

32  
PAGES OF  
EXPERT TUTORIALS

web



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# designer™

ISSUE 128

 DREAMWEAVER  FLASH  PHOTOSHOP

## RECYCLABLE SITES

Why web templating could save time and make you money!

## ADOBE TALKS

Flex development and Flash '07

## HOW TO:

Master rotoscoping in **Flash 8**

Video cues & triggers explained

Template design in **Photoshop**

Add trendy lo-fi graphical effects to your web art

Build Mac widgets with **HTML & CSS**

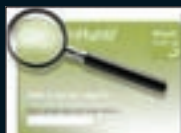


photoshop  
**LO-FI**  
TEMPLATES  
Creative tutorial

# Creative **flash** video

All the cutting-edge techniques you need to deliver eye-catching web video

- CORE TECHNIQUES FOR WEB-READY MOVIES
- CELL SHADED VECTOR VIDEO TRICKS
- ADD LIFE TO VIDEO SEQUENCES IN FLASH 8



### BUILDING MAC WIDGETS

Learn how to create your own OS X content with the help of HTML, CSS and JavaScript



### DEPTHCORE DISSECTED

How this awesome creative community became one of the year's hottest-looking websites



# Welcome

## THE experts

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



### Mark Shufflebottom

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH HIS GRAPHICS TABLET IN FLASH

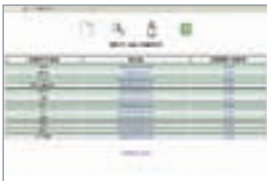
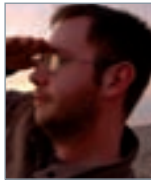
Mark opens our double header of Flash Video tutorials this issue, by looking at creating funky vector-based animations for your films. Yes, the art of rotoscoping becomes easier in Flash 8 and any fans of *A Scanner Darkly* will enjoy this one.



### Ian Davenport

MAKING HIS DEBUT WITH A GUIDE TO MAC WIDGETS

We're pleased to welcome Ian to the writing team this month, especially as he's doing something rather unique. Instead of building a web-based HTML, CSS and JavaScript site, he's actually going to be examining the very cool art of Mac widgets.



### Stefan Mischook

PRACTISING WHAT HE PREACHES IN PHP AND MYSQL

Stefan's recent primer tutorials in the fundamentals of PHP programming were so popular that we felt he needed to return and pick up where he left off. This time however he indulges in object-oriented techniques within a mini practical project... Nice!



### Steve Jenkins

BACK WITH PART 2 OF HIS GUIDE TO CSS LAYOUT BASICS

People get rather scared and tetchy at the thought of learning CSS. Well Steve encourages you to cast off the shackles of table-based layouts and continue his odyssey into making those first steps toward a style-sheet laden paradise. Of sorts.



Getting your face on TV these days seems to lead to instant celebrity, so is the web video boom set to become the new breeding ground for stars?

**YOUTUBE HAS** already ushered in a new cult arena for screen junkies and become part of our general vocabulary when referring to video blogging. Not only has it centralised the movie musings of thousands of people, but it has also hinted at a genuine TV-on-demand service for the web community.

Visitors can easily lose themselves scanning for clips ranging from loonies singing into their hairbrushes, to ripped broadcasts of sporting highlights, music videos and even a dodgy film trailer or two. Of course, the more copyright-sensitive material has suffered some scrutiny since Google snapped the site up and we could all be made to pay for its pleasures in time, but its influence leaves an indelible mark on the way we view the web.

So therefore we've taken a leaf out of the whole video-blogging book and decided to dip into the trend, first with an overview feature of what posting online movies really entails. Our lead feature on page 26 gives a pretty broad guide to the essence behind what good web films should be about, how you capture the action, process it and eventually post it. What considerations on file formats or display sizes are there? Which sites out there do the business best of all? Once you've got your clips together, you can then

look forward to a pair of Flash walkthroughs that focus on some advanced techniques that could take your video in exciting new directions. Mark Shufflebottom takes heed from hit flick *A Scanner Darkly*, to investigate rotoscoping tricks with the help of a Wacom graphics tablet. Darren Richardson follows up with the skills in using cue points and triggers that you'll need to make your video communicate with the rest of your site.

For those more camera shy, we offer two ways of crafting web graphics in Photoshop, before our Dreamweaver section continues a from-scratch look at CSS layouts, Object-Oriented PHP and an exclusive on building Mac OS X widgets with HTML!

And so the Oscar surely goes to...

**Mark Billen**  
DEPUTY EDITOR

## Editor's picks

Web Designer issue 128 also has this little lot to get excited about as well...



**22-25**

We speak to the crew behind art collective site depthCORE about this awesome site redesign



**38-39**

Mark Anders of Adobe drops by for a chat about Flex development and Flash in 2007



**96-97**

David Howell returns to conclude last month's look at the emerging mobile eCommerce landscape



*e***Mag**



# gallery

## THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



### THE FOSTER IMPOSTERS

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

Designed by: **Goodby, Silverstein and Partners**  
with **Unit 9**

If you, like us, find the flapping puppetry of Jim Henson's creations hilarious, then you'll no doubt be giggling like a child on your arrival at this online gem. The site serves as a portal to extend the reach of the Foster Farms brand, alongside its simply brilliant commercials. From the off, you're entertained by the antics of two renegade chickens from Arkansas, who are trying to break into the Foster Farms to be with the 'high-quality' chickens. The website is neatly designed and includes retro games, as well as linear sketches as the site's intro.



Roll your mouse over the first cheeky chicken and he'll interact with your cursor by heading it off the screen

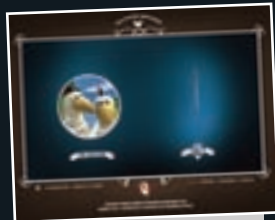
Choose a method to attempt to get the chickens into the Farm and you'll be treated to a sketch complete with mischief and silly clucky banter



**NEED SOME INSPIRATION** to get your creative blood pumping? Look no further, as we bring you some of the most cutting-edge, fun and stylish websites currently online to help push your capabilities. It's time to get inspired and shatter the impossible!

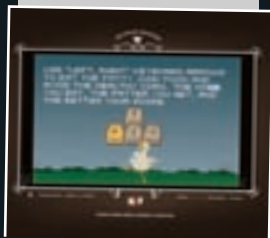
**GOT IT?  
FLAUNT IT!**

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)



## Site Highlight

The site is well put together, without being pretentious and, to put it simply, it's bloomin' funny! We hope that the makers continue to add to this website with more exploits of these ridiculous chickens.



