

37  
PAGES OF  
EXPERT TUTORIALS

web

## designer

DREAMWEAVER FLASH PHOTOSHOP

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Packed with the latest software, web templates, video tutorials, fonts, music and plug-ins

www.webdesignermag.co.uk

ISSUE 126

CREATIVE PREVIEW  
2007Out with the old, in with the new  
Plus: Creative highlights of 2006

- Huge software releases
- Hot new technologies
- Iconic site launches

eCOMMERCE  
BUILDERSPick the perfect solution  
for your next web venture2ADVANCED  
EXCLUSIVEBehind the scenes of the web  
studio's latest site masterpieceTransform your  
website...  
Flash forward

Expert design guides for firing up your projects

on the disc  
FLASH  
TEMPLATES  
worth  
over  
£1000

## HOW TO:

Complete a unique  
gravity-based GUILearn how **SSIs** can  
enrich your projectsDesign an expanding  
single-piece templateExplore glass-graphical  
effects in **Photoshop**Discover custom CSS  
styles in **Dreamweaver**Create a 'handy' custom  
cursor site with **Flash 8**

## HELPING HANDS

Build a navigational helper  
that will change the way  
you look at cursors forever

## EXPANDING GUI'S

Design a site template that  
grows into a sprawling  
graphical interface

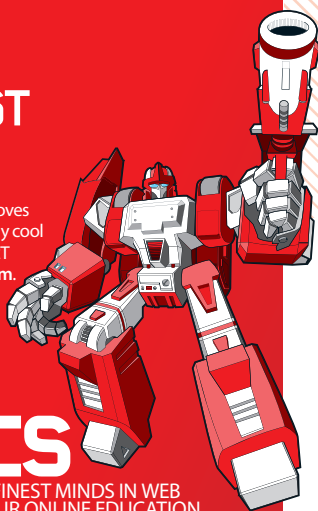
## COVER ARTIST

**Gregory Kojemyak**  
(<http://gregory-art.com>)

Going under the artistic moniker of .GREGORY, this Ukrainian designer loves nothing more than creating seriously cool graphical musings for his deviantART gallery at <http://zork.deviantart.com>. This cover image is inspired by the resurgence of interest in Mattel's Transformers toys, coinciding with the forthcoming feature film.

## THE experts

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



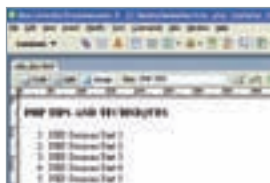
### Mark Shufflebottom

CREATING AN INTERFACE THAT GIVES A GUIDING HAND  
He's back this month with an incredibly cool system for adding natural navigation and interactivity. Perfect for instructional sites, or just for injecting some fun, you'll learn to build a front-end that features a hand cursor for drawing site content.



### Rachel Andrew

EXPLAINING SERVER SIDE INCLUDES AND WHAT THEY DO  
Rachel returns by lifting the lid on the ability to embed server-side instructions into a variety of different code types, with this introductory guide on working with SSIs. You'll be adding them into your projects in no time!



### Stefan Mischook

REVEALING ESSENTIAL PHP CODING TIPS FOR EVERYONE  
Stefan not only provides a third instalment of his **killerPHP.com** video tutorials on this month's disc, but also talks us through essential code tricks. Spanning numerous techniques, developers new and old should find a wealth of knowledge here.



### Darren Richardson

BOUNCING BACK WITH HIS GRAVITY GUI PART 2  
Last month he rustled up a funky piggy-bank take on using gravity effects with Flash 8. This time he returns to add some seriously clever collision code to the mix along with various other tweaks. Keeping track of those flying coins isn't easy!

# Welcome



## Another tumultuous year in web design may well be drawing to a close, but there's much more excitement to come over the next twelve months

There's quite a popular adage in life that goes something along the lines of learning lessons from the past to paint a rosier future. The world in general could probably take heed of such advice if we're honest, but at *Web Designer* we have the luxury of being a bit more blinkered.

So it's the end of another year, and yes we can't believe where the time has gone either, but we're using it as a fine excuse to look backwards to look forwards – if you catch our drift. We have a special creative review this month, that celebrates all the fantastic design highlights we may or may not have covered in 2006, while hopefully pre-empting some of the fine things expected to happen in 2007. Rob Ford of **thefwa.com**, kindly talks us through all those cool moments that have defined his year, and hints at the anticipation we all share for forthcoming software launches and emerging development work. Make sure you join the debate and let us know about what you guys think via our mailbox and forums.

Elsewhere, we don an extra eCommerce hat and evaluate the software solutions you'll need for setting up an online store in time for the Xmas and January sales. There's not long, so usability and flexibility are key here with David Howell given the task of identifying

the perfect off-the-shelf suite that any budding eShop-keeper could ask for. Plus, if you're more keen on doing things from scratch, there's a good word about exactly what development prowess you'll need up your sleeve.

Meanwhile, our awesome Behind the Scenes scoop with the great guys at 2Advanced Studios concludes with the final Q&A full of more great concept art. The tutorial fun continues with a 'handy' site navigation helper in Flash, along with the second instalment of Darren Richardson's gravity GUI. There's also expanding interfaces and glass-effects in Photoshop, plus top PHP tips and a guide on using Server Side Includes in Dreamweaver. All in all, we're just the perfect Christmas gift for web designers everywhere!

**Mark Billen**  
DEPUTY EDITOR

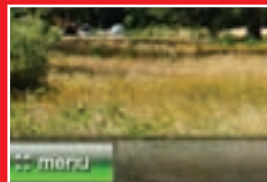
## Editor's picks

If you didn't know already, *Web Designer* issue 126 also boasts this little lot too...



22-25

We continue our exclusive Q&A session with 2Advanced Studios and reveal some cool concept art



62-64

Create web graphics and templates with a sophisticated glass-like look in Photoshop



94-95

It's all about coping with the Xmas demand in our latest eCommerce mini-feature





# gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



## PRISM GIRL GRAPHICS

<http://prismgirl.org>

Designed by: Azusa Mano

If you're looking for a visual explosion of beauty, then point your browser to this stylish interactive experience. This site is the personal website of Tokyo-based graphic artist Azusa Mano and, as you'll see yourself, the illustrative design has plenty of gloss, with fading imagery encapsulating a creative and imaginative showcase, which is simply pure class. The navigation is simple and purely visual with the use of scrolling artwork and subtle animations that are a real treat.



The portfolio section enables you to view the development of Azusa's work from 2003 to the present day

The website is truly about the artwork as it isn't fixed within traditional pages and the imagery is allowed to wander across the pages



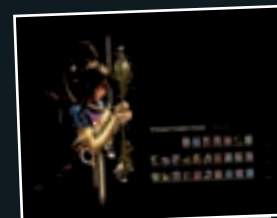
**WE KICK OFF** in style as always with another collection of the finest web design examples that the online world has to offer. Be fired, be inspired and remember to let us know about those cool URLs that you think warrant a place in our gallery pages – it's open to everyone!

**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](mailto:webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk)

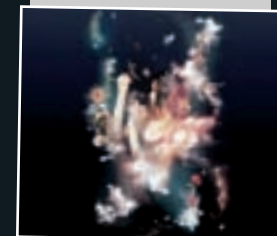


Although each design is unique, all the images on the site have a similar feel to them so the site remains consistent



## Site Highlight

The website's main strength has got to be its elegant visual elements. Photography and illustrations are all layered around carefully throughout the layout. The way in which the images are revealed is also very special.



The main navigation is within the artworks themselves and you'll be taken to each section in magical animated transitions

# gallery

## THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



### Site Highlight

Arguably the best part about this website is the manner in which each embedded video has been made to fit into the design, and has not simply been thrown on to the page in a rectangular TV screen.



The cardboard cutout idea has been superbly executed, you really get the impression of a depth

The website is dynamic, energetic and cool. A superbly executed website where you'll never get bored







## SALOMON FREESTYLE 2006

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

Designed by: **Salomon**

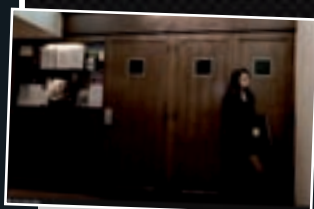
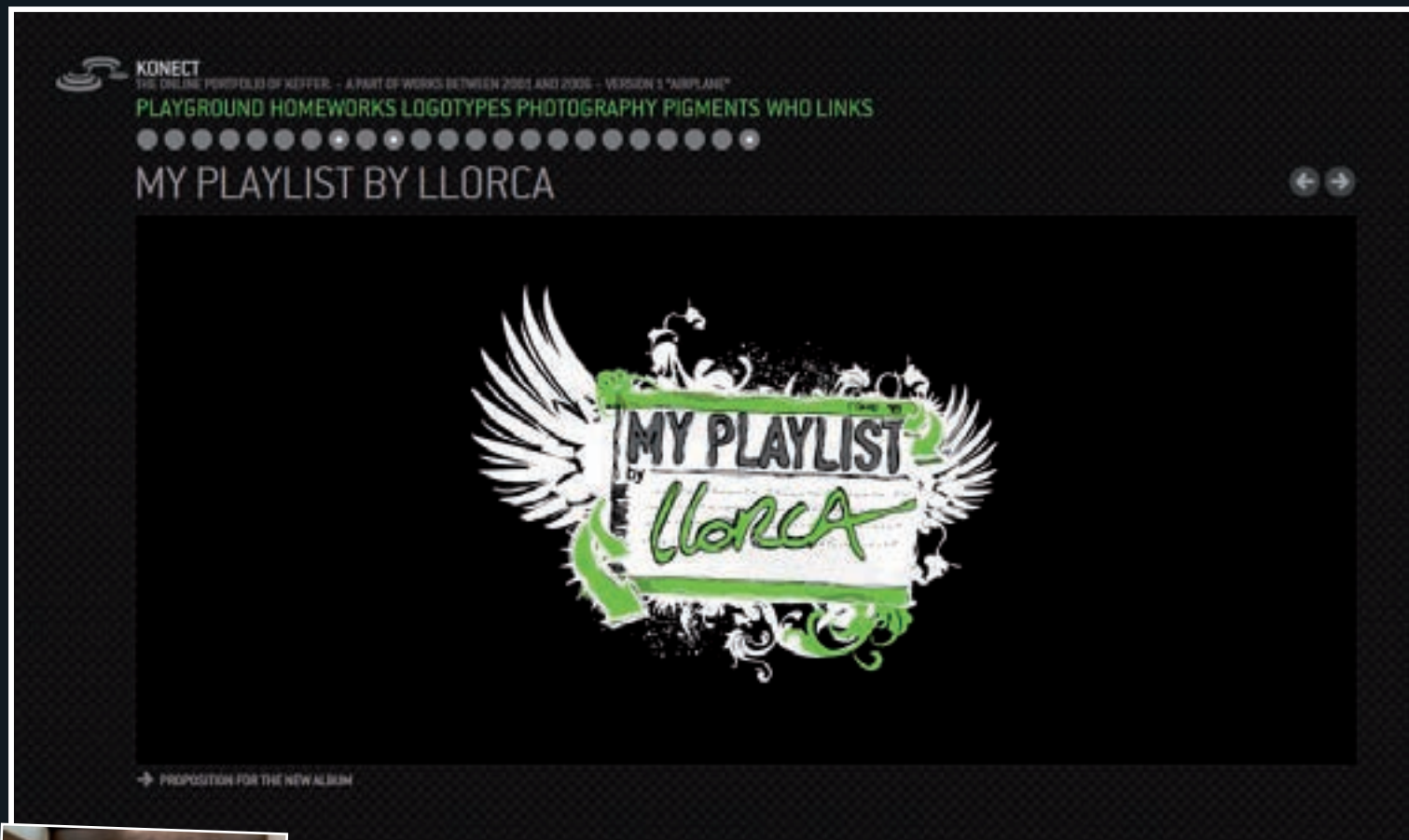
Salomon has been a manufacturer of top-of-the-range equipment, footwear, apparel and experiences for action and outdoor sports since 1947. Its latest line of freestyle products have facilitated this energetic website to market this new range. The website utilises cool street-smart design and some hyperactive transitions, while the main focus of your attention is the informative videos used to introduce each product. From a marketing point of view, it has to be said that it's produced an ideal showcase that'll have no problems in enthusing its customer base.





# gallery

## THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



*The use of greens and greys in the general page helps each artwork become your primary focus*

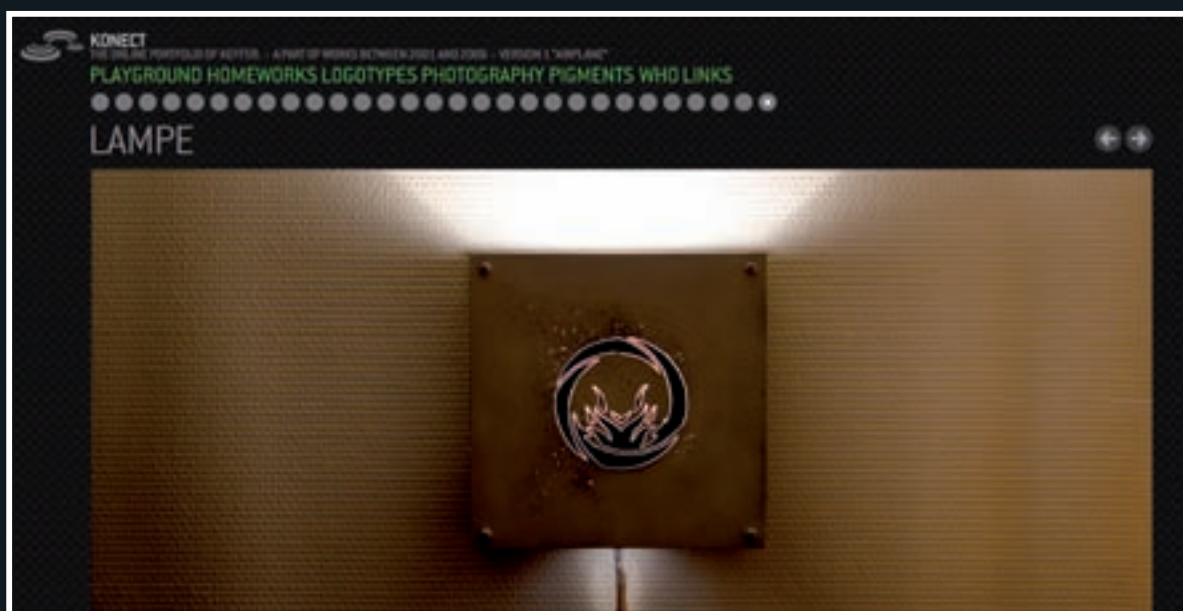
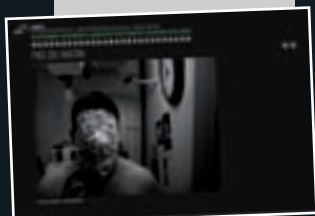
**KONECT**  
www.konect.org  
Designed by: **Keffer**

This interactive portfolio website has been the digital showcase since 2001 of the varied visual creations of French designer Keffer. The website is unpretentious and boasts a simple yet functional navigation system, leaving you to focus entirely on the previews of his work that take centre stage. For any hyperactive web designer students out there who are just starting out, this website is a great example to show that your portfolio doesn't have to be full of everything in the glitter box to impress – sometimes less really is more!

*Each artwork that you select fades incredibly slowly into vision, normally this would prove to be a pain, but in this instance it actually adds an element of cool*

### Site Highlight

The manner in which Keffer is able to make you sit back and watch his portfolio arrive in front of you in such an immersive manner has most definitely added a great deal of impact to his designs.





# Site Highlight

Without doubt the Saab test drive is the highlight of this website and it's obvious to see that it has been carefully crafted to bring you a cool experience. You do wonder how far they could of gone with this though?



In keeping with the marketing slogans of 'taking a test flight', the design of the website is in line with that of an airport with the car actually on a runway

After you've had a test drive you have the opportunity to view it again and see how much of a good driver you really are

HOMETEST PILOTEVENTSBLOCK TEST DRIVEPERFORMANCE TEAMICE EXPERIENCE

←EVENTS

←BOOK TEST DRIVE

PERFORMANCE TEAM

ICE EXPERIENCE

Want to test-fly a Saab?

Saab is looking for pilots around the globe. From local dealers to national and regional events, we're offering people the chance to experience our aircraft heritage at first-hand. Take a test-drive and feel Saab's legendary sporty handling for yourself, or see the Saab Performance Team in action. But why wait? Put Saab - and yourself - to the test in our interactive drive - The Test Pilot.

## TEST FLY A SAAB

[www.saab.com/microsites/pilotswanted/GLOBAL](http://www.saab.com/microsites/pilotswanted/GLOBAL)

Designed by: Lowe Tesch and Perfect Fools

Fancy a test-flight of the new Saab? Well take a trip to this website and have some great fun with its unique interactive test drive. From different views you can see the car slalom, chase, 360 and switch lanes. This website proves to be a great addition to Saab's marketing campaign, as it produces a very strong brand, by providing all the relevant information but combined with lots of fun. It certainly wanted to make us go and try it out for real!

HOMETEST PILOTEVENTSBLOCK TEST DRIVEPERFORMANCE TEAMICE EXPERIENCE

Test-flight complete

You looked good out there. But don't relax yet! You can repeat the test. Press the button to start the test again and see the results. You can also view the test again.

RESTART TEST

VIEW TEST RESULTS





# gallery

## THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP

### DIGITAL PROGRESSION

www.digitalprogression.com/  
Designed by: Digital Progression

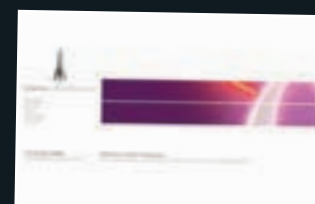
If you're looking for the best way to present your work to the world online, then our advice is to visit the online portfolio of Digital Progression and follow its example. Digital Progression is a UK studio who specialise in the creation of high-end digital artwork that you'll no doubt be impressed by. The website has an obvious navigation system making your exploration of the site a breeze, combined with high quality preview images of the company's talents.

*The quality and attention to detail of the work on show here is inspirational stuff*

*Digital Progression has worked for some big name clients and presents them in a particularly stylish manner in keeping with the quality already on show*



*There's no way on earth you can get lost while navigating around the website, because the links and thumbnails keep it simple*



### Site Highlight

This clean and carefully laid out website plays to the company's strengths and utilises its strong visual creations as the motivation to navigate through its entire portfolio.







# 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



**The Stuntman**  
[www.thestuntman.la](http://www.thestuntman.la)  
Designed by: grupow.com

The Stuntman is your unbreakable toy. It's time to release that built-up adrenaline after a hard day at the office.



**The Creative Mind**  
[www.adobe.com/creativemind/](http://www.adobe.com/creativemind/)  
Designed by: goodbyilverstein.com & unit9.com  
Explore the universe in your head, full of trap doors, ripcords and rabbit holes.



**SectionSeven Inc.**  
[www.sectionseven.com](http://www.sectionseven.com)  
Designed by: sectionseven.com  
A gorgeous site that takes the online book to whole new levels. Large screen resolution required here though.



## Creative Horizons rejoiced

THE SIXTH ANNUAL CALL FOR THE PRESTIGIOUS HORIZON INTERACTIVE AWARDS KICKS OFF WITH A BANG

**THE HORIZON INTERACTIVE Awards**, recognising talent in interactive media including websites, CD-ROMs, DVDs, Flash, Video and online ads, are now calling for entries to 2007's competition. Showcasing talent from all over the globe, last year's competition saw nearly one thousand entries from across the globe.

The HIAs began in 2002 to recognise outstanding achievement in the field of interactive media, regardless of company size, with a commitment to "shedding the spotlight on that work and the people who made it happen." The Horizon Interactive Awards' business philosophy is: "Quite simply, we're working for you. Through a very customer focused approach, we'll do whatever it takes to help you

show the world how great your work is!" Each year entries are chosen for Gold, Silver, Bronze and in some cases honourable mention award distinctions. All Gold winners are eligible for the Best of Category and Best of Show award (the Horizon Interactive Awards' highest honour).

The awards are judged by a varied bunch of talent spotters from all levels of the interactive media industry. "These are people that live and work in the industry on a daily basis," say the award organisers. "No group think tanks here... just really creative and qualified people. In addition, end-users and non-designers are also part of the judges' panel. This offers a unique perspective not found at any other awards competition. We feel that solutions should be effective, not just fun to look at."

If you'd like to enter the Horizon Interactive Awards the deadline for the 2007 competition is the 31 January 2007. Entries can be submitted online by visiting [www.horizoninteractiveawards.com](http://www.horizoninteractiveawards.com).



**"WE FEEL THAT SOLUTIONS SHOULD BE EFFECTIVE NOT JUST FUN TO LOOK AT"**

HORIZON INTERACTIVE AWARDS

# Calling all you designers!



*There are now no excuses not to submit your work to the Adobe Design Achievement awards, with an open online submission date on the 27 April 2007*

## ADOBE ANNOUNCES ITS CALL FOR ENTRIES TO THE 2007 ADOBE DESIGN ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

**ROLL UP, ROLL UP!** Adobe has announced its call for entries into 2007's Adobe Design Achievement Awards. The competition awards a title to the most talented and promising student designers, photographers, illustrators, animators and digital filmmakers. The program is now in its seventh year of running and has been expanded to include entries from even more students across the globe. There are a total of nine submission categories for next year's awards including animation, digital illustration, digital photography, interactive and web design. The designers of the 2007 ADAA campaign were a collaboration of winners and finalists from the 2006 competition.

In a new initiative, Adobe will be accepting submissions for the competition online through until 27 April 2007. Entries will be judged digitally in May and semi-finalists will be asked to mail in their entries for final judging. The only strict criteria set for the design awards, is that all projects must be created on Adobe Creative Suite, Adobe Production Studio or Macromedia Studio software programs.

Judges will select the winners and finalists, based on originality and effectiveness in communicating project objectives. The lucky finalists will receive a trip to San Francisco to attend the awards ceremony and an opportunity to showcase their work. Other winning treats include a selection of Adobe software products and the opportunity for an internship with 2007 SIGGRAPH Guerilla Studio and a welcome cash prize of \$5,000.



*SiteNav has been designed to tackle the long-winded process of scalable websites*



## Scaling it

### NEW SYSTEM MAKES WEBSITE STRUCTURES A LOT SIMPLER

**PROMINENT MEDIA HAS** developed a new system to generate multi-level, standards-compliant navigation using a single .NET custom tag. SiteNav allows anyone capable of making a single page to produce scalable websites.

Previously techniques to provide the same results included the long-winded use of Dreamweaver Libraries, but Prominent Media is confident that the new system offers an easier and more powerful solution. By generating a unique navigation for each page, based on its position in the sitemap, SiteNav gives more information than a standard 'include'; highlighting the current page and section, or reusing the information to make 'breadcrumb trails'. Because all the navigation is described in a single XML file, anybody with an XML editor can control the navigational structure

of a site in seconds. "We originally developed SiteNav for our own internal use, to make it easier for us to manage our own clients' websites. Very quickly we found that it shortened our production and maintenance times, which was great for our clients and for us," Iain Row, managing director of Prominent Media explains. "Since we made the system publicly available we've had a lot of positive feedback from designers who could always make nice pages but couldn't scale the site without using expensive CMS software. Using SiteNav in conjunction with Dreamweaver or Contribute is like having a CMS solution at a fraction of the cost."

SiteNav is available for an unlimited free trial at [www.sitenav.co.uk](http://www.sitenav.co.uk), although users that wish to apply it to a live site will need to buy a permanent licence for a very affordable £50.

## NEWS in brief



### CUT THE MISERY OF CSS

If you really want to get your head around designing great-looking websites and quick downloads, then it's essential to understand Cascading Style Sheets. Web wizard David Sawyer McFarland, has released a new instalment in his *Missing Manual* series aimed to show readers how to create stylishly enticing web pages. For more information and to buy the book online visit [www.oreilly.com](http://www.oreilly.com).



### DO YOU TRUST YOUR ISP?

A report from uSwitch has found a nine per cent drop in broadband satisfaction levels on a survey of more than eleven thousand customers, setting consumer trust at an "all time low". TalkTalk from the Carphone Warehouse and Orange had one of the worst scores at a mere 70% satisfaction.



### GOOGLE AIDS PATIENT DIAGNOSES

Google has become the first port of call in diagnosing patient cases, says a report from the British Medical Journal. The search engine has become the most popular on the web and with access to more than three billion medical articles, is the most commonly used for researching illnesses and symptoms.



```
Pwebsite = { ((14.14*
EaseNav) + (13.56*Speed)
+ (13.11*CleanDes) +
(10.89*Func) + (10.89*Up))
- ((12.63*Pops) + (10.32*Ads)
+ (5.21*MultiM)) } / 6.26
```

Pwebsite = the degree of perfection of the website  
EaseNav = ease of navigation  
Speed = the speed at which pages load  
CleanDes = clean, simple design  
Func = functionality - 'does what it says on the tin'  
Up = the site is always alive  
Pops = the site tries to give you pop-ups  
Ads = excessive advertising  
MultiM = Flash and other multimedia



## Equation for dotcom success?

RACKSPACE DISCOVERS THE FORMULA FOR THE PERFECT WEBSITE

**EVER FOUND YOURSELF** scratching your head worrying about how you can create a website that'll knock the socks off your competitors? Well, the answer could be in the form of a complex maths formula, so says the Social Issues Research Centre (SIRC) on behalf of Rackspace Managed Hosting. The formula was created after 50 participants were sent on 'virtual treasure hunts', requiring them to seek out specific pieces of information from a variety of websites. The SIRC then recorded their comments and preferences. "The rules of the web are constantly changing," explains Jaques Greyling, managing

director of Rackspace Managed Hosting. "Rackspace commissioned this study to better understand what the formula for online success is today, as part of our commitment to providing our own brand of customer service. It will be interesting to re-visit this in twelve months to see how the needs of web users have evolved." Rackspace Managed Hosting has developed an online calculator to measure a website's performance against the perfect website formula. You can submit a survey for your own website by visiting [www.rackspace.co.uk/rateYourSite](http://www.rackspace.co.uk/rateYourSite) and hopefully get a definitive answer to whether your content works!



## Singing our Zune

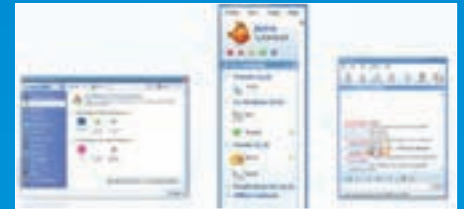
MICROSOFT LAUNCHES MP3 PLAYER TO RIVAL APPLE'S IPOD

**HOPING TO BE** a serious rival against Apple's iPod, Microsoft has launched the modest but stylish Zune player. Unlike other MP3 players on the market, the Zune features wireless technology that enables users to share tracks, recordings, playlists and pictures just as they would with Bluetooth on their mobile phones. However, the new models have immediate drawbacks for music download fanatics, as songs bought from Napster, Rhapsody, AOL or Urge will not work on the music player. Files can only be downloaded from a dedicated Zune site, nor will it accommodate podcasts. Although reviews

have been mixed, disregarding file format issues, the general aesthetics and performance have been well-received. The Zune, available in three base colours comprising of black, white and brown, offers 30GB of storage space and a three inch LCD screen that works in either portrait or landscape mode. However Microsoft's first venture into the MP3 world is taken, Zune product manager Matt Jubelirer is adamant that it's an insight into the future of personal music players: "We will continue to innovate where and when it makes sense for our customers, so we can keep exciting them for years to come."

*At present, the Zune is only available in the US priced \$250 (£151)*

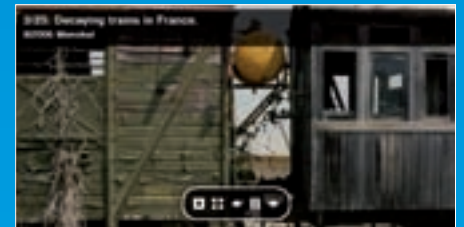
## TOP Downloads



### TRILLIAN

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

Struggling under the weight of so many Instant Messenger accounts? Trillian is a standalone chat client that supports AIM, ICQ, MSN, Yahoo Messenger and IRC with no other included software, pop-ups or spyware.



### MONOSLIDESHOW

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

Monoslideshow is a download that will quickly create a Flash slideshow to view your images in a web page. It's fully customisable, so you can resize and position everything to suit your needs. It talks XML so you can easily incorporate it into your existing site.



### ADSENSE

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

AdSense is a fast way for website publishers to display relevant Google ads on their website's content pages. AdSense delivers relevant text and image ads that are precisely targeted to your site and your site's content.



### TEMPLATE MONSTER

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

Featuring a host of free downloadable templates, Template Monster gives you the chance to expand the potential of Flash and PHP web projects, among others. There are conditions on the use of your templates, so check out the terms of use before you apply your templates for professional purposes.

Those designer toys that everyone here at *Web Designer* would love to unwrap under the tree this Christmas...



## TELL THE TIME Giovannoni Wireless Projection Clock

Price: \$150 (£79.21)

Web: [www2.oregonscientific.com](http://www2.oregonscientific.com)

So emerged in your web design work that you lose track of time? Now you can project the time onto any wall or ceiling with the Giovannoni Wireless Projection Clock. The projection orb can be removed from the base and position in any way you like to give the best possible view of the time on any flat surface. If you run out of power you can recharge your orb by placing it on the base cradle. The self-setting clock also includes dual alarms, indoor temperature and buttonless controls.



## BREAD AND BUTTER: Transparent Toaster

Price: £TBA

Web: [www.inventables.com](http://www.inventables.com)

Inventables have come up with a novel idea for toasting your favourite slice. The transparent glass exterior allows you to see the bread while it's toasting to avoid those wasteful burnt dramas. The concept is still in it's design phase as at the moment, the glass doesn't currently get hot enough to toast bread. One question... who's going to clean it?

# Message board

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

FORUM: [www.webdesignermag.co.uk/forum](http://www.webdesignermag.co.uk/forum)

EMAIL: [webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk](mailto:webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk)

Time again to open our mailbag and answer your letters on the burning issues that make web design so interesting. . .

## Using logos

Hello there,

I'm wondering where people stand on using logos on your website, as I'm a self-taught (with some help from you guys) web designer, if you can call me that, and I'm currently putting my own site together. I offer network support and IT solutions, but although I don't sell any of the associated products I've listed, I'm wondering if there's any problem with me placing the official logos on the main page if I'm technically doing the companies concerned a favour?

Great mag by the way!

*John Carroll*

Very good question John and it's one that falls into the grey areas of web publishing. The general freedom we associate with the internet suggests to us that these sorts of things should be fine, but it could still land you in hot water. Companies are still very strict over the use of their identities and might get upset if you're portraying the image that they're in fact endorsing you. In all of these kinds of cases, you're far better advised to seek the permission from the people concerned, as you probably don't really want to make enemies out of such powerful firms! Usually their sites will have marketing or PR people you can contact, so we'd say go down that route.

## CSS crisis

Hi,

I'm writing this letter to you in desperation, exhaustion and cataclysmic annoyance! I'm relatively new to the web design world. I've been doing it for almost a year and I have only just had my first encounter with the Internet Explorer min-height CSS problem. This is monumentally annoying. How come Microsoft has fallen behind?

I've attempted many work-arounds that I found on the web and none seem to work properly. I've now found that IE7 fixes these problems, but I doubt many people will have that yet. The best part is, IE for the Mac doesn't seem to have this problem! Can anyone suggest a fail-safe work-around for this problem? I'm at wit's end and it doesn't look like it does on the postcard. Sorry, just venting spleen. Great mag by the way, I really enjoy it, do agree with the letter last week though that you seem very Flash oriented. I'd like to see more CSS effects and work with images.

Yours in a collapsed heap,

*Phil Thomas*

Gosh Phil, just take a few deep breaths there mate! Welcome to the often unbearably annoying world of designing web pages. What shouldn't really cause much frustration is sadly fraught with browsers that all adhere to differing standards and totally different Document Object Models or DOMs. This has been a bug-bear amongst web developers since forever, and we doubt very much that it'll ever be totally solved. You just have to do your best to design a one-size fits all solution, or add code that renders things differently for the browser being used. We should say that IE7 does go some way to address known problems, plus the brand new Firefox is pretty good!

## MAIL OF THE MONTH

### Linux lovers

Dear *Web Designer*,

I purchase your magazine here in France every month and love it, but (there's always a 'but') for some of us using Linux, Dreamweaver and Photoshop are unfortunately not an option.

The Linux desktop user base is growing and yes, I know that it's not the size of Windows or perhaps the Mac user base, but it's a significant percentage! I know a lot of people who merely hang on to Windows because there is not a Linux version.

NVU is not on a par with Dreamweaver and the Gimp is not as good as Photoshop, but it's getting there fast. So every now and again, can we have tutorials based on NVU and the Gimp, please? It's a real killer for us novices to read the Dreamweaver tutorial and think: "Wow that's great, but how do I get that to work in NVU?" (Actually you can run Dreamweaver MX under Linux with a product from Codeweavers, but it's a bit buggy)

*Drew Boardman*

Hi Drew, thanks for your letter. We certainly take your point about the expanding Linux base and will be keeping a close eye on user trends regarding operating systems and design software in future. Dropping in the odd NVU or the Gimp tutorial in subsequent issues should certainly be possible, as we're always open to varying things. It might be nice actually to hear from those in a similar position to you, just to gauge how popular these might be. However, we do have to pin our allegiance to the big Adobe products just to appeal to the largest market frankly – and as you say, they're pretty much regarded as the best. Hopefully they'll get Linux versions in future perhaps, but in the meantime we hope you'll still be able to migrate the techniques we cover every issue as best you can. It's worth remembering that lessons in HTML, JavaScript, PHP and CSS should be universal regardless of what editing tools you use.



Internet Explorer 7 at least goes some way to addressing CSS inconsistencies





## Behind the Scenes

# 2ADVANCED STUDIOS

**L**ast month we were lucky enough to catch up with one of the world's most important web design forces, California's 2Advanced Studios. With the fifth version of the company's iconic website only recently going live, they opened the doors on Attractor's development, to provide an insight that took even our breath away.

So choosing to spread this special feature over two instalments, we're back to learn more from the team directly, and also indulge ourselves with the stunning concept art that they were able to provide.

We were so taken with the examples of 3D modelling work, early renderings, abandoned concept art, storyboards and matte paintings, that we've decided to bring you even more, to sign off in real style. So please kick back, and enjoy an exclusive pass into the production of surely one of this year's most eagerly anticipated site redesigns. Special thanks to all at 2Advanced, and particularly Christi Nishiyama, for making it all possible.

**EJ:** Eric Jordan, chief creative officer  
**TN:** Tony Novak, chief operations officer  
**CN:** Christi Nishiyama, marketing manager

**WD (Web Designer):** You created an awful lot of conceptual design work for this project. What was it about the eventual site that persuaded you to go down that route in the end, and abandon some of the more spacey themes or technological ideas you've shown us?

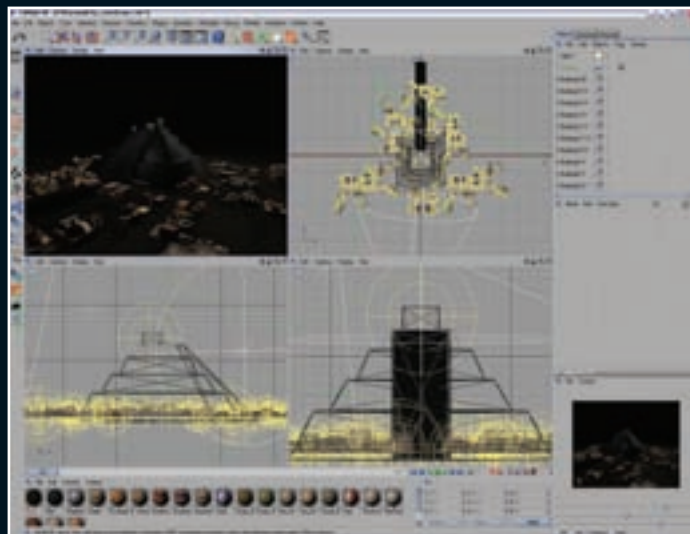
**EJ:** We conceptualised multiple different directions for V.5 before making a final decision. Here's a little background on our process over the two years:

In 2004, I took a 'vacation' by myself to the Caribbean in order to experiment with concepts for V.5. I spent a few days comping up designs on the beach and taking photos of the island (which later became the reference materials for the plant life in River of Eschaton... the second V.5 matte painting of the Attractor series.) During the last three days of my trip the island was hit by a small hurricane, so I stayed confined to my bungalow and finalised the designs for V.5. It was then that I decided on the idea of having a black background with multiple coloured sections. Months after getting back from my trip, it was suggested by a few team members that we go a different route than what I had

**"It was extremely important for us to achieve the proper balance between design and function"**



Here we see the evolutionary process from wire frame models to the gorgeous matte backgrounds found on the final site



3D work played a major part in creating the site elements





# V.5 “ATTRACTOR” PART 2

originally envisioned. We had a lot of ‘round-table’ meetings talking about usability and search engine optimisation and I think we just got wrapped up in it, and lost sight of what 2Advanced was all about. There was some bumping of heads around the studio, and a few heated discussions on which way to go. This was perfectly natural in the course of a creative project where you have a lot of different people involved who all have different ideas. Of course, not everyone is going to see eye to eye.

