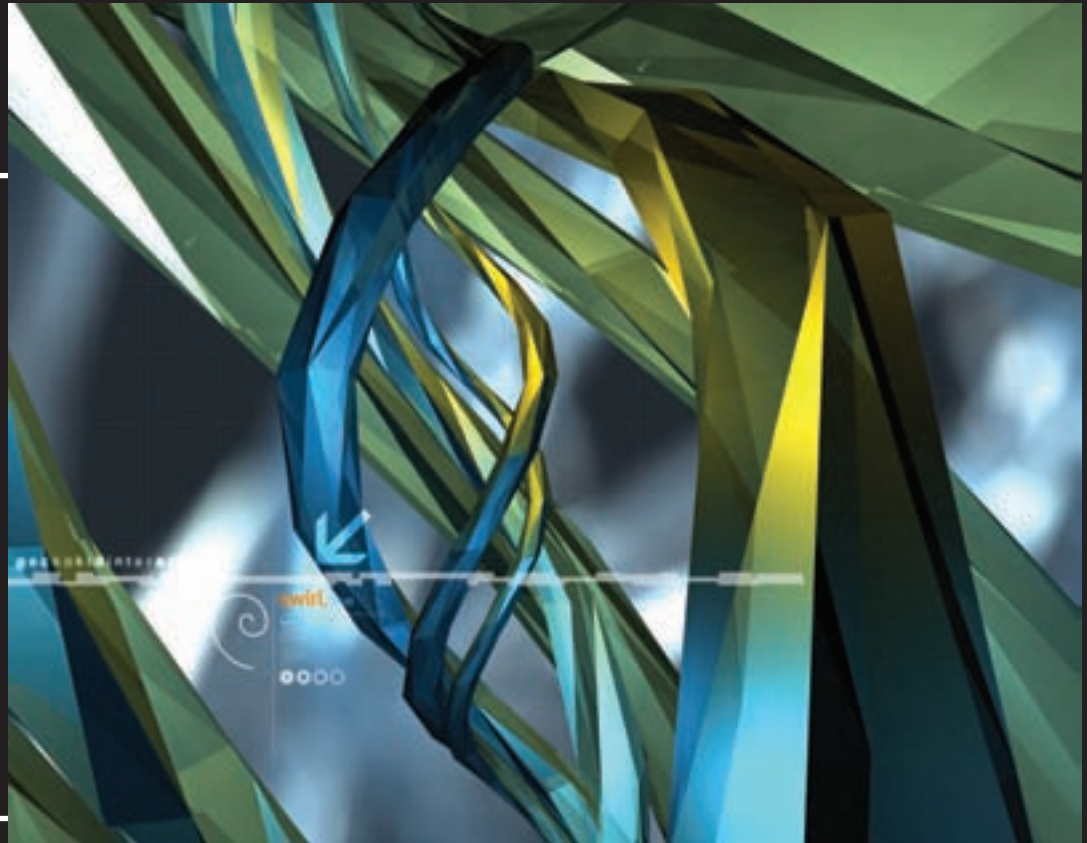


Jackie Wu

www.geckokid.net

Skills: Flash, Dreamweaver & Photoshop

Employment status: Student at Newcastle-Upon-Tyne University
Jackie came to our attention via his great letter in this month's message board, so we thought it only fair to see more from his fabulous portfolio. From its changing splash screens and sideways scrolling design, this home for his Geckokid alter-ego shows why he's doing the right thing reading for a degree in Multimedia Design. Just 21 and already able to boast an incredible skillset beyond just the usual tools, he shows a maturity beyond his years in the sublime graphical artworks and interface tricks he's able to present. He even cheekily asks visitors for monetary donations to supplement his studies, so that alone makes him an official *Web Designer* legend in our opinion!



Jackie's site has a really novel design that scrolls horizontally across the browser