Have a play with the retro-style games that manage to keep the humour and provide a really nice touch to the website as a whole

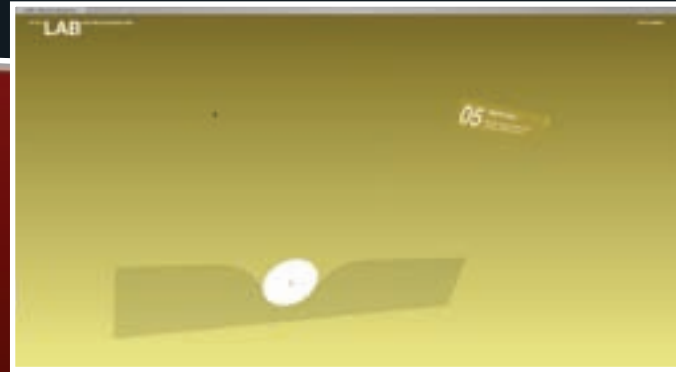
Take your browser to the site's commercial section and witness the chickens on a daytime talk show

# gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



*The Block Clock has two options in which to view time – either as an automated clock or as a chronometer, which creates itself from the vector rectangles dusted around*



*When interacting with Gravity Ball, you can click to hold the ball and throw it up – you'll notice the gravity pulls it back down to earth*



*Liquid Form enables you to use your mouse to manipulate the cell-like imagery over one another, mutating them into one*

*You get an amazing amount of freedom to twist and distort the objects on screen*

## LAB

<http://lab.mathieu-badimon.com>

**Designed by: Mathieu Badimon**

For the Flash junkies out there who love nothing more than routing out the best Flash experimentation in the digital labyrinth that is the internet, you'll be sporting a beaming smile once your browser walks up the path of this little gem. LAB is the experimental playground of web master Mathieu Badimon and is a fabulous feast of interactive play, rich colour and strong design. The website has seven interactive sections all exposing different 3D experiments for you to play with.



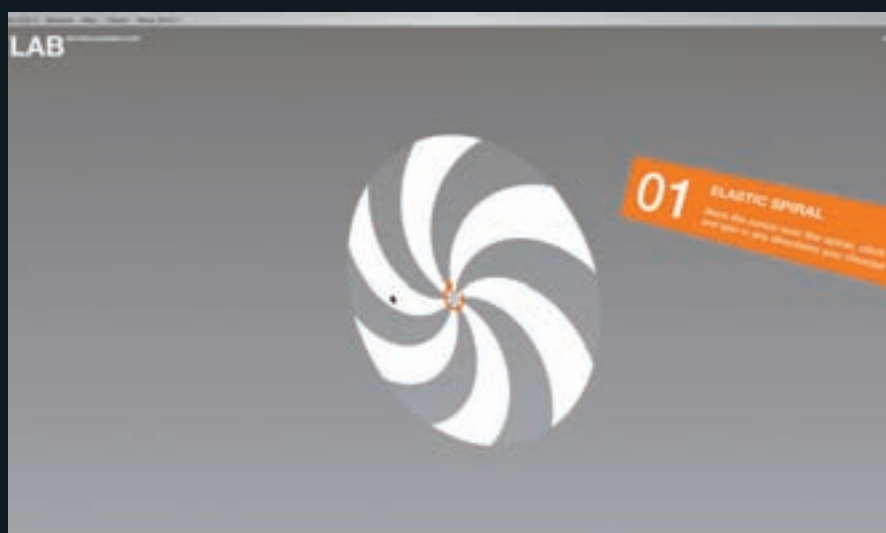
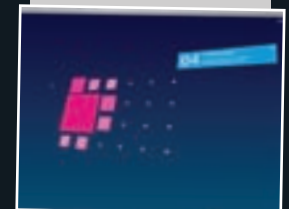


With the Warped Text function you can manipulate the word 'form' however you like, using the circular points located at different points of the word

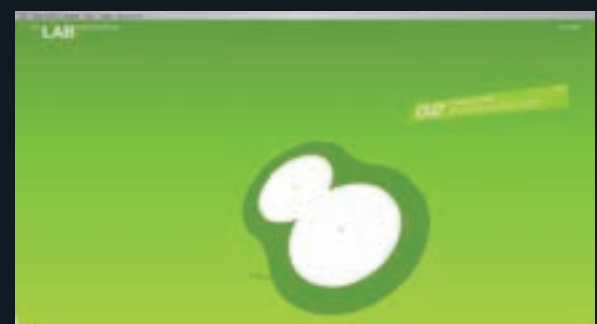


## Site Highlight

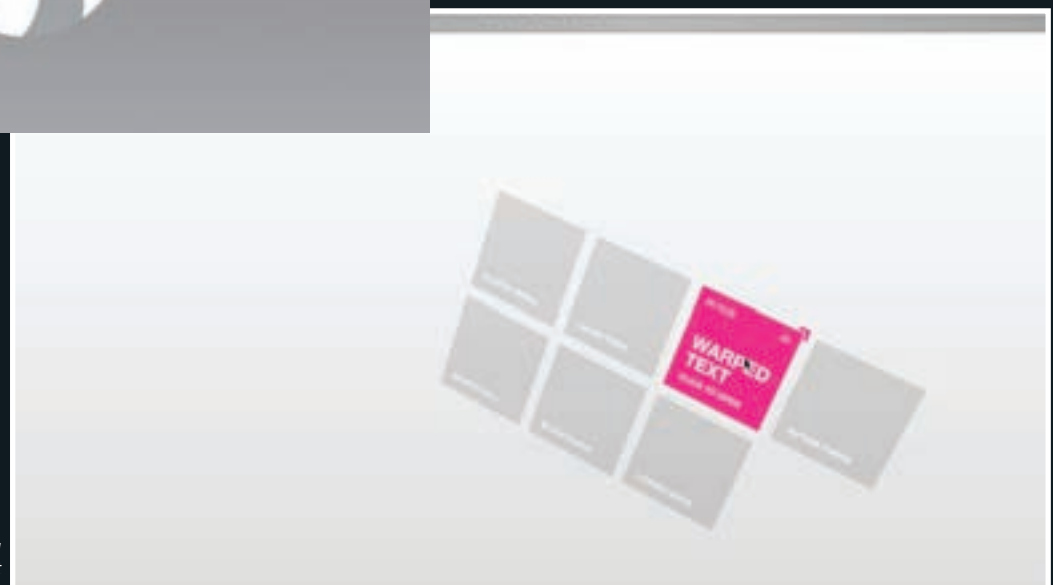
No doubt the back end coding of interactive elements of this site are at the advanced level of ActionScript, however the simplicity of interaction is quite brilliant and if you're not having fun, you'll be scratching your head saying 'how did he do that?'