Eventually, this new route was scrapped and we went back to the drawing board yet again. This time we used some of the concepts and design elements that I had created in the Caribbean, mixed with a new digital matte painting direction that I had been learning and studying at the time. We infused those concepts with some great ideas on usability and pushing the functionality of Flash to make it more browser friendly, without having to go with a hybrid design.

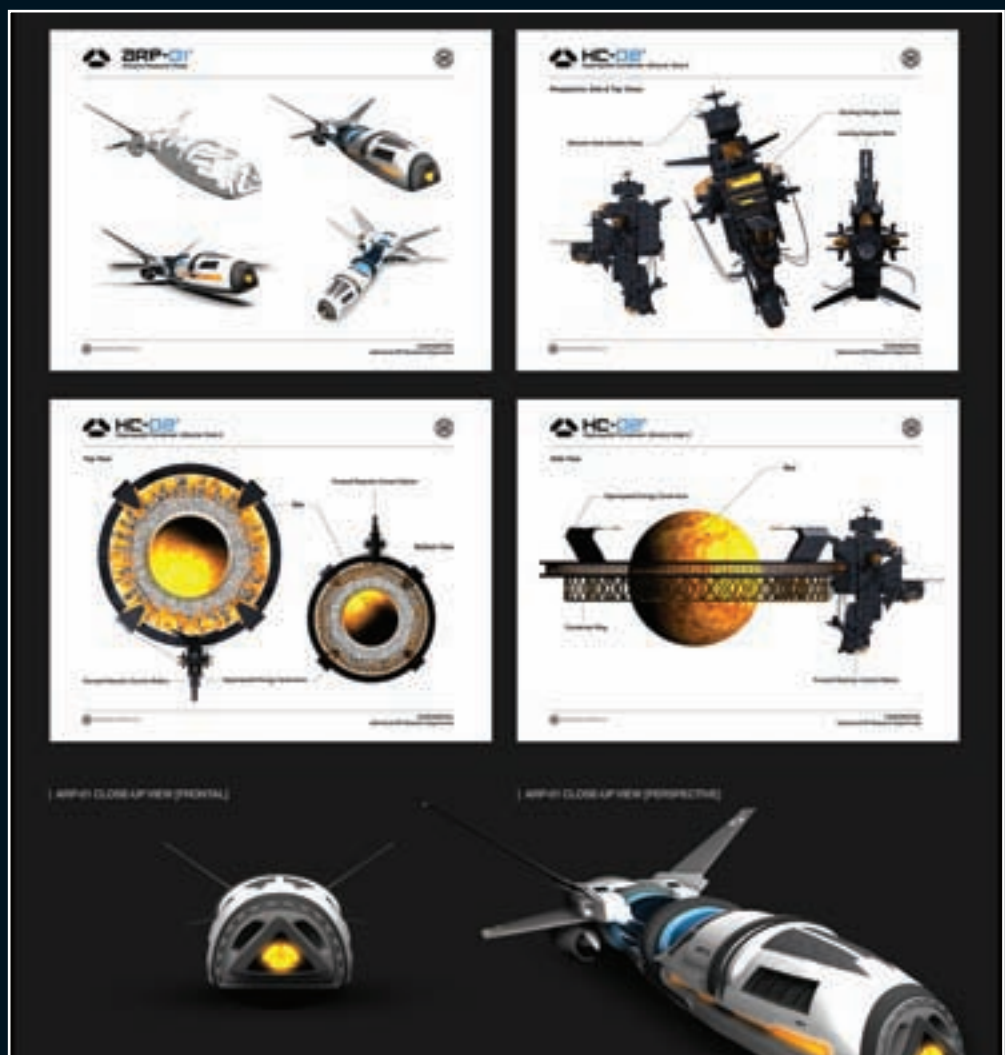
So I think the one or two years we spent going back and forth trying to figure out the general direction of V.5 were worthwhile, because it really helped us clearly define a site direction that satisfied everyone and still kept to the true essence of 2Advanced.

**TN:** On a completely unrelated whim, Eric had taken personal interest in the digital matte painting techniques commonly practised in the movie industry by companies such as Industrial Light & Magic (ILM). When he unveiled his first creation, *Edge of the Ocean*, the vision for V.5 was born. The excitement it generated in the studio was overwhelming.

**WD:** Is it likely that you’ll revisit design ideas that didn’t quite make the grade this time round in future developments?

**EJ:** We may revisit some of the design ideas in the future, although it’s important for us to remember why we left them out in the first place.

**WD:** The attention to detail (in Attractor V.5), commitment to forging exciting and yet accessible content, and intricacy of the Flash interface work is



*Extensive space-age concepts were generated but ultimately shelved. It seems unlikely that these awesome renderings will see the light of day in later projects, but that just underlines the wealth of imagination available*



# Behind the Scenes



## DESIGNING FOR ADDITIONAL MEDIA

Concepts for extra wares outside of just the site were also put together by the team. These examples suggest some seriously cool ideas for printed portfolios or brochures that would compliment the Attractor launch

## “We’re always looking for the next member of our team – and we pull individuals from all over the world”

**stunning. How important was it for you to get the balance right between a great-looking site design, and something that still feels light and intuitive to the visitor?**

**TN:** It was extremely important for us to achieve the proper balance between design and function. V.5 was an internal challenge to explore new methodologies and techniques without sacrificing aesthetics. V.5 became a massive undertaking because we needed to maintain that sense of emotional connection with 2Advanced, but empower it with new functionality that makes it really usable and accessible. We truly pushed the boundaries (and ourselves) to accomplish all that we have with V.5.

**WD: What do you consider the most successful parts of the site to be, based on your own connection with the project, and any feedback you’ve had?**

**TN:** Our integration of an entire modular sub-system of Flash Dynamic Deep Linking (DDL) has generated much discussion and positive feedback. We’ve seen countless forum threads asking: ‘How did they do it?’

Well in answer to that, we created classes for performing DDL as a method of communication between the site’s Flash movies and a user’s browser, enabling many features that have traditionally been useless on a Flash-based site. In V.5, users can effectively create bookmarks to content pages, utilise the Browser History function, refresh the current page and navigate with the browser’s Back and Forward buttons. All without the concern of returning to the start of the movie. Moreover, the DDL system dynamically updates the Address Bar, therefore making it possible to share links deep within the site (and bypass several layers of navigation and animation).

We’re also quite proud of our dynamic loading of language specific fonts. Our development team was intent on developing a superior method to ease future implementations of multi-language solutions. While we could have very easily relied on the user’s system fonts from language to language, we felt that the limited system font choices with Flash would severely impact aesthetics.

Moreover, it was important to remember that V.5 was indeed dynamic, meaning that we didn’t have the option to simply embed a subset of any particular font. For Asian fonts that have over seven thousand glyphs, the challenge was very real. So we created a complex set of rules to essentially ‘auto-detect’ fonts based upon a user’s country, system language settings, IP address and URI (Uniform Resource Identifier). Together with an embedded Font Manager that enables dynamic font switching between languages and a multi-language based CMS, the V.5 framework now allows for new languages and fonts to be introduced without the need for modifying the Flash movies.

**WD: Do you have any cheeky exclusive hints on up and coming projects you might want to let us in on, plus what 2Advanced version 6 might have in store for us when it comes around?**

**TN:** Without giving anything away, we have some exciting projects coming out for Japan. Keep checking the 2Advanced website for updates on our latest works. As for V.6... I think we are still recovering from the madness that ensued during V.5’s development.

**WD: We have plenty of creative people over here dreaming of making it in this business, so what would our readers have to do to impress you guys if**











## As the creative year draws to a close, we take a moment to look over the past 12 months, to draw inspiration for what highlights the web design world will have in 2007

**I**t's pretty much a prerequisite for the production of a publication like *Web Designer* to continue looking forward. No matter what happens, there's always another issue to fill and a blank canvas to project the latest creative happenings or trends onto. Due to the nature of the industry we chronicle, and its rapidly changing landscape, we thankfully have no shortage of new things to cover – but it does also tend to make everything a bit of a blur.

The site launches, award shows and software releases that have been and gone, are forever captured in previous issues; so it's often extremely helpful to revisit where we've been, when looking at where we'll go next. To celebrate the closing of 2006, we thought it would be appropriate to investigate the creative highs of the past year through the eyes of someone

close to the industry, whilst also dropping in certain nuggets from our own archive. Our good friend at [thefwa.com](http://thefwa.com), Rob Ford, kindly agreed to do so, on the proviso that he could cast his all-seeing eye over the sites we could be raving about in a year's time. However, if we've left anything out, or failed to include your favourite web design-related rumour for 2007, then please do let us know all about it via our letters page, or the reader forums at [webdesignermag.co.uk](http://webdesignermag.co.uk).

### **In the meantime, take it away Rob...**

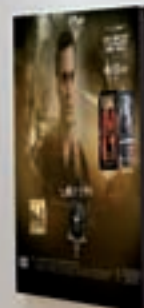
As another year draws to a close on the internet, a world that grows much faster than anyone can keep up with, let's break down 2006 into bitesize segments and focus on the most exciting movers and shakers in the online industry.



Bridges made out of German goalkeepers? Whatever next...

## High definition

2006 saw the first ever HD website, for the *Walk The Line* DVD ([www.walkthelinedvd.com](http://www.walkthelinedvd.com)). This is something we'll see more of in 2007 and already the latest *X-Men 3* film should go in this direction as well. The constraints of broadband speeds are the biggest enemy of HD online, however the industry is constantly striving to improve this. High-definition trailers are the best way to enjoy HD online, as long as you have the QuickTime plug-in installed (a must IMO). The trailer for *300* ([www.apple.com/trailers/wb/300](http://www.apple.com/trailers/wb/300)), an upcoming epic film for 2007 retelling the ancient Battle of Thermopylae, is a must-see for those wanting to experience the future of film and broadcasting.



## Animation world

One of the reasons we love the internet so much is the ability for unsung talent to come into the limelight. The world of animation is a classic example. And in 2006 we were able to witness some true beauties, with *Stilt Walkers* ([www.musicbypedro.com/movie/stiltwalkers.mov](http://www.musicbypedro.com/movie/stiltwalkers.mov)) being a perfect example.

## Creative review 2006

### Industry events

The biggest piece of news in the interactive world was Adobe's acquisition of Macromedia, which was eventually completed in April. Designers and developers alike were wary of this takeover as they feared for the future of some of the software they used on a daily basis. However, those fears were short lived and already the acquisition is a distant memory. In terms of Adobe's main influence on the web, Flash, the future is looking bright, especially as it looks to move the Flash player into the mobile communications industry.

Also in April we saw the Microsoft and Eolas patent dispute run riot across the web and any sites that used the <object> tag. As Microsoft released a critical update for Windows, users suddenly found that websites that used multimedia elements like Flash, QuickTime, etc, now had to 'activate' the website or content they wanted to view by a single click. Luckily, coding genius Geoff Stearns produced a fix for this with

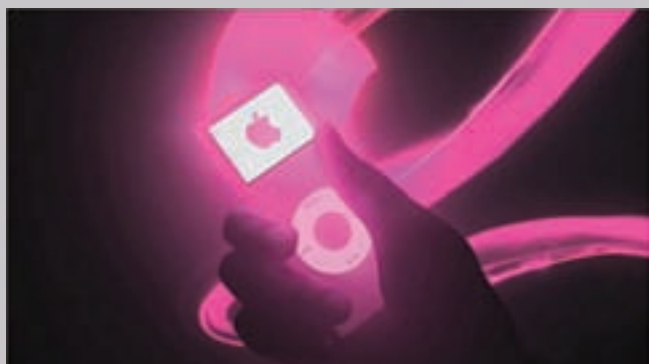
### Installations

Another area that is just out of the starting blocks is that of interactive installations. These are physical multimedia installations set up to promote products and events in areas used by the public, for example, festivals, product launches, exhibitions etc. One of the best examples from 2006 would be Grass (<http://portfolio.barbariangroup.com/>) for *Wired* magazine's NextFest.

### Visual effects

Without a doubt, the increase in broadband capabilities is making the motion graphics and visual effects world grow exponentially. Also, this has become the latest way for design and production studios to showcase their talents through jaw-dropping and awe-inspiring motion reels.

Companies like Apple with its iPod nano adverts ([www.apple.com/ipodnano/ads/](http://www.apple.com/ipodnano/ads/)) and Citroen with its C4 Ice Skater advert ([www.beam.tv/beamreels/reel\\_player.php](http://www.beam.tv/beamreels/reel_player.php)), prove just how the landscape is changing and how exciting it's becoming as well.



## "Web 2.0, a new wave of sites that boasted clever applications and increased user interactivity"

his SWFObject (<http://blog.deconcept.com/swfobject/>). However, this did mean that developers world wide would have to edit the code on all their pages to implement the fix.

Staying with Microsoft, who seems to take one step forward and two back at every stage, the long and way overdue release of Internet Explorer 7 hit our screens in October. On its release the feedback was shocking. In fact the reports we read on it were so disheartening that we've set all our company PCs to not install it, for now anyway. Of course, many have installed IE7 with no issues, but the deluge of problems that can be read on the official Microsoft IE7 message board is enough to put anyone off. Interestingly enough, Firefox released version 2 of their browser eight days later and the transition for the update was hardly noticeable. Microsoft has already starting boxing up and shipping its next generation Window's software, Vista for 2007 and rather than being excited about this, we fear for our personal health and wellbeing as the thought of installing any new software from Microsoft always fills us with fear!

Where would a round up of 2006 be without mentioning Web 2.0 and YouTube? Web 2.0, or should we say a new wave of sites that boasted clever applications and increased user interactivity like Digg? We found the whole Web 2.0 phrase rather confusing for non-savvy users. Web 2.0... is that like a new internet? Do we need a different internet connection? Is it a secret society? Already people are talking about Web 3.0 but some of us are still thinking

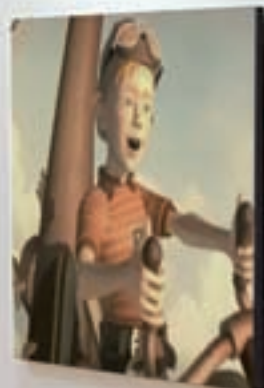
$E=MC^2$ . 2006 was the year for YouTube. Especially as it finally sold out to Google for \$1.65 billion, even though apparently no cash passed hands and the co-founders of YouTube received only shares in exchange. Which ever way you look at it, it's still a lot of money and acts as an incentive to keep people innovating and looking for the big idea, which, in turn, keeps the internet fresh and exciting.

### Industry awards

In the web award world, we saw the closure of the Web Standards Awards project in May. The project set out to highlight the most creative websites that were standards compliant. After a short lifespan of two years, the site owners felt that a situation had arisen whereby hundreds of sites with beautiful code were being produced every month and that highlighting the best ones was becoming nigh on impossible. They felt that their mission was complete and decided that the time was right to archive the project. We think this was an excellent decision, as can be seen through the huge number of CSS galleries we now have. Can we say overkill?

A newcomer to the award scene was The European Logo Design Annual (EULDA) ([www.eulda.com](http://www.eulda.com)). As the name implies, this award scheme is for graphic designers who produce the finest logos in Europe. This looks like being an exciting project for years to come and all winners are featured in an annual book. The 2006 winner was from Portugal for *Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira*. 2006 saw the 10th Anniversary Of Flash and FWA ran a public





## Books

Are books dead? Is print dead? Are they dying a slow death? Without doubt, these industries are struggling and we're sure they're looking at new ways of utilising their resources and 2006 must have been the biggest struggle to date. One publisher who seems to be bucking the trend is Taschen, a German publisher who focuses on the arts and design. Taschen released a series of five books in 2006 covering web design, portfolios, studios, Flash sites, eCommerce and Music Sites. The Flash book is the highlight of the series but then again, we would say that as Rob wrote the introduction for it!



Football and beautiful girls is just one way to make viral marketing effective

poll for Adobe to find out what the most Influential Flash Site of the Decade was, with 2Advanced V3 ([www.thefwa.com/flash10/](http://www.thefwa.com/flash10/)) being the eventual winner.

Another interesting award would be the Peugeot Design Contest ([www.peugeot-concours-design.com](http://www.peugeot-concours-design.com)), which will culminate in 2007. This progressive contest invites those with imagination to re-invent the 'Drive of Your Life'. Basically, design a concept car and the winning design will be built and revealed at the Frankfurt 2007 Motor Show and will also feature in the Xbox 360 *Virtual World*. Of course, the year's usual award shows took place: the Cannes Lions, Clio Awards, London

become award-winning due to the size of budget they command, however you must appreciate that the biggest budget in the world is next to worthless in the wrong hands. You still need the most cutting-edge web designers, developers and thinkers to realise this type of project. The Philips Bodygroom site ([www.shaveeverywhere.com](http://www.shaveeverywhere.com)) sees Philips almost throw caution to the wind in its highly entertaining website to promote its men's all-over body shaver.

# "A visual cornucopia of motion graphics"

International Awards, to name a few. We'll round up the most highly acclaimed sites later in this article.

One story that can't be missed is the story from Sweden's Farfar. After winning a Cannes Gold Lion, one of its employees buried the award on a beach in Cannes while drunk. Of course, he forgot where he buried it and ended up putting up a \$1000 reward. Prank or true story? Either way, if you're holidaying in Cannes and are sunbathing on the beach and wonder what that stiff object is poking in your back...

## Best sites of 2006

2006 was another great year for exciting next generation websites, with the likes of Nike's Jordan Brand flagship site ([www.jumpman23.com](http://www.jumpman23.com)) pushing your computer to new levels through the use of full screen video and full-on motion effects. Some people say that sites like this should not

Using plenty of video and very clever, humorous wording, delivered perfectly by a bathrobe-wearing actor, this site left unforgettable memories.

Insurance is boring, we're sure nobody would argue with that. However, the Travelers In Synch Challenge ([www.travelersinsynch.com/challenge](http://www.travelersinsynch.com/challenge)) website breathed a little excitement into the industry. A site whose level of interaction was as high as one could get as users were invited to explore and take part in numerous challenges to secure three different scenarios. Once again, video coupled with top drawer 3D work made this a first class and world class surfing experience.

One of the world's leading interactive agencies, Big Spaceship, took up its first project for Nike by producing a pioneering website, Nike Air ([www.nikeair.com](http://www.nikeair.com)).

What made this site so exciting was the first ever seen ability to create motion graphics on the fly, by way of user interaction

with their keyboard. A visual cornucopia of motion graphics would leave all who visited in awe.

Audi's website for its Audi R8 ([www.audi.com/R8](http://www.audi.com/R8)) made all car enthusiasts drool. The video and 3D motion effects were right at the cutting edge of the latest in terms of online multimedia. The impact of this site was huge.

## What 2006 meant most to Rob...

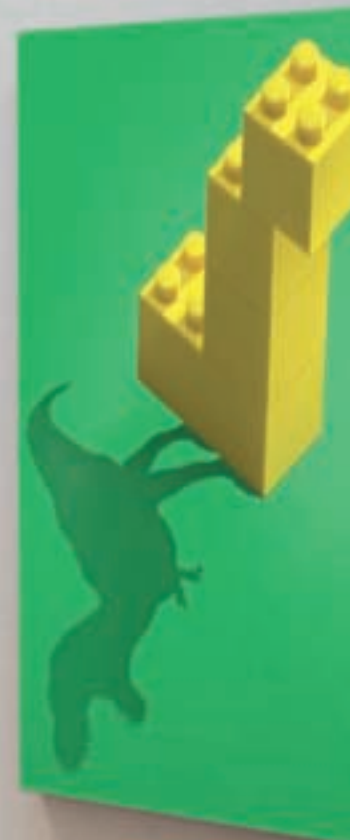
The biggest feeling I will take away from 2006 is that the internet industry as a whole is back in full effect. The dotcom bubble-burst of many years ago is reminiscent of the last recession that caused so much negative equity in the housing market. The housing market has since bounced back in a major way and this is where the internet is at. Big corporations are yet again getting their fat wallets out and are throwing money at the next big idea, start-ups, virals and online advertising. The job market, which obviously goes hand in hand with the growth of the internet, is exploding right now. Companies looking to recruit are struggling in a big way. I constantly receive emails from web design agencies who are looking for staff as their companies are beginning to mushroom in size to keep up with demand from their clients. The world of Flash continues to evolve, but the level of experimentation we used to see has dropped off the scale, as people focus on bread and butter work while they concentrate on paying their bills and maintaining healthy businesses.

## Virals

As the marketing gurus with big advertising budgets shift from the small screen (TV) to the internet, we continue to see more and more viral campaigns spread, as they're meant to... like a virus. Coffee time emails are laden with them and office workers can't get enough of them. In a year which saw England bomb out of the World Cup in usual style, we saw the likes of the Wet T-Shirt World Cup ([www.wet-t-shirt-worldcup.com](http://www.wet-t-shirt-worldcup.com)), a far better way to spend your time rather than watching overly paid egomaniacs running across the turf.

## Advertising

As mentioned above, the whole advertising arena is changing, but we can't forget or miss out on the creativity that's still coming out from all over the globe. The World Cup in Germany took guerrilla marketing to a whole new level with the Oliver Kahn bridge ([www.thefwa.com/adworld/adworldcup06](http://www.thefwa.com/adworld/adworldcup06)). Lego also showed why it's still a vibrant and future thinking company through its creative print adverts ([www.thefwa.com/adworld/adlego06](http://www.thefwa.com/adworld/adlego06)) and proved how the most simple ideas can have the biggest impact.







Those robots even found their way into popular car adverts in 2006

## Dutch masters

The world of AJAX will again be pivotal to progressing the development of Rich Internet Applications (RIAs), with a couple of variants on the lips of most coders. LoJAX not only boasts decent browser support across all devices but also has the ability to retrieve data from external domains, while an open source PHP library like xAJAX could give developers a more accessible route to the technology. Lets hope that the next Dreamweaver plays its part and offers similar support.



## Getting a second life

Virtual web world boomed in 2006 and they don't look set to fade out next year. Linden Lab's *Second Life* community has proven a major hit and it'll be interesting if its appeal will migrate to futuristic web experiences. How about an eBay that puts you inside a digital auction house? We'd buy that for a dollar...

# Creative preview 2007

## Looking ahead

It might be early doors as far as 2007 is concerned but there's still a lot to look forward to over the coming two months. Mark Billen speculates...

While it's very nice to look back at what's been and gone, it's generally far more exciting to pre-empt what's to come in the future. So what does 2007 promise for the web design community? Well in many ways it could easily turn into one of the most important periods since the web was born, especially if the first waves of the Web 2.0 tide are able to bear the kinds of fruit they've already suggested. Dismissed all too easily as just another novelty trend by some industry sceptics, the next generation bandwagon has shown its wheels are made of sterner stuff. That's exactly why we'll be heralding the New Year with our biggest Web 2.0 issue to date next month, and hopefully giving developers the motivation to join the revolution if they haven't already. But of course the emergence of sites such as YouTube, Flickr, Writely, Blogger, Digg.com and Clipmarks, who we'll be interviewing next time, should also contribute to the influx of similar examples. The 2006 MAX show

# “YouTube: either ushering in a new era for video on demand, or producing the biggest dotcom flop”

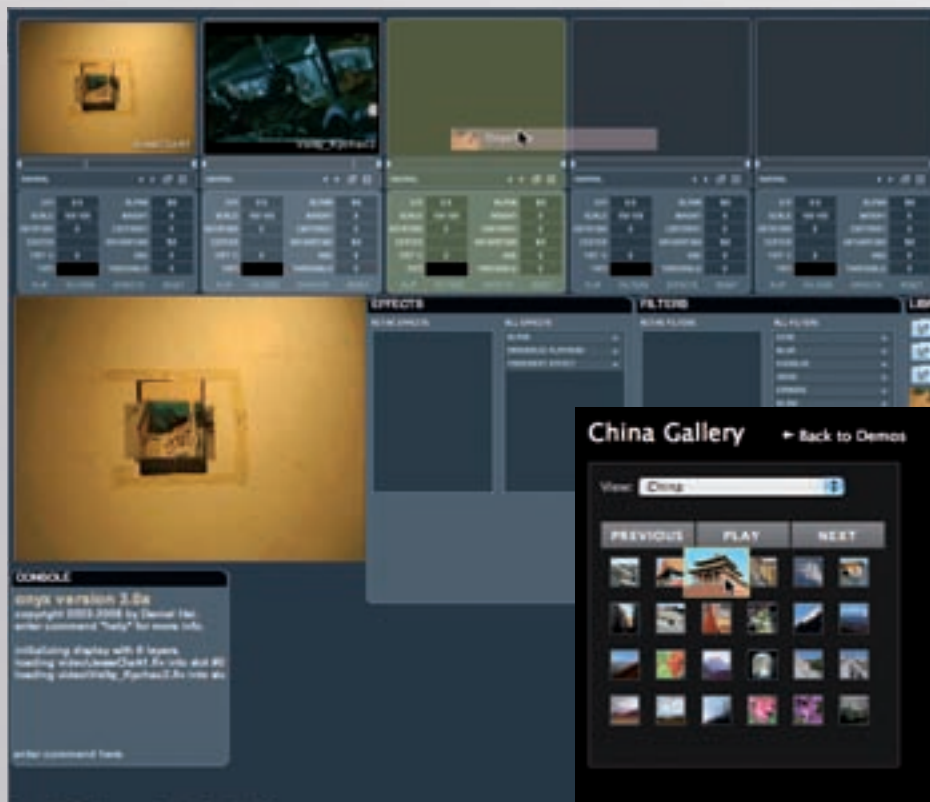
was also a great indicator of where Adobe's Flex and Apollo platforms hope to push this area of development via prototype out of browser applications for the likes of auction giants eBay. This has again been echoed in demonstrations of Windows Vista, with Microsoft seemingly interested in blurring the lines between the desktop and dotcom experience. Conference audiences have

already been treated to fairly impressive test projects including an interactive BBC TV listings scheduler and programme viewing client, all rendered outside of IE. This could be pivotal to realising the genuine Web 2.0 vision in 2007, thus changing the way we view and build web content forever.

Something similarly important to bear in mind is the arrival of those tools we'll

*Adobe's Apollo is already making waves on its popular Labs site, where example RIA projects can also be experienced first-hand*

*2Advanced may well have a new version live and kicking, but it was number three that was voted most inspirational over the last decade*





## Console wars

Unless you've been living in a cave, you'll be aware that some pretty major events are set to occur in the gaming world. March 2007 will yield Sony's PS3 release across Europe, while Nintendo's Wii and Xbox 360 will have already grabbed audiences. Sony's machine however looks to be a much more comprehensive device for web surfing and online entertainment. Genuine WebTV on demand could therefore well be about to break through over the coming 12 months.



Flash 9 brought video content forward, but what will be its next trick?

actually be using, with the next incarnations of Flash and Dreamweaver sure to be influential. These will be the first Adobe branded versions and will therefore almost certainly be significantly integrated into Creative Suite 3. Rumoured to be unleashed sometime in the year's second quarter, Photoshop CS3 looks like it will ship in Standard and Premium packages. The latter will bundle advanced features such as rotoscoping and the pumped up perspective

tool Vanishing Point 2, while introducing quick rotating canvas' and Corel Painter-style tablet tools. Flash CS3 or 'Blaze' to refer to its codename will almost certainly enhance its ability to import PSD and Illustrator files, whilst adopting the JPG compression from the next Photoshop. As always other details are pure speculation, but don't be surprised if Dreamweaver and GoLive become DreamLive CS3 – hopefully taking the best

## “Keep glued to our Bulletin pages for all the gossip”

bits from both. Keep your nose glued to both our regular Bulletin pages and **Adobe.com** for the breaking gossip.

As far as the sites to watch might go, YouTube will remain a fairly interesting bet. New owner Google could face a struggle to obtain the kinds of rights it'll need to make the present archive of clips here legit, and may need to introduce a subscription-based service to fund it. This restricted access will naturally be at odds with what made the site such a valuable commodity in the first place, either ushering in a new era for video on demand or producing the biggest dotcom flop since forever – only time will tell. Commercial sites from web studios like our good friends at 2Advanced will doubtlessly continue to push the envelope as web marketing continues to pay dividends for those with the cash to invest in it. We might even see a V6 of their home page

at some point, which is always a highly influential event. Evangelists such as Hillman Curtis, who is currently exploring projects in digital filmmaking, will continue to lead a trailblazing charge, so we'd recommend trying to catch up with him at the many events we're sure he'll be preaching at.

One thing you can be sure of however, is that whatever happens *Web Designer* will be right here with the most cutting-edge developments and techniques month in month out. If only everything in this business was so certain eh?

## What Mark's looking forward to in 2007...

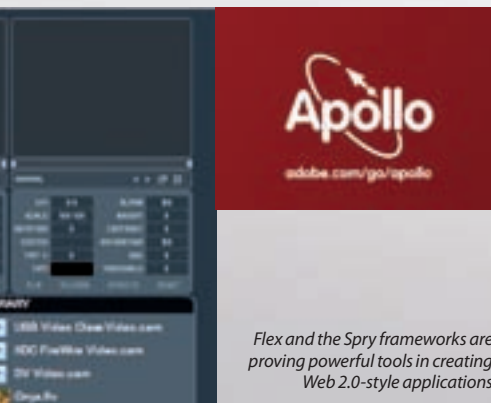
I think for me and everyone else connected with the magazine, the most exciting prospects are those things you can't necessarily predict. The continuing emergence of Web 2.0 technologies and the anticipated arrival of CS3 are obviously massive, but the real fun lies in the talented work we get to see and the people that make it possible. Innovative sites seem to pop up by the week while fledgling designers make their first steps into this business all the time, so it's just a pleasure for us to be able to have a hand in making the creative cogs turn.

## .mobile

2007 could well be remembered for the year of the mobile web. The dedicated dotmobi domain names have been up for grabs for the last few months and it's hoped that these will provide the kind of hand-held content we all crave. Mobile web pages should soon not merely be squashed up versions of their desktop counterparts, but fully optimised experiences in their own right. The implications for eCommerce applications are particularly attractive here, so we'll be waiting with bated breath.

## Expert efforts

With so many talented readers and friends, *Web Designer* can be proud to be quite a creative hotbed for the future. Regular contributor Nick La has recently revamped his site at [www.nstudio-design.com](http://www.nstudio-design.com) and launched an FWA-style project at [www.bestwebgallery.com](http://www.bestwebgallery.com). Meanwhile, cover artist Justin Maller has just put the last few touches to the fabulous [depthcore.com](http://depthcore.com), where digital artists can unashamedly flaunt their skills. Check it out!



Flex and the Spry frameworks are proving powerful tools in creating Web 2.0-style applications





Fancy some extra cash to spend this Christmas? Opening your own online marketplace is now easier than ever discovers **Dave Howell**

# CASH IN THIS CH

**I**F YOU'VE EVER DREAMT of starting your own business, now is the perfect time. The micro business is thriving, as the web is giving anyone a level playing field on which to trade. As Chris Barling, CEO and co-founder of Actinic Software ([www.actinic.co.uk](http://www.actinic.co.uk)) who pioneered off-the-shelf eCommerce, describes, if you're in a niche market, an online store is perfect as a full or part-time business: "The great thing about the web is that it provides a vast audience, so you can specialise much more, yet still have a potentially viable market. So a small business can continue targeting an ever more precise niche until they have a genuine competitive advantage over others."

Using the internet as a base for your business offers the perfect opportunity for all budding entrepreneurs. With a wealth of tools freely available to you, it's easy to realise your ambitions. What's more, you can start your business as small as you like and then scale it up as you want to. In the world of eCommerce you're in complete control. With Christmas just around the corner, billions of pounds will be spent online. Consumers have thrown off the early concerns about buying online and have embraced the internet as a legitimate place to shop. This Christmas is set to break all records for online sales, so why not grab yourself a slice of this very lucrative market?





Actinic Catalog has helped thousands of people take their first steps in eCommerce, so you and your business could well be next!

# RISTMAS!

Once you've made the decision to set up your own online store, you could be forgiven for thinking that this is a complex and costly exercise that only large retailers have the resources to handle. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, online stores like Amazon look complex, but when you strip them back to their foundations, all you see is a website interface that's supported with a database. On top of this is a search engine so that goods can be located, a trolley system so customers can collect the items they want to buy and a checkout system so they can hand over their money. All eCommerce sites have the same basic

these applications allow you to build a professional eCommerce-enabled website. You can also add a trolley and checkout systems to your completed site with bolt-on utilities that are readily available from a wide range of suppliers.

One great way of saving huge amounts of time, is to buy a template for your new online store. There's a huge range from suppliers like Templates Factory ([www.templatesfactory.net](http://www.templatesfactory.net)) and Template Monster ([www.templatemonster.com](http://www.templatemonster.com)). Once downloaded you can add your items, activate your trolley and checkout systems, and start trading

## "Save time by buying a template for your new online store"

components. But don't forget that customers are used to using professional eCommerce websites. So take your time to design your site's interface. Make sure your search is flawless, and that your trolley and checkout systems are easy to use.

The good news is that today you have a massive choice of applications you could use. More choice has meant that a number of applications now exist that offer specialised systems you can use to set up your store. You have to think carefully about what kind of store you want to build and match the application you use to those plans.

The approach you take to building your store will direct you to the most appropriate package to use. If you're a Dreamweaver expert then the site you build with this application can be adapted to become fully eCommerce enabled. Even the humble FrontPage can be successfully used to create a professional eCommerce site, but you may find that Microsoft's offering puts too many constraints on your store. Both

### ONLINE STORES

With broadband access to the internet now almost ubiquitous, it's feasible to create and manage an online store with nothing more than your favourite internet browser.

If the store you're designing will have relatively few items (less than 200 is the optimum stock level), then using online store design applications could be ideal for you. One great service that enables you to dip your entrepreneurial toe into eCommerce comes from the hosting service 1and1 ([www.1and1.co.uk](http://www.1and1.co.uk)). It offers eShops that start at just £9.99 a month. For this your store can contain 100 items in ten categories. If you have larger ambitions, it also has a pro version for £19.99 a month and a developer version for £39.99, offering unlimited items.

Also worth checking out is the US-based MonsterCommerce ([www.monstercommerce.com](http://www.monstercommerce.com)). The basic store costs \$49.95 per month and includes everything you'll need to operate efficiently. Other

## DOING THINGS THE HARD WAY

**WHEN YOU BEGIN** to look for the ideal off-the-shelf package to build your new eStore, it's easy to forget that you'll have to work within the constraints of the software that you choose. The solution is to build your store from scratch. If you want to use an industry-standard web design package like Dreamweaver, you can take the construction of your site one stage further and also build the trolley system yourself. You can see how a shopping trolley can be built with PHP in *Web Designer* 124. If you're not sure how to choose the right shopping cart system for your site, visit the Adobe website for some advice: [tinyurl.com/y9m9n8](http://tinyurl.com/y9m9n8).

Building an eCommerce site from scratch can seem a daunting task, but if you do want to get your hands a little dirty with some code, but would at least like a framework to work with, the Open Source movement has an application that you ought to check out. OsCommerce 2.2 ([www.oscommerce.com](http://www.oscommerce.com)) is a PHP-driven eCommerce solution that enables you to build a complete site, but that also gives you control over every aspect of your new online store. You'll need to know how to set up your host server as this is a server-side application.

Of course, you don't have to use PHP. If you have experience of any other languages such as ASP, you can use your skills to develop the eCommerce components of your website. This is what Rob Young of Cool Focus ([www.coolfocus.com](http://www.coolfocus.com)) did when he needed a reliable and secure trolley system for his site. "My main reason is because I like to write my own solutions for everything if I can," says Rob. "I just find it easier to apply my own logic to the problem than to try to understand someone else's. Also I don't have to worry about whether we'll need a certain feature later on that isn't in the package as I can just build it in. For example, I never thought that we'd need to handle promotional codes and discounts, so I wouldn't necessarily have picked a package with those features. When I later decided we needed them, they were easily added."

Taking control of the foundations of your new store by coding at least some components yourself can give you the flexibility that is lacking in most boxed eCommerce packages. As Rob Young concludes, when you need to make a change to your store or its hosting you can do this yourself and be safe in the knowledge that your store is operational and open for business: "We had a change of server a while back that meant an upgrade to ASP.NET, and we had the cart (and its related systems) recoded in a few hours. There was certainly no need to buy upgraded software or (worse still) buy a different package and adapt our site to use it. The great thing about ASP (and PHP/JSP), is that you just write the code in whatever's handy and test it. All our sites and their back-end programming were written in a Notepad-like text editor. I guess you could say that enables us not to grapple with the stupid things that FrontPage and similar apps do to your code when you're not looking!"



Designed and built by Rob Young, this site illustrates how a hand-coded trolley and checkout system can integrate seamlessly into an eCommerce enabled store



## DOING MORE WITH EBAY

**THE ONE WEBSITE** that has done more to kindle the entrepreneurial spirit than any other is, without doubt, eBay. Some 10,000 people in the UK now derive their income from the small business they run on the auction site. Perhaps you've already dabbled in online auctions selling some unwanted items, but could you turn the occasional sale into a full-time business? The answer is a definite yes, and with a plethora of tools to help you, an eBay business can be started in just a few hours.

How complex you make your eBay store is entirely up to you. You don't even have to have a 'proper' store as it were, if you just want to stick with standard auctions. What you must do if you're going to list more than a dozen items at a time, is become much more efficient at listing your lots. Turbo Lister (<http://tinyurl.com/b7ns5>) is the answer. It's a free download, and a superb way of saving you bags of time listing your items.