Here you get to twirl a spiral shape in two directions by dragging the mouse before it snaps back on release



Each interactive experiment uses physics, so notice that all are unique when compared against the others



Even the main menu system has a great cutting-edge look



# gallery

## THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



### IAMSTUDIOS

<http://iam-studios.nl>

Designed by: **Fat-Man Collective (and Vortice Studios)**

Some websites serve their purpose and function just fine, while some manage to do that and entertain you at the same time – resulting in you shouting for your buddies to come take a look. The website for music production studio, iamstudios, is one such place. Sporting a themed 3D Flash website, stylishly designed in the flavour of a slick and clinical concept, it also contains masterful production. The transition animations of 'Woofie' and 'Microbone' are fantastic fun, as are the interactive elements themselves.

The initial screen is a taster of what's to come and immediately showcases the company's strong sense of branding

The portfolio of iamstudios can be seen and heard via the well-crafted, embedded video clips



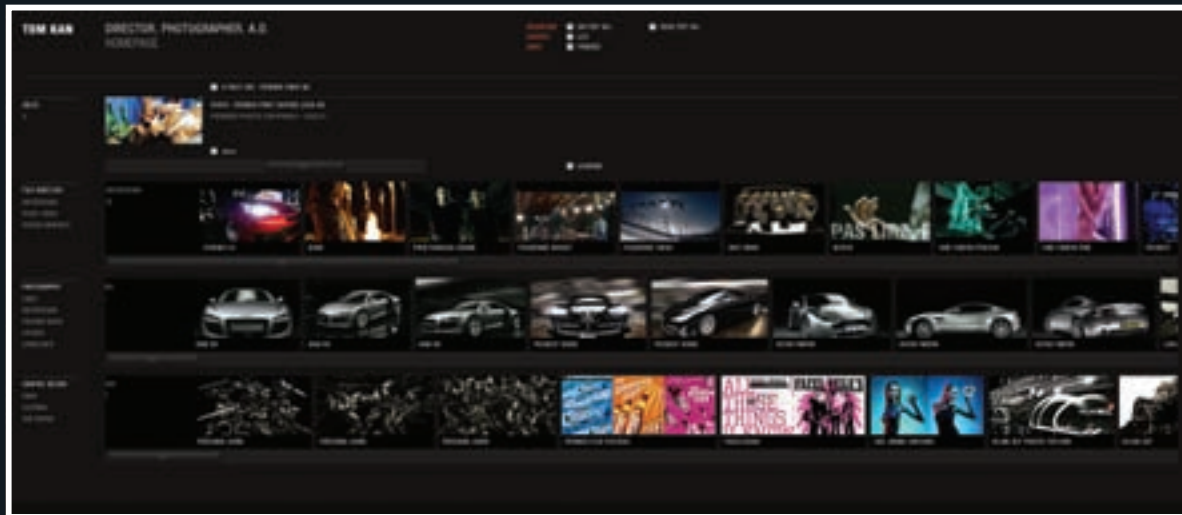
The iamstudios team has a sense of humour that's apparent in the company outlook showcased across the portfolio and website



### Site Highlight

The 3D antics of 'Woofie' are great and the mark of a genius... just be careful, as you may forget why you visited iamstudios in the first place!



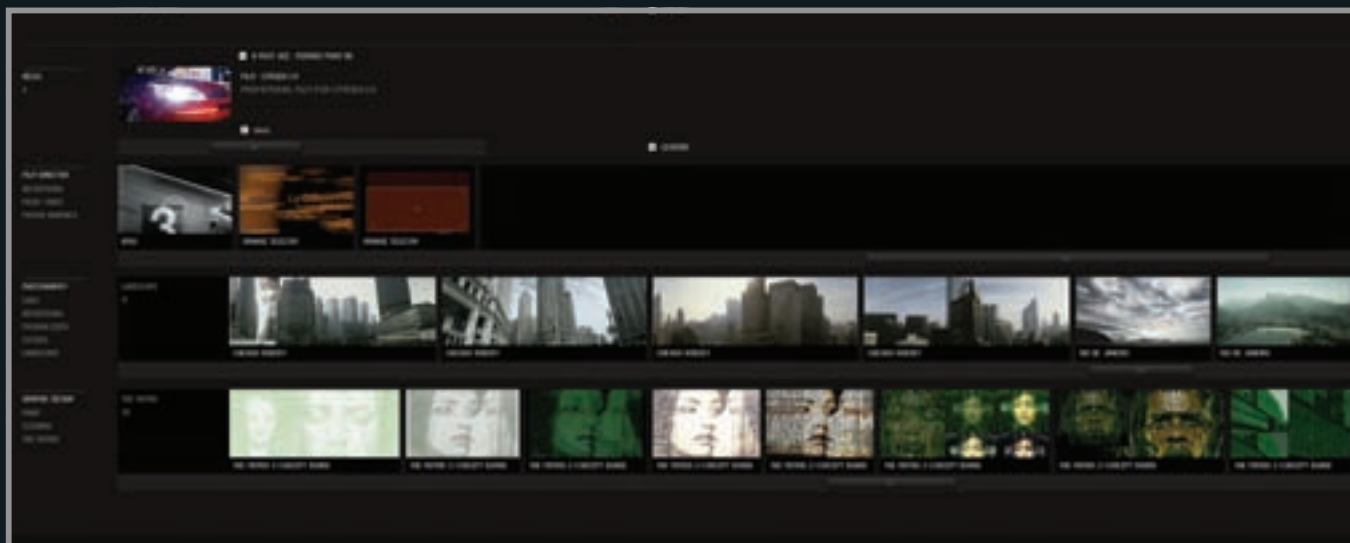
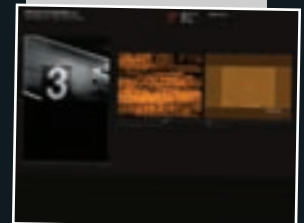


Within the loins of the website you'll find a navigation system that's brilliantly obvious due to its concise layout



## Site Highlight

The embedded video commercials are both highly entertaining and have high and fast loading times – if only all sites were as slick.



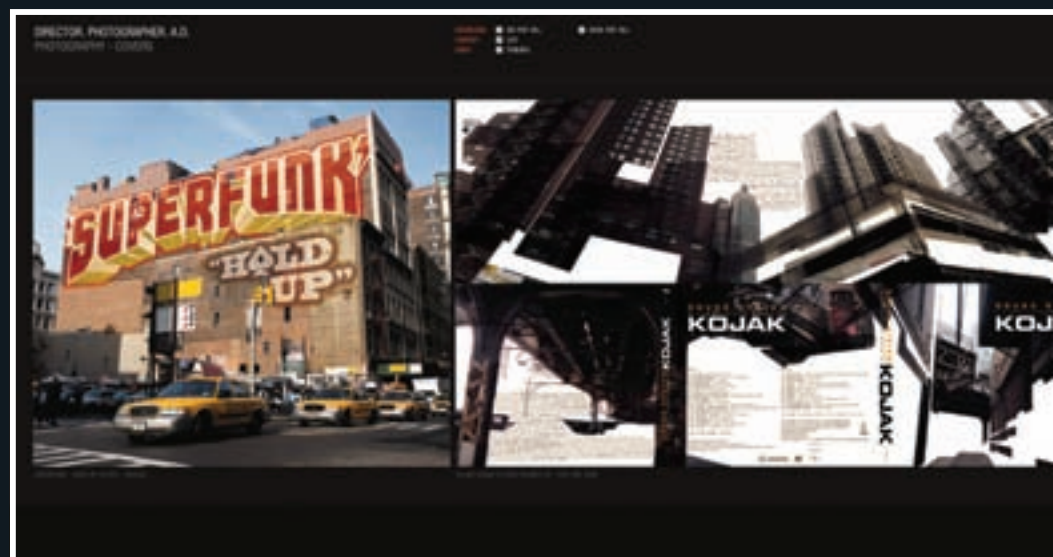
The dynamic interactivity is displayed with each click as the portfolio changes to suit

## TOM KAN

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

**Designed by: Datakick**

Welcome to the fantastic online portfolio of the creative genius that is Tom Kan, photographer and director. Here you just need to sit back and peruse the feast of works including film, advertising, music, video, motion graphics, as well as many other offerings. This website is one of the most dynamic around and many will look on it with envious eyes. This website is extremely slick and stylish, which is no doubt the result of a carefully planned process from start to finish.



On selecting a piece of artwork for closer inspection you'll be treated to detailed enlarged imagery, allowing you to see just how good this guy is

# gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP

## STUNNING NIKON DSLR

[www.stunningnikon.com/dslr](http://www.stunningnikon.com/dslr)

Designed by: **MRM Worldwide**

This website is a very shrewd and creative piece of marketing on the part of Nikon to advertise the latest camera in its range, the Nikon D80 digital SLR. Digital photographer enthusiasts from online photo sharing communities were given the camera and asked to send back their images – and this website is the result. It's a showcase of these images and the camera itself. With the camera naturally taking centre stage, it's surrounded with some stunning photography that also begs to be clicked.

Click on any image and you'll be given the lowdown on the individual specifications of the camera – this is a really nice touch

If you select certain images, you can find other images taken by that photographer as well as video clips on the artist's thoughts

The website even provides a widget, which, once downloaded, provides you with a constant stream of images to your desktop

### 18-135mm AF Zoom-Nikkor Lens

A highly versatile lens for any type of shooting. For wide angle, medium or extreme close-up, this lens is ready for any shot at a variety of focal lengths.

The 18-135mm AF Zoom-Nikkor Lens helped Heather get close-up from far away.



## Site Highlight

By clicking on a photograph you will float around the camera to preview the images on view. On selecting an image you can learn the photographer's name and take a closer.

To get a constant stream of photography from the Nikon Stunning Gallery on your desktop, just follow these simple steps:

1. Click here to download the Yahoo! Widget Engine. Follow the installation instructions provided.
2. Click here to download the Nikon Stunning Gallery Widget. Run the program to install it on your computer.
3. Finally, enjoy new, stunning photography every time you look at your desktop.

### stunning is buster



At the Heart of the Nikon Nikon





# bulletin

## HOT NEWS FROM THE WEB DESIGN WORLD



### CURRENT FAVOURITES

**Rob Ford** Founder & Principal of theFWA.com, gives his monthly pick of the coolest sites out there.



### monoface

[www.mono-1.com/monoface](http://www.mono-1.com/monoface)

Designed by: [www.mono-1.com](http://www.mono-1.com)

Click the mouth, nose, head and each eye to create a different monoface... just keep clicking for wackier faces!



### I'm a Cyborg but that's ok

[www.cyborg2006.co.kr](http://www.cyborg2006.co.kr)

Designed by: [www.wddg.com](http://www.wddg.com)

Have patience with the poor network connection and loading times – it's well worth it we promise



### Horses Give Everything

[www.foratthastargerallt.se](http://www.foratthastargerallt.se)

Designed by: [akestamholst.se](http://akestamholst.se) & [northkingdom.com](http://northkingdom.com)

One of the first fullscreen video experiences and surely a great guide for the shape of things to come



**"A REVOLUTIONARY AND MAGICAL PRODUCT THAT'S LITERALLY FIVE YEARS AHEAD OF ANY OTHER MOBILE PHONE"**



## Designer gadgets galore

APPLE KICKS UP SOME HYPE WITH EYE-CATCHING PRODUCT LAUNCHES AT THIS YEAR'S MACWORLD EXHIBITION

**ANOTHER MACWORLD** came to a close last month and with it brought some more Apple goodies for the world to get excited about. Although the products weren't a complete surprise (thanks to numerous blog hints and speculations heading the public's way before Apple's CEO, Steve Jobs, made his speech) it still meant that the show ended with some satisfying new gadgets to look forward to.

The big news to be unveiled at the conference was the announcement of the new iPhone. Jobs branded the phone as a "revolutionary and magical product that's literally five years ahead of any other mobile phone". He told his audience: "We are all born with the ultimate pointing device – our fingers and iPhone uses them to create the most revolutionary user interface since the mouse."