Once you've sorted how to efficiently list your items, the next step is to look closely at how you manage your auction business. With what could be hundreds of items being listed and auctions finishing, it's easy to get confused. The good news is that eBay comes to the rescue again with Selling Manager (<http://tinyurl.com/jvvzu>) that enables you to track each transaction with ease. The basic service is free but it's a good idea to use the Pro version as this has more useful features and only costs £4.99 a month.

The ultimate way to sell your goods on eBay is to open your own store. Again, eBay offers all the help you need to open your shop front. A basic shop costs just £6 a month – with a 30-day free trial for new subscribers. Take a look at the eBay Business Centre (<http://pages.ebay.co.uk/businesscentre>) for all the information you need to get started. And if you're not sure if eBay is for you, go to <http://tinyurl.com/xtrv> for the inside take on eBay business.

You may decide that you want to build your store outside of the eBay system but would like to list your auction on that site anyway. This can be easily achieved with eBay's Editor Kit (<http://tinyurl.com/wkrwp>) that can display up to 200 eBay listings that update in real time. Once you have your store up and running, you can use Dreamweaver to control the appearance of your eBay store. WebAssist's eBay StoreBuilder (<http://tinyurl.com/ymsmm9>) uses Dreamweaver to help you control the content in your eBay store. You have a choice of over 800 store templates to choose from.

Remember, just because you're trading on eBay doesn't mean you can ignore basic business practice. Read up on your accounting responsibilities before you open your store at <http://tinyurl.com/8awdb>.



*There are many helping hands out there to aid you in building your perfect eBay store, like this store builder from WebAssist, which utilises the power and flexibility of Dreamweaver*



If you dream of starting your own business, there's really nothing standing in your way thanks to the range of solutions available

online store creators worth a look include: Lycos's eShop ([tinyurl.com/y8ktwe](http://tinyurl.com/y8ktwe)). Ishop ([www.ishop.co.uk](http://www.ishop.co.uk)) also offers a comprehensive package, but watch out for the pricing. Easy Store Creator ([www.easystorecreator.com](http://www.easystorecreator.com)) and LiteCommerce ([www.litecommerce.com](http://www.litecommerce.com)) are US based, so make sure you have good lines of communication with their tech support teams just in case you need them.

Over and above the store creation services we've just mentioned, a raft of other players also have a presence in the market. These include: BT eShop ([tinyurl.com/ylijz67](http://tinyurl.com/ylijz67)), EkmPowerShop ([www.ekmpowershop.com](http://www.ekmpowershop.com)), Lynx Internet Solutions ([www.lynxinternet.com](http://www.lynxinternet.com)), Mal's e-commerce ([www.mals-e.com](http://www.mals-e.com)), RomanCart ([www.romancart.com](http://www.romancart.com)), ShopCreator ([www.shopcreator.com](http://www.shopcreator.com)) and lastly Actinic Express ([www.actinicepress.co.uk](http://www.actinicepress.co.uk)) that comes from the same company that developed the Catalog application and bought eCommerce to the masses.



cart system. If you have an affinity for all things Open Source, take a look at Zen Cart ([www.zen-cart.com](http://www.zen-cart.com)). Lastly, a worthy contender is ClickCartPro ([www.clickcartpro.co.uk](http://www.clickcartpro.co.uk)). Last, for Dreamweaver users there's a PayPal eCommerce toolkit you can use from WebAssist ([www.webassist.com](http://www.webassist.com)), with a similar utility for FrontPage users from Auction Messenger ([www.auctionmessenger.net/paypal](http://www.auctionmessenger.net/paypal))

### ECOMMERCE TOOLKIT

The last category of eCommerce site building is standalone packages that enable you to construct your store from database to checkout system, all within the confines of a specialised application. All of these packages approach site design as a template that you modify to create your unique store. These applications do limit your creativity, but they do offer a complete out-of-the box toolkit that has every aspect of eCommerce site building covered. The market leader in this category is Actinic's Catalog that

## "You're spoilt for choice when choosing payment options"

### SHOPPING CARTS

If you already have a website, instead of redesigning it you can just modify it to become eCommerce enabled. Using existing payment systems as a bolt-on is a great way of quickly building your eCommerce presence. Systems like PayPal that are integrated into eBay can also be used as a stand-alone payment system on your site. The addition of some simple code links your site to PayPal.

It was once a nightmare for some eCommerce sites when they couldn't set up a merchant account to obtain credit card facilities, but now they're spoilt for choice with payment options to offer customers. The leaders in this market are WorldPay ([www.worldpay.com](http://www.worldpay.com)). They offer a complete off-the-shelf solution so you can offer full credit card payment facilities within your store. Charges can often be a worry for the small business, so the service from Protix ([www.protix.com](http://www.protix.com)) is a great way of keeping track of your transaction charges. For £20 a month you get no transaction charges, no set-up fee and no annual fee. If you want much more control over the payment systems you use, then take a look at X-Cart ([www.x-cart.com](http://www.x-cart.com)), which is a complete PHP-based shopping

created this category of eCommerce software virtually single-handed. Now up to version 8, the package has matured and offers a number of versions to suit your exact needs. The self-build range includes Catalog at £379, plus additional versions that offer increasing levels of sophistication, up to Actinic's Business Multi-user version – that'll set you back £1,549. If you like the idea of operating your store via an application you can start right from your desktop, and that can handle all of the essential eCommerce components your site must contain, Catalog is one of the most comprehensive eCommerce packages available today.

With any template-driven website creation tool you have to make compromises. You'll never have complete control over every aspect of your website, unless you actually write or edit the HTML code yourself. However, of the template based software packages currently available, ShopFactory ([www.shopfactory.com](http://www.shopfactory.com)) offers an excellent set of tools that are not only powerful, but also more customisable than in many other packages of this type. ShopFactory comes in three flavours, beginning with the Lite version for £93, to ShopFactory Gold for £499. EROL ([www.erolonline.co.uk](http://www.erolonline.co.uk)) is another well-known and



respected eCommerce application that is certainly worth checking out for your store. Now up to version 4.0 its interface has been given a facelift. If you're used to working with applications that have split screens you'll feel at home using EROL's interface. The package has also been made much more efficient to use, as its My Store, Build Manager, as well as its edit and preview screens can be accessed much more easily. The option to connect to the Sage Line 50 Accounts package could be important to you and is well executed with a plug-in utility. The latest version of EROL also contains new templates and the ability to relate products together to help you increase your store's trolley value. EROL comes in three basic versions, therefore one of them could be perfect for your store.

Last, taking a more modular approach to eCommerce site construction is eCommerce Suite from WebAssist ([tinyurl.com/y9e7re](http://tinyurl.com/y9e7re)). The basic package gives you all the tools you need to construct a fully functional eCommerce-enabled website. The package does give you more control over every component of your site and can easily be expanded with other WebAssist applications when you want to add a specific feature to your site. The basic package costs \$399.99.

With so many different approaches you could take to building your online store, it's easy to become confused. The key to choosing the right services or package for your needs is to ask yourself what kind of store you want to open. If you won't be selling hundreds of items, and are not really concerned about having minute control over how your store's appearance then the online services are excellent value for money.

As the online deals offer a complete package including the site hosting for a fixed monthly fee, you know precisely what your store is costing you. If you have greater ambitions however, then you can of course build your site in the traditional way and make it eCommerce enabled. There are many shopping cart systems you could choose to integrate into your store, but sticking with a basic trolley system is always a sensible move. You want to give your customers a fast and easy route to parting with their money. Look closely at the trolley system you're thinking of using to ensure it's robust enough to take increases in demand at seasonal times of year in its stride. Don't forget, if your trolley system is down your store is completely disabled, so choose carefully.

Not having to assemble all of the components of an online store yourself is why the integrated systems like Actinic's Catalog have become so popular with budding online entrepreneurs. These systems do have their limitations, especially when it comes to your store's layout. But they more than make up for this in their ability to implement features like promotions and discounts, which would be difficult to hand-code. If you're looking for a one-stop solution to construct and manage your store, these systems are perfect.

The world of eCommerce is no longer the province of large corporations. In fact the opposite is true. Online, even the smallest micro business can market its goods to a global audience who are actively looking for companies they can buy from. If you've had a burning ambition to start your own online store, there isn't a better time than right now. With Christmas just around the corner, what are you waiting for?

## BUSINESS ISP CHECKLIST

### 1: CONNECTION TO THE BACKBONE

What this means in practice is how your ISP's servers are connected to the internet. These are referred to as 'tiers'. If your ISP is of the tier 1 type then it has its own portion of the internet that it controls. These are the most expensive, but the most reliable. Tier 2 and 3 lease backbone bandwidth from other suppliers and so are cheaper, but less reliable.

### 2: LEASING PRICE

The market for dedicated servers is getting very competitive, but you can still apply the equation that you get what you pay for. However, the subscription you pay can include 'extras' that could give you a nasty shock when you get the next quarterly bill. So check what exactly is included in your fees.

### 3: DOWNTIME RATING

Any ISP that you're thinking of using for your business account should be able to provide statistics of its performance for the last year. Look at the amount of downtime its servers suffered, and ask about how they handle redundancy. This is how they react if its connection to the internet goes down. Do they have a backup?

### 4: SERVICE LEVEL

The most important document that you'll sign with your ISP is the service level agreement. This sets out exactly what you'll be getting for the money you'll hand over each quarter. Look for 24/7 support as your website will be trading all day, every day.

### 5: TRACKING REPORTS

If you are to see how well your website is doing you need solid reporting. Your ISP should be able to provide you with logs that will show a wide variety of information, from visitor numbers to where customers came from, or went to after they left your site.



The ISP that you choose for your eBusiness is one of the most important partnerships you will enter into. Choose carefully as making the right choice is vital

## THE FINAL WORD

We break down the solutions described into the best for each category, and help you make a decision about where to go from here...

### Best solution for rapid eCommerce development: Actinic Catalog 8

**Justification:** With a long development history Catalog has become the defacto standard to which all other eCommerce applications are measured. Now with a plethora of new features, if you want fast, versatile and user-friendly eCommerce development, look no further.

### eCommerce solution best buy: 1and1 Internet eShop

**Justification:** Using a hosted store system is a great way of testing the eCommerce waters before committing more time and money. Backed up with their excellent server packages and customer support, diving into eCommerce couldn't be easier with 1and1's eShop options.

### The most flexible eCommerce solution: Dreamweaver with WebAssist PayPal eCommerce Toolkit

**Justification:** Building your store from scratch will give you ultimate control over every aspect of how it looks and operates. But you must seamlessly integrate a trolley and payment system into your store's pages. WebAssist's PayPal toolkit offers you just this functionality. And what's more, it's free!

### Most intuitive eCommerce solution: EROL

**Justification:** With the overhaul of its interface as a user you'll feel right at home. All of the components that you'll use to build your store are easy to access. With its HTML editor and code snippets for rapid site building, you'll be up and running with EROL in no time.

### VERDICT:

Getting into eCommerce has never been easier, but choosing the right route into online entrepreneurship is very important. One package stands out from the rest as it offers the micro businesses a fast and effective entry into eCommerce, but has the versatility to support your store when it needs to expand. *Web Designer* gives Actinic Catalog our seal of approval.

Actinic 8 can support all your eCommerce ambitions







### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
start.flx,  
finished.flx and more

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create a Flash animated helper for  
your website

#### TIME REQUIRED

1 hour

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Raising site interactivity with dynamic cursors

WE EXPLORE CREATING AN ANIMATED MOUSE POINTER THAT PROVIDES EXCITING INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE USER AND THE INTERFACE

**CREATING LASTING** impressions on any user nowadays is about offering something unusual in the way your site works. Websites that cause a stir around the web design community usually contain a creative visual treat.

In line with this, we're going to create a custom mouse symbol, which when you select an option on the interface, Flash will take control of the cursor, animating it to assemble the interface before the user. Our mouse cursor is being

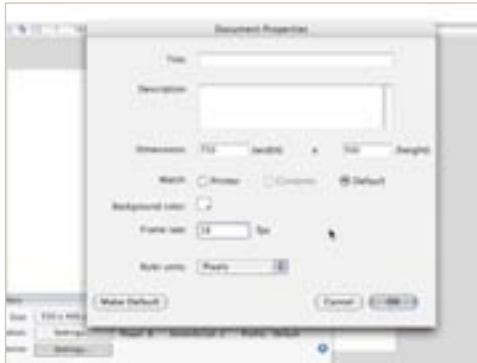
replaced by a hand, therefore we'll be able to use various hand gestures to help us grab content and reveal it to the user. To finish, we'll allow the hand to become the mouse pointer once again. Due to the space constraints, we've only shown one section of the interface. But if you look at the finished file on the CD, you'll see that both interface buttons display content. The same techniques are used for both, so once you've done the first, experiment with the second.



## YOUR EXPERT

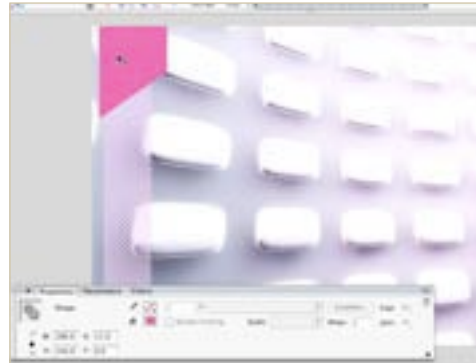
**Mark Shufflebottom** teaches on the BA and MA Interactive Media courses at Bournemouth University. He teaches 3D applications, interface design, online gaming, small-screen device production and, of course, all things Flash and ActionScript.

# Raising site interactivity with dynamic cursors



## 01 Starting the project

Open the file 'hand-start.fla' from the cover CD and press Ctrl+L to open the library. As you'll see, this file has several assets in the library ready to begin. Click on the button next to Size on the Properties palette to change the size of the document. Change the details as shown above.



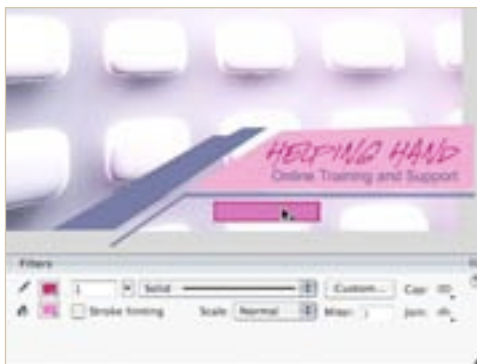
## 02 Add the background

From the library drag the symbol 'bg.png' onto the stage and position at 0 pixels on the X and Y axis. Now drag 'pattern' onto the stage. Name this layer 'background' and create a new layer called 'buttons'. Use a bright pink fill and add a Shape as shown using the Pen Tool.



## 03 Add the logo

Add the shape in blue next to the pink shape. Drag the symbol 'hand-logo.swf' onto the stage and position over the top of the shapes. Click the Filters tab in the Properties palette. Click the plus symbol and add a Drop Shadow, reduce the strength to 40% to make it more subtle.



## 04 More shapes

Use the same techniques to add the shapes in the bottom-right of the document, and use the Text Tool to add the text. Choose a typeface that emulates handwriting for the title, to fit the theme. Draw a rectangle (as shown in the screenshot), choose the Modify>Convert to symbol menu.



## 05 Convert to symbol

Convert to a Movie Clip called Shape. Choose Modify>Convert to symbol and make it a button called 'button1'. Double-click and add a 30% Drop Shadow. Add a keyframe for the Down state and reduce the Drop Shadow to 2px. Nudge the button 3px to the right and down.



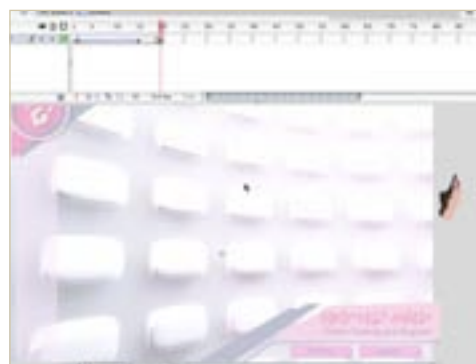
## 06 Name the instance

Add a keyframe at the Hit state, then return to scene 1. Name the instance 'one\_btn' and copy and paste it next to the original. Name this instance 'two\_btn' and add the text over the buttons as shown above. Create a new layer, name it 'content' and position it below the buttons layer.



## 07 Create a Movie Clip

From the library drag the 'relaxed' Movie Clip onto the stage and position at 340 pixels on the X axis and 289 on the Y. Go to Modify>Convert to symbol, make this a Movie Clip and name it 'content'. After clicking OK, give this the instance name of 'content\_mc' in the Properties palette.



## 08 Animate the hand

Double-click the hand to edit the Movie Clip. Drag Frame 1 to Frame 2 in the timeline and add a keyframe at Frame 15. Rotate the hand 90° in the Transform palette, then add a motion tween between these keyframes. Add a keyframe at Frame 20, and click on the hand on the stage.



## 09 Change hands

In the Properties palette click on the Swap button and choose 'relaxed cut'. Add a keyframe at Frame 40. Position the hand as shown, add a motion tween. Create a new layer, drag it below the first and add a keyframe at 20. Draw a rectangle, give its fill an alpha value of 60%.



# Tutorial



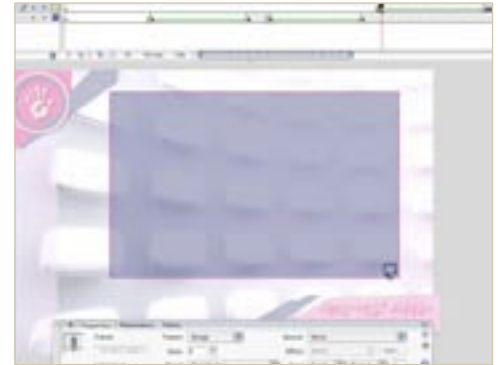
## 10 Animate rectangle

Add a keyframe to the rectangle layer at Frame 40. Select Frame 20, move the rectangle to the position of the hand and add a shape tween. Add keyframes at Frame 46 and 65. At Frame 65 increase the rectangle size using Free Transform. Add a shape tween between Frame 46 and 65.



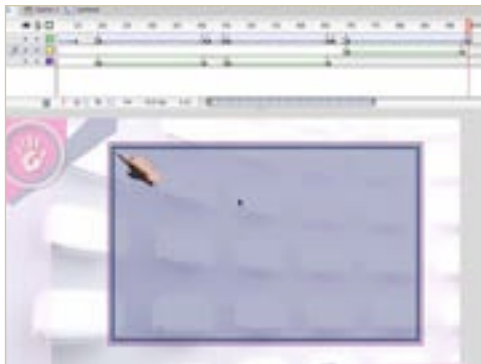
## 11 Hand follows rectangle

Add a keyframe to the hand layer at 41, swap the symbol to 'relaxed'. Add a keyframe at Frame 45, rotate the hand to 15° in the Transform palette, moving it to the bottom-right of the rectangle. Add a motion tween between these keyframes. Add a keyframe at 46, swap the hand to 'point'.



## 12 Extend timeline

Name the rectangle layer 'rectangle', the hand layer 'hand'. Select 294 of the rectangle layer, press F5. Add a new layer called 'rectangle2'. Add a keyframe at frame rectangle with a 3px stroke, delete the fill. Add a keyframe at 93, make this fill the first rectangle, add a shape tween.



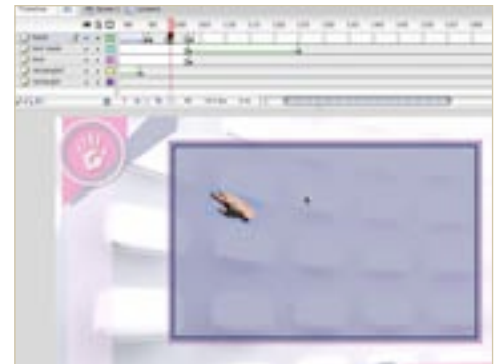
## 13 Push the rectangle

Select the hand layer and add a keyframe at 66. Swap the hand symbol to 'relaxed' and add a keyframe at 70. Swap the symbol back to 'point' and add a keyframe at Frame 94. Move the finger to the top-left of the rectangle and add a motion tween between Frame 70 and 94.



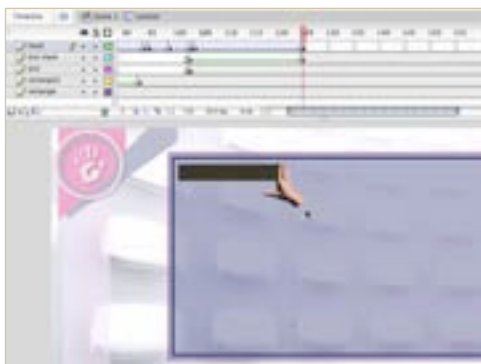
## 14 A new layer

Create a new layer and position it below the hand layer, naming this 'text'. Add a keyframe at Frame 103 and add the text as shown above. Add another layer above this and name it 'text mask'. Add a keyframe at Frame 103 and draw a small rectangle, then add a keyframe at Frame 125.



## 15 Free Transform

Using Free Transform, scale the rectangle so that it covers the text. Then add a shape tween between Frames 103 and 125. Add a keyframe to the hand layer at Frame 95. Swap the symbol to 'relaxed' then add keyframes at Frame 99 and 103. At 99 move the hand down.



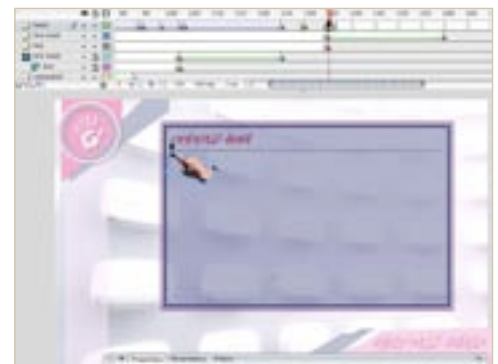
## 16 Reveal with hand

Add a motion tween between Frames 95 and 99, then between 99 and 103. Add a keyframe at 104 and swap the hand symbol to 'push'. Add another keyframe to Frame 125 and move the hand to the right-hand edge of the text mask. Motion tween the hand between these frames.



## 17 Add the mask

Now right-click on text mask and choose 'mask' from the pop-up menu. Create a new layer and name it 'line'. Add a keyframe at Frame 135 and add a line using the Line Tool. Now create a new layer and name this 'line mask'. Add a keyframe at Frame 135 and add a rectangle as shown.



## 18 Extend the shape

Add a keyframe at Frame 160, use Free Transform to extend the shape to cover the line. Add a shape tween, then a keyframe at Frame 130 of the hand layer and swap the symbol to the 'point' symbol. Add a keyframe at Frame 135 and move the pointer to the left edge of the line.

## IN DETAIL

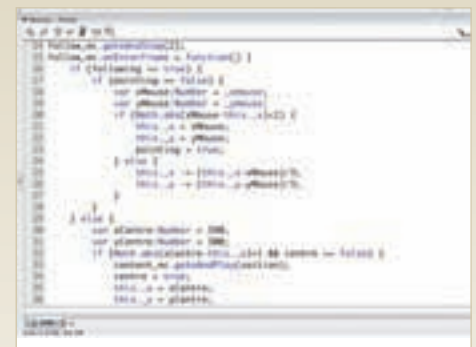
### Adding interactivity to the project

In the tutorial we've added some ActionScript to give functionality to the project. Let's take a look at the code, explaining exactly how it works and how the interactions are parsed by Flash

THE ACTIONSCRIPT code is essential to helping the interface work and the first part of making the interface work is to get the 'follow\_mc' to replace the mouse. This is done by setting up a listener object in lines 4 to 12. The listener is set to detect or listen for when the mouse moves. When this is the case, the normal mouse pointer is hidden and the 'follow\_mc' is positioned to the same X and Y location as the mouse. The 'if' statement checks to make sure that the pointer is drawing the interface.

Once the hand is successfully following the mouse position, we need to get the hand to stop following the mouse when the button is pressed. So take a look at the 'one\_btn.onPress' event handler. Here we see if the current frame of the content is Frame 1. If it isn't, some content must be displayed already so we tell the content Movie Clip to play (which removes the content). Some variables are set, 'following' is set to 'false', when this is set to false then in the onEnterFrame function the mouse is moved to the centre of the screen. When it gets there, the centre variable is set to 'true', which stops it moving to the centre. Additionally, on pressing the button a variable called 'section' is set to 'one'. Notice that when the mouse reaches the centre position (line 33), the content Movie Clip is told to play the frame label 'one'. At this point the 'follow\_mc' hand is made invisible and the hand that takes over is in the animation of the content Movie Clip.

Once the hand has stopped assembling the interface we need the hand to get back to the mouse. The hand is animated back to the centre of the screen and the 'follow\_mc' is set to be visible again. At this point variables are changed to make following equal 'true' and pointing to equal 'false'. Under the onEnterFrame, when these variables are set, the hand moves back and takes over as the mouse pointer once again. What the user experiences is a seamless integration between animation and usability.



Moving the mouse dynamically is handled in the onEnterFrame function depending on which variables are switched on or off



The buttons are partly responsible for switching the appropriate variables to move the pointer dynamically



### 19 Draw the line

Add a keyframe at Frame 160 and move the pointer to the right edge of the line. Add motion tweens between Frame 130 and 135, and 135 and 160. Right-click the line mask layer, choose 'mask' from the menu. Add a new layer called 'text2'. Add a keyframe at Frame 180 and the text shown.



### 20 Reveal the text

Create a new layer and name this 'text2 mask'. Add a keyframe at Frame 180 and draw a rectangle to cover the top edge of the text. Add a keyframe at Frame 220 and use the Free Transform Tool to scale the rectangle to cover all the text. Now add a shape tween between these frames.



### 21 Reveal more text

Select the hand layer and add a keyframe at Frame 161, swap the symbol to 'relaxed'. Add a keyframe at Frame 165 and move the hand down slightly, then add a keyframe at Frame 180. Move the hand to the top of the text. Add a motion tween between Frames 161-165 and 165-180.



### 22 Reveal more text

Add a keyframe at Frame 181 of the hand layer, swap the symbol to 'serve'. Add a keyframe at Frame 220 and move the hand to the bottom-centre of the text. Add a motion tween between these frames. Right-click on the text2 mask layer and add a 'mask' from the drop-down menu.



### 23 A new layer

Create a new layer, name it 'image box'. Add a keyframe at Frame 230, draw a small rectangle to the top-right of the last text added. Add a keyframe at 250, increase the size of the rectangle to 147 pixels high and wide. Add a shape tween between these keyframes, then a keyframe at 265.



## TECHNIQUE

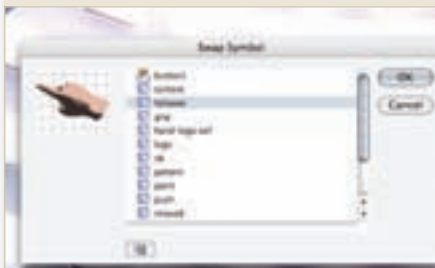
## Swapping symbols in Flash

At several points in the main text you're requested to swap symbols. To avoid any confusion, we examine the technique



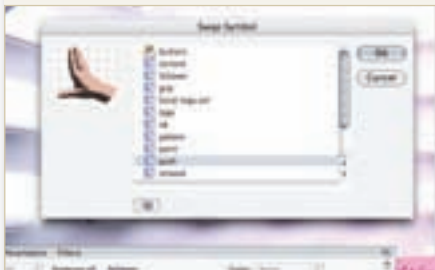
### 01 Select an instance

The instance on the stage is a reference to the symbol found in the library. It can therefore act as a placeholder that can easily be swapped. In our case we need to change the type of hand displayed.



### 02 Swap button

The key to changing any instance is to click the Swap button on the Properties palette. This will open a pop-up window displaying the current symbol that this is an instance of.



### 03 Change the instance

In the pop-up window choose another symbol and click OK. The hand will change to the new version, which is particularly useful for this tutorial. Obviously any symbol on the stage can be changed this way.



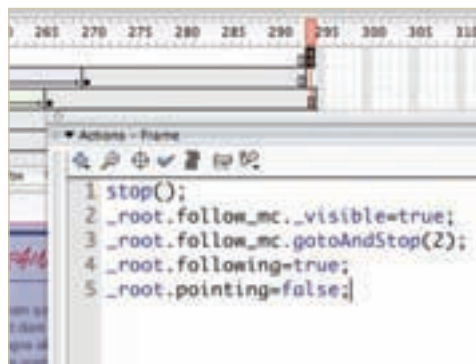
### 24 Fade out the square

At Frame 265 change the alpha value of the square to 0% in the Colour Mixer palette. Add a shape tween between Frame 250 and 265. Add a new layer and drag it below image box. Add a keyframe at Frame 250. Drag the symbol 'training.png' to the stage, positioning under the square.



### 26 Reveal the square

Add a keyframe to the hand at Frame 229, swap the symbol to 'point'. Add a keyframe at Frame 250. Position the finger in the bottom-left of the image box. Add a motion tween to these frames and a keyframe at 251. Swap the symbol to OK and add a keyframe at Frame 270.



### 28 Adding code

Add a keyframe at Frame 2, add the Frame label 'one' in the Properties palette. Add a keyframe at Frame 294 and the code as shown above. Finally add a keyframe at Frame 305 and add a 'stop();' command. We'll structure each of the layers to stop within two frames of each other next.



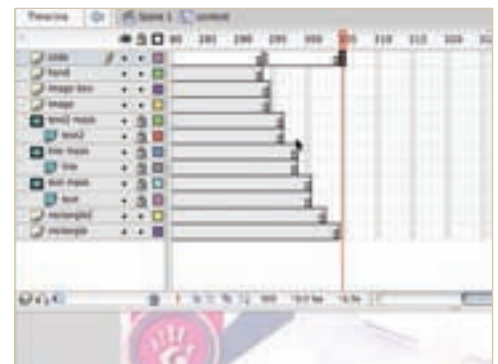
### 25 Control the hand

Select Frame 221 of the hand layer and add a keyframe. Swap the hand symbol to 'relaxed', then add a keyframe at Frame 224. Move the hand under the area of the image. Add another keyframe at Frame 228 and move the hand to the top-left of the image. Motion tween these points.



### 27 Finish the hand animation

At this keyframe move the hand to -23 on the X axis and -63 on the Y axis. Motion tween the hand between these keyframes. Select Frame 293 and press F5. Add a new layer above the others, called 'code'. Select Frame 1, open the Action panel and add a 'stop();' command.



### 29 Removing frames

Using the screenshot as a guide, select each frame in turn and press F5 to extend the timeline to the appropriate frame. So that, as it plays, each element disappears from the stage. Return to Scene 1 now and lock the content layer. Drag the Content layer below the Buttons layer.

# Raising site interactivity with dynamic cursors

## Break away

When a button is selected, the hand stops following the cursor and breaks away to a chosen space on the screen

## Create the interface

The hand grabs a backdrop from off the screen and drags it onto the stage. The hand then draws the interface

## Another selection

When you select another button, the interface disappears one element at a time

## More content

Due to space, the second interface couldn't be animated, but the final version follows the same techniques

## The hand

The hand replaces the normal mouse cursor to become the pointing device for the interface



## 30 Add the mouse cursor

We'll replace the mouse with our own custom cursor, so select the buttons layer. Drag the 'follower' symbol onto the stage and give this the instance name of 'follow\_mc' in the Properties palette. Now create a new layer above the other layers and name this 'code'.



## 31 ActionScript code

From the cover CD open the file 'Actions.txt'. Select this code and copy it. Go back to Flash and select Frame 1 of the code layer. Open the ActionScript editor and paste the code inside, which brings the interactivity between the animation and functionality into this project.



## 32 Testing the file

Press Ctrl+Enter to test the document. The hand will replace the mouse. Select the Training button and the hand will leave the mouse and start to assemble the interface of the training section. We didn't build the support section, but it's present on the finished CD file.





### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
All the files you need are on the CD

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Add collision detection to gravity using Flash 8

#### TIME REQUIRED


2 hrs

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Detect collision with **PART 2** Flash 8 and ActionScript

SEE WHAT'S INVOLVED WHEN CREATING COLLISION DETECTION AND GRAVITY IN THE SECOND PART OF OUR PIGGY BANK TUTORIAL

 **FOLLOWING ON** from your tutorial on gravity using ActionScript 2.0 and Flash 8 last month, we'll now have a look at the complex code behind collision detection. We'll be using some of the principles we used last month. But if you missed the last issue, not to worry, because the code has changed so much to add in the collision detection, that we'll be starting from scratch. Collision detection is used all over the internet and can be used for a number of concepts. In this

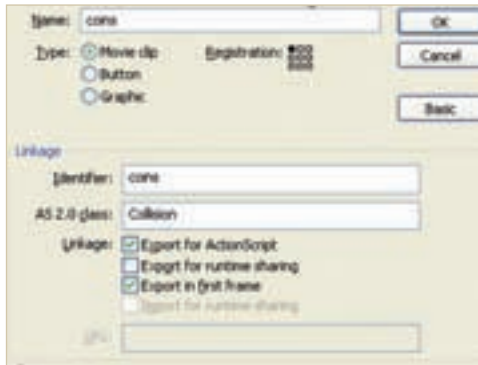
example we're using it as the start of an interface, but more commonly, collision detection code is used when creating games. So once you've learnt the basics behind the math, you can implement the concept into a number of ideas. Before we start, if you're interested in learning more about the complex ActionScript then we highly recommend taking a gander at Keith Peters' book *ActionScript Animation: Making Things Move*. Published by Friends of Ed.



## YOUR EXPERT

**Darren Richardson** works as a tech lead for Magic Lantern Production based in London and has been in the business for over ten years. In his spare time he runs flash sites at [www.actionscripts.co.uk](http://www.actionscripts.co.uk) and [www.flashgroup.net](http://www.flashgroup.net) as well as other exciting portal sites.

# Detect collision with Flash 8 and ActionScript



## 01 Setting the stage

Open up 'start.fla' in Flash 8 and expand the Coin layer to show all the coins. Select all the coins by clicking on the stage and pressing Ctrl+A. Press F8 to make them into a new symbol of Type = Movie Clip. Save as 'coins' and select the Export for ActionScript option.



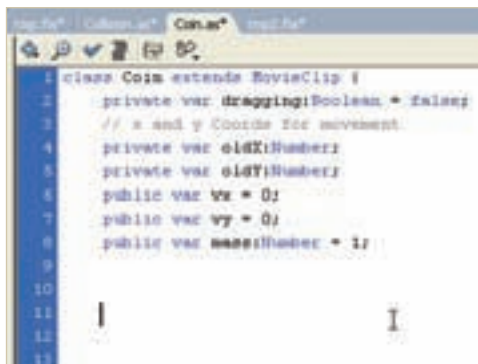
## 02 All in the layers

In the input box put Collision, this is a class you'll be creating shortly. Notice on the timeline that all the coins have gone to one layer; you can delete the rest and just rename the one with the coins in 'coins', enter the coins symbol and align the coins to the top of the stage.



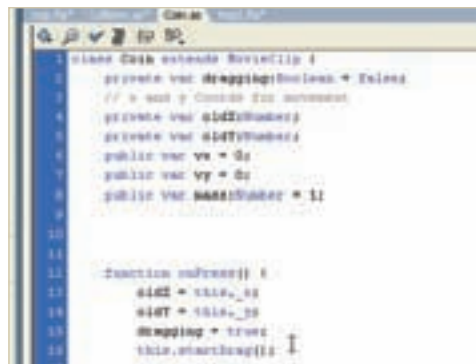
## 03 Instance name

Still in the coins symbol, click on each coin in turn, and in the instance name in the Properties panel name them 'coin0', 'coin1', 'coin2', 'coin3' and 'coin4'. Check the linkage by right-clicking in the 'blue\_mc' in the Library and selecting Linkage, you should see 'Coin' in the AS2 class.



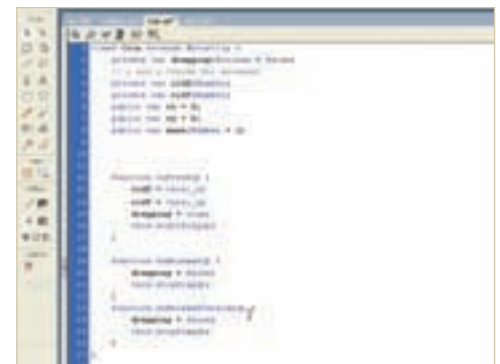
## 04 Coin class

Save the 'fla' file and create a new class called 'Coin'. Save the file as 'Coin.as' in the same directory as the 'fla', then place the code above into the top of the class. You're extending the Movie Clip so you can use its events. You're also declaring a few variables that'll be referenced later.



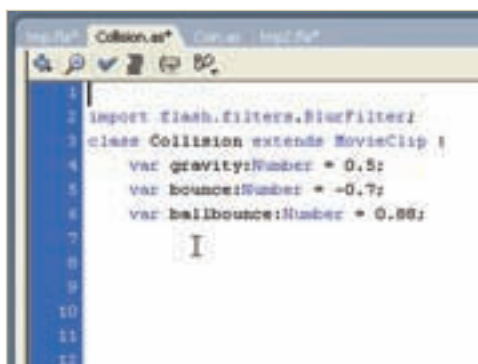
## 05 onPress event

As you've extended Movie Clip at the top of the class, you're able to use such events as onPress, onRelease and onEnterFrame. Here you're using onPress to trap the mouse-press when a coin is clicked, which will then trigger the 'startDrag' so you can throw the coin.