Among a host of features, including a cover browser for album artwork and a soft keyboard to send and receive SMS messages, the iPhone also

features a rich HTML email client. This fetches your email in the background from most POP3 or IMAP mail services and displays photos and graphics along with the text. The iPhone also features a version of Safari where any part of the web page can be easily zoomed in on and expanded by tapping on the iPhone's multi-touch display. This could herald the first genuinely portable internet device we've all been craving.

At the same time, Apple also premiered Apple TV – a neat bit of technology that allows you to play your iTunes content from your Mac or PC onto your widescreen TV.

Apple TV will begin shipping in February for a suggested retail price of \$299 (about £150). The iPhone will be available in the USA in June 2007, Europe late 2007 and Asia in 2008. A 4GB model will set you back \$499 (approximately £250) and an 8GB model is planned to cost £599 (roughly £300).

# Imagine this

\$15,000 OF GREAT PRIZES ARE UP FOR GRABS IN MICROSOFT'S LATEST IMAGINE CUP INTERFACE DESIGN COMPETITION

**MICROSOFT HAS PUT OUT THE CALL** for the best young designers across the globe to come forward. The technology giant had announced the launch of its Imagine Cup Interface design competition. Now in its fifth year, the Cup is part of an international student competition that calls on designers to submit a user interface that's 'innovative, useable and creative'.

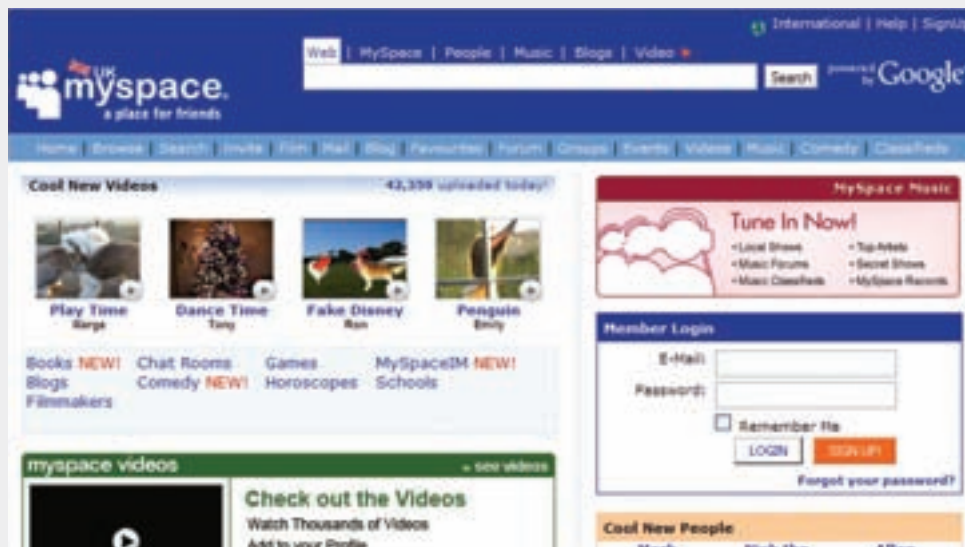
Last year's event saw over 65,000 students from 100 countries participate in the competition that has been nicknamed the Software Development Olympics. The Imagine Cup comprises a number of categories, one of which is the Interface Design Competition. According to a Microsoft spokesperson: "The theme for The Imagine Cup this year is 'imagine a world where technology enables a better education for all.' This means, as well as encouraging talented designers to use Microsoft's tools and technology to unleash their ideas and create a new and exciting interface approach, students must also channel their vision to address a wider, real-world problem – that of education."

In order to take part in the competition, students are encouraged to pair up and compete in two preliminary rounds before the grand final. Each team will be required to submit an abstract and a storyboard explaining their concept. In order to stand a chance of sharing a prize pool fund of \$15,000, first-round entries



*Do you have a design that you'd like to share with the world and win a nice little earner at the same time? Then make sure you get your submissions in by 1 March!*

must be submitted by 1 March 2007. Entries will then be judged and 30 teams will advance to the next stage. Six teams will then be selected to compete at the final in Seoul, Korea, under the eye of a team of professional judges, including notable industry figures, academics and representatives from this year's global sponsor, BT. To find out more about registration for this year's event, point your browser at [www.imaginecup.co.uk](http://www.imaginecup.co.uk).



## Google reveals top searches

SEARCH ENGINE GIANT ANNOUNCES 2006'S MOST SEARCHED FOR SITES WITH A SPECIAL SURVEY OF SURFER BEHAVIOUR

**GOOGLE ZEITGEST, RESPONSIBLE** for pulling together interesting search trends and patterns, has announced the top ten 'googled' sites for 2006. Search statistics are automatically generated, based on the millions of searches conducted on Google over a given period of time. The list of Top Searches in 2006 was comprised mainly of a selection of Web 2.0-based sites, with [www.bebo.com](http://www.bebo.com) leading the way, closely followed by social networking favourite

[www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com). Others in the list included radioblog, metacafe, wikipedia and torrent search site mininova. A separate top search list was also created for the top news entries and featured (in order of popularity): Paris Hilton, Orlando Bloom, cancer, podcasting, Hurricane Katrina, bankruptcy, Martina Hingis, autism, 2006 NFL draft and *Celebrity Big Brother 2006*. Just promise not to go away and flood these tags into your page meta data!

## NEWS in brief



### PEUPLADE COMMUNITY

A French site, [www.peuplade.fr](http://www.peuplade.fr), has been set up to instigate networking. Most community sites offer vast networking on a world-wide basis, but Peuplade aims to allow residents of the same city to interact with one another. The site was originally set up as a notice board, which began in a small area of Paris, but is quickly spreading to the rest of the city.



### BBC FILE-SHARING

BBC Worldwide have signed an agreement with technology firm Azureus, to make hundreds of episodes of BBC programmes available on a file-sharing network for the first time. Azureus is most well known for developing a BitTorrent client with over 130 million users. The new deal means that users of the software will be able to download high-quality versions of BBC programmes.



### DVD BATTLE STILL ONGOING

The heated battle for the new high-definition DVD format won't come to a conclusion until a favourite format has been announced, say technology speculators after last month's CES Vegas show. Blu-ray and HD-DVD are locked in battle to become the (rather lucrative) replacement for the dwindling DVD market. Currently, as the two are completely incompatible with each other, users are required to purchase a completely new system to play their newer format technology.



## Start producing with Adobe

NEW VERSION OF PRODUCTION STUDIO SUITE TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR BOTH MAC AND WINDOWS PLATFORMS



**ADOBE HAS ANNOUNCED** that the next version of Adobe Production Studio – the video and audio post-production tool – will be available for both Mac and Windows users. Mac-based web pros who currently use Adobe After Effects, Photoshop and Illustrator,

will soon be able to unleash their creative potential on new releases of Adobe Premiere Pro, Adobe Encore DVD and Adobe Soundbooth, as part of the revised package.

"Our customers wanted all the components in Adobe Production Studio to be available on both the Macintosh and Windows platforms," says John Loiacono, senior vice president of Creative Solutions Business Unit at Adobe. "We listened and believe that a new innovative cross-platform video suite, anchored by powerhouse releases of Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Premiere Pro and Adobe After Effects, will really shake up the industry."

Video technologies aided by Adobe Production Studio have been used to improve shared video capabilities for social networking sites such as YouTube and MySpace. The new Production Studio is expected to be available mid-2007 with all of its components being available for Intel-based Macs and continuing to be available for Windows. As of yet, confirmation of the final suggested retail price has not been disclosed.



*Would you like your blog site to be adorning these pages next year? Get yourself down to Blog World Expo to mingle with those who could make it happen*

## Best bloggers

THE WEBLOG AWARDS ANNOUNCES ITS FAVOURITE BLOG SITES OF THE PAST YEAR

**THE WEBLOG AWARDS**, the world's largest blog competition, has released its lists of the top blog sites of 2006. Over 525,000 votes were cast in 2006 for finalists in 45 categories, including *Best Blog*, *Best Online Community* and *Best Photo Blog*. The *Best Overall Winner's* award went to hefty USA news blog *Daily Kos* – *The state of the nation* (<http://dailykos.com>).

Nominations for The 2007 Weblog Awards will begin in September 2007 and voting will commence at the end of October 2007, with a live presentation scheduled to be held at the Blog World & New Media Expo in Las Vegas November 2007. Blog World & New Media Expo is 'the first

and only tradeshow, conference and media event dedicated to promoting the dynamic industry of blogging and new media'. The show welcomes content from any blogger, vlogger, podcaster, internet radio broadcaster or producer of any other form of new media content.

So after you've checked out the huge talent that came out of 2006 at [2006.weblogawards.org](http://2006.weblogawards.org), get thinking about how to better the competition at this year's event. You've got until 19 October 2007 to register your site, so get your blogging caps on.

Be sure to stop by [www.blogworldexpo.com](http://www.blogworldexpo.com) to download a registration form and find out more about the competition and exhibition.

## TOP Downloads



### COFFEECUP HTML EDITOR 2007

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

Featuring two separate editors, The Code Editor and the The Visual Editor, CoffeeCup HTML is a fantastic tool for those who are new to HTML. The WYSIWYG editor even means you can create pages by drag and drop alone.



### TYPECASTER

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

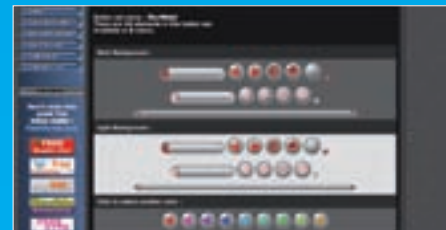
TypeCaster transforms standard type into broadcast-quality 3D tiles, giving you text with curved contours. Although initial results aren't particularly stunning, it can be a great base for Photoshop work, particularly if you add your own textures.



### TEMPLATESBOX

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

Feeling a little bit lazy? Or fancy getting some inspiration if you're building a site from scratch? TemplatesBox has a fantastic selection of high-quality website, flash and logo templates available at an affordable rate.



### FREEBUTTONS

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

Quirky buttons can really lift a site, but they can be quite laborious to create. Visit FreeButtons to download a selection from 14 different styles. Types range from the marble look of 'Alien' to sleek bubble styles.

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

Tell us about it by emailing

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

Give in to the geek with these great new gadgets...



## JBL ON TIME ALUMINIUM iPod Alarm Clock

Price: **£147.99**

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

There isn't a worse way to start the day than being scared out of your wits by an aggressive alarm clock. It doesn't seem any better if you choose to set your radio alarm either, as you can guarantee some loud-mouth will be the morning DJ. The guys at JBL have designed a gorgeous iPod Alarm Clock, which basically doubles up as a dock and charging base. So if you've always fancied waking up to the dulcet tones of Chris De Burgh or the such like, now you can!



## OFFICE BULLYING USB Missile Rocket Launcher

Price: **£22.90**

Web: [www.stella-comm.co.uk](http://www.stella-comm.co.uk)

Every office has a token idiot who seems to think it's acceptable to chat inanely throughout the day, while you pull your hair out wondering why on earth your tables don't line up. There surely can't be anything wrong with a little bit of harmless violence. Shut those fools up with this pretty scary-looking rocket launcher, a bargain at just over 20 quid from Avant Garde distribution limited.

# 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)

With the *Web Designer* letter bag starting to swell, we delve in for more developer-related opinions and general chit chat

## 2Advanced rule!

Hi *Web Designer*,

Just want to say first that I really love the mag these days and feel that you're probably the only mag of its kind worth buying every month. My main reason for writing though is regarding the awesome Behind the Scenes special you did recently on 2Advanced Studios. They're undeniably one of the best creative agencies around and both parts of this feature enabled us to gain access to the work they do in a way we wouldn't normally manage. The concept artwork for the Attractor v5 project was brilliant and adds an extra dimension to the new Behind the Scenes format. The extra two pages is appreciated too!

*Jo Bracewell*

Thanks for that Jo, we're delighted you hold the magazine in such high regard. It's also doubly nice to hear some great things about the slightly revamped format for Behind the Scenes. The section of course now takes the format of a traditional Q&A, but we have made a conscious effort to up the profile of the featured projects. 2Advanced were a real coup for us and are now regarded as great friends of this title, so we were even more determined to make this a memorable piece. Since then of course, we have covered the Web 2.0 pair of Clipmarks and Digg.com, and this month the fabulous new depthCORE (see page 22). We agree that four pages gives us more scope to include much more feedback and as much exclusive imagery as they'll give us. Watch this space!