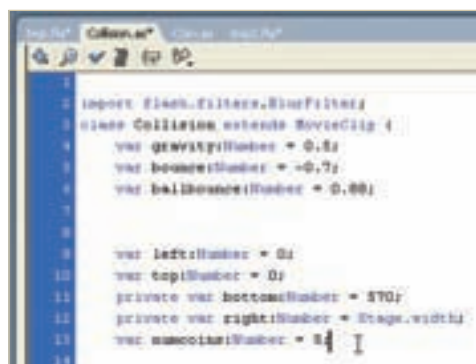
## 06 onRelease event

These next two functions are also part of the Movie Clip class. When the mouse button is released, the coin will fly off on the screen. The code in the screenshot also shows a set of variables are being set for your next class, which you're just about to create.



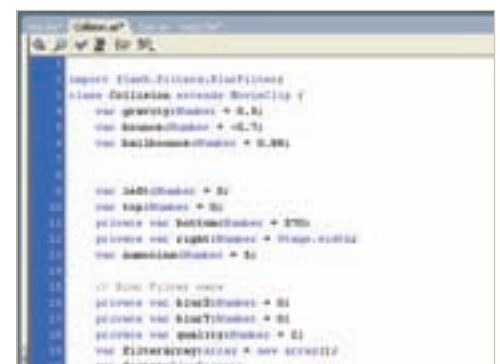
## 07 Collision class

Create a new ActionScript file. Name it 'Collision.as' and place it in the same directory as your other files. At the top of the class, add the code above. Notice you're again extending the Movie Clip for the same reason as before. You've imported a new class as well: the BlurFilter class.



## 08 Setting boundaries

In the next five lines you're declaring your boundaries for where the coins can actually bounce, so with these variables you've actually created a box container in which your coin will live and be constrained to. The last variable is the maximum number of coins.



## 09 Blur variables

Hopefully you noticed you imported the BlurFilter class at the top of this class. These are the properties the BlurFilter requires to work blurX, blurY and quality. Here you're setting defaults and then creating an Array to hold the parameters. Finally, you're creating a new filter variable.



## TECHNIQUE

## Tracking down our inspiration

We have a look at the site that inspired this tutorial, the rather superbly original [www.fjallbrynt.nu/kampanj/](http://www.fjallbrynt.nu/kampanj/)



### 01 Bottle tops

The site opens to reveal what could easily be a tube of toothpaste, along with the bounding screw-on tops that act as the navigational tokens. In our case these are substituted for coins, but the principle remains very much the same.



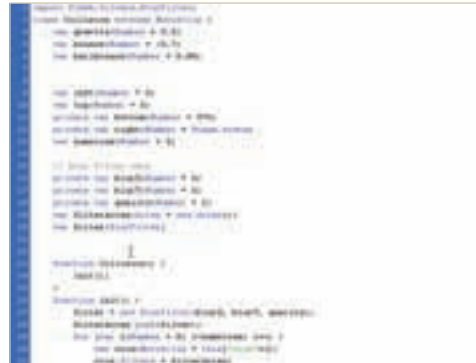
### 02 Bouncing around

The tokens, or tube tops, bear different icons and therefore represent nuggets of content. They can be grabbed by the cursor and dropped down the pipe. The excellent gravity and collision effects are well worth noting.



### 03 Content areas

The site really consists of a number of rooms that are revealed by dropping the tokens down the pipe. Here's where the main content resides, and although the text isn't in English, all visitors can appreciate the ingenuity of this superb little site.



### 10 Constructor

Next add the constructor and an 'init' function call. It's common practice not to add all your initialisation code in your constructor, but to add a new function that executes it instead – in this case, the 'init' function. Here you're adding the filter to each of the coins.



### 12 The bouncing angle

The code above is looping through all of the coins and assigning them variables, which is their gravity and new \_X and \_Y coordinates. Next you're going to check to make sure the coins are bouncing off the sides, top and bottom on the main stage and adjusting the angle of the bounce.



### 14 Blur me

The next four lines are assigning new properties to the filter Array you created earlier with default values. So you're assigning the blurX and blurY values from the vx and vy, which are the velocity/speed, so the slower the coin goes the less blur.



### 11 onEnterFrame

Add the onEnterFrame code above your class. This is yet another Movie Clip class event which runs each frame in this case 31 times per second, because your frame rate is set to 31fps. Here you're taking two coins and sending them to a function to see if they've connected.



### 13 Else what?

Next you have an 'else' statement to place below the rest of the code you have so far. The code in the last step had an 'if' statement that, if you fell into, executed the code, else you execute the code above, which resets the variables to ones you set in the Coin class.



### 15 Check the collision

Now create a new function, which will receive two properties of type Movie Clip, in the function you have variable declarations of dx, dy and dist to work out the distance between the two coins passed to this function, then an 'if' statement to see if they've actually collided.

# Detect collision with Flash 8 and ActionScript

## IN DETAIL

### Adding content

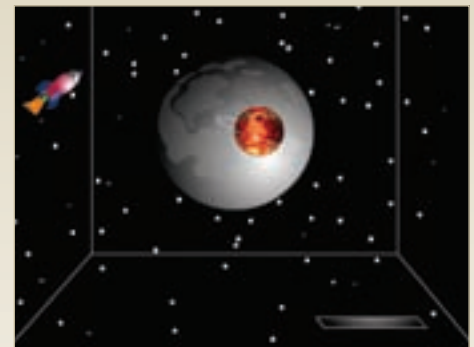
Despite all the special effects and novelty elements, this is meant to be a functional environment. The next step you'll want to try therefore, is producing extra content areas for your interface

ONCE YOU'VE completed the tutorial, take a look at creating some content so the interface becomes more of an interactive site. We've left this open for you to explore the different ways of opening new pages. We will give you a couple of ideas however, to hopefully get the creative juices flowing and push you into finishing and creating a lovely site. The first option would be to trap the 'on click' events, like the onPress event, and simply open the new screen or window in that way. You have to, of course, trap in the Coin class, but as this class is attached to all the coins, how will you know which coin you clicked? If you type: 'trace(this)' you'll have your answer. Then trap this with a switch statement.

```
switch (this) {  
  case "p0":  
    // open window p0  
    break;  
}
```

The second option could follow the design concept you've already created, collision detection but with a different twist. Here create a 'hot spot' and make it into a Movie Clip. Now in your Collision class you can check in the onEnterFrame event if you've hit the hot spot, and if you have, that triggers the new window to open. In the onEnterFrame code add: `roomHit(particle);`. And then a new function like below, but remember you'll still need a switch statement because you'll not know which window to open.

```
function roomHit(p:MovieClip) {  
  if (this._parent.room  
  mc.hitTest(p)) {  
    // open the room  
  }  
}
```



Create new environments, but keep a similar quirky look and feel that fits in with the overall style as much as possible



Use timeline animation to give added value to the end look, and remember to incorporate the coin operation into each scene

```
/*  
Next you need to calculate the  
angle, sine and cosine for use next  
*/  
var angle:Number = Math.atan2(dy, dx);  
var sine:Number = Math.sin(angle);  
var cosine:Number = Math.cos(angle);
```

## 16 Matter of angles

First you have to work out the angle of the distance between the two coins. Once you have the angle you can then work out the sine and cosine. Why do we want this, you ask? Rotation my dear Watson, rotation. It'll all become clear over the next few lines.

```
// rotate the first coin passed  
var pos0:Object = {x:0, y:0};  
// rotate the second coin passed  
var pos1:Object = rotate(dx, dy, sine, cosine, true);
```

## 17 Plain old rotation

Here you're assigning two variables. First is pos0, an object with two properties, one of X, which is equal to 0, and one of Y, which is also equal to 0. The next variable is pos1, a type object, but the assigning is calling a function that returns type objects with the same X and Y properties.

```
// rotate the first coin passed velocity  
var vel0:Object = rotate(pos0.vx, pos0.vy, sine, cosine, true);  
// rotate the second coin passed velocity  
var vel1:Object = rotate(pos1.vx, pos1.vy, sine, cosine, true);
```

## 18 Velocity variables

The next two lines are actually calling the same function (which you'll write shortly), but they're passing different information. Before you passed the distance, sine and cosine; now to return a velocity you're passing the coin's velocity variables and the sine and cosine.

## 19 Test the collision reaction

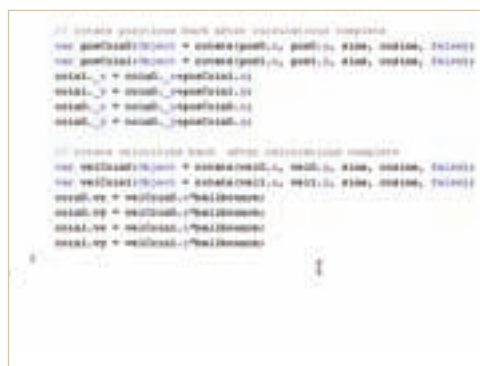
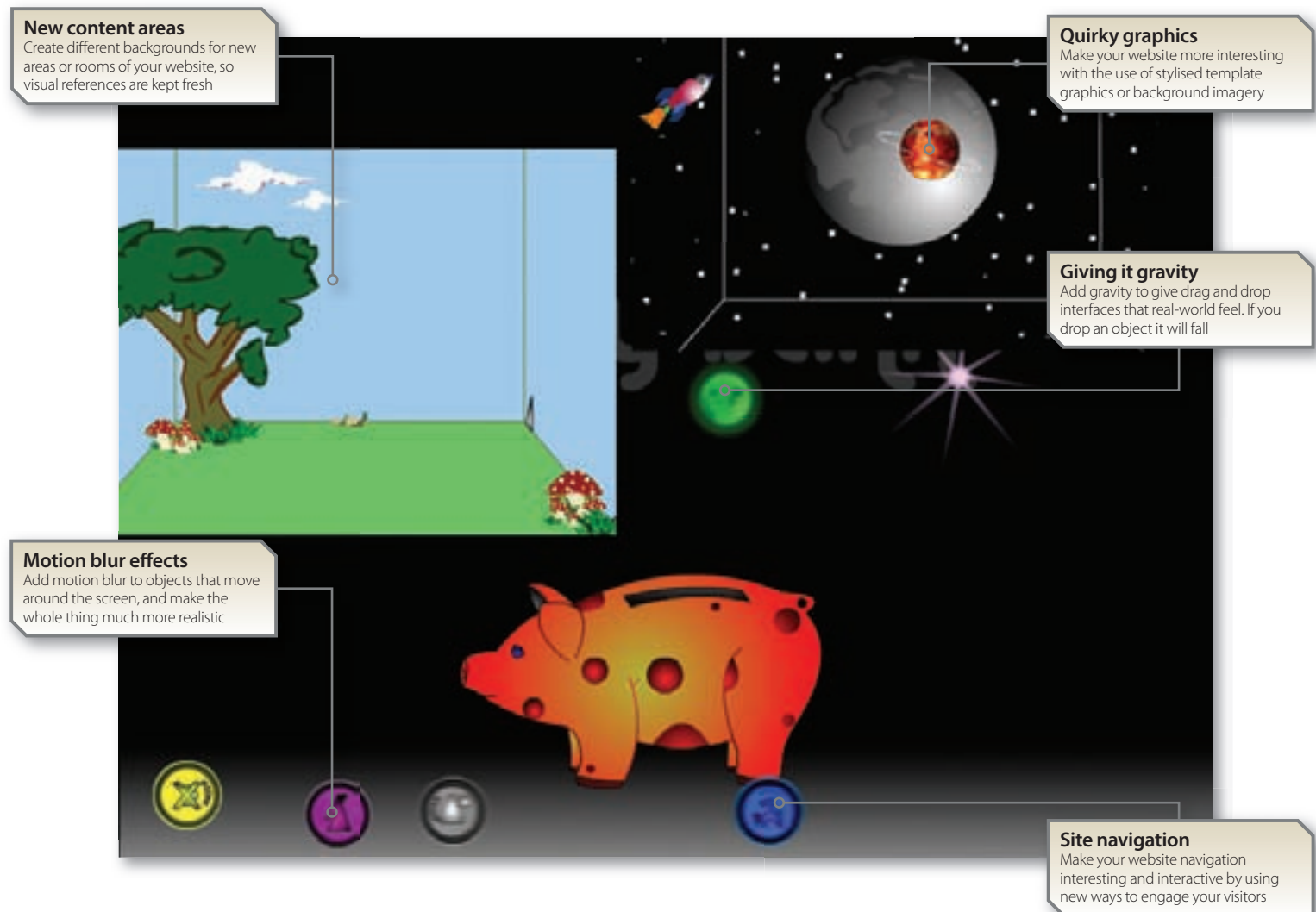
This line of code tests the reaction when two coins collide. There's a variable in the line, 'mass' that you haven't seen in this class because we assigned it to the Coin class. Without mass you'll have no reaction to collision. Mass is the size of the coin.

## 20 Update coordinates

Now you have your rotation, velocity and reaction code, you can update the coin's X and Y coordinates by using the equations in the code above. As you can see, they're using all of the variables you just created, these are all needed to create the correct collision animation.

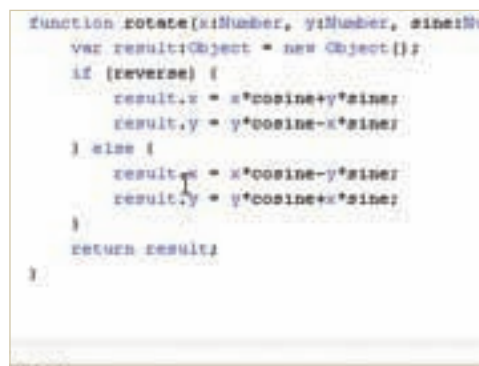


# Tutorial



## 21 Clean it all up

Now you should have your new positions and have completed the calculations. For next step, you need to clean up and put your variables and coins' rotations back to normal. The code shown above will do this for the rotation and velocity.



## 22 The rotate function

Now add the rotate function that you've been calling throughout your code. Here the code returns an Object with two properties, named X and Y, and depending on whether a Boolean value that is passed equals 'true' or 'false', returns a different calculation.



## 23 The final test

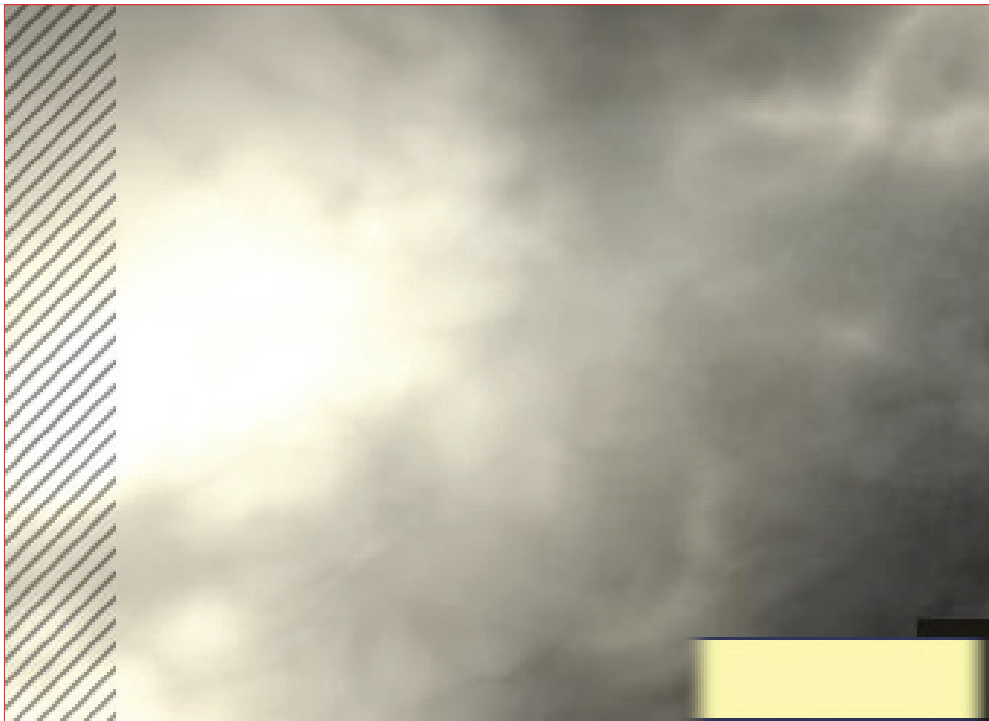
Go back to your fla and test the movie. You'll see the coins slowly drop then be picked up and thrown, you'll see them bounce off one another. We would advise you playing with the code you've just created to see how it acts when you change values like gravity and ballBounce, have fun!





# Tech Support Flash

Blurring images dynamically, displaying XML and different time zones are among this month's Flash problems tackled by our resident mister fix-it Mark Shufflebottom



Get blurred movement as you drag objects around your screen using the code provided

## Q Dragging and dropping

I've been creating an interface that allows my visitors to pick up buttons and drag them around, and when they drop them on a target, it loads the right section of the site. I've got all that working no problem. However, I was thinking that in order to make this better, it would be nice if the buttons blurred as I moved them. Or, even better, if the blur amount fluctuated based on the amount of movement I gave them. I can add a blur using the filters, but this would need to work dynamically so that the blur changes. I realise this would probably be quite difficult, but can it be done? And if so, how would I go about it?

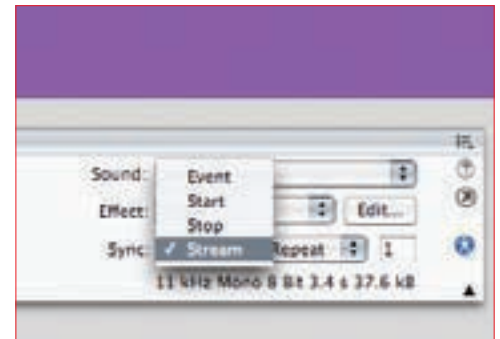
Trevor Gordon

A This is possible and the trick to this is to use ActionScript when you're moving your buttons. At this point, measure between the current frame position and the previous frame position, then add a blur based on this distance. Fortunately blurs can be added using ActionScript, so it should work perfectly. The only problem that you'll have is that filters can't be applied to buttons using ActionScript,

but if you convert all of your button instances to Movie Clips then it'll work. This will not harm the buttons in any way, as the same functionality can be added to Movie Clips as to buttons.

The following code assumes that you have a Movie Clip on the stage with the instance name of 'button\_mc'. Now add a new layer and add the following ActionScript:

```
import flash.filters.BlurFilter;
button_mc.onPress = function(){
    var posY:Number = this._y;
    var posX:Number = this._x;
    this.startDrag(false);
    this.onEnterFrame = function():Void {
        var blurX:Number = Math.abs((this._x
        - posX)/20);
        var blurY:Number = Math.abs((this._y
        - posY)/20);
        var quality:Number = 3;
        var filter:BlurFilter = new
        BlurFilter(blurX, blurY, quality);
        var filterArray:Array = new Array();
        filterArray.push(filter);
        button_mc.filters = filterArray;
        updateAfterEvent();
    }
}
```



Keep MP3 files external to avoid making huge Flash files, and this is also easy to control using ActionScript

```
}
}
button_mc.onRelease = function(){
    this.stopDrag();
    this.filters = new
    Array(filter);
    delete(this.onEnterFrame);
}
```

The first line of this imports the Blur Filter class into Flash so that Flash can access it. Now the code moves on to what to do when the button is pressed. Two variables, posX and posY, grab the current position of this Movie Clip on the stage, then the Clip is told to start dragging. The onEnterFrame code sets up a function that occurs every frame and dynamically works out the amount of blur to both the X and Y. The blur is then applied and pushed into an Array, as with all filters. The filter is then added to the button.

The next block of code stops the dragging when the button is released. At this point an empty Array is pushed into the filter to clear the blur. The onEnterFrame function is deleted to stop it from working.

That should produce the blur effect you're hoping to achieve. You can apply this to any number of buttons.

## Q Site soundtracks

I have a website that works across several scenes. I've got some background music that I would like to continue playing across all these scenes, but at the moment it stops after the first scene. Is there any way of doing this, it seems like such a basic requirement? Any help you can give would be greatly appreciated.

Brian Carson

A Yes, this is a basic requirement and I'm sure that you've simply set your sound sync to the wrong settings. If you set the sync drop-menu to Stream, the sound streams until there are no more frames, hence your problem when you're working with scenes. Simply changing the sync drop-menu to Event will start the sound playing right through until it reaches the end, and you can set how many times it loops.

An alternative way of working with this is to control it through ActionScript. This way you can keep the sound external, which won't slow down the loading of your website by having a

## "USE XML IN ORDER TO SOURCE CONTENT FROM OUTSIDE THE SITE DESIGN"



## 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

large music file. (We're assuming it's large in file size simply because it's playing across several scenes.)

If you keep the sound file in the same directory as the HTML file, use the following code to access it and start it playing in Flash:

```
var my_song:Sound = new Sound();  
my_song.loadSound("song1.mp3", true);
```

This creates a sound variable called 'my\_song', although it can be named anything. On the second line the variable is told to load the sound 'song1.mp3' – obviously you need to change this to the name of your MP3 file. If you place it in a directory for neatness, you can use 'music/song1.mp3', which looks in the music folder for the appropriate MP3. The 'true' condition in the 'loadSound' command means that Flash will stream in the MP3, so it doesn't need to load the whole song before playing the music.

This second option is much more simple and will probably work better with your site, if at any point you need to stop the music you can use:

```
my_song.stop();
```

That should hopefully wrap up any problems you're having with sound. Just for reference, using scenes is not the best solution, as your site should be split over separate SWF files that are loaded at the request of the user.



## XML struggles

I'm trying to work with XML and I'm loading the data from an external file. I'm using the following code just to test it out; all I want to do is display the code by tracing it into the output window:

```
myContent = new XML();  
myContent.ignoreWhite = true;  
myContent.load("football.xml");  
trace(myContent.firstChild.nodeValue);
```

I was actually trying to display it in the Flash document but couldn't – so I just opted for this simple option, but I can't even seem to do that! Can you tell me where I'm going wrong please, as I want to be able to display this data in an easily updatable file?

David Cronin



What you're struggling with here is just simple teething trouble. Once you cut this out, you'll be up and running using XML in no time at all. We're glad you included the code as it allowed for the problem to be spotted instantly.

What you're doing is calling the XML before it has loaded, which is why you're not seeing anything from your result. You need to call the appropriate onLoadEvent handler to get the appropriate result. Here your code has been modified to display the result correctly:

```
myContent = new XML();  
myContent.ignoreWhite = true;  
myContent.load("football.xml");  
myContent.onLoad=function(success){  
    if (success){  
        trace(this.firstChild.childNodes[0].  
            childNodes[0].firstChild.nodeValue);  
    }  
};
```

This checks that the load has been successful and, when it has, then the trace is called. Notice how the trace code changed slightly, this is because this is how Flash drills down to the first



## Expert advice

### Keeping your Flash content easy to update

Flash is very handy for making websites, there's no question, but sometimes the content can seem a little bit locked in. It can be very difficult for clients to update the websites you have created without them having to pay you to open up and edit the Flash content. As an alternative why not use XML as a way of sourcing content from outside of the design? This way the design and the content on the site remain separate and the content can easily be updated by your client.

node inside the encapsulating XML. This'll get the value of team from the following code in an XML file:

```
<football>  
    <club>  
        <team>Wigan  
        Athletic Football Club</team>  
        <location>North  
    West</location>  
    </club>  
</football>
```

To get the value of location you just amend the trace slightly to this:

```
trace(this.firstChild.childNodes[0].
```

```
childNodes[1].firstChild.nodeValue);
```

As you can see, once these basics have been mastered it becomes very easy to get results with XML and your work.

## Technique: Global time zone



I've been building a site for a travel agency and would like to be able to display the time of different destinations around the world. I obviously thought Flash would be the easiest way to do this, but I have no knowledge of displaying the time so that it updates as the seconds progress. How easy would it be to make different time zones display? Jane Leeding



Using the date command, Flash can get the local time of the computer or GMT. From this, simply add or detract the number of hours to display depending on the time zone of the city. These can be held in variables and displayed in the Flash document using dynamic text fields. You can set up an onEnterFrame handler to update the clock in real time.



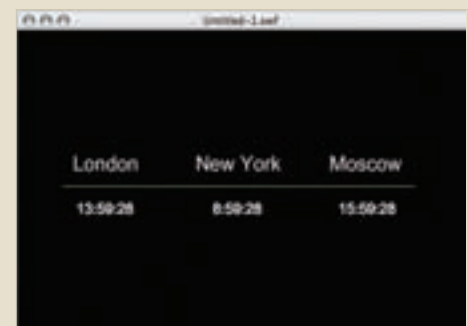
### 01 Display text

Create three Dynamic Text fields on your stage, add the variable name of 'displayLon', 'displayNY' and 'displayMos'. This will display the London, New York and Moscow times. You can add appropriate labels so you know which is which.



### 02 Add the code

Create a new layer and open the ActionScript panel. Add the code as shown above. This code will grab the date and time then add or take away the appropriate number of hours required to display the time. This is then displayed in the variables.



### 03 Test the file

Press Ctrl+Enter to test the Flash file. You should see the local London time displayed in the first box, minus five hours for New York and two hours added for Moscow. Using this principle you can display the time of any other city in the world.





### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
Beach.jpg, Couple.psd, Girl.psd, Paper.jpg, Surfer.psd

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Design a foldout interface in CS2, ready to build and animate in Flash

#### TIME REQUIRED


3-4 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Create a foldout interface

THIS TWO-PART TUTORIAL WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH HOW TO ACHIEVE A UNIQUE TEMPLATE DESIGN IN PHOTOSHOP, BEFORE REVEALING NEXT MONTH HOW TO MAKE IT EXPAND AND ANIMATE WITHIN FLASH 8

 **THIS TUTORIAL IS** split into two parts and is spread over this issue and the next. In this issue, we're going to go through, step-by-step, how to design a foldout interface in Photoshop. Then, in the next issue, we'll look at how to build and animate it in Flash.

Our design laid out in this tutorial was influenced in the first place by the fantastic website [jonathanyuen.com](http://jonathanyuen.com). However, we'll be adding some more textures, elements and generally heading in a different direction. But it will still have the same outcome of



## 01 Create a new doc

Open CS2, create a new document 2048 x 640px with a Color Mode of RGB. The interface will eventually fold out three times, so add a guideline at 682px and 1364px to give you an indication of the different pages that need to be designed and how they relate to each other.



## 02 Background texture

Open the tutorial files from the CD provided and locate the 'Paper.jpg' image. Open this in Photoshop and drag it into the top-left of your main document. The paper only covers about a quarter of your document, so duplicate it and flip it on the vertical axis and position below.



## YOUR EXPERT

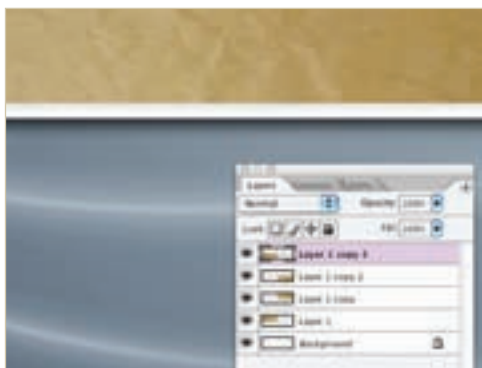
**Rodger Page** is a new-media designer and multimedia editor who has been using Photoshop and Flash for years. His plans are to teach digital arts at a college or university, but for the moment enjoys authoring CD and DVDs here at Imagine Publishing.

# Create a foldout interface



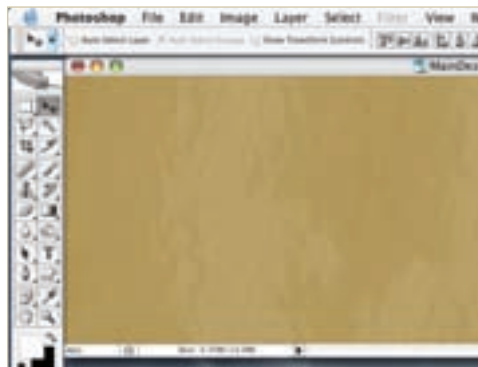
a gradual navigation system that's slowly worked through by the viewer. It's widely expected nowadays that most people have a broadband connection, and due to the nature of this design (being mostly bitmap graphics and eventually animated with Flash filters applied) the loading time will be a little longer than the average Flash interface. Despite this, the effect achieved will engage the user and guarantee a few revisits, therefore the plus points definitely outweigh the negatives in our opinion!

The design works in one tonal range, with the main elements being heavy black or faded to blend in with the background texture. The intended effect is to represent someone doodling on a piece of paper.



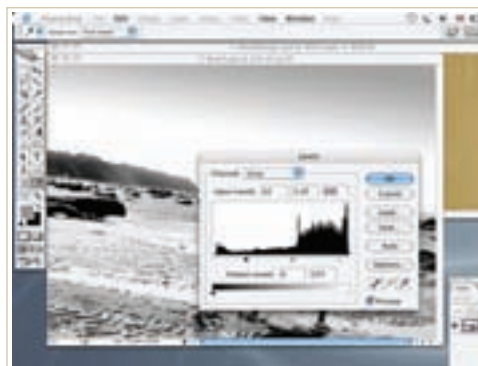
## 03 Merge the layers

Half of your document should be covered with the background texture. Select the top paper layer, flip it on the horizontal axis and position in the top-right corner of your document. Repeat for the bottom section. Open the Layers palette and merge the four texture layers together.



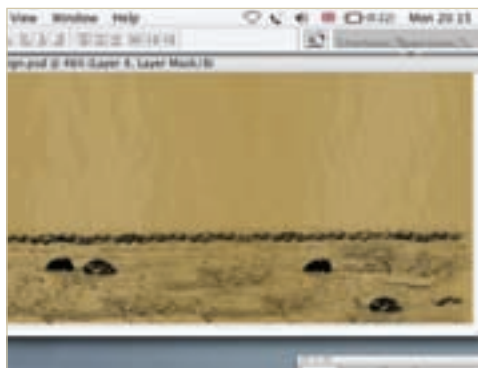
## 04 Get blending

Your entire document should now be covered with the paper texture, but will have a line running through the centre. To remove this, select the Clone stamp and begin to remove the lines. Try and remove the mirrored effect by cloning different sections throughout your background.



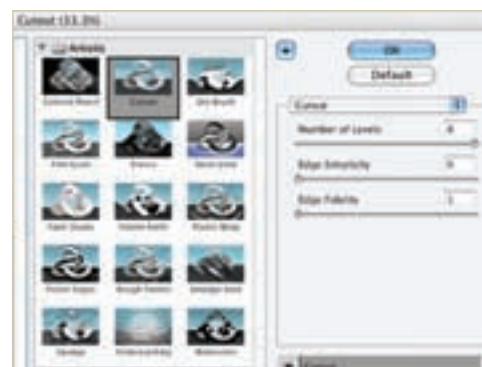
## 06 Beach scenery

Open the 'Beach.jpg'. Select the Clone Tool and begin to remove the couple from the scene. Ensure to maintain a horizontal line that joins on the horizon. Convert it to Grayscale, adjust the levels to give a good contrast between a solid black and white that's slightly burnt out.



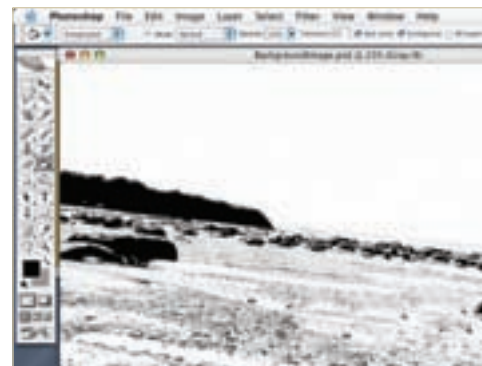
## 08 Extend the beach

Drag the Beach image to your main design and in the Layers palette set to Multiply, drag a horizontal guide into the document and rotate the horizon of the beach to fit the guideline. Now using the Clone Tool extend the Beach image to fill the width of the document.



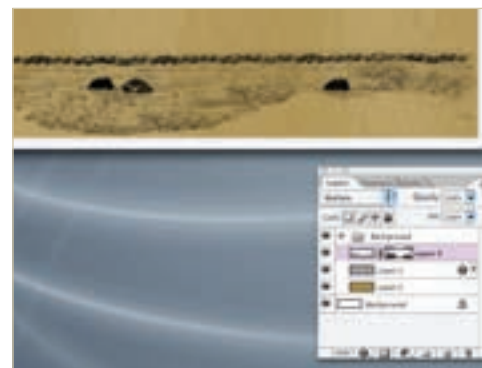
## 05 Instant texture

Select Image>Adjustments>Desaturate to remove the colour. Now add a Cutout filter with Levels = 8, Simplicity = 0 and Fidelity = 1. Finally add a Color Overlay layer effect to the background image of '#ab8e4c'. Your background should now look like crumpled paper.



## 07 Add the effects

On the Beach image, from the Filter menu select Stylize/Glowing Edges and enter the following values: Edge Width =5, Brightness=5 and Smoothness=10. Invert the image to a white background by holding down Ctrl+I. With the Paint Bucket set to a Tolerance of 32, fill in the rock with black.

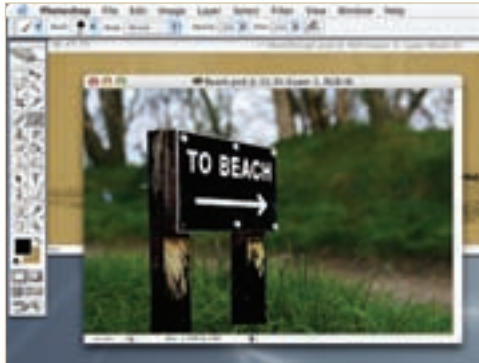


## 09 Apply layer mask

Select Layer>Add Layer Mask>Reveal All. Select the Brush Tool with a 50px sized brush head and a 75% soft edge to paint in black over the bottom of the beach. Toggle between black and white to conceal and reveal selections, and hide parts of the beach by following the contour lines.



# Tutorial



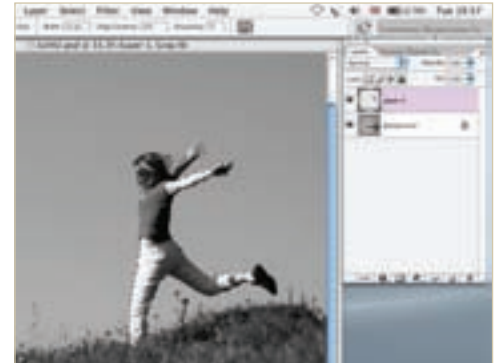
## 10 Beach image

Open the 'Beach.psd' and select the Pen Tool with Paths selected and begin to cut out the sign, including big portions of the grass. Paste it to a new layer. Convert to Grayscale, select Posterize from the Image>Adjustments menu and set the number of Levels to 7.



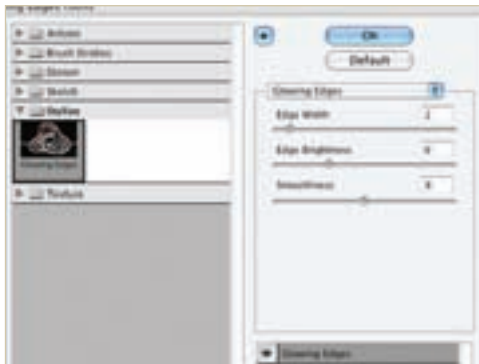
## 11 Place the sign

Drag the sign into your main artwork and convert to a Smart Object. Position the layer behind the Beach image and transform the scale and rotation of the sign so that it sits on top of the horizon. Now choose Multiply in the Layers palette Blending Modes to hide the white portions.



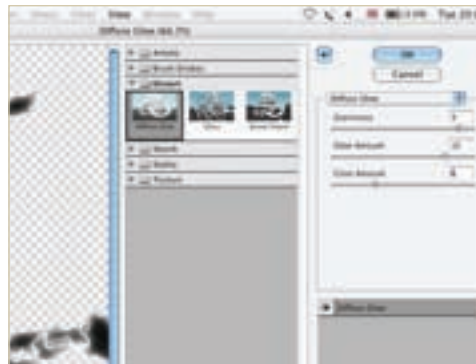
## 12 Cut out the girl

There are three main scenes to your foldout interface: the girl, the couple and the surfer. Open the 'Girl.jpg' in CS2. Select the Pen Tool ensuring Paths are selected in the Options palette and begin to cut out the girl. Once this is done, make a selection and paste to a new layer.



## 13 Posterize

With the new layer selected, choose Image>Adjustments>Posterize and in the dialog box enter the value 4 and hit OK. Now from the Filter menu select Stylize/Glowing Edges and enter the following values: Edge Width = 2, Edge Brightness = 6 and Smoothness = 8. Hit OK.



## 14 Distort the glow

From the Filter menu select Distort/Diffuse Glow and enter the following values: Graininess = 9, Glow Amount = 16 and Clear Amount = 6, hit OK. The image should now be solid black with white lines highlighting and defining the edges with a white grain texture.



## 15 Cut out the couple

The middle section of the interface will contain the couple and, as they're holding hands and facing each other, this will give symmetry to the centre of your artwork and balance out the effect. Open the 'Couple.jpg' from the CD and use the Pen Tool to cut them out.



## 16 Cut out the surfer

The final or end section of your interface contains the surfer. The whole artwork now contains a girl, a woman and two men, which again adds balance to the artwork. Cut out the surfer using the Pen Tool and, as before, paste to a new layer.



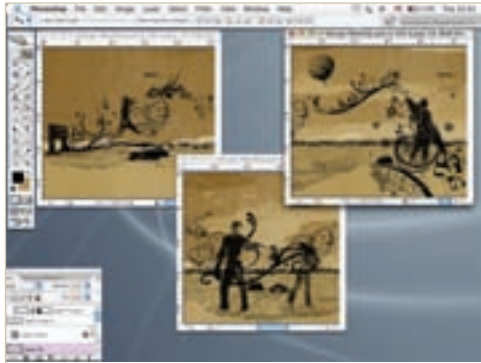
## 17 Add effects again

Select in turn the couple and the surfer and begin to apply the Image Adjustment and the two filters (Posterize, Glowing Edges and Diffused Glow). Drag all three (the girl, the couple and the surfer) into your main artwork and in turn convert each of them to separate smart objects.



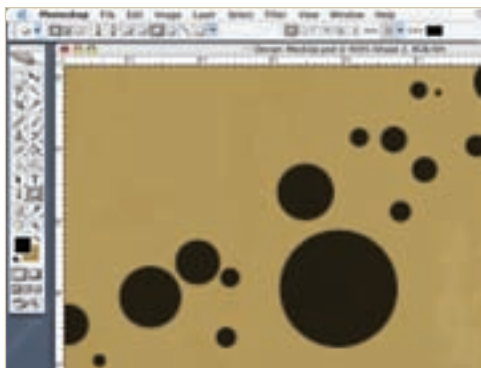
## 18 Transform and place

In the Layers palette create three new layer folders and name them 'Scene 01', 'Scene 02' and 'Scene 03'. Drag the girl into 01, the couple into 02 and finally the surfer into 03. Set each of the layers to Multiply and transform the scales to fit within the interface.



## 19 Scene 01

As mentioned before, the interface is split up into three scenes, each of which will be created and contained within a separate folder. This approach will make it a lot easier to export the individual elements. So try and keep each scene tidy in the appropriate folder.



## 21 Lots of circles

Within the Scene 01 folder, select the Vector Shape Tool and the Ellipse shape, ensuring Shape layers are selected and black is in the foreground. Holding down Shift, draw out the circles. This'll give you a perfect circle, and also add the additional circles to the same Vector layer.



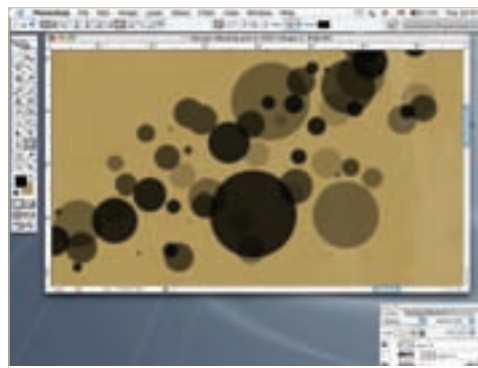
## 23 Heavy lines

Select the Pen Tool ensuring that Shape Layers are selected. Still in the scene 01 folder, begin to draw out shapes around the girl and over the circles. As with the circles, create sections on the same layer and aim for about four layers. Try and imagine how it would animate.



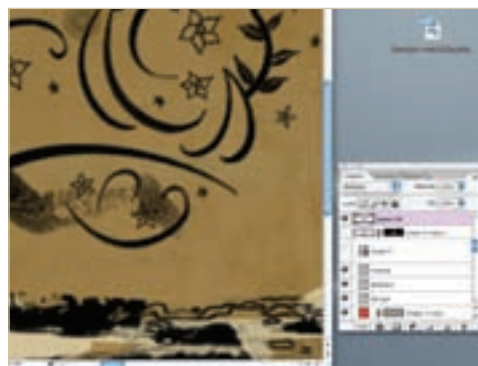
## 20 Vector shapes

There are three different types of vector shapes that are employed to create the flowing lines that bind the artwork together. First, there's the heavy black lines, then there's the detailed objects and finally there's plenty of circles, which are also varying degrees of black.



## 22 Lots more circles

Once this is done, set the layer Opacity to 80% and the blend to Multiply. With the Ellipse Tool draw more circles on a new Vector layer, over and around the first bunch. Set this layer to 60% and Multiply. Repeat this twice, reducing the Opacity by 20% each time.



## 24 Detailing

Still in scene 01, with the Pen Tool, draw a flower on a new Vector layer. From the toolbar select the Path Selection Tool and select the Flower path, copy and paste the paths to the same Vector layer, transform the scale and rotation of the new path until you're happy.

## TECHNIQUE

### Isolating the graphics

Once the background is hidden the Blending mode effect is lost. Here's how you overcome this.



## 01 Make the selection

Holding down Ctrl, locate your layer within the Layers palette and click on it. This will load a selection around whatever content is held on that particular layer.



## 02 Flatten and copy

Choose Layer>Flatten image. This will maintain the selection around your graphic. Now copy, create a new document (which will be the same dimensions of the copied graphic) and paste.



## 03 Save for web

Now that you've isolated the graphic it's time to export it. But first, hide the Background layer within the Layers palette, then choose Save for Web. See the In Detail boxout for more info on what file format you need for the different graphic types.





## 25 Blend the flower

Set the layer Opacity of the Flower Vector layer to 80% and set the Blending Mode to Multiply. On a new vector layer draw out a new flower and repeat the process of copying, pasting and transforming. Then finally, draw out a third flower and repeat for this also.



## 26 Masking things

Some of the lines and detailing should hopefully run over the main girl image, so to make them feel part of the environment we're going to hide specific parts. This'll give the appearance of them running around her and not just over the top of her, which will add depth to the image.



## 27 Delete interference

Select the Vector Shape layer that's hiding parts of the Girl image, select Layer>Add Layer Mask>Reveal All. Ctrl-click on the girl layer, select the Brush Tool with black as the paint colour, now with the vector mask selected, draw over the lines that are obscuring the girl to hide them.

## IN DETAIL

## Exporting content ready for use in Flash

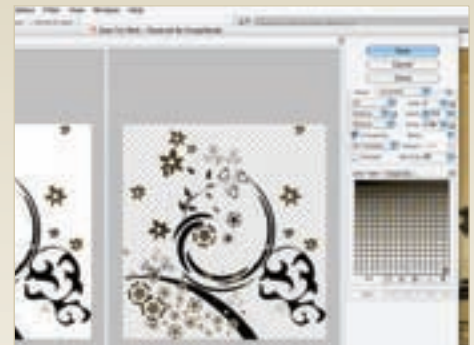
Get your artwork components out of Photoshop ready to be imported into Flash. Use the correct file format to ensure your loading times are as reasonable as possible

**AS MENTIONED AT** the start, this interface is very graphic-heavy and although most of the graphics are vectors, in Photoshop they're interacting with each other and some of them combine varying degrees of opacity. The upside to this however, is that the graphics are predominantly black and therefore there's less colour data to be exported, which means that with a bit of tweaking the file size can be kept relatively low.

The two file formats that you need to use are the GIF and the PNG as they both contain alpha channel data, while maintaining the best image quality. Some of the graphics used in the artwork contain degrees of white to black, and using the Multiply Blending Mode the graphic is perfectly blended to the background colour. This does present a problem when we need to export the graphics, as when the background is removed so is the applied colour.

To combat this problem, we need to copy the graphic with its appropriate blend colour intact. This can be easily achieved through a simple flattening of the artwork. To do this simply hold down Ctrl and select a graphic layer to create a selection of its contents, now flatten the artwork (this should maintain the selection), copy and paste into a new document. This maintains the effects and isolates the graphic with the added bonus that it's cropped to the contents.

Now using the Save for Web function, export as a GIF or a PNG depending on the amount of colour data or gradients contained within the graphic, toggle between the two to see what gives the best compression while maintaining the image quality. To achieve a transparent background with a PNG simply hide the Background layer before you select Save for Web. To do this in a GIF, in the Save for Web window select the background colour (make sure this is a solid fill colour) and in the Color Index palette click on the Transparency button to hide that colour.



*Use a GIF when there are solid portions of colour. This'll give the best compression rate but the alpha channel is very restrictive*



*Use a PNG when you want the best image quality possible and you're not concerned about loading times*



## 28 Background sky

Return to your background folder and using the Ellipse Tool draw a swirling sky with varied degrees of Opacity. Once this is done select the layer and using the Transform function stretch out the horizontal axis to cover the entire width and set the Blend mode to Multiply.

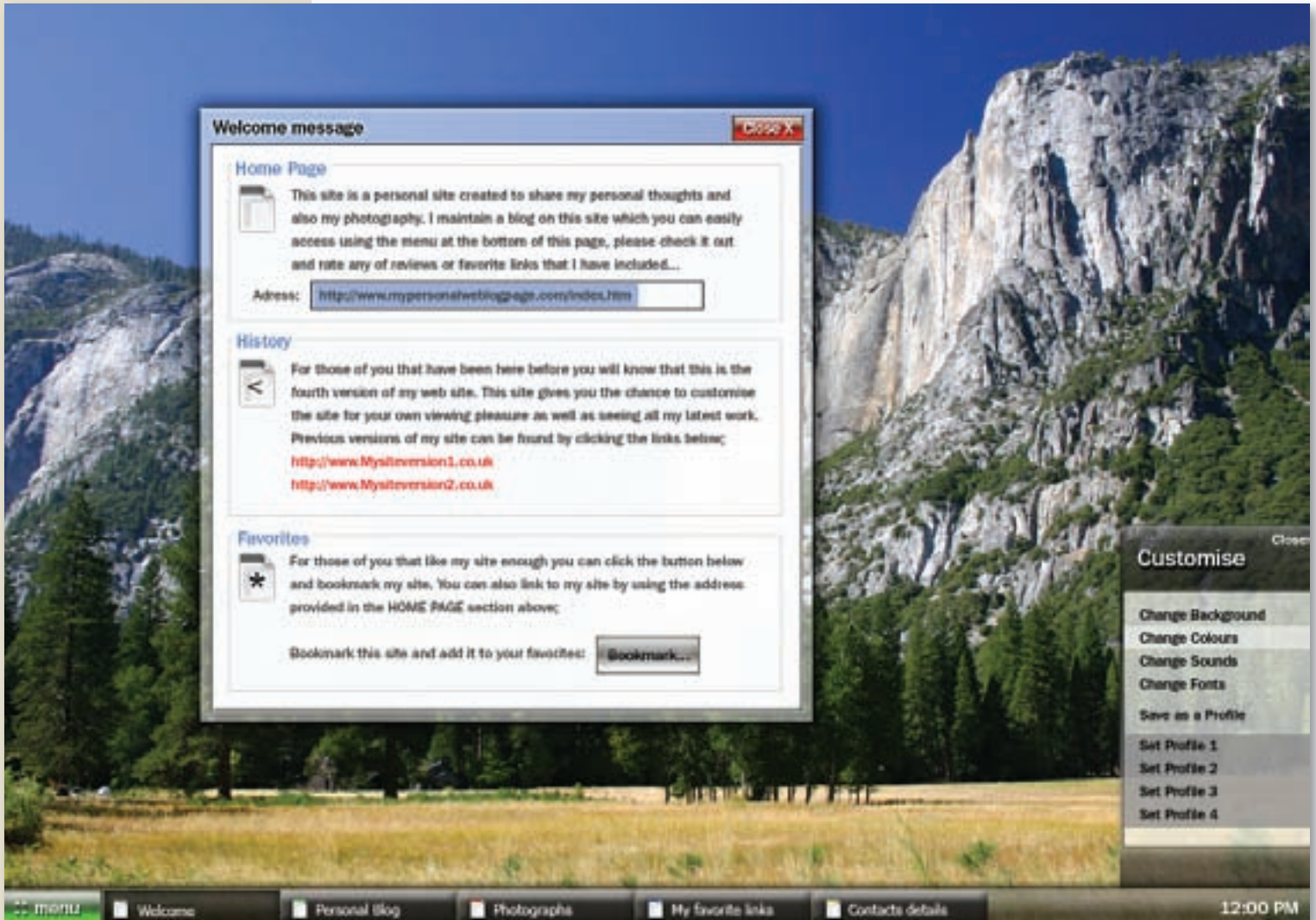


## 29 The remaining scenes

Simply duplicate the remaining layers. Moving to the appropriate folders and transforming the scale and rotation will be fine for these last elements. Add additional graphics if you wish. Repeat steps 26-27 for the masking, and you're done!







### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
The files you need are on the CD

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Find out how to create a Vista-styled layout for your very own website

#### TIME REQUIRED


45 minutes

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Create all the effects for a Vista-styled website

HOW TO USE PHOTOSHOP TECHNIQUES AND EFFECTS TO CREATE VISTA AQUA STYLED ARTWORK FOR YOUR VERY OWN WEBSITE

 **WITH WINDOWS VISTA** close upon us, no doubt a number of Vista-styled website templates will soon arrive on the web, as we saw happen with the launches of XP and Mac OS X.

So we thought it would be useful to show you how to design a style that will look similar to what we believe Windows Vista will look like. This tutorial will take you through the steps of creating coloured aqua-style button graphics. Transparent pop-up windows also appear to be a feature of

Vista, so we'll run you through creating these as well. The design in this tutorial is best suited to be built in Flash, so either build the site yourself, or pass it onto a Flash web developer. With this in mind you should always have animation and interaction in the forefront of your plans.

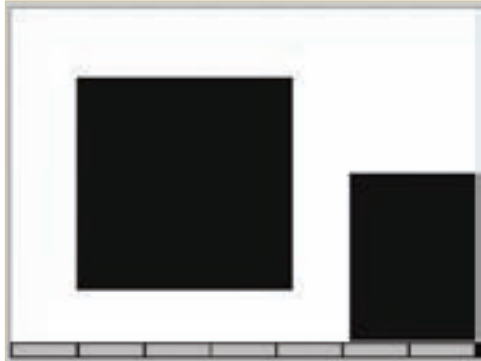
A fully layered Photoshop file of the final design is provided on the disc that comes with this issue of the magazine, so you can use this for reference as you follow the tutorial.



## 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 all the effects for a Vista-styled website



## 01 The layout

Before you start, plan out the components your design has to incorporate. For this style, the menu will be placed at the bottom of the design, and we'll also need one pop-up window designed for the site content. You can plan out the rough layout using Photoshop as we have here.



## 02 The background

If you browse the disc you'll see an image called 'Vistabackground.jpg' in the Tutorials section. Set the image to 1024 x 768 so you can actually use this file to begin building your template design. Go to Image>Image size to do this and make sure the design is 72dpi too.



## 03 The menu bar

The first element we're going to create is the menu bar at the bottom of the screen. Create a new layer and with the Marquee Tool (M) draw a rectangle. Fill this rectangle with gradient Black to White using the Gradient Tool (G), holding down Shift to get a vertical gradient.



## 04 The menu bar

With the gradient in place and the layer selected, set its Opacity to 60% in the Layers palette. You will now see the Background image through the bar. Now add a vertical Drop Shadow from the Layer Styles menu. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Drop Shadow to do this.



## 05 Aqua button

We're now going to create the aqua menu button that lives in the bottom left of the screen, inside the menu bar. To start, create a new layer and again draw your button shape using the Marquee Tool. Now fill the shape with a dark green colour.



## 06 Layer style

You'll need to add two styles to this layer now, first is an Inner shadow. Set the values to the following: Distance = 0, Choke = 22, Size = 13. The second you need is an Inner Glow. Set the following values: Colour = Yellow, Choke = 0, Size = 8. See the screenshot for the effect.



## 07 The lights

The next step will be to add some colour to the button and give it some depth. Create a new layer above the dark green layer. Draw a smaller scaled down shape that's a little over half the size of the original box. Fill this in with a bright green colour.



## 08 Soften the effect

Now you have this layer apply a layer mask to the bright green shape. Do this by going to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. You'll see an extra white box appear in the Layers palette. With this box selected, add a gradient to it and you'll see the edge of the green fade away.



## 09 Add the shine

Create a new layer and repeat the previous step, but with the shape coloured in white and covering the top part of the original shape. This'll give you the shine effect of the button. At this point you can play around with the gradients and colours to get varied effects.



## TECHNIQUE

## Web templates with interaction

As a graphic designer, when providing a website template, always think about the options for animation and interaction



### 01 What can interact?

In this example we've designed a Customise pop-up menu. By creating this menu it explains to the developer that certain elements will need to be kept on separate layers in order to remain dynamic. Such as the Background.



### 02 The background

It's important the web developer knows the Background is dynamic, as it would be quite easy to group objects in Photoshop before importing them into Flash. In this example the developer will keep the Background as a separate element.



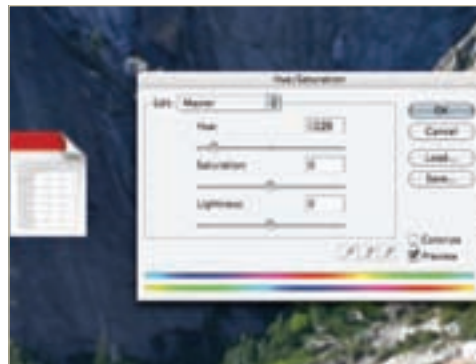
### 03 Set profiles

Setting profiles for visitors to change, will really emphasise the Vista style and make your site feel extremely dynamic. All you have to do is provide the web developer with a few more backgrounds and the other options you want available.



### 10 Button text

Create a text layer below the White Shine layer, and write 'MENU' in it with a white font. Now add a Drop Shadow layer style to the text with the following settings: Distance = 2, Spread = 0, Size = 2. You now have a finished button that consists of four layers.



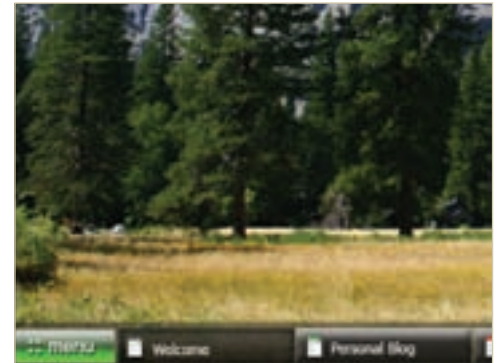
### 12 The icons

A design element we have provided for you to save time is 'icon.jpg' found on the disc. This simple little icon can be used on the buttons if scaled down, and also in the page content as in the following steps. To change its colour use Image>Adjust>Hue/Saturation.



### 14 More Vista

The next step for the Vista style is to create another white box on a new layer, slightly smaller and aligned to the bottom of the original box. Then add a Pillow Emboss layer Style – found in the Bevel and Emboss options. This box must remain at 100% Opacity.



### 11 Finish the menu bar

With all of the previous steps, you have learnt all the necessary effects to create the remainder of the buttons on the menu bar. You'll need to experiment with the setting, but you're fully able to create gradient filled shapes, add Layer Styles and reduce the opacity.



### 13 The content

We obviously need to create an area on the design for your content to go. The Vista style again lends itself to a transparent window. Create a new layer and draw a box to the size you need. Set the Opacity to 50% and add two Layer Styles: a Drop Shadow and an Inner Bevel.



### 15 The page design

You now have to design the area where your content sits. Once again by using new layers and a collection of the methods above, you can create your very own bespoke layouts. When you need buttons, simply copy the four button layers and change the colours to suit.





### THE BRIEF

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

To add a subtle sense of movement to your photographs or web art

#### TIME REQUIRED

1 hour

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Adding movement to your web art

GIVE YOUR IMAGES A SENSE OF MOVEMENT USING VECTOR OVERLAYS AND BLUR EFFECTS

 **THERE'S NOTHING MORE** exciting for a Photoshop artist than being given a luscious source photograph to play around with. You don't have to worry about sitting in front of a blank, white canvas staring longingly for inspiration as most of the hard work has already been done for you. If you've been asked to adorn your photographs with illustrative elements, there are a few procedures you should bare in mind. It's no good simply placing elements over your source image with no recognition for the shot's style and composition.

Take a look at the original image in the bottom right. It's a cracking snap the way it is, but the wind-blown hair and the pose of the model simply scream out for some subtle added elements with a sense of movement. Over the next couple of pages we're going to take you through the process of adding elements to this photo. We'll explore the tricks for adding the kind of movement and excitement that you may find within web art on popular sites. The end image should result in a polished graphic that would proudly adorn any online project.

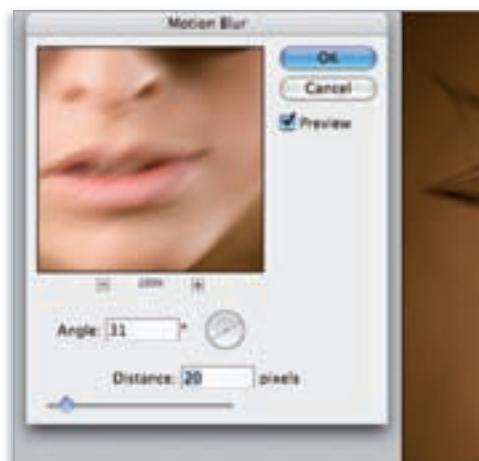
## 01 Set up your canvas

The original image doesn't offer much room for experimenting in Photoshop, and it would be better if the canvas was larger to give us more room for manoeuvre. To combat this we've added more canvas to the top and bottom of the image by altering the canvas size (Image>Canvas Size) and adjusting the height to 297mm.



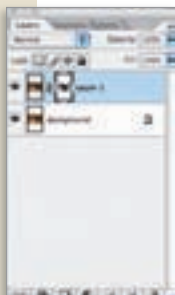
## 02 All going blurry

The next step is to make a selection using the Rectangular Marquee Tool, copy this and add it onto a new layer. Then add a Motion Blur with an angle of 31 degrees and a distance of 20 pixels.



## 03 Masked motion


We only want a hint of motion, as we don't want to spoil the image, so it's essential to mask out some of the blurred layer. So add a mask to this upper layer and alter the Soft Round Airbrush with a lowered Opacity of around 80% to erase the Motion Blur over the face, shoulders, chest and legs, leaving just the hair blurred.



## 04 In the frame

The image could do with some framing to make it stand out more, so we have created a black area at the top and bottom of the canvas. Add some diagonal stripes in order to give the frame more impact. You will find this easier if you create these lines on a separate canvas and then place them on your artwork. After you've done one set, simply copy and flip them to create a second set so that they look identical.

## The source image

 **IF YOU WOULD** like to try this effect on the image featured here, go to [www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com) and enter the reference number '00000151194'. However, to really get your head around working with photographs, we suggest that you try the techniques out on your own images to create something truly unique.





Adding movement  
to your web art





# Tutorial

## 05 Clouding the situation

We've grabbed some images of clouds, snapped from outside the window, and added them onto our image. Use a Screen Blending Mode to help them blend into the image. Some masking will probably be required to get rid of the nasty grey areas. Add some sparkles too – they're very easy to create: just make some dots with a brush and apply an Outer Glow layer style.



## 08 Add some scratches

If you're placing vector graphics onto your canvas there's the danger of it looking too clean cut. So scan in a scratched surface and place it near the diagonal lines to make the image look a little grittier and more Photoshopy.



## The Pen Tool

**THE PEN TOOL** in Photoshop can work similarly to the Pen Tool in Illustrator. Once you've created a curve or path you can fill the selection with the Paint Bucket Tool. Photoshop's Shape tools can also be used to generate vectors. With these tools you can create a whole host of shapes such as rectangles, lines and polygons. You can easily add these to photographs by simply placing them on a separate layer.



## 06 Floral hair

Because of the windswept look of the hair, it's perfect for adding floral elements. Adding vector clips from Illustrator will give your black elements impact, but you can recreate this just as easily by drawing shapes with your Pen Tool in Photoshop. You have to do this on intuition, so just shift around the layers.



## 10 Eye for the birds

You don't have to be restricted to only extending elements of the photograph. It can look great if you add random elements to your image. Here we've traced the outline of a photograph of a bird, copied the image several times, tweaking the shape size as we went along, and pasted them all into one layer on top of our artwork. It just gives it a sense of a bit more motion.



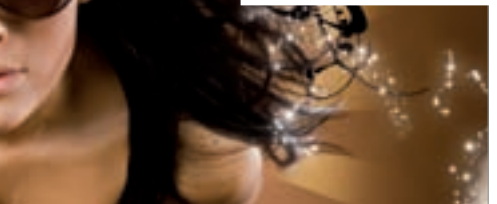
## 07 Bring me sunshine

We want to bring a sense of motion into the image and so we're going to create some sunbursts in Illustrator. Then place these into the design and use the Warp Tool to twirl the rays slightly and distort them. Be careful not to warp them too much though, as you don't want them to look like a spiral.



## 09 Sparkles

In separate layers you can add more glows to the image. It's possible to fake a 3D look with these glows. You can create them by adding dots onto the image using a soft white round airbrush. Layer up the dots and experiment with the Gaussian Blur to help achieve the sparkle effect.



## 11 Under the spotlight

At the moment the top and the bottom of the image don't look as if they're part of the photograph. So, in the bottom left hand corner draw a basic white ellipse using the Ellipse Tool. Give it a faded outline by applying a Motion Blur in exactly the same way as we applied it to the main photograph.





## 12 Elaborate brushes

Keep your eye out for free brushes on the internet. Brushes don't always have to comprise of small soft round airbrushes. Some of the more intricate brushes can come in useful if you want to add a quick detail here or there. Remember, if you want to make the new brush blend in well to your image you can apply a low opacity mask to rub it in slightly.



## 14 Even more elements

We've really gone to town with the extra vector elements and have included another white flower brush on the left-hand side of the image. It's normally not a good idea to add so many details on a photograph. However, as the model is placed in the centre, and there's such a lot of blank space around the edge, it literally cries out for some vector attention.



## 17 Colour me good

As long as your lines are on a separate layer you can experiment with colour. One of the easiest ways to add colour to a white line is to paint over it on an overlapping layer, using several brighter colours in the spectrum. Alter the Blending Mode to Overlay and then you can merge the two layers together. As long as you then apply a Gaussian Blur, the line will blend well into the image.

## 13 More vectors

It's time to start getting intricate again by adding more vector designs around the edge of the photo. You can always reposition and rescale these elements at a later stage so don't worry too much about it looking overbearing. Once you've finished your design you can always tweak it. That's the beauty of using layers.



## 15 Dashing lines

We don't really have any moving elements over the model so fix that by adding some diagonal lines. It's worth adding these one at a time and zooming out of your image to take a step back and assess the appearance. The easiest way to add lines is to use the Line Tool in the toolbar.



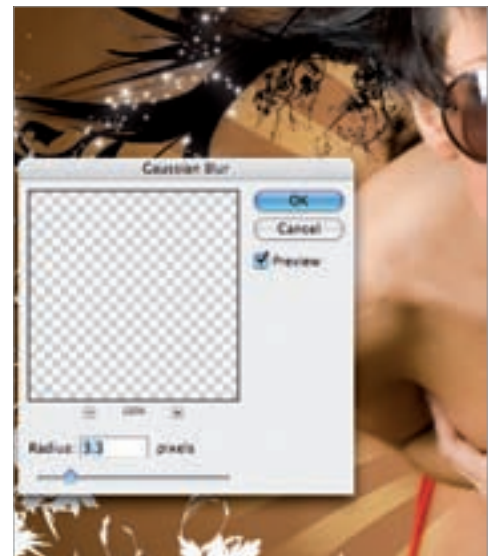
## 18 Subtle details

Don't forget to think about the more subtle additions to your image. This will give your final artwork the polish it needs to stand out from the crowd. For example, we've just applied a very simple and small Gaussian Blur airbrush on the sunglasses.



## Saving brushes

IF YOU WOULD like to modify an existing brush by, for example, adjusting the brush tip shape, you stand in danger of losing your adjustments. To save a modified version of a brush, click the Create New Brush icon at the bottom of the Brushes palette and choose the New Brush Preset. Name your modified brush and click OK. Your new brush will then appear every time you open up the Brush palette.



## 16 Blurring lines

The best way to blend the lines into your image is to apply a Gaussian Blur. The amount of blur will depend on the Radius of the pixels you set and you should assess these settings separately.



## 19 Plenty of motion

We want to make sure that there's plenty going on in the image, so use this final step to copy elements that already exist in the page and spread them around the canvas. When you're happy you can flatten the file. However, we suggest you keep a layered version too – you never know when bits will come in handy.



## 555 Design

www.555design.org



### TOP TIP



#### Sepia tones

Sepia tones are invaluable when creating the grungy look

The scratches, tears and stains in the background picture are obvious, but the effect wouldn't be complete if the image had not also undergone a major shift in tone. In this image, the designer has applied a sepia-like brown colour cast to the image to give it a truly dirty, grungy, aged look. To replicate this effect in your own work, try adding a layer of solid dark brown above an image, and then knocking the Colour layer's Blending Mode over to Overlay. Instant aging achieved!

**W**hen Photoshop first arrived on the scene all those many moons ago, it was envisaged as a digital darkroom that would enable photographers to spruce up their images and allow them to achieve a new level of quality and perfection.

But as development continued, photographers and artists alike fell for the Adobe application's charms. Soon it was being used to not only create faultless photographs, but also highly imaginative works of digital art that can, in some instances, be attributed to the program's ability to mess things up a bit.

In some ways, it's ironic to think that Adobe's industry-leading imaging suite is used to deliberately scratch, tear, stain and otherwise abuse pictures in the name of art. Yet, that's exactly the use it's put to when digital imageers are striving to attain that distinctive, grungy look. That's right, if you want to give your imagery an edgy twist, you can do it all with some clever use of Photoshop brushes, blends and filters – and a little bit of imagination!

Take this site for example. Here, visitors are presented with an immediately atmospheric, grungy cityscape that forms the backdrop to the portal. At first glance, it almost looks like a scan of an old and grainy photograph, but take a closer look and you'll realise it's Photoshop trickery all the way. So, let's get in a little closer and take a gander at the dirty details.

#### Site logo

This logo appears throughout the site. Cleverly produced, it reinforces the grungy identity of the site's design



## Logo design

Fiddling with the opacity of an image can create a stamp-like effect

One of the most distinctive parts of any website should be the logo, and here 555 Design's idea is no exception. Working on the notion that the five fingers on each hand represents the numbers in the title, while tying it into a symbol of hands-on creativity – the design is certainly effective.

The designer has used a grungy font and etched out the image to give it a stamp-like effect. In addition, the logo is given an almost semi-transparent quality, which can be achieved by simply adjusting the Opacity setting of the Logo layer in the Layers palette.



Finally, the logo is added to the page and given a slightly rotated alignment to reinforce its stamp-like qualities.

## Scratches and tears

Make sure you're careful when you scratch, stain and tear!

Perhaps the most striking effect used in the site's main image is its scratched, torn and stained appearance. This idea is always effective when applied with care, but there's a danger of looking too obvious and awkward if it's applied with a heavy hand.

So how do you get such effects? Well, the assumption is that it's created by cunning use of Photoshop filters, but the truth is that it's actually all done with the careful application of brushes.

To start with, you'll need to create a grungy brush (see the step-by-step on the next page). Take your time to paint



over the entire image using a brush set to a large size on a new layer, then fiddle about with the layer's Blending Modes until you're happy.

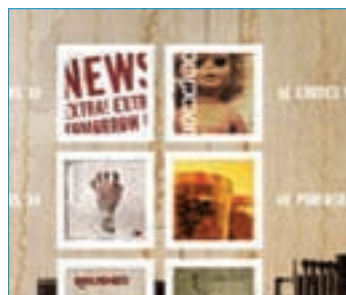




## Menu items

Try making your background the foreground for once

In terms of site navigation, the majority of buttons and links have been added along the right-hand side of the screen, to leave enough room for the main background picture. While this isn't usually the case (ordinarily, background images are just that – in the background), on an art site such as this it makes sense to use large, loud imagery. What's interesting here however, is that the designer has used the menu items to further reinforce the site's grungy feel, by picking some strange and even disturbing imagery to sit within the buttons. They almost give

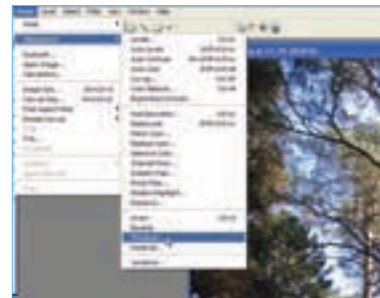


a kind of edgy Polaroid feel, which is reminiscent of the imagery used in the opening credits of David Fincher's noir thriller *Seven*.

## STEP BY STEP

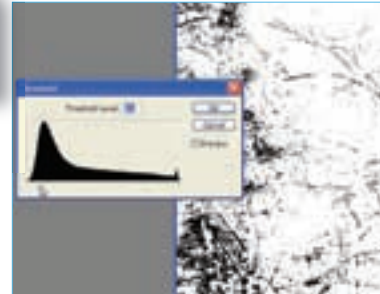
### Quick grunge brushes

We show how making a grungy brush is ridiculously quick and easy to achieve



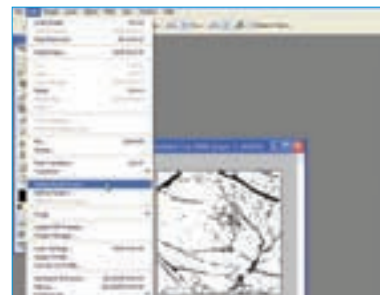
#### 01 Load a photo

First, open up Photoshop and load up a digital photo. For this brush, use an image that is preferably something with a lot of fine detail, such as this shot of some trees we've used. Believe it or not, this detail is going to make up the scratchy texture, so go to Image>Adjustments>Threshold to proceed.



#### 02 Scratch it up

When the Threshold dialog appears, grab the slider at the bottom of the histogram display and start to move it towards the left. As you do this, you'll hopefully notice that the image starts to lose large chunks of detail, leaving smaller, thinner elements in their place. When done, hit OK.



#### 03 Make the brush

Now create a new canvas of 250 x 250px, then use the Move tool to move the Scratch image into the smaller canvas. Play around with the positioning until you're happy. Then use the Eraser tool to get rid of any straight lines on the edges of the pattern, caused by the crop. Hit Edit>Define Brush Preset and you're done!

## Minimum text

Let your images say what words sometimes can't

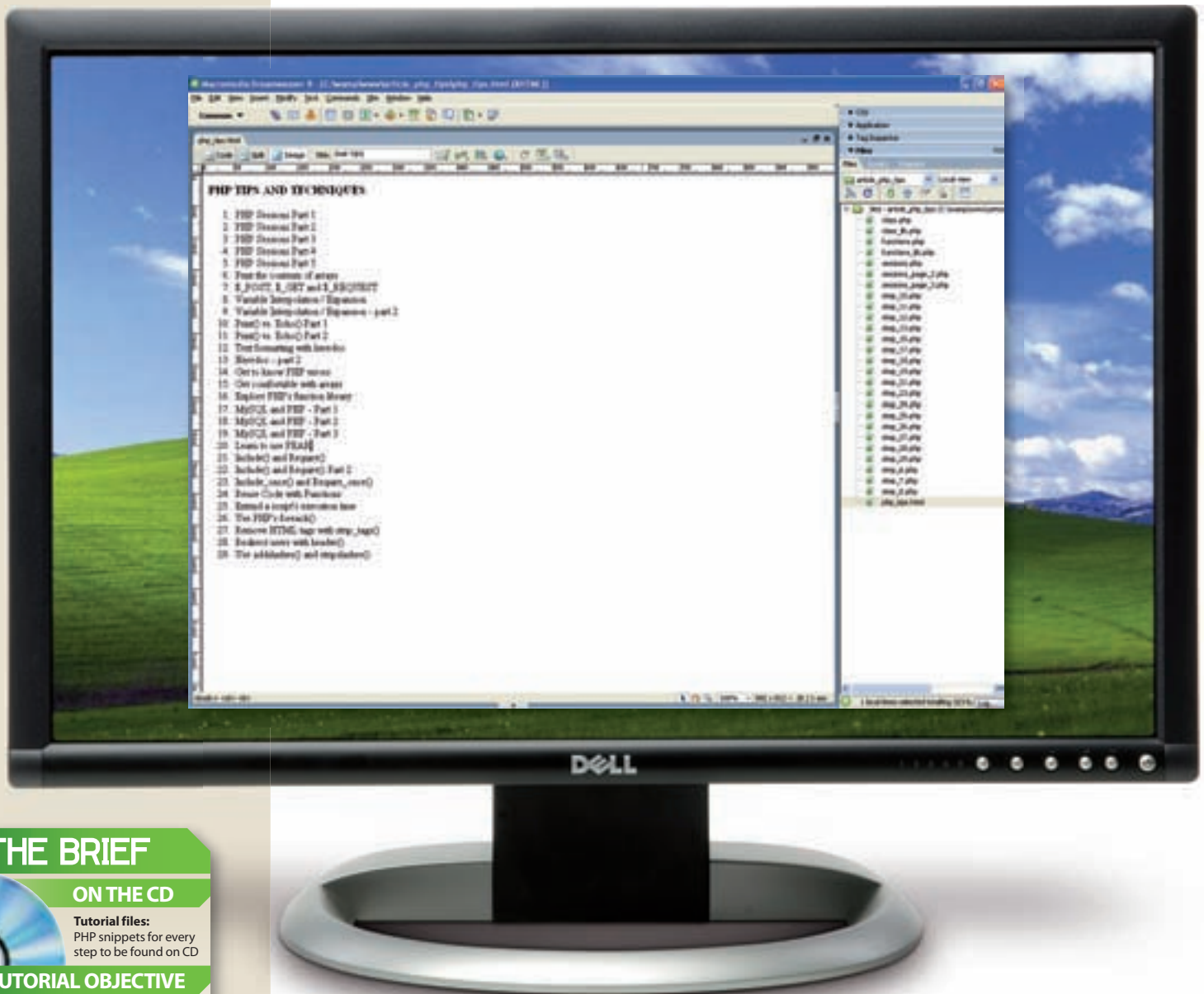
Often, it's extremely tempting to fill your site with text so that you can have as much communication as possible with your visitors. However, in some cases, less is most definitely more.