## Taken to task over tables

Hi,

I am an occasional reader of your magazine. On the most part, I find it informative and the tutorials very useful. However I am a little dismayed that in 2007 you are still providing templates that are table-based. I was under the impression that serious web designers, especially in Europe and the US now that accessibility is required by law, all agree that table-based layouts are not only a thing of the past but are something we are all well rid of.

*Redfern Reid-Pitcher (via email)*

Crikey we've only just started 2007 haven't we Redfern? We see your point anyway, and would echo your stance on table-based layouts. However, in those instances where the layout of the template isn't pivotal to the focus of the tutorial, our experts may slip into old habits simply for convenience. This month though, you'll notice that Steve Jenkins continues his fight for CSS layer-driven layouts, so we hope that placates you somewhat. Additionally, we wouldn't necessarily agree with the sentiment that table-based layouts constitute a violation in accessibility – it's more attributed to lazy design now we have Div tags. Table tags in HTML were never intended for this purpose, but it's not true to suggest a table layout cannot yield an ethical site template. What does everyone else reckon?

## MAIL OF THE MONTH

### Gootube concerns

Hello,

With most of us web-design entrepreneurs keen to guess the next trend that could light up the industry, I've been considering YouTube's incredible success. Wouldn't it be amazing to come up with a dotcom like that and flog it for millions of pounds? Unbelievable, but I can't help but think the silly money involved in Google's takeover is all about hype. It's buying an albeit very strong brand within the video-blogging arena, but the site itself isn't exactly the most sophisticated and innovative thing I've ever seen. It also seems strange that the very freedom it gives bloggers to post content could end up drowning it in a tide of litigation. If it just becomes a legitimately licensed TV-on-demand channel, complete with subscription fee, it will surely lose the appeal that made it what it is. I don't think Google knows what it has bought or how to run it frankly, but the guys who sold it must be laughing. Another dotcom boom and bust anyone?

*Ross Weeks*

The thing is Ross, if everyone was able to create and sell a dotcom giant, they would go for pence and not millions of lovely pounds! YouTube is certainly the pick of the bunch these days and could possibly be the most iconic site of the past few years – Google's purchase of it just underlines that. Although all big site investments like this have little to do with the site assets and more to do with the people or hits it attracts. You're effectively buying an audience that in themselves have empowered a virtual brand. We would therefore worry that Google's more concerted approach to money-making, could result in YouTube getting both viewing fees and annoying advertising some time soon. But hey, maybe it's time to strike out in the video-blogging stakes and do things yourself? Thankfully our cover feature and tutorials should be just the trick for you this month!



Why not try and follow in the footsteps of sites like YouTube and cash in on the blogging trend? Turn to page 28 for some great tips on getting started







# DEPTHCORE.COM V.6 ONLINE ART COLLECTIVE

We take an in-depth look at a site that brings creative forces together in the real world while unifying some cool design techniques on the web...

**A**s ever, we at *Web Designer* pride ourselves on dedicating this section of the mag to the forces that are taking the web world by storm. In recent issues, we've covered sites that are part of the Web 2.0 phenomenon and ones that are responsible for some of the more breathtaking site designs out there.

So this month, we thought we'd combine the two and catch up with a recently revamped [depthCORE.com](http://depthcore.com) that provides a fantastic art and design community for nurturing creative talent across the globe.

To find out how it all came about, we speak with creative director Justin Maller before catching up with technical director Brian D Smith. So without further ado, read on to find out how the latest version of this stunning site got its wings.

**JM:** Justin Maller, creative director

**Web Designer:** First, how would you describe [depthCORE](http://depthcore.com) and the work you do to anyone who perhaps hasn't been fortunate to discover it yet?

**JM:** [depthCORE](http://depthcore.com) is an international art collective that I founded in 2002. It's comprised of over 100 independent artists, designers, musicians, photographers and animators located all over the world, bound together by the common goal of producing world-class digital creations. Although it was generally abstract in style to begin with, the overall aesthetic of the site has diversified over the last five years, to the point where there's no longer a single idiom that encompasses the breadth of work

available from our group. Suffice to say, we've made it our mission to satisfy our appetite for original and innovative compositions, by creating them together in a pack-style, family-based atmosphere. The binding link between our disparate and far-flung artists is as important as the final exhibition.

**WD:** How does the team, or general [depthCORE](http://depthcore.com) collective, fit together in terms of the staff behind it and the general day-to-day duties of actually running it?

**JM:** [depthCORE](http://depthcore.com) is very minimalist in terms of staff. Brian D Smith covers the entire website – from design to coding to maintenance. This is a massive workload that I wouldn't believe was possible for one man if it wasn't for the fact that he's been holding it down for nearly four years! Christopher Mytton and Kevin Stacey are our two back end wizards, who come in from time to time to handle the heavier technical stuff and some of the scarier coding jobs. Then there's me, the creative director. My job is to manage our artists, conceive and manage releases, handle recruitment, forge creative and business relationships, conceptualise changes and upgrades to the website, write and distribute our PR materials and occasionally make the odd piece of art.

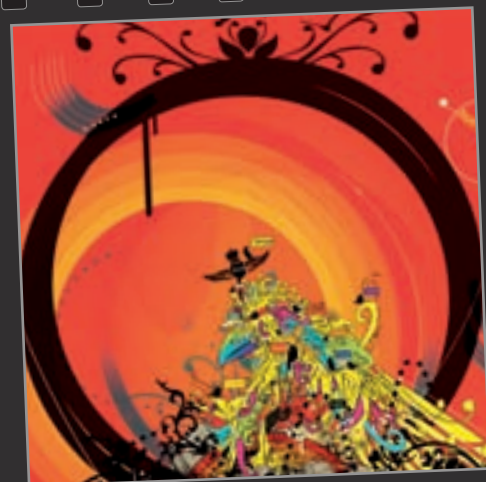
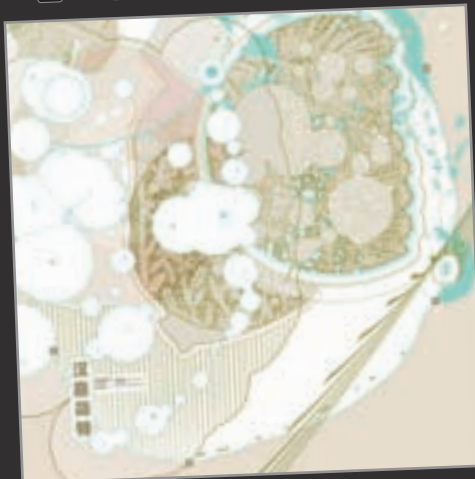
Other than us, there are the 100 odd artists who have various levels of involvement. Some artists simply make art, some take a more active role in being ambassadors for the site, whereas others like Eric Sin and Keith Alban have a slightly more arduous workload as they assist with the day-to-day moderation of the site and the music direction respectively.