Here, the designer has exercised restraint and kept copy to a minimum so that the imagery can speak as loudly as possible. But that's not to say that there's a complete lack of exposition; take a peek at the top-right section of the screen and you'll notice a tiny paragraph of welcome text stamped into the corner. The golden rule is that no matter how expressive your website



imagery is, it's good practice to offer some degree of explanation as to what the purpose of the site is, so that your visitors are not confused. But as seen here, that's not to say that you have to be verbose in order to achieve this goal.





### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
PHP snippets for every step to be found on CD

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Build a collection of useful PHP tips, tricks and techniques

#### TIME REQUIRED

45 minutes

#### SKILL LEVEL



# A collection of killer PHP tips, tricks & techniques

PHP'S POWER COMES FROM ITS VAST COLLECTION OF BUILT-IN FUNCTIONS. WE EXPLORE PHP'S FUNCTIONS AND CAPABILITIES

PHP IS THE most popular web programming language out there, because it's fast, easy to learn and powerful. One of the reasons it's so powerful (and productive) is due to the huge collection of functions that come built into PHP.

Besides functions, PHP has many in-built constructs (extra features that are technically not 'functions') that really add to PHP's power and usability. It shows that PHP was built on a practical 'nerd-to-use' basis – after many years

of PHP development, you'll find that PHP is chalked full of functionality. The downside to PHP's pragmatic and (to a certain extent) ad hoc development path, is that PHP can be a little inconsistent in the way things are done. Specifically, function naming conventions and approaches to solving programming problems need to be filtered. This tutorial will help with both by providing a collection of the most useful PHP functions and tips that you may refer back to endlessly.



## YOUR EXPERT

Stefan Mischook has been designing web pages since 1994. Stefan is also knowledgeable in many programming languages and web technologies including PHP and JAVA, among others. He now runs [www.killersites.com](http://www.killersites.com) and [www.killerphp.com](http://www.killerphp.com).

# A collection of killer PHP tips, tricks & techniques



## 01 PHP sessions

Sessions are one of the most important mechanisms in PHP. With them, you can easily track information associated with a particular user/visitor across your entire web application. To use sessions, you need to call 'session\_start()' before the document is generated.



## 02 Identifying users

Sessions are associative Arrays that PHP binds to a particular user by assigning them a unique session ID. As your site visitor moves from page to page, PHP identifies who they are by checking their ID. You can add values to the session like so: \$\_SESSION['first\_name'] = "Stefan".



## 03 Enabling the session

Once a session has been set, you can access its values with the familiar associative Array syntax: \$\_SESSION['first\_name']. Even if you're just accessing values, you still need to first declare that the page is session enabled by calling 'session\_start()' before you print anything to the page.



## 04 Removing items

You can remove items from a session like so: 'session\_unregister('first\_name')'. When you remove an item, you're only removing that particular item – the session ID assigned to that user will remain. If you want to destroy the session altogether, you need to call: 'session\_destroy()'.



## 05 Destroying a session

Session\_destroy() destroys the session and all its data, but the session ID (stored in a cookie) will persist in the browser's cache until the browser is closed. So if the user lands on another session enabled page, they'll have the same session ID, but none of the data.



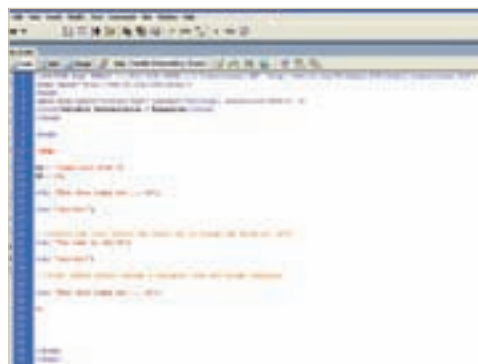
## 06 Printing Arrays

The 'print\_r()' function is supremely useful when you're down and dirty in code, and if you need to quickly figure out what information you have stored in Arrays and PHP objects. Since Arrays and objects are used all over PHP, this convenient function is one to keep in your back pocket.



## 07 PHP's global arrays

\$\_POST is used by PHP to automatically store any submitted form values, \$\_GET contains any information sent via the query string and \$\_REQUEST contains \$\_POST, \$\_GET and cookie data. These globals are Arrays, so you can view their values using the print\_r() function.



## 08 Variable interpolation

Variable interpolation is sometimes referred to as variable expansion. It's the process of replacing variable names (in a string) with the values of those variables. There are two ways to do this, the easiest way is with double quotes. Another way is to surround the variable with brackets.



## 09 Using double quotes

Variable expansion works only when you use double quotes. If you use single quotes after an 'echo()' or a 'print()', PHP will print out the variable's (literal) name (eg: \$a) and not its value. Another way to expand variables is to use the powerful heredoc – more on that later.





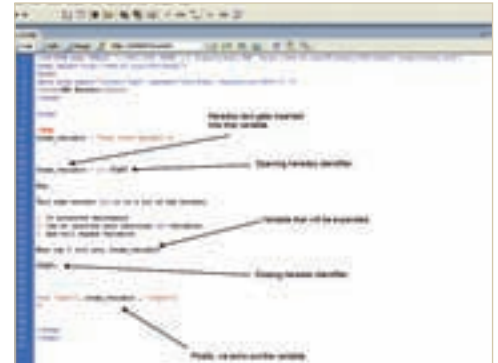
## 10 Echo() over print()?

Print() and echo() both print text to the page, but they're different. The echo() construct is not a function and in some ways it's more flexible than print(). With echo(), you can print multiple items with one statement by separating them with commas – something you can't do with print().



## 11 Print() over echo()?

Print() is an actual function and, as such, it returns a value (true or false). That means you can use print() as part of a larger expression. Since echo() is a construct and not a function, it doesn't return a value and so cannot be used this way. Check out the screenshots.



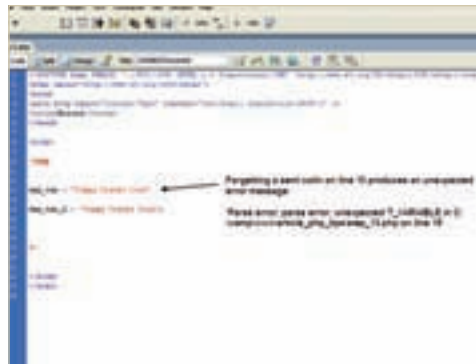
## 12 Writing heredoc

To tell the PHP engine that you're writing heredoc, you need to start with three angled brackets (<<<) followed by what the nerds would call an 'identifier'. The identifier is a string of text – your choice. There has to be a space between the <<< and the identifier text string.



## 13 Inject formatted text

Heredoc has its roots in Unix and is used in other languages like Ruby and PERL as well. It preserves whitespace. Single and double quotes are passed through. Heredoc is a great way to inject formatted text into variables, functions and other PHP constructs.



## 14 PHP errors

While working with PHP, purposefully break scripts just to see the error messages that pop up. In time, you'll come to recognise the different errors and what causes them. Having this knowledge will help you a lot when you come across errors that you didn't expect.



## 15 Get comfy with Arrays

Arrays are one of the most important structures in PHP. Arrays are so powerful that every modern language has them! PHP Arrays are either indexed Arrays or associative Arrays. Arrays are used all over PHP, so you must get comfortable using them.



## 16 PHP's function library

Don't waste time writing code that's already been written! Spend time digging into the vast collection of PHP functions. Visit the PHP function library at: [www.php.net/manual/en/langref](http://www.php.net/manual/en/langref) and try new functions every so often. Remember the top three rules: reuse, reuse and reuse.



## 17 Connect to MySQL

PHP can connect with many databases. That said, 99% of us will just need to connect to MySQL. A few ways exist to connect to MySQL. The first way to connect to MySQL is using the classic procedural method – it works on all PHP enabled servers and is easy to use.



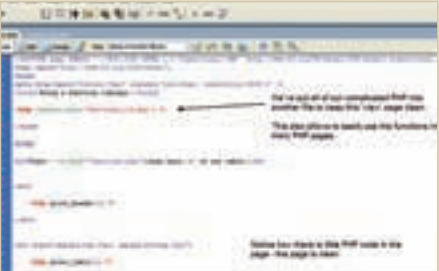
## 18 Connect using OO

With the release of PHP5, it's only natural that an Object-Oriented method of connecting to MySQL should appear. This method is found in the new MySQLi extension. MySQLi support new features besides an OO interface like: prepared statements and secure connections with SSL.

## TECHNIQUE

### An external function library

Let's dig deeper at using functions to package up code, for the sake of code reuse and cleaning up pages



#### 01 The hidden code

Modern-day PHP programming theory is to keep the viewable PHP pages as free from code as possible. The idea is that you want to make it as hard as possible for web designers to break anything!



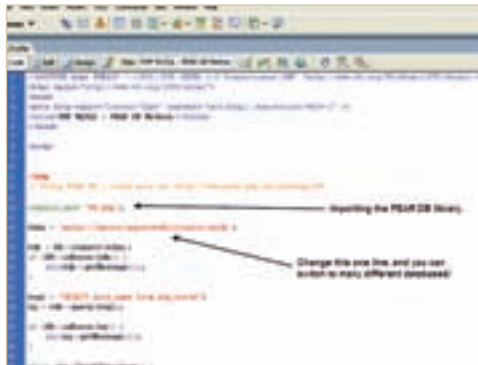
#### 02 The function library

Our function library contains the bulk of the PHP code. By placing the 'meat' of the code in a separate file, you can use these functions multiple times in the same page, and in different pages.



#### 03 The View

With relatively simple PHP logic (in the functions), you can change not only the look but also the structure of a page. We've kept the examples simple, but we're sure you can imagine all the possibilities.



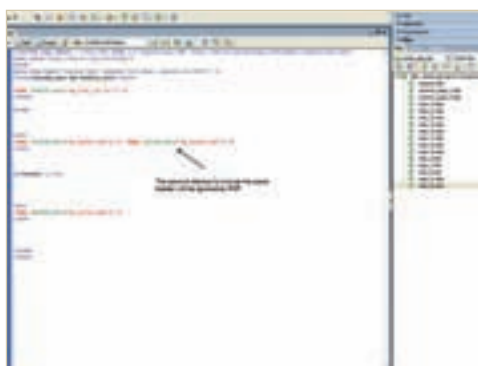
### 19 PEAR libraries

The first two methods assume that you'll always be connecting to MySQL. If you want to be a little more flexible, you need to use the PEAR libraries that harmonise the interaction with any database. Then if you need to switch from MySQL, just change one line of code.



### 21 Include() and require()

'Include()' and 'require()' allow to include/insert code into your PHP pages, therefore allowing you to create reusable chunks of code such as headers and footers. Include() and require() allow you to reuse PHP code across many pages that are key to function libraries and OOP in PHP.



### 23 Include/require once

If a program uses include() or require() to include the same file twice, PHP will happily load the same files where you could have problems like functions being redefined, or HTML blocks being printed twice. 'include\_once()' and 'require\_once()' will skip successive attempts.



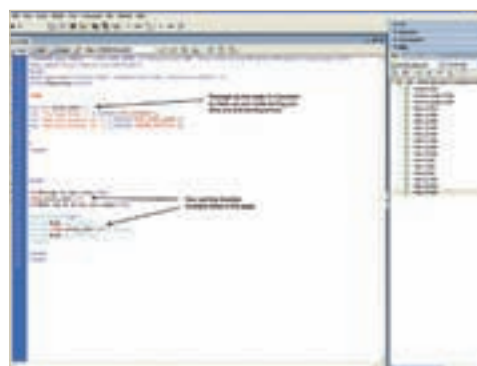
### 20 Learn to use PEAR

PEAR provides much more than a database abstraction layer. It provides a whole range of useful PHP objects that you can use in your own PHP work. PEAR is an important extension in PHP. To learn more about it, check out PEAR's website at [www.pear.php.net](http://www.pear.php.net).



### 22 Error messages

Include() and require() work the same, except, if require() throws up a fatal error, PHP will stop processing the page if it can't find the file. Whereas include(), will display a warning message but will continue to process the page. Name the file with any extension: .html or .php, etc.



### 24 Reuse code

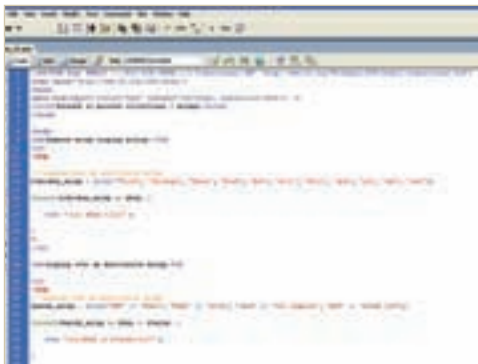
The easiest way to reuse code in your PHP scripts is by creating your own custom functions. When you have some code that you can use in more than one PHP page or project, it's time to 'wrap' that code up into a function so that you can more easily use and reuse it.





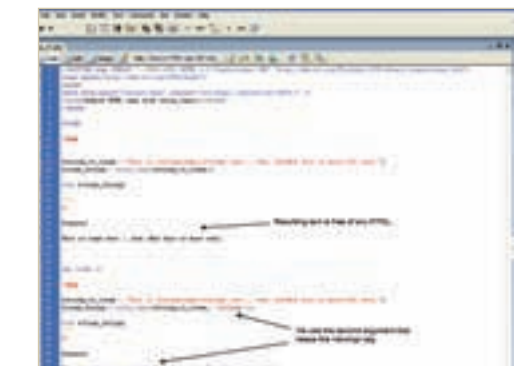
## 25 Extend the time limit

Sometimes you may have a PHP script that'll take longer than PHP's default time limit (30 seconds) – perhaps you're sending an e-newsletter, for example. In these situations, you may want to tell the PHP engine to go beyond its built-in limit using the 'set\_time\_limit()' function.



## 26 Use PHP's foreach()

PHP's 'foreach()' is a powerful and simple way to loop through Arrays with a minimal amount of code. Remember that Arrays are used everywhere in PHP: for form processing, database result sets, etc – so this is important stuff.




## 27 Remove HTML tags

'Strip\_tags()' remove HTML tags from a string of text. This is used typically to protect against a hack-attack that people might attempt when filling out forms that your scripts are processing. The function can also take a second argument where you can specify tags to leave in the string.

## IN DETAIL

## Organising PHP code more efficiently

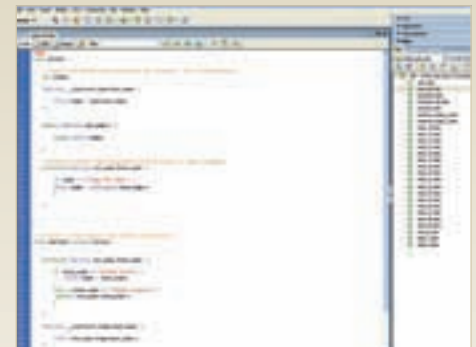
As we mentioned before, PHP is a vast language that has had a bumpy and colourful past. Smart PHP programmers inject structure into their code to save time and money

 **THE ULTIMATE GOAL** of programming is to write software using reusable, prefabricated chunks of code, rather than having to write your own. PHP goes a long way by providing a very powerful and rich collection of functions, constructs and objects that are designed to make web applications easy to build.

Though PHP comes (out-of-the-box) with a great toolset, PHP programmers need to expand on that base and build up a collection of their own useful functions. Function libraries are great, but they don't help much when it comes to providing structure to a web application. Object-Oriented programming (OOP) takes the concept of code reuse to whole new level, way beyond what simple functions can do alone.

We strongly suggest that you explore OOP concepts in PHP and start creating your own PHP objects. In no time at all, you'll have a nice collection of reusable code that'll speed you along with your PHP programming. In the previous issue of *Web Designer* we explored OOP in PHP. If you can't find that issue, visit [www.killerphp.com](http://www.killerphp.com), where you'll find video tutorials on Object-Oriented programming. The tutorials on this site are designed to teach total beginners, so you should find it easy enough to start your journey down the OOP path.

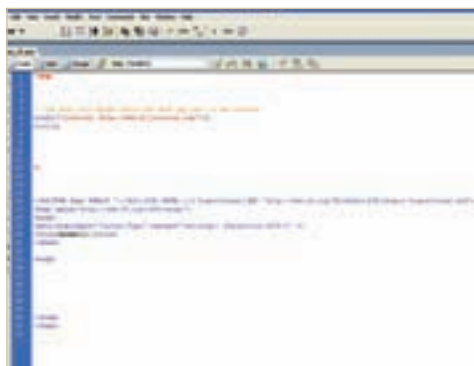
The PHP community is now speeding away from old-school procedural PHP programming to OOP. Many object oriented frameworks (eg, ZendFramework, PEAR, cakePHP, etc) have sprung up and are worth exploring because they'll save you a lot of time in the end. One advantage that code libraries provide, is that you'll have fewer bugs in your code. As you use more of your own (or better yet, someone else's) functions or objects, you'll essentially be swapping in bug-tested code for untested new code. To speed up production and to make your life easier, it makes sense to build up a collection of reusable and bug-free code.



*OOP uses objects that combine behaviour (functions) and state (variables) in one package*



*Like with simple function libraries, by having most of your PHP contained in objects, you keep your views clean*



## 28 Redirect with header()

The 'header()' function allows you to insert raw HTTP headers so you can do things like set the response type. The most common use of header() is to redirect users with 'location'. After you call it to redirect someone, use 'exit()' to stop the script from processing the page any further.

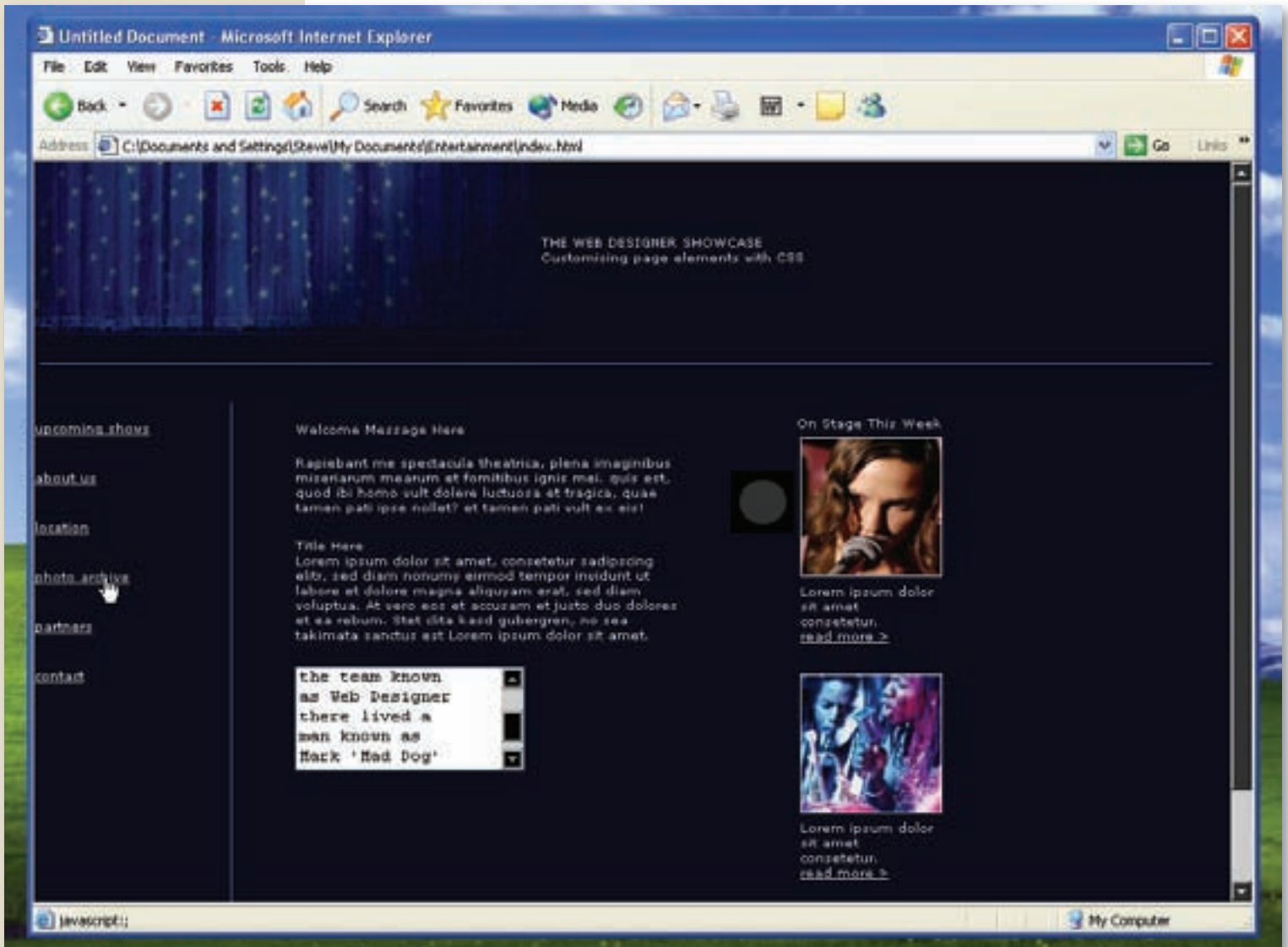


## 29 Escape the slashes

There are certain characters that would cause problems if you tried to insert them into a database without escaping them. The 'addslashes()' function will automatically add the slashes that'll escape (make safe) the text for insertion into the database. 'Stripslashes()' removes the slashes.







### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

Tutorial files:  
N/A

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

To apply CSS to common page elements

#### TIME REQUIRED

1 hour

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Customising page elements with CSS tricks

DISCOVER HOW TO STYLE VISIBLE AND HIDDEN PAGE ELEMENTS WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF SOME IMAGINATIVE CSS TECHNIQUES

**IN ESSENCE** A web page is a collection of elements that are brought together, arranged, tweaked and assembled into the final build. This has long been the domain of HTML and, to a certain degree, still is. However, the adoption of CSS has slimlined the page-building process, and given designers and developers a new tool to play with. The beauty of CSS is that it can be applied to any established tag, plus there's the option to create and customise your very own classes.

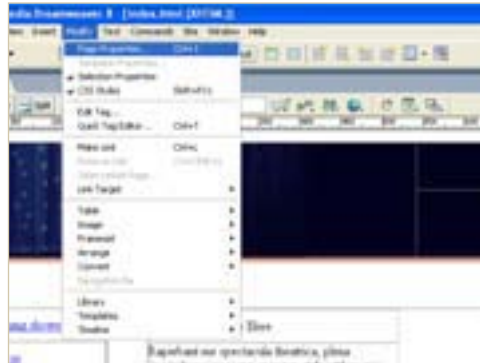
Included in this setup are visible and hidden page elements that are given the CSS treatment throughout this tutorial. We've taken some of the more common elements, including margins, body text, scrollbars, background images and links, and applied some simple CSS. This gives the element a generic all-encompassing value that's then applied throughout the page. This, in turn, will provide leaner, meaner, search-friendly documents that'll banish tag heavy pages forever.



## YOUR EXPERT

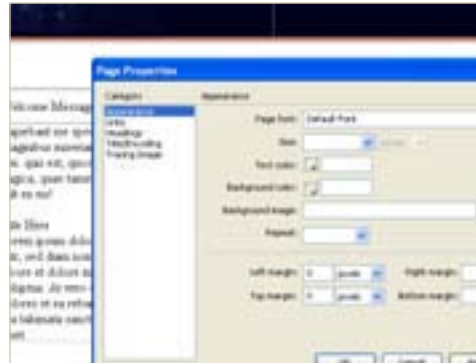
Steve Jenkins is a keen designer and developer who started creating websites after attending Bournemouth University and loves tackling the most testing of Dreamweaver problems. To see a sample of Steve's work, take a visit to [www.thesouthend.co.uk](http://www.thesouthend.co.uk).

# Customising page elements with CSS tricks



## 01 The Modify menu

We're going to start with a simple basic site with tables, text and images. The first element to be modified is the margins of the page, to remove any white space between the page and the browser. To start, head to Page Properties via the Modify menu.



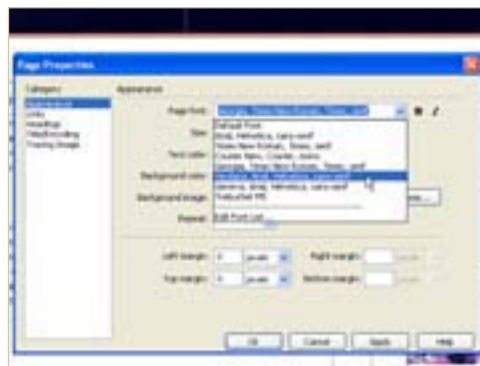
## 02 Margins

The Appearance category contains the page's collection of margins. Which margins are chosen depends on the design of the page. If it's to be a single central column only, the Top margin needs to be set to 0. If the page is to be placed top and left, then both these need to be set to 0.



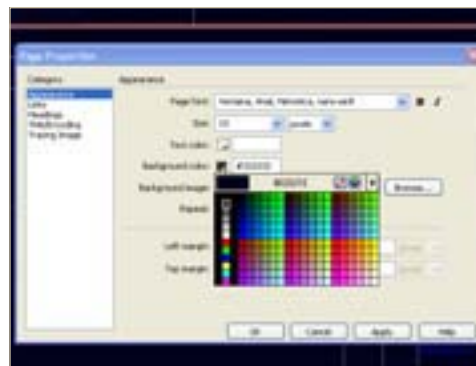
## 03 Default font

The Appearance category also contains several other elements that can be defined at the same time. One of the more obvious elements is the Page font. Select the Default Font from the drop-down list and then decide on the size, 10 or 12 pixels is very often the standard option.



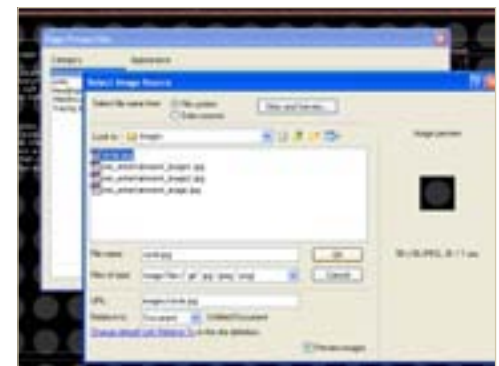
## 04 Font selection

When selecting a font it's good practice to choose a common font that resides on the majority of systems. If the chosen font doesn't exist, the page will display a substitute, affecting the overall design of the page. Popular choices include Arial, Verdana and Trebuchet MS.



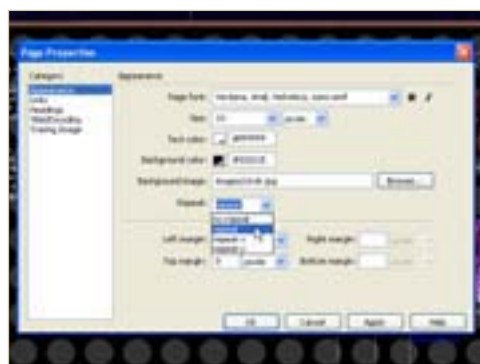
## 05 Add some colour

At this point it's a good idea to define the text colour and background colour to ensure that they don't clash. By default the background colour of a document is set to white. To change this simply select a colour from the accompanying list. The same applies to the text colour.



## 06 Background images

An alternative to a single background colour is a background image. Decide on an image and click Browse to locate it. By default the selected image will repeat across the page vertically and horizontally. Remember to select an image that will not compromise the font colour.



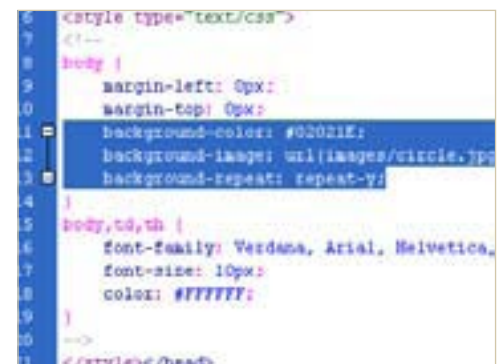
## 07 Repeat, repeat

The Repeat option gives greater control over how a background image is displayed. To display only a single instance of the chosen image select 'no-repeat' from the drop-down list. The 'repeat' option is the default option and will display the image vertically and horizontally.



## 08 Repeat X and Y

The Repeat drop-down list contains two further options in the shape of 'repeat-x' and 'repeat-y'. Selecting repeat-x will place the image across the top of the page in single file. Selecting repeat-y will place the image vertically to the left from the top to the bottom of the page.



## 09 Background options

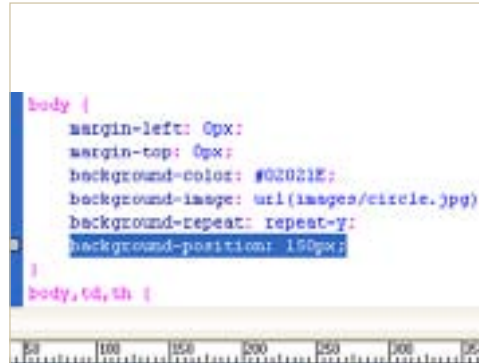
The default options are a little restrictive and CSS provides a command that allows more control over the positioning of the image. Head to the Code view and locate the Body class. This'll contain the previously selected background options including colour, image and repeat option.





## 10 Background position

To position the repeating image in a different place, add a new value. Create a new line under 'background-repeat: repeat-y'; and add the following 'background-position: center;'. Replacing center with an alternative, ie, left, right, will place the image in the appropriate position.



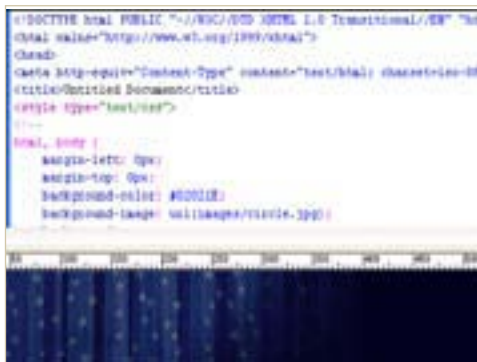
## 11 Positive positioning

The 'background-position: value' uses a set of predefined positions as mentioned in the previous step. However, these don't give precise positioning. To achieve a precise position the use of pixel measurements is needed. Instead of 'center' a measurement such as 150 pixels can be used.



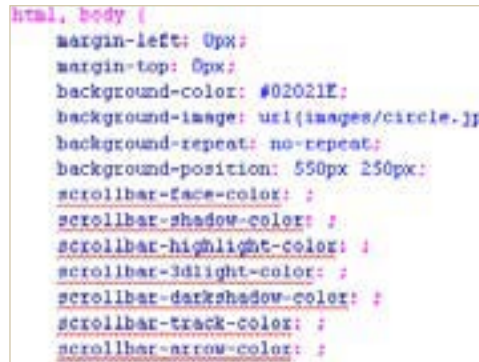
## 12 Absolute positioning

To position a background image the CSS code needs to be modified. The 'background-repeat: value' first needs to be set to 'no-repeat'. The 'background-position:' then needs the precise location. Add the position, 550 x 250px – the first value is vertical, second horizontal.



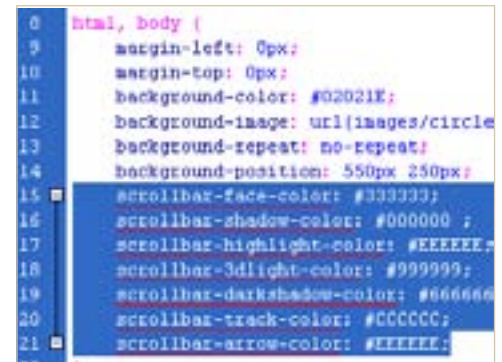
## 13 Colouring scrollbars

CSS allows for the manipulation of scrollbars (only in IE5.5+ for Windows). Adding the right code can change the various elements to suit the page. The first step is to add to the body class already established. Go to Code view and add HTML to work with the Body class as shown.



## 14 Adding the code

A scrollbar is made up of a number of different elements, all of which are customisable. These include face-color, shadow-color, highlight-color, arrow-color, (all preceded by scrollbar) and more. So first the code components shown need to be placed inside the 'html, body' class.



## 15 Scrollbars explained

The main components of the scrollbar are the following: 'scrollbar-face-color', 'scrollbar-track-color' and 'scrollbar-arrow-color'. Face-color is the colour of the scroll itself, track-color is the background and arrow-color is the scroll arrow colour.



## 16 Seen in action

When adding the code to colour the scrollbar, a good knowledge of hexadecimal colour codes will go a long way to getting it right. Alternatively check the colour codes before you start. Once in place you need to save the page and preview in your browser to see it in action.



## 17 Form elements

Adding the scrollbar code shown in the previous steps also affects the form element text area. Any form that contains a 'textarea' within a page with the code in place, and instigates the use of scrollbars – ie, more lines than defined – will have their scrollbars defined as the main page.



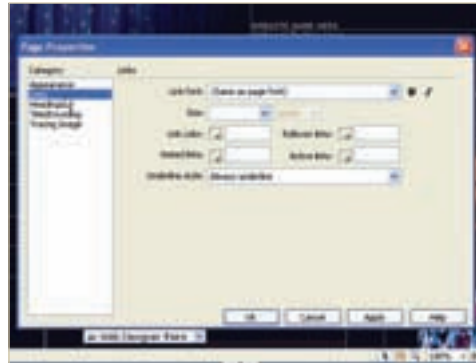
## 18 Different class

To stop all scrollbars being the same, a new class can be created and applied to the textarea element. Switch to Code view and add a new class, ie, scrolltext with brackets. Now copy the scrollbar code used in the previous step into the new class ready for customisation.



## 19 New colour, new class

Now adjust the hexadecimal colour codes for the new class, remembering to carefully choose the colour codes first. Now save the page and head back to the Design view and select the textarea on the page. Now select the new rule from the Class drop-down list.



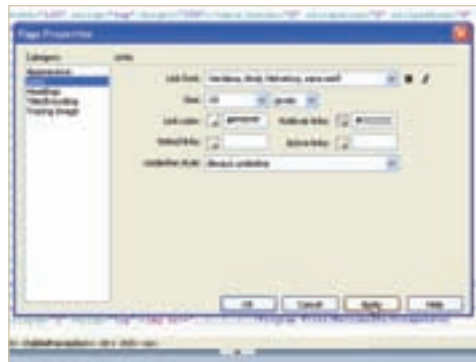
## 20 Lovely links

Hyperlinks are essential elements of any page and need to be given careful consideration when designing a site. To create the necessary CSS code in Dreamweaver, first head to the Modify menu and select Page Properties. Now switch to the Links Category to view the available options.



## 21 Link decisions

First select the font and size to be used for links, this is commonly the same as the body text. The first step, and perhaps the most important, is selecting the 'Link color', it should contrast well against the background colour. More often than not it will be the same colour as the body text.



## 22 Link options

'Rollover links' gives users the option to select another link colour that's activated when the mouse cursor passes over the link. 'Visited links' provides the colour that a link will change to after it has been visited. 'Active links' provides the colour of the link of the page being visited.



## 23 Border rules

Borders can be applied to tables, images, paragraphs, etc and come in a variety of guises. To create border styles in Dreamweaver first create a New CSS Rule and name it to open the CSS Rule definition dialog window. Here you'll see the Border Category, click to select.



## 24 Dot, dash, double

Border presents Style, Width and Color as the elements that can be applied. First is Style, which presents a number of options such as dotted, dashed, double, etc. Select the desired style and activate, or click the 'Same for all' to apply it to all sides of a border.

## TECHNIQUE

## Aligning page elements

Here we demonstrate how to align common page elements with the help of some simple CSS

```
h1, h2, h3 {  
    font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;  
    color: #FFFFFF;  
    text-align: center;  
}
```

## 01 Basic alignment

To align an element such as text, CSS provides 'text-align'. This can then have the value 'center', 'left' or 'right' added, to position the text. This will need to be applied to a tag or class such as h1, h2, h3 or p (paragraph) to work effectively.

```
h1, h2, h3 {  
    font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;  
    color: #FFFFFF;  
    margin-left: auto;  
    margin-right: auto;  
}
```

## 02 Alternative ideas

An alternative to the CSS in the previous step is to make use of the margins. For example, h1, h2, h3 {margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;}. When both the margins are set to 'auto', the element is automatically centred inside the parent element, ie, h1.

```
h1, h2, h3 {  
    color: #FFFFFF;  
    margin-left: auto;  
    margin-right: auto;  
}
```

## 03 Table alignment

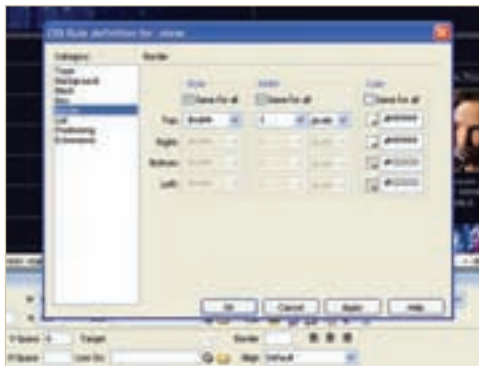
To align a table, first place the table as the child of a DIV element, ie, <div class="center">HTML table code here</div>. The CSS needed to define the table is as follows: .center table {width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;}





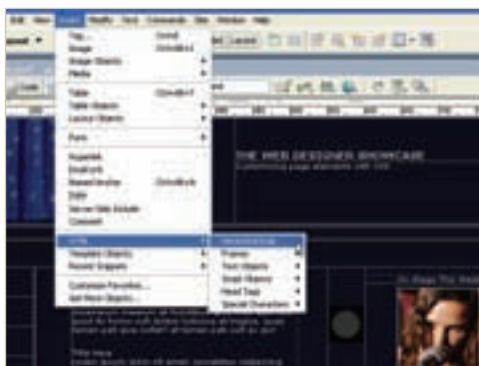
## 25 Border width

Width offers a number of solutions to creating the border outline. By default, the Width drop-down list offers three predefined sizes, thin, medium and thick. For more control select 'value' then enter a size, eg, 1, plus the chosen measurement type, ie, pixel.



## 26 Border colour

Select from the Color palette and apply to all sides. Alternatively, this border element is often changed to create a shadow effect. Add a different colour to Left and Bottom. The new border class can be applied to get away from the default black border for images.



## 27 Horizontal Rule

This page is not used as much as it should be due to the lack of options, but CSS can resolve this. First insert the standard Horizontal Rule via Insert>HTML and view. Now switch to Code view, add the following class: 'hr' with brackets. Save the page.

## IN DETAIL

## Say goodbye to those table layouts

The advent of CSS has brought with it a host of advantages, none more so than CSS-P. Combined with DIV tags, pages can now be precisely positioned, lightweight and search-engine friendly

**THROUGHOUT THE TUTORIAL** we've concentrated on the more common elements that populate a web page. We've demonstrated how CSS can manipulate and ultimately improve the design process. This introduction has only touched the surface of the power of CSS. It has so much more to offer the designer, including the much-vaunted tableless layout.

Tables have long been the staple diet for many web designers, but CSS offers an alternative. The use of CSS and DIV tags can achieve the same table-based layout effects, but has several advantages over the standard HTML page. It'll reduce HTML code noticeably, which in turn gives faster page downloads. It's the combination of CSS and DIV tags that will eliminate the table forever. The DIV tag is defined and positioned via the CSS Rule. All CSS can be hand-coded into the HEAD of the page or a style sheet, but thankfully Dreamweaver provides some assistance.

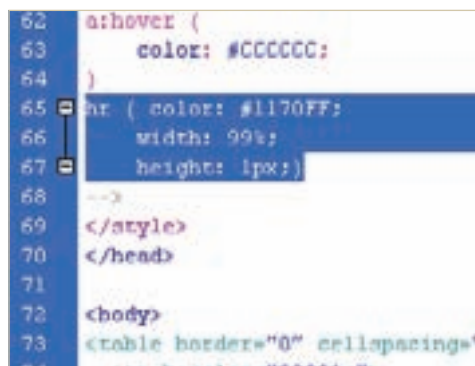
Head to the CSS panel, Window>CSS Styles, and click the New CSS Rule icon to start the process. Now select the Advanced Selector Type and name the element '#header' and Define in>This document only. Press OK to open the CSS Rule definition window and click the Positioning Category. The first option to define is the Type, we've chosen Absolute for precise positioning. Next the Width and Height of the tag need to be decided, select Value and add the desired number. Now do the same for Placement. This'll produce the necessary CSS to position the DIV element as shown here. '#header {position: absolute; top: 0px; left: 0px; width: 800px; height: 100px;}'. If the tag is to have a background colour, select the Background Category, choose a background colour and press Apply. With the CSS defined, head to the Insert menu and select Layout Objects>Div Tag. Now select 'header' from the ID drop-down list, and press OK to view the precisely positioned DIV tag. Repeat the process until you have all the elements you need in place.



Define the width and height of the DIV tag before deciding upon the exact placement and background colour

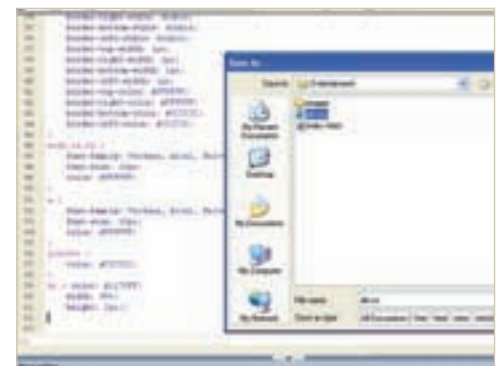


With the header DIV tag in place it's time to start creating the rest of the page layout



## 28 Give it colour

To give the standard Horizontal Rule something more than grey, add the following line, 'color: #1170FF', to the 'hr' class remembering to select your own hexadecimal colour code. The width and height values will also need to be added and defined before saving the code.

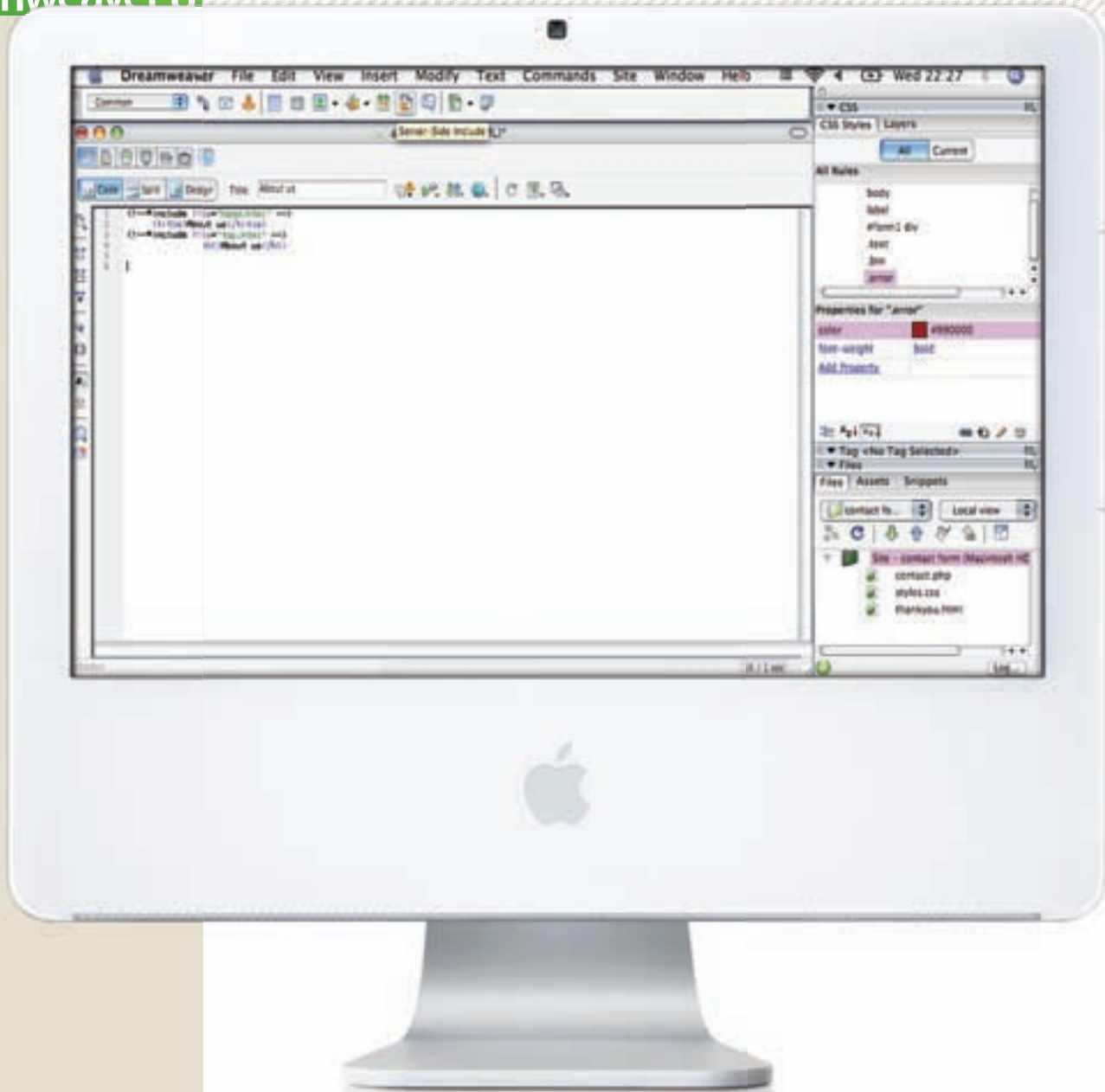


## 29 Style sheet

All the CSS we've created has been embedded into the <head> of the page. This effectively makes it only available to a single document. The simple solution is to copy all the code between the <style> tags into a new CSS file. Head to New>Basic page>CSS, copy the code and save.







### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
layout.shtml  
head.html and more

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Learn how to use Server Side Includes in Apache or with ASP or PHP

#### TIME REQUIRED


60 minutes

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Use SSI to streamline website development

SERVER-SIDE INCLUDES MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO TURN AN ELEMENT THAT IS FEATURED ON ALL YOUR PAGES INTO A SINGLE FILE

 **IN MOST WEBSITES** there are certain elements that appear on all, or almost all, pages of the site. The header area of the page might contain a banner and top level navigation for example, which will be copied onto every new page created, to gain a consistent look across the whole site. If you need to make a change to one of those areas you need to open and update every page it appears on. If you're a Dreamweaver user you might use Templates to streamline this updating process,

however you still have to then re-upload all of your files. If this sounds too much like hard work and, let's face it, we could all do with a few time-saving tips, this tutorial will demonstrate how to make the repeated section of your pages into one separate file that can then be included in all of your pages. This means that if you need to make a change, you just have to update and upload that one file for the change to show up on every page it's included in.



## YOUR EXPERT

**Rachel Andrew** is a web developer and managing director of web consultancy [edgeofmyseat.com](http://edgeofmyseat.com). She's a member of the Web Standards Project. She's written a number of books including *Build Your Own Standards Compliant Website with Dreamweaver 8*.

# Use SSI to streamline website development



## 01 Apache SSI

We'll start by looking at standard Apache SSI, as these will be available on most UNIX-based web hosting. If you have Apache running on your own computer, you can also enable SSI to test locally. To do so, first open up the file 'httpd.conf', which is the Apache configuration file.



## 02 Enable includes

SSI are usually disabled by default, to enable them find the line that looks like:

**Options Indexes FollowSymLinks MultiViews**

If you search 'MultiViews' in your editor you should find it. Edit it to add 'Includes' to the end:

**Options Indexes FollowSymLinks MultiViews**

**Includes**

This tells Apache that you want Includes enabled in your default directory.



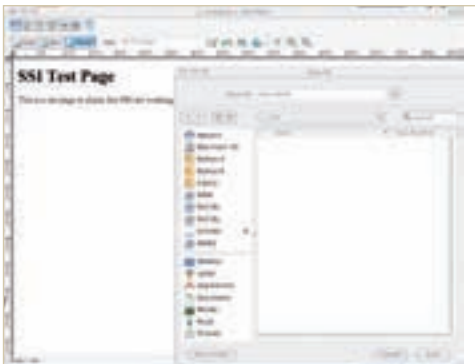
## 03 Add the handler

We also need to tell Apache we want to allow server-parsed files. Further down the file (search for server-parsed) you should find a section which looks like:

**#AddType text/html .shtml**

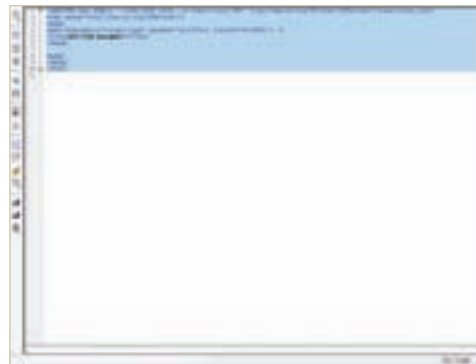
**#AddHandler server-parsed .shtml**

Uncomment the two lines by removing the '#' symbol. Then restart your Apache server so it picks up the changes.



## 04 Your first SSI

To test that you've set up Apache correctly, let's create an SSI. Create a new XHTML document and save it into a site that you can access through Apache. The file needs to be saved with the file extension '.shtml' – the handler that we specified to Apache would be used for pages with SSI.



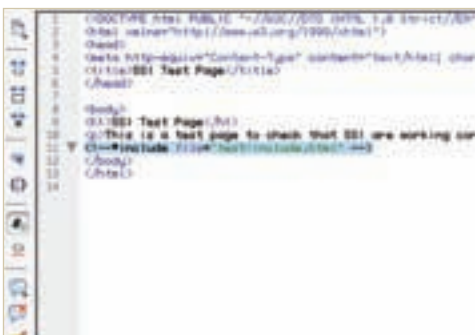
## 05 Create the include

Now create another new file in Dreamweaver, switch into Code View and delete everything from this file. An include file is a fragment so doesn't need its own DOCTYPE, body tags, or anything other than the content you wish to be included. Save this file as 'test-include.html'.



## 06 Adding text

Only the main document needs to be a '.shtml' page – the included files can have any file extension, '.html', '.inc', or even '.php' if your server supports it. Add some text to the include. It doesn't matter what, but make sure it's correct (X)HTML, as it'll be included in your main document.

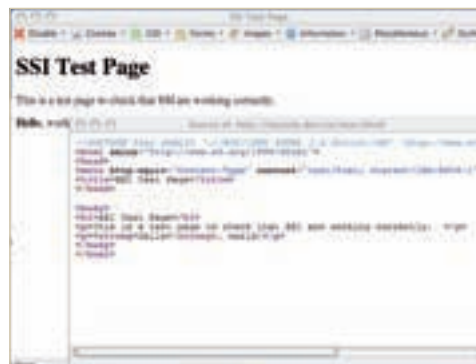


## 07 Include the file

An SSI include statement looks like an HTML comment. To include your file add the following to your main page:

**<!--#include file="test-include.html" -->**

You can add this directly into the code or using Dreamweaver, by clicking the Server Side Include button on the Common pane of the Insert toolbar.



## 08 Test the file

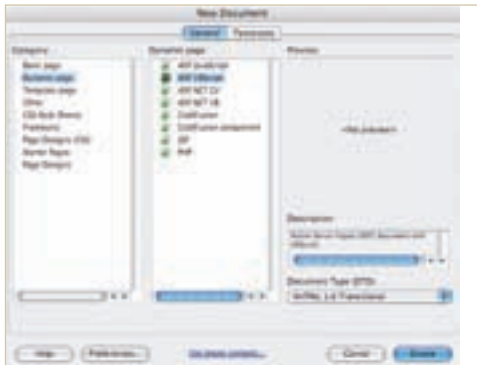
You can now test your file in a web browser. Go to your site using the URL of your local server (rather than just opening the page in a browser). You should see the text of the include on the page. View source and you'll see no hint that it was ever a separate file.



## 09 Common problems

If you see the include comment in the source when viewing it, then your server can't handle SSI or you're using '.html' instead of '.shtml' as the extension. Dreamweaver displays the file as part of your main document, so if it shows the include you know the path is correct.





## 10 Includes on IIS

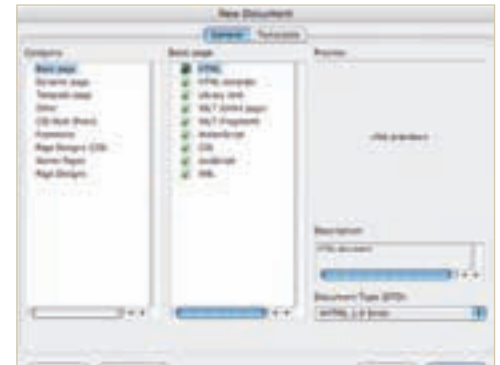
If you're using the Windows server IIS then you can still use SSI, however you'll need to save your page as an '.asp' page, unless you set up your IIS Server to parse '.shtml', which is less likely to be normal for your web host. ASP Includes use the same syntax as Apache SSI.



## 11 PHP Includes

If you're using PHP, it has a different syntax to include a file to ASP or plain SSI, but the end result is the same. In Dreamweaver create a page and save it with a '.php' extension. To include a file as we did using SSI, use the following line of code:

```
<?php include('test-include.html'); ?>
```



## 12 Includes in practice

Now we understand how includes work, let's look at how we might use them on a site. Create a new file and save it as 'layout.shtml' (or 'layout.asp' or '.php' depending on your server). We'll start by creating the layout on a single page, get that right before worrying about includes.



## 13 The layout

The layout can be found on the CD, or use a layout of your own. We've kept this simple, but included areas that you might find on a regular website: a content area, some main navigation and a footer. As with many sites, the navigation and footer will be the same on every page.



## 14 The first include

The first thing to do is select everything from the top of the page down to the title element. Copy it into a separate file and save it as 'head.html'. If working in PHP and ASP you could give this file a '.php' or '.asp' extension – it's entirely up to you.



## 15 Include the file

Delete the mark-up from the main document that you just added to 'head.html'. In its place, add an include using SSI/ASP, or the PHP method of including the file, depending on your server type. View the page in a web browser to check the file includes correctly.



## 16 The top include

Now select everything from just below the title (leaving the title on the page) right down to just above the content area. Copy this into a file named 'top.html' and include this file in your main document, in place of the now deleted content. This'll include our main navigation in this layout.



## 17 What about the title?

We could have made one include instead of two, but we left the title out so we can give each page a unique title for accessibility and SEO purposes. Using PHP or ASP we could deal with this by having the title as a variable, but this way works for SSI too.



## 18 The footer

We make our final include by selecting everything from below the final line of content, to the very bottom of the document and the closing </html> tag. Copy this content into a file and save it as 'bottom.html', and then include this file at the bottom of your page to replace the content.



## 19 The result

The final result, when viewed in your web browser shouldn't look any different from the page prior to you creating the includes. The server parses the SSI or PHP and joins all of the files together before serving them to the web browser. So the user is none the wiser.



## 20 Creating a new file

You can now use your 'layout.shtml' as a template. After saving it as a new file, all you need to do is edit the title and the content to create your new page. When you need to add a new navigation item, just add it to 'top.html' and it'll appear on all pages.



## 21 Parsing .html as .shtml

On an existing site with pages that already have a '.html' file extension, you might not want to make all pages '.shtml'. You can instruct your server to parse '.html' pages as '.shtml'. On your development server you can add: `AddHandler server-parsed .shtml .html`. This will force all HTML pages to be parsed for SSI.

## IN DETAIL

### Highlighting the current page

With your navigation now one file, you might wonder how best to highlight the current page the user is on. We look at some options in PHP and for SSI

ONCE YOU HAVE created a few pages using your includes, it might occur to you that you would like to be able to highlight the current page that the user is on. But now that the navigation is in one included file, how can you indicate to it which page it's included in? If you're using PHP or ASP (or other server side scripting language) then you can address this problem using the server side language. This is the preferable method if it's available to you. At the top of the page, set a variable indicating which page or section you're in, for example:

```
<?php $thispage = 'about'; ?>
Then in your navigation, check to see which page you're on:
<?php if($thispage == 'about') { ?>
<li class="cur">About us</li>
<?php } else { ?>
<li><a href="">About us</a></li>
<?php } ?>
```

You can then create a class for 'li.cur' with the different styling for current pages. You will need to give your include file, as well as the main file, a '.php' file extension in order to use this method. If you're just using plain SSI then you can use CSS selectors to highlight your navigation. To set this up, you'll need to have the opening <body> tag in the main document as opposed to being in your top include file. With a bit of reorganisation of code you can end up with the main document looking like this:

```
<!--#include file="head.html" -->
<title>Site layout</title>
</head>
<body id="about">
<!--#include file="top.html" -->
<h1>Welcome</h1>
```

Don't forget to take the </head> and <body> out of 'top.html'! Now add an id to the body element to identify the



Use CSS selectors to highlight the current page or section you're in

section that you're in:

```
<body id="about">
```

Now in the navigation you need to add a class to each li element that's the same name as the id applied to the section, so your navigation ends up looking like the following:

```
<ul>
<li class="about"><a href="">About us</a></li>
<li class="services"><a href="">Our
Services</a></li>
<li class="contact"><a href="">Contact Us</a></li>
</ul>
```

Then in the CSS apply the class only when the li class matches the body id:

```
#about #side li.about {
border-bottom: 2px solid #00CC00;
}
#about #side li.about a:link, #about #side
li.about a:visited {
color: #00CC00;
}
```

'Layout2.shtml' on the CD, and accompanying includes demonstrates this technique.



## 22 SSI on your web host

Your web host probably won't have all '.html' pages being parsed for SSI, but may allow you to add the above directive to a '.htaccess' file. You may also need to enable SSI in the first place. Do this by adding the lines we added to 'httpd.conf' to this '.htaccess' file to enable SSI.



## 23 The xbit hack

You can also tell Apache to parse '.html' files as SSI by way of the xbit hack, by adding the line:

```
XBitHack on
```

to your httpd.conf or .htaccess file. You then need to make files that must be parsed executable. You can find more information about this method at [www.html-faq.com/ssi/xbithack](http://www.html-faq.com/ssi/xbithack).



## London Eye www.londoneye.com



### TOP TIP



#### A style sheet from embedded code

When creating the rollover effect on text links, the appropriate code is placed in the <HEAD> of the page between a couple of script tags. The same applies for any other styles created while formatting text etc. While these styles are embedded in the document they'll only work with the open page. Head to the File menu and select New>Basic Page>CSS>Create, and save the page. Now copy the code between the style tags into the new CSS document and save. Then attach the new style sheet to all your pages.

**T**HE LONDON EYE, now sponsored by British Airways, has become a landmark London is famous for.

Located on the banks of the River Thames the 135m high observation wheel offers fantastic views across the capital. In the few years that the attraction has been open, it's had over 3.5 million visitors – averaging 10,000 a day. However, the Eye is a lot more than just a tourist attraction, it also hosts a wide variety of events, including corporate occasions and weddings.

The London Eye website portrays its message across a simple but functional base, with a clean, crisp layout. The main structure of the website is designed using many contemporary elements, including DIVs, layers and Flash. Navigation is spread across two elements, both making use of rollover techniques, but in different ways. The main menu bar uses a background colour to emphasis a visitor's position on the menu. A different background colour is assigned to each menu element. This in turn is the colour scheme for the selected page. The secondary menu is a little more understated, and simply uses a subtle shade of the text colour on rollover.

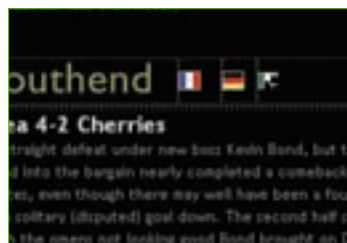
As it's an international attraction, the website incorporates a Language Selection menu. However, this probably isn't quite what visitors will be expecting. A click of the language icon simply reveals a PDF to read or download in the selected language.



## Language selection

English is not the only language to be spoken across these pages

As an international attraction, it only seems right that the site should be available in alternative languages. In the top-right corner of the home page the site has incorporated a Language Selection, which has a number of flag icons. These represent the available languages, including French, German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese. Clicking a selected icon however, doesn't reveal a new page with the text translated, but a six-page PDF file, therefore this is nothing more than a simple link to a PDF file. Dreamweaver doesn't include a specific command to insert PDF files. To



open a PDF file via a web page, first the link element – ie, text or image – needs to be selected. The location of the PDF file then needs to be placed into the Link box, eg, language/german.pdf, in the Property Inspector.

## Navigation matters

Change the colour of text links and remove underlines on rollover

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](http://www.thesouthend.co.uk).

## Site doctor

# Diagnosing the tricks behind dotcom designs



## STEP BY STEP

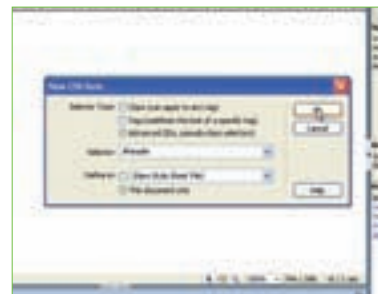
### Layout objects

Discover how to define a DIV tag ready for the creation of table-free design



#### 01 Create CSS

When you're using a DIV tag, it's always a good idea to first of all create the required CSS rules that'll be used later on. To do this, head to the Windows menu and select CSS Styles, followed by New CSS Rule. Once you've located this, set the Selector Type to Advanced.



#### 02 Define ID

The CSS Rule now needs to be given a name. We think it's advisable to create the style for the DIV as an ID. This is done by placing a hash symbol in front of the style name, for example, '#header'. Now select Define in>This document only, and press OK.



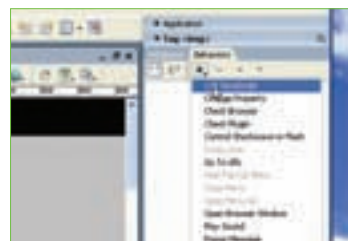
#### 03 CSS Rule definition

Now Dreamweaver will give you the option to set a number of elements for the #header DIV tag. These include: Type, Background, Border and, the invaluable, Positioning. Now add your dimensions to dictate the size of the DIV tag. Once you've done that, use Placement to position it on the page.

## Accessibility options

Enlarge or minimise the text on the page for all to enjoy

Accessibility is an essential element in any website. In line with this, the London Eye website has incorporated an Enlarge Text feature with three options: Increase font size, Reset font size and Minimise font size. These three options allow users to adjust the default size, which also adjusts all the elements of the page, including the images for example. Plus there's an option to reset to the default size if needed. This function is operated by JavaScript, and uses the onClick command to activate it. To add JavaScript in Dreamweaver, first select the text or image to activate



the code. Head to the Behaviours panel (Windows>Behaviours), click the Plus button and select Call JavaScript. Now enter the function name or code, press OK and then select an event from the drop-down list.

## Virtual Tour

Get the inside track with this cute animated tour

The Virtual Tour is a little misleading in the true sense of the word. Instead of the traditional 360 degree view of a room or location, the site has introduced a standard Flash movie file. This gives users pretty much the same experience, but approaches the subject matter from a different angle. Placement of the Flash movie is aided by JavaScript. However, if you have an SWF file ready to go, it's a simple matter of inserting it into the appropriate part of the page. Head to the Insert menu and select Media>Flash and locate the SWF file. This'll be placed into the



page as a blank grey box with a host of properties. To view the SWF file hit the Play button in the Property Inspector. Other properties allow for the movie to be resized, manually or via the Property Inspector.



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Badly  
brandedNEW STUDY SHAMES ONLINE  
FIRMS WHO DON'T DELIVER A  
CONSISTENT IDENTITY ACROSS  
THEIR INTERNET PRESENCES

**GIVING OUT** the correct and memorable image of your business could ultimately make or break the trust we all want from our customers. Strangely though, new research findings from web content engineering specialists Magus, suggests that the majority of online firms don't treat this area with enough respect. Its studies have showed that leading global companies are incorrectly implementing more than 80 per cent of their own brand guidelines, despite the claims that accepted best practice methodologies have been followed in most cases. Examples from several major dotcom companies, boasting a multi-market web presence, were shown to have alarmingly high levels of divergence from fundamental brand guidelines and web standards. In fact, 23 per cent of the guidelines identified were being contravened while customers were confronted with up to seven standards-related errors on every single page. "These findings demonstrate the real problems faced by global organisations in maintaining a consistent brand identity across a large web presence," admits Magus' CEO Simon Lande. "Erosion of standards undermines trust, and ultimately devalues brand equity."

In response, Magus has launched its own ActiveStandards monitoring and analysis service for automating the control of online branding. Initially piloted as a solution for consumer goods giant Unilever



Unilever and Magus CEO Simon Lande understand brand importance online

during their 2005 site rebranding initiative, the system is a wholly unique application that sits alongside a company's own content management system (CMS). Brand guidelines can be defined and used to control their implementation. Alongside additional facilities for verifying best practice web standards, such as legal issues, accessibility, usability, and search engine optimisation. "It's the perfect solution for global companies who need to make sure their brand is consistent across our global web presence," enthuses Unilever's communications director Tim Godbehere. "It focuses on fault identification and resolution, helps site managers worldwide, and makes sure the Unilever brand is consistent across our global web presence." More information can be located at [www.magus.co.uk](http://www.magus.co.uk).

## Zimki makes Java easy

BUILDING POWERFUL WEB APPLICATIONS NEEDN'T BE ONLY  
AVAILABLE TO THOSE WITH EXTENSIVE CODING KNOWLEDGE

**WEB 2.0** was dismissed by many as mere hyperbole, but we're starting to see its potential shine through across many different applications, including eCommerce. However, if you don't necessarily possess the technical prowess needed to jump on the bandwagon, then a new service called Zimki could be well worth

investigating. Essentially a developer network and web-based JavaScripting engine for building rich interactive sites, the service is free to join but charges for API calls, storage and bandwidth on a pay-as-you-go basis. The idea behind the service is to relieve developers of the mundane task of setting up security provisions, hosting and backups; so they can concentrate on the pure joy of building. You'll still need a fairly decent knowledge of scripting to take full advantage, but the theory is that Zimki should provide an intuitive and accessible gateway to creating applications like blogs, shopping baskets, photo uploaders, music notation tools, etc. The compromise is that the fruits of your efforts must reside on the Zimki network, although plans for making the service somewhat more flexible do seem to be in the pipeline for next year. With a stack full of libraries and a neat three-step introduction sequence for getting you acquainted with the service, we certainly feel that Zimki and similar services could be highly influential in shaping the next-generation internet landscape. Make sure you find out more by visiting [www.zimki.com](http://www.zimki.com), now!



The Zimki development portal could provide the ideal environment for those hoping to build applications like this shopping cart



# SEASONAL SELLING

More people are choosing cyberspace over the high street, so make sure your site's up to the task

**MILLIONS OF BRITONS** are now shopping online. The internet accounted for half of all the retail sales in the past year. According to the latest figures from the Internet Advertising Bureau, consumers bought £19.2 billion worth of goods online in 2005, up 32 per cent on the previous year. Focusing on Christmas alone, shoppers spent almost £5 billion in the lead up to Christmas 2005. With this Christmas set to outstrip these figures, ensuring your eBusiness can cope with the festive demand that'll be placed on it, is a commercial imperative you simply can't ignore.

## TRAFFIC TROUBLE

Seasonal demand for services and products is part of every business's commercial calendar. However, many enterprises – particularly micro businesses trading exclusively on the internet – often have little forward planning in place to cope with the increased traffic that's inevitable at these times of year. As Richard Longhurst, director of Lovehoney ([www.lovehoney.co.uk](http://www.lovehoney.co.uk)) points out, as a business owner you have little excuse if your company falls victim to increased demand for its goods or products: "At the risk of sounding like Baden-Powell, the general advice is to be prepared. Whether it's Christmas, Mother's Day or Halloween, these happen at the same time every year, so there's really no excuse for being surprised."

Being prepared is echoed by Christian Robinson, MD of Firebox.com who says: "The key to a successful website is to anticipate the surge in advance. Here at Firebox.com we've developed all our systems in-house. This means that if we need to change, adapt or improve our site we're able to do so extremely quickly. It also means we can develop new systems in time for key seasons such as Christmas. Most SMEs should be able to predict how busy they'll be during peak periods through sales forecasting."

The key to coping with any seasonal rush is to plan as early as possible. Christian Robinson continues: "Here at Firebox we spend all year planning for Q4 – each area of the business is broken down to anticipate the effects of this extremely busy period. This includes: buying, merchandising, customer services, fulfilment, marketing, finance, PR, web design and technology. Each team interconnects, so we all have to work to a strict calendar to meet planning deadlines in order to make the machine run as smoothly as possible. For us, the key element here is the customer – they should always receive a flawless service no matter what time of year it is."

The infrastructure that supports your website should also be looked at closely. Don't forget, as an internet-based business your technical systems can be your company's Achilles heel if you don't pay close enough attention to how your systems operate, and how they would cope with even a small increase in demand. As Stephen Holford, director of product marketing at Fasthosts ([www.fasthosts.co.uk](http://www.fasthosts.co.uk)) describes: "There are several things that businesses can do to ensure their website's performance, and these relate to the importance of the site's up-time. First, all businesses should make sure that their website is hosted by a quality web hosting company. These companies should have redundant power and internet connectivity to ensure that if there's a failure in their regular supply, they can switch over to an alternative without disrupting the business's website. Second, businesses should look at load balancing their websites. This means the website is hosted on two or more servers, and so if there is increased demand for the website, the load can be shared between multiple servers."

Don't forget that the infrastructure that your site is built on has to do much more than simply host your website. You'll need your

"TURNING CONSUMERS AWAY ONCE THEY HAVE MADE THE DECISION TO BUY IS COMMERCIAL SUICIDE"



*Firebox.com is a site that's well prepared for Christmas and with the festive season upon us, there's really no excuse not to be*



servers to direct the processing of payments for instance to your service provider. But what if your server went down for even a short time? You must build in contingency plans for every eventuality. One of the main reasons that shoppers state prevents them from completing an order is trolley systems that are either inefficient, or that are slow and not versatile enough.

A recent report from SciVisum, a UK-based website testing specialist, makes stark reading. They looked closely at how trolley systems performed and found many sites lacking. Deri Jones, CEO, SciVisum says: "UK eCommerce sites are slapping customers in the face, rather than shaking them by the hand. Turning consumers away once they've 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's likely that many online managers are completely unaware of the problems." Look closely at how you would cope if your trolley system had technical problems, as you don't want to stop any customers making a payment!

## LOGISTICS LOWDOWN

The customer-facing website that your business has developed, is only one component of your eBusiness. Often overlooked – but of equal importance – are the physical elements of your supply chain. Often, small ones in particular, businesses will concentrate their efforts in developing their website, but pay little attention to the supporting systems that it'll rely on. However, Stephen Holford of Fasthosts makes the point that it's easy to focus on the logistics of your business at the expense of the website that feeds these processes with orders: "Because the logistics of taking orders, fulfilling them and handling the distribution issues are time consuming and expensive, these are likely to be at the forefront of a business's thinking. Its website, once properly set up, needs little management in such ways and can often be overlooked. If it doesn't plan for increased traffic to its website, especially if it's one of its main channels, then it could be preparing the logistics for an increase in business that its website fails to deliver because it simply isn't scaled to cope with the traffic."

Ensuring that your business can meet its delivery promises is one of the most important aspects of exploiting seasonal

upturns in sales. Get this wrong and you could be living with the consequences for a very long time. Disappointed customers will voice their views loudly to anyone that'll listen. This negative publicity should be avoided at all cost. "On the logistics side, the peaks in demand mean you have to pick, pack and physically dispatch so many more orders that you may have to start thinking about weekend working, or shift working," comments Richard Longhurst of Lovehoney. "You may need to extend the normal working hours of your warehouse for instance. Equally, the management can't expect the pickers and packers to work longer hours if they aren't prepared to muck in themselves."

One excellent way of ensuring your business is set up and ready for the seasonal rush is to test your systems. Look at any historical data that you have and calculate what your likely increases will be. Put in place new systems, or expand the operations you already have to meet these new targets and run some tests.

This is something that Richard Longhurst avidly recommends to all businesses: "Test runs can be very useful. Smaller businesses could pick and pack say five times as many orders as they would normally do and see how their systems react to the extra throughput."

## "IF YOUR SITE FAILS, THEY'LL SIMPLY GO TO YOUR COMPETITORS AND BUY FROM THEM"

Seasonal upswings in trade are a fact of life for all businesses. With the online retail environment reaching maturity, your business must ensure it can cope with what can be massive increases in trade, over a very short space of time. Shoppers want to spend their money on your site, but as Deri Jones of SciVisum concludes, many eBusinesses still have a long way to go: "In eCommerce every transaction counts. It's the sporadic and unpredictable performance of websites that's the most worrying to users. Our study shows that websites are not coping with the heavier loads that occur day by day. Failing through inconsistency to support consumer-buying habits, and completely missing the boat when it comes to giving eConsumers a satisfactory, reliable experience. Online retailers need to test and monitor crucial site functionality or they'll lose customers to more nimble rivals." This view is supported by Stephen Holford

## SIX TIPS FOR A PROFITABLE & HAPPY E-CHRISTMAS

**01 Increased traffic** If there's anything worse than having no orders, it's having more than you can deal with. Delayed or unfulfilled orders result in unhappy customers who won't be coming back. On average, eCommerce sites see a rise in orders of 30 per cent in the Christmas period; although obviously this varies greatly. So if your sales are seasonally affected, make sure all your systems can cope with at least that level of increase. This includes having extra staff for getting orders out in time. And if you're planning any special promotions, allow for even more.

**02 Keep control of your store** In peak periods your stock position can change really quickly. You need to be able to respond immediately. You don't necessarily want a web developer setting the priorities for what products are online – only you really know your business. Then again, you may want to change prices, or specially promote slow-moving stock, or to substitute products when you get alternative supplies. You need to be able to add, modify and delete things yourself, at any time, day or night.

**03 Cater for last minute shoppers – promise what you can deliver**

Christmas shoppers fall into two camps: those who buy in September and those who buy after the 20 December. You need to make sure that your shipping can shape up. Make clear what the last day is when customers can order for delivery by Christmas. Ideally, put this on the

header or footer of every page in your store. Once the deadline has passed, change your message to make it clear that orders can't be fulfilled in time.

**04 Help customers who are in a rush**

Most online shoppers are in a hurry. When they come to your site, make the key information that they'll need as obvious as possible, particularly any special information relating to Christmas. Most of all, you must have a lightning-fast search capability. This should be able to match both by category and by price-range. Your eCommerce product must integrate the two. Search engines may be fine for text-based searching but they're very poor when you want a gift that costs less than £10 for, say, your eight-year-old niece.

**05 Delivering the goods** Make sure your logistics supplier can cope. It may be worth considering a courier for the peak period or special delivery. If deliveries do require a signature, or won't fit through a letterbox this often means that the parcel is returned to the depot until the customer arranges to collect it, which rather defeats the convenience of buying online. So give customers the opportunity to have a delivery to their work address to avoid delays.

**06 Thank your regulars** Remember that all important 'Thank You' Christmas card to all your regular customers. Perhaps it's gimmicky, but as a customer we like it when we get remembered. Or better still you could add a 'present' of a discount during January.

of Fasthosts who finishes by saying: "Making sure the online shopping system is built robustly, and thoroughly tested is key. If this is hosted on a high-quality server, then it can be built to withstand unexpected surges in traffic. Remember, the shopping cart is the route for customers buying your goods, if this doesn't work they'll simply go to your competitors and buy from them."

Planning is the key to dealing with seasonal shifts in trading patterns. If you have historical data analyse this carefully. Look at every aspect of your online business, from your site-hosting to your logistical processes. All these components must operate together seamlessly to give your customers a flawless service. Don't, under any circumstances, trust any element of your business to chance at these busy times. It's at peak times when your business will really be tested. Ensure your operations are up to the challenge.



# eCommerce inside view

## Interview: Dr Riaz Agha Falcon Websites Ltd



TO COINCIDE WITH A GREAT SET OF FLASH RESOURCES ON THIS MONTH'S CD, WE HAVE A WORD WITH DR RIAZ AGHA, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF FALCON WEBSITES LTD, ABOUT WHY ITS DIZZYING ARRAY OF WEB DEVELOPMENT SERVICES IS GIVING IT A COMPETITIVE EDGE IN THIS INDUSTRY

**Firstly, how would you describe the service that Falcon ([www.falconwebsites.com](http://www.falconwebsites.com)) provides?** We offer website design, hosting and marketing services to Startups, SMEs, Corporate clients, the Public Sector and are an outsourcing option for other website design firms. The websites we build for clients are custom-made, but we also have a range of templates for other website designers to use, enabling them to focus on their core competencies.

**How would you classify your majority customer base, and what kinds of requirements do they generally look for in your products?** Most of our customers are businesses looking for either a completely new website, or a redesign of an existing one. We're also interested in having more website design, PR and marketing agencies outsource to us. As an outsourcing option, we offer customisation services, good value and rapid turnaround. We listen carefully to our clients' needs, and assign them a dedicated project manager.

**In a web world where creative originality is so important, how much emphasis do you place on providing templates or bespoke services that can be easily tailored?** We agree that creative originality is paramount and our clients expect this of us. We provide a dual service of both full bespoke design, as well as templates that can be either 'off the shelf' or customised to the client's requirements.



Falcon Websites offers a broad range of services to the internet-eager, from web design to online marketing

**Which products or service types are proving most popular with Falcon punters these days?** Our most popular service is website design (including Flash and custom programming) but the vast majority of our clients end up hosting with us as well, and increasing numbers use our online marketing packages too. Simply having a website is not enough anymore, people also want large volumes of highly targeted traffic as well.

**From the little guy starting his first homepage, to the more serious eCommerce outfit, what price points do you have for delivering great site templates or services?** We custom build entire websites at prices starting from £499. Adding Flash, content management, eCommerce or log-in systems all adds to the price. Many people have started their own website design company from such outsourced custom design services.

**The templates you've provided for us have been specially designed by an in-house team. Can you tell us a little bit about that team and the experience you have?** We use a team of ten programmers and six designers, which ensures our websites are both functional and aesthetic. We also have a specialist team of four for search engine optimisation. Our depth of expertise and experience is evident by the fact that we're Adobe Solution Partners and Google Adwords Professionals. Our web designers embrace the latest software, accessibility guidelines and world wide standards from industry bodies such as the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). We can deliver solutions in over 20 programming languages, such as XHTML, CSS, XML, Adobe Flash, Adobe ColdFusion, Microsoft.NET and Java.

**Would you ever accept original template submissions from budding designers if they were suitable?** Absolutely, we welcome creative input from others and an exchange of ideas is always exciting.

**If you weren't doing what you do, what business would Falcon Websites take on instead and why?** We have a very broad range of services from website design, hosting and online marketing. Having diversified our range of services over the years, we're really focusing on delivering a quality service in all areas. We aim to become the preferred outsourcing option for many website designers, allowing them to focus on sales and marketing whilst we use our expertise to deliver high quality websites.

### PROFILE: FALCON WEBSITES LTD

FALCON WEBSITES LTD is an independent, privately held limited company, that launched in 2004. It aims to provide a comprehensive range of website design, hosting and marketing services to Startups, SMEs, corporate clients, the Public Sector, and as an outsourcing option for other website design firms. We ensure that each website we build maximises its aesthetic appeal and functionality and allows for seamless navigation of content. Over the past year we've produced over 30 websites and Flash presentations. Our website designers embrace the latest software, accessibility guidelines, usability recommendations and world wide web standards from industry bodies such as the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). We're able to deliver solutions in over 20 programming languages and we always assign a dedicated project manager to each client (providing a single point of contact). We don't use templates, always design bespoke, and provide comprehensive after-sales support. We're a registered member of the UK Web Design Association, Adobe Solution Partners and Google Advertising Professionals. We're registered with the Data Protection Act 1998 and have also adopted the Information Security Management standard BS7799. Falcon Websites Ltd will conduct its business fairly, impartially, in an ethical and appropriate manner, in accordance with the company's values, and in full compliance with all UK laws and regulations. The highest standards of ethical business conduct and compliance are required of people associated with Falcon Websites in the performance of their company responsibilities. If you're interested in our reseller service, please contact us at: [sales@falconwebsites.com](mailto:sales@falconwebsites.com), or on 0800 195 7528.

### What is it in general that sets Falcon apart from other web design consultancy firms in this market, and are there any projects or specific products you'd like to refer to?

Since we offer website design, hosting and marketing services, our relationships with clients are often longer term and our interests are in line with theirs. Our professional and multi-disciplinary teams provide high quality bespoke designs (as well as templates), rapid turnaround and good value for money. We use cutting-edge web technology in our designs, have a very wide range of programming and design expertise and ensure our websites are search friendly and accessible. We always assign a dedicated project manager to each client, and provide full after-sales support and a 100 per cent satisfaction guarantee. We're an ambitious and rapidly expanding firm. We wish to empower agencies with our expertise in design and programming, thus allowing everyone to play a role in the exciting industry of new media.



# eCommerce gallery

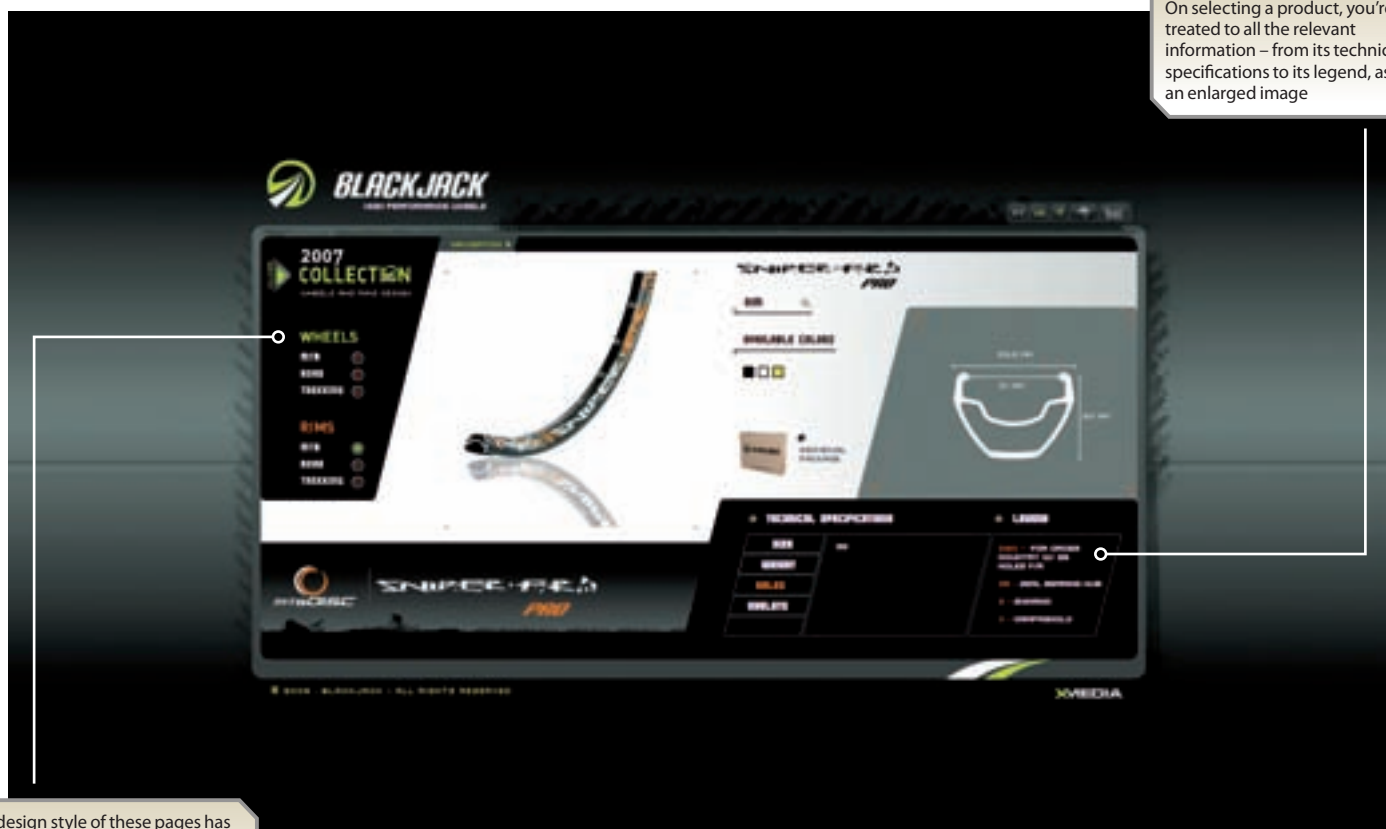
Innovation is at the core of a strong brand and can catapult any small company with a specialised trade into building its cliental from a global audience

## Blackjack deals a winning hand [www.blackjack.pt](http://www.blackjack.pt)

**TAKING THE JUMP** to trading online has brought great success to those companies and entrepreneurs with a unique and specialised skill base. It allows them to utilise the web to open doors to countless opportunities for trading within a niche marketplace, that would otherwise prove difficult to reach. Blackjack, a company specialising in the design and manufacture of high performance wheels and rims for the modern cyclist, is one such company that's grasping these concepts with both hands. It's been distributing its products with great success all over Europe. Blackjack entrusted the help of Portuguese multimedia master Expertmedia ([www.expertmedia.com](http://www.expertmedia.com)) in order to produce a multi-award winning website. It's well conceived with a slick and stylish design and dynamic shop front, that no doubt appeals to a customer base that knows its mountain biking. Most importantly, of course, the website manages to communicate a strong brand identity of innovation, high performance and quality. With its obvious navigation, the user has plenty to see and is provided with all relevant information and specifications about the products, with the added bonus of some digital goodies also.



The main purpose of this website is to showcase its 2007 collection. On clicking here, its numerous products take centre stage



On selecting a product, you're treated to all the relevant information – from its technical specifications to its legend, as well as an enlarged image

The design style of these pages has been superbly crafted in the style of digital time displays

“A strong brand identity of innovation, high performance and quality, runs throughout the site”



You have the opportunity to preview each product prior to selection with the use of thumbnail images, making your decisions easy

If you're particularly impressed with the design of the site, they also provide some digital goodies in the form of downloadable artworks for your desktop



The website makes it very easy to find a distributor of its products by providing an organised page that lists stores by their country

## VERDICT

Nichely does it:

The Blackjack website is a clinical and well executed online presence, harbouring all it would ever need in a successful online marketing campaign for such highly specialised products. We think it's hit right on the money.



# 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 clients 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Home (Linux)	08708 503 305	£59.88	800MB	10GB	300	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Home (MS)	08708 503 305	£71.88	800MB	10GB	300	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Business (Linux)	08708 503 305	£107.88	2.5GB	20GB	700	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Business (MS)	08708 503 305	£119.88	2.5GB	20GB	700	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Professional (Linux)	08708 503 305	£179.88	6GB	50GB	1500	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Professional (MS)	08708 503 305	£203.88	6GB	50GB	1500	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123 reg ( <a href="http://www.123-reg.co.uk">www.123-reg.co.uk</a> )	Starter	0900 11 22 123	£19.08	100MB	1.5GB	15	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123 reg ( <a href="http://www.123-reg.co.uk">www.123-reg.co.uk</a> )	Starter Plus	0900 11 22 123	£35.88	250MB	3GB	25	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123-reg ( <a href="http://www.123-reg.co.uk">www.123-reg.co.uk</a> )	Starter Pro	0900 21 11 23	£47.88	500MB	5GB	35	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
2020Media ( <a href="http://www.2020media.com">www.2020media.com</a> )	Everyday	0845 166 7456	£100	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media ( <a href="http://www.2020media.com">www.2020media.com</a> )	PHP	0845 166 7456	£150	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media ( <a href="http://www.2020media.com">www.2020media.com</a> )	JAVA Tomcat	0845 166 7456	£175	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media ( <a href="http://www.2020media.com">www.2020media.com</a> )	Coldfusion	0845 166 7456	£250	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4D hosting ( <a href="http://www.4dhosting.com">www.4dhosting.com</a> )	Bronze Package	0845 166 8386	£40.00	10MB	500MB	2	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting ( <a href="http://www.4dhosting.com">www.4dhosting.com</a> )	Silver Package	0845 166 8386	£64.99	20MB	2GB	10	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting ( <a href="http://www.4dhosting.com">www.4dhosting.com</a> )	Gold Package	0845 166 8386	£79.99	50MB	2GB	50	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting ( <a href="http://www.4dhosting.com">www.4dhosting.com</a> )	Titanium Package	0845 166 8386	£149.99	500MB	5GB	500	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4D hosting ( <a href="http://www.4dhosting.com">www.4dhosting.com</a> )	Reseller Package	0845 166 8386	£299.99	1GB	10GB	1000	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue ( <a href="http://www.9netave.uk.net">www.9netave.uk.net</a> )	Starter	0870 8726560	£99	50MB	1.5GB	10	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue ( <a href="http://www.9netave.uk.net">www.9netave.uk.net</a> )	Professional	0870 8726560	£199	100MB	2.5GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue ( <a href="http://www.9netave.uk.net">www.9netave.uk.net</a> )	Corporate	0870 8726560	£399	500MB	5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AMEN ( <a href="http://www.amenworld.com">www.amenworld.com</a> )	WEB NAME+	0870 950 393	£9.73	1GB	10mbps	1	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AMEN ( <a href="http://www.amenworld.com">www.amenworld.com</a> )	WEB MAIL	0870 950 393	£28.06	2GB	10mbps	10	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AMEN ( <a href="http://www.amenworld.com">www.amenworld.com</a> )	WEB PRO+	0870 950 393	£70.36	5Gb	10mpbs	1000	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AMEN ( <a href="http://www.amenworld.com">www.amenworld.com</a> )	PRIVATE SERVERS (Windows)	0870 950 393	£84.46	400mb	10mbps	N/A	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AMEN ( <a href="http://www.amenworld.com">www.amenworld.com</a> )	PRIVATE SERVERS (Linux)	0870 950 393	£84.46	1Gb	10mbps	N/A	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BeamHost ( <a href="http://www.beamhost.co.uk">www.beamhost.co.uk</a> )	Home	0871 277 9827	£59.88	800MB	5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
BeamHost ( <a href="http://www.beamhost.co.uk">www.beamhost.co.uk</a> )	Business	0871 277 9827	£119.88	2GB	2GB	300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
BeamHost ( <a href="http://www.beamhost.co.uk">www.beamhost.co.uk</a> )	Economy	0871 277 9827	£239.88	5GB	80GB	1000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd ( <a href="http://www.christiantechnology.co.uk">www.christiantechnology.co.uk</a> )	Host Package	0870 742 0530	£55 inc VAT	50MB	1GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd ( <a href="http://www.christiantechnology.co.uk">www.christiantechnology.co.uk</a> )	Pro Package	0870 742 0530	£125 inc VAT	100MB	2GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd ( <a href="http://www.christiantechnology.co.uk">www.christiantechnology.co.uk</a> )	Base Package	0870 742 0530	£250 inc VAT	250MB	5GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Clara.net ( <a href="http://www.clara.net">www.clara.net</a> )	Clarahost Lite	0845 355 1000	£29.99 inc VAT	10MB	1GB	10	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clara.net ( <a href="http://www.clara.net">www.clara.net</a> )	Clarahost Advanced	0845 355 1000	£699	500MB	30GB	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CWCS Managed Hosting ( <a href="http://www.cwcs.co.uk">www.cwcs.co.uk</a> )	CWCS Starter Plan	0845 203 1000	£19.99	400MB	1GB	10	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting ( <a href="http://www.cwcs.co.uk">www.cwcs.co.uk</a> )	CWCS Entry	0845 203 1000	£109.89	2GB	10GB	30	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting ( <a href="http://www.cwcs.co.uk">www.cwcs.co.uk</a> )	CWCS PRO	0845 203 1000	£19.99	5GB	20GB	50	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting ( <a href="http://www.cwcs.co.uk">www.cwcs.co.uk</a> )	CWCS Business 1	0845 203 1000	£169	5GB	30GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting ( <a href="http://www.cwcs.co.uk">www.cwcs.co.uk</a> )	CWCS Windows Reseller 1	0845 203 1000	£39.99	20GB	50GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting ( <a href="http://www.cwcs.co.uk">www.cwcs.co.uk</a> )	CWCS Windows Reseller 2	0845 203 1000	£59.99	Unlimited	1GB	10	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting ( <a href="http://www.cwcs.co.uk">www.cwcs.co.uk</a> )	CWCS Linux VDS Entry	0845 203 1000	£39.99	50GB RAID	80GB	Variable	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting ( <a href="http://www.cwcs.co.uk">www.cwcs.co.uk</a> )	CWCS Windows VDS Entry	0845 203 1000	£46.99	8GB RAID	80GB	Variable	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting ( <a href="http://www.cwcs.co.uk">www.cwcs.co.uk</a> )	CWCS Linux Entry Dedicated	0845 203 1000	£99.99	80GB RAID	300GB	Variable	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

# WEB HOSTINGS

NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POP3 ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Home Professional	0845 644 7750	£89.99	10GB	50GB	10,000	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Business Professional	0845 644 7750	£129.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Reseller Professional	0845 644 7750	£299.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk)	Windows 2000 Unlimited Plan	0208 777 8881	£29.50-£499	100-5000MB	2-80GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk)	Resellers Plan	0208 777 8881	£200-800	2GB	30-50GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Silver	0808 180 1880	£79.50	150MB	3GB	5	✓	X	Option	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Gold	0808 180 1880	£139.50	300MB	5GB	10	✓	✓	Option	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Gold Plus	0808 180 1880	£189.50	450MB	10GB	30	✓	✓	Option	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Platinum	0808 180 1880	£359.50	600MB	20GB	50	✓	✓	Option	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X



# WEB HOSTING guide

NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POP3 ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Platinum Plus	0808 180 1880	£599.50	1.2GB	40GB	10	✓	✓	Option	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Email Plus	0808 180 1880	£49.95	50MB	N/A	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Lite	08712 773494	£14.99	25	1GB	5	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Starter	08712 773494	£23.49	50	1GB	20	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Standard	08712 773494	£52.49	100	1GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Professional	08712 773494	£68.99	250	1GB	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Business	08712 773494	£119.99	500	1GB	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Corporate	08712 773494	£199.99	1000	1GB	unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Basic 50	0870 160 5555	£70	50	1GB	5	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	£99.50	1GB	5GB	10	✓	✓	✗	£1.50/mailbox	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

## WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

**WEB SPACE** This describes the amount of physical data storage space you'll have available to you on the 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 demand more.

**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.

# WEB HOSTINGS

NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POP3 ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Pro	08700 599 599	£199.90	3GB	15GB	50	✓	✓	X	£1.50/mailbox	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Enterprise	08700 599 599	£499.90	10GB	25GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Unix	08701 608602	£120	10MB	5GB	1	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Windows	08701 608602	£120	10MB	5GB	1	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Shared SQL Business 50	08701 608602	£300	50MB	25GB	1	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Shared SQL Business 100	08701 608602	£600	100MB	50GB	1	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Pay As You Host (www.pay-as-you-host.com)	Standard	0870 284 0287	£47.88	50MB	512MB	Unlimited	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pabb Web Design (www.pabbwebhosting.co.uk)	Unlimited hosting	07756 441059	£114	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Z account	0800 316 1006	£293.75	120MB	10GB	Unlimited	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
The Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Dolphin	0800 316 1006	£2,172.58	2x20GB	40-60GB	Unlimited	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
The Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Fully managed servers	0800 316 1006	£5,287.50	2x70GB SCSI	80-250GB	Unlimited	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Standard 1	0800 321 7788	£49	10MB	2GB	1	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Standard 2	0800 321 7788	£69	20MB	2GB	1	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Premium 1	0800 321 7788	£99	25MB	2GB	1	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Premium 2	0800 321 7788	£149	50MB	2GB	1	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✓	✓	X	X
Switch Media (www.switchmedia.co.uk)	Business	0151 236 9111	£95.88	1.5GB	10GB	500	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Switch Media (www.switchmedia.co.uk)	Professional	0151 236 9111	£186	3GB	25GB	1200	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Parking	08707 65 63 64	£52.88	25MB	500MB	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Forwarding	08707 65 63 64	From £15	N/A	500MB	N/A	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Hosting	08707 65 63 64	From £7.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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

**SHOPPING CART** Selling products online is a big part of eCommerce, 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. 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, 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. Pretty much all the hosting providers will have this as standard so that you are immediately confident of exactly what you're getting for your money. 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

### Elaborations

[www.elaborations.co.uk/flash](http://www.elaborations.co.uk/flash)

**Skills:** Site design, company/product branding, corporate solutions

**Employment status:** Web development agency based in London

Surely a throw-back to Nick La's day and night animation in *Web Designer 118*, this London-based design agency has created a very special online home indeed. Elaborations tells us that the feedback on this recently launched portfolio site has been terrific, and going by the real-time animation used to create the background time-lapse, we understand the hype. However, the same level of polish and skill has been lovingly applied across all of the content, including case studies of past projects and a slick contact form for posting messages. "Our Flash showcase concept evolved as the project progressed," explains Elaborations' Brad Bagherian. "Initially we started with a night and day theme. But the virtual environment grew with continual additions to the surroundings, interactivity, movements and special effects, while still concentrating on making sure the visitor's experience on our site would be one of the best." Well it's certainly achieved that, with a site we'd have to put down as one of the best new examples from a web agency we've seen of late.



Click on Elaborations' ingenious Flash showcase to see birds flying and leaves blowing across the screen

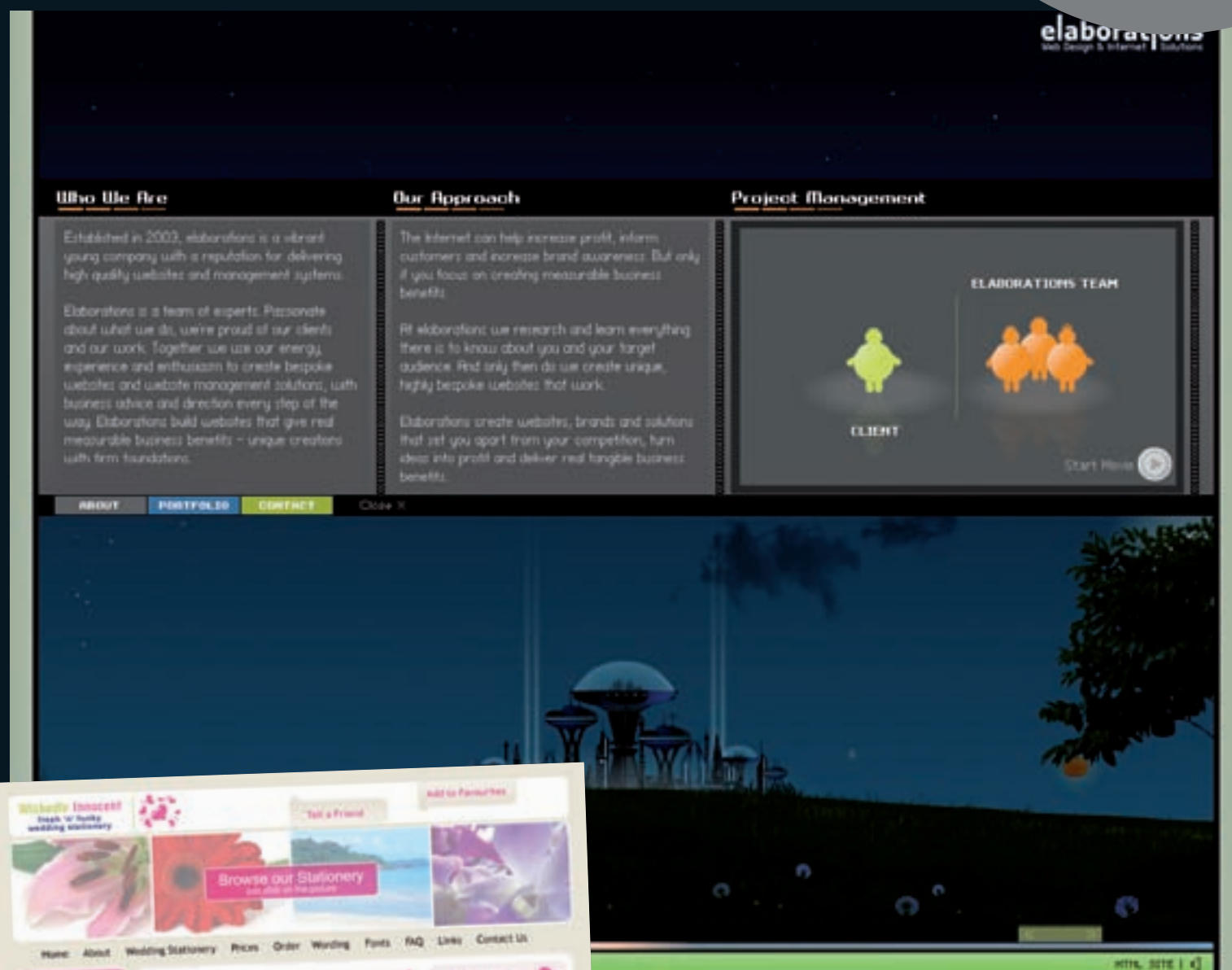
If you can drag your eyes from the fabulous animations, visit the site's portfolio section to view the company's work



**LAST ISSUE** we gave you tips for getting your site noticed by search engines, but this is the place that could get you seen by the people. Our portfolio showcase is open to anyone wanting to promote their skills via their online wares, and get noticed by those that matter

**MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

To keep this section going we rely on student or freelance designers to put themselves forward. It's 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](mailto:webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk)



All of its clients' websites in the portfolio are accessible through Elaborations' own site. This design for Lucy's Limos is simple yet highly functional, and makes navigation around it easy for visitors



The site Elaborations has produced for its client Wickedly Innocent, is a perfect example of how it so expertly captures the mood and feel of its clients



# portfolio

THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING

## Peter McAvoy

www.pmcgraphics.com

**Skills:** Illustration and Motion

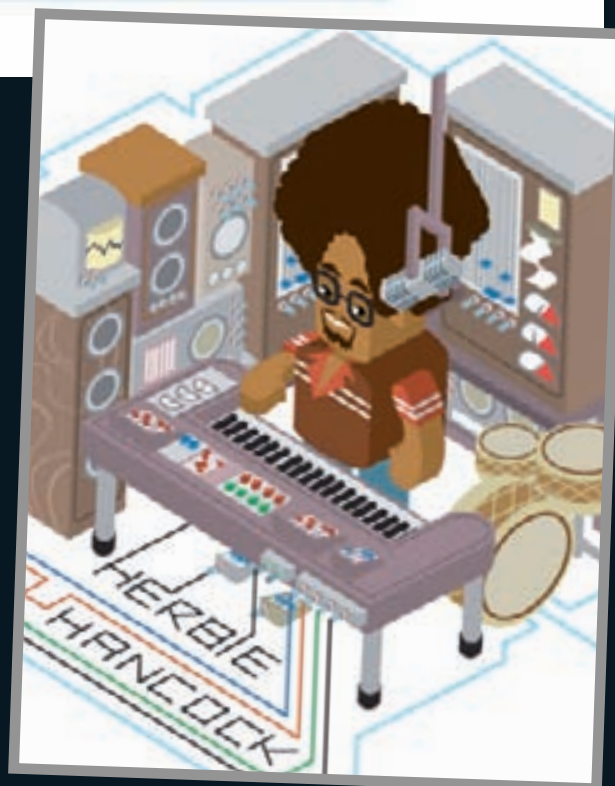
**Employment status:** Seeking freelance work

Right, this is easy – just look at these images. Pete McAvoy either hates fiddling with text in HTML, or is just really self-effacing, but the lack of a detailed biography on the site is excused by the pretty pictures. And boy are they pretty. He is a superb illustrator who ably spans a series of styles from the sublimely cute and cuddly, to the grittier graphic novel or comic book efforts that leave you gasping. He goes from the soft vector shapes contained within a submission for the Vormator competition we shouted about in last month's Bulletin, to more politically charged work of detainees and tsunami disasters. The brilliance is that the portfolio could easily be rounding up examples from completely separate artists; such is the ability to avoid any visual typecasting. We particularly like the *Coffee and TV*-style milk carton characters, that wouldn't look at all out of place in Blur's memorable music video. We also love the awesome isometric doodles of Herbie Hancock. Somebody employ this guy!

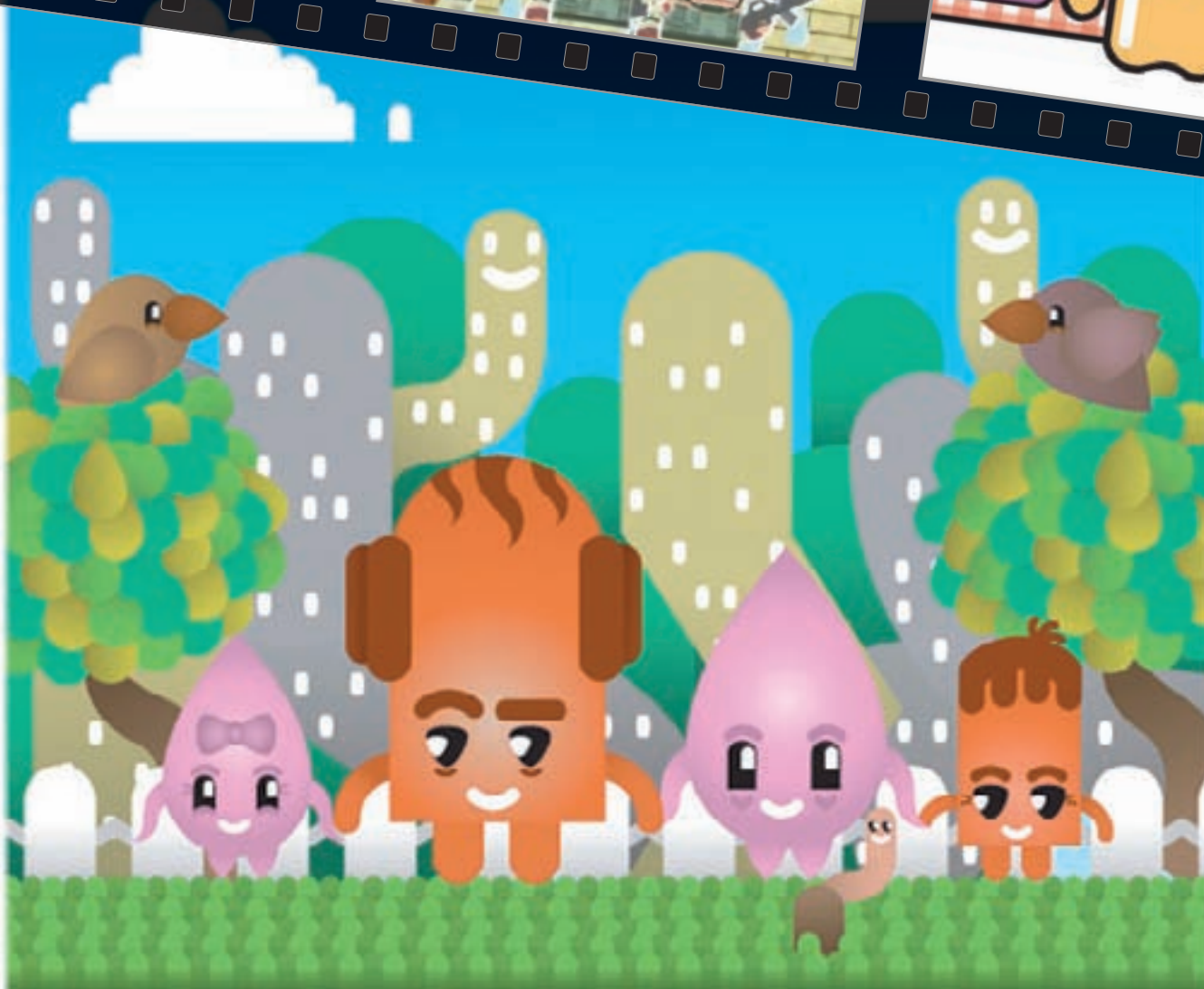
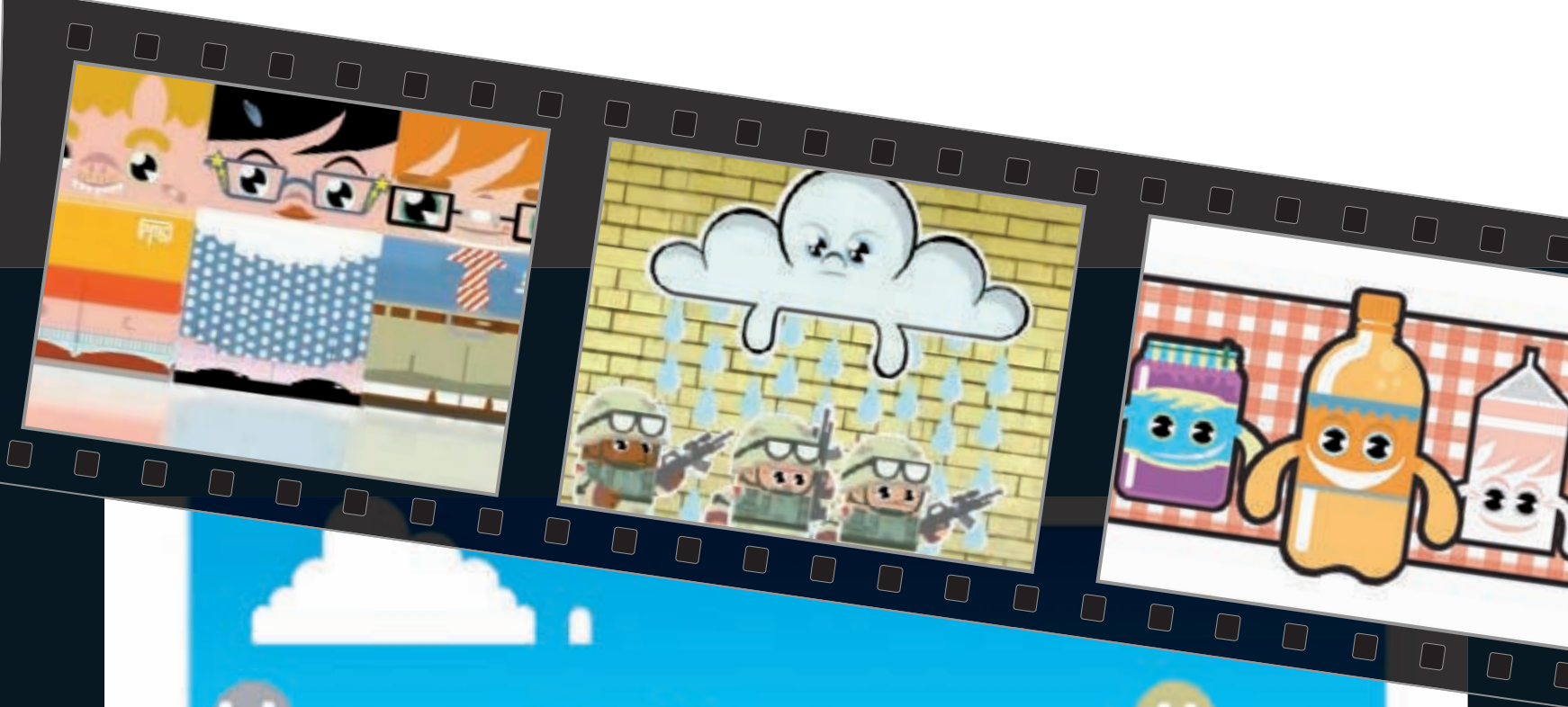


As well as cute characters and political images, pmcgraphics.com showcases a selection of Pete's unique logos

Pete's designs range from isometric illustrations, like this one of Herbie Hancock, to more curvy fellows like the ones in his motion clip for the fictional brand 'Pop'







My submission for the Vormator competition.