**WD:** The site ([www.depthcore.com](http://www.depthcore.com)) has only recently returned to the web after a significant revamp. What was the main motivation behind that redesign and where did the style concept for the new look come from?

**JM:** The site underwent a fairly serious redesign when we launched our sixth version in October. The main reasons behind this rather drastic makeover, was the need to create a more dynamic website, so that our users have more than simply our exhibitions to draw them to the site. The upgrade is certainly not a cosmetic one. We now offer several new features that make being part of the [depthCORE](http://depthcore.com) community an experience that's as rewarding as it is inspirational. Our custom-built Workshop Creative Development tool is but one example of the new features we have implemented in



*depthCORE's homepage is an overwhelming collection of thumbnails and links. It's tough deciding where to click first!*



Just a few examples of the work supplied to depthCORE.com by its many users

order to make the site more interactive. We strive to foster a community based on the principles of artistic development and constructive criticism. We've built it around the principle that the site is now a constructive environment made for artists, by artists.

**WD: It's clear your members see depthCORE as a vital creative hub. In light of this, did you have any fears about the site being 'under reconstruction' for the period of redesign – and how long did that redevelopment take from start to finish?**

**JM:** Every single day that the site was down, was like a sucker punch to the stomach for both Brian and I, we were desperate to get it back online as soon as possible. Our downtime certainly stretched out longer than we wanted it to, but it was completely inescapable – while we moved servers it was simply not feasible to keep the site online. Sporadic downtime is a reality for any site as large and rapidly expanding as ours and although we absolutely detest it, we're powerless to completely eliminate it. The redevelopment took place over a number of months and was obviously rapidly accelerated when the site went offline. We were forced to delay the release of a few features that were set for launch and considering that not all of these planned features have been implemented, it's fair to say that the site is still in a state of development.

**WD: Were there any particular improvements or enhancements, perhaps in terms of general site functionality or capabilities that were necessary for the new site to fulfil – and did these present any particular problems?**

**JM:** We wanted to offer our users a set of tools to develop their creative pursuits and the biggest problem this presented was in terms of conceptualising a site that could fulfil this objective in a unique and effective way. How could we create a range of features that would be different from those currently on offer from other websites? I believe that in the new workshop, we have forged a creative apparatus that's centred on critique-based development, as opposed to the popularity-based exhibitionism that plagues other communities. This range of services is set for a major overhaul when we release the second wave of public

## “The pages are brill, but the real joy I get from the site is watching people join, submit and create”

and subscriber-based features in the next month or so. I can honestly say that some of the things we'll be offering are unlike anything else available on any other website and I'm truly psyched to see the reception from our burgeoning community.

**WD: With yourself based in Melbourne, Australia and your technical director/webmaster Brian based in Dallas, USA, how did the partnership work in uniting both the concept side of the redesign with the actual technical execution?**

**JM:** It helps that Brian is 75 per cent sorcerer! We have an amazing collaborative relationship, whereby I will simply write out a set of dreams and he will make them into beautiful websites. I have yet to come across a limit to his visual or technical talent, or his amazing ability to precisely recreate exactly what I've envisaged. We keep things as minimal as possible – occasional VOIP conversations and a barrage of back and forth emails with the occasional .doc attachment for the denser concepts.

**WD: Were there any moments when you said to Brian “let's do this” only to be told that it wasn't feasible or perhaps possible?**

**JM:** Never. That's the simple truth!

**WD: What would you consider the most successful parts of the new site to be, based on your own connection with the project and any subsequent feedback you may have had from fans or members?**

**JM:** The best addition to the new site is the wonderful and positive community that has sprung up within it. The workshop has been a resounding success, as has our new sparkling clean forum. We had some rather serious troll infestations in previous incarnations of our forums, but these have been thoroughly exterminated and I'm pleasantly surprised by just how friendly, helpful

and creative these new forums are. The user pages are beautiful, as is the message centre and the journal system, but the real joy I derive from the site is watching people join, submit and create.

**WD: Are there any hints you can give us about potential updates or improvements we might look forward to from depthCORE in the future?**

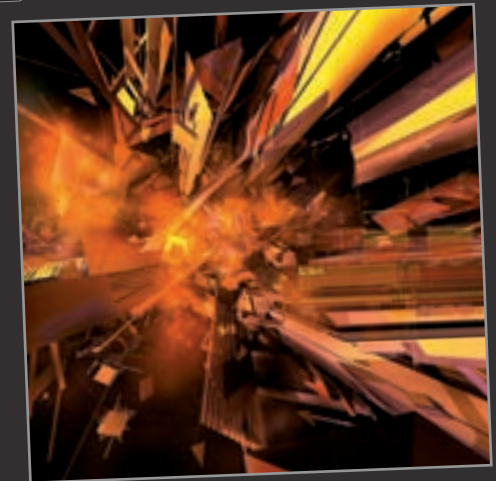
**JM:** We have a myriad of features set to launch. Out of pure necessity we've been forced to include some paid services, but I can assure you that what we have planned will more than justify the paltry amount required to upgrade. In terms of what they are, you'll just have to stay tuned, but expect great things!



depthCORE.com manages to entice some similarly edgy and fashionably creative sponsors and advertisers like this clothing manufacturer known as funkcrush



# Behind the Scenes



## DEPTHCORE.COM – ONLINE ART COLLECTIVE

**A**fter a sterling leg from Justin, depthCORE.com's technical director Brian D Smith has barely settled down with a cuppa before we urge him to take the baton from his colleague, as we continue the barrage of questions. Here goes...

**BS:** Brian D Smith, technical director

**WD:** How did you originally become involved with depthCORE and indeed become technical director behind the initiative?

**BS:** When depthCORE first came about, it was very appealing because it revolved around a subject that I took great interest in. To see where my own work stood, compared to the work showcased on depthCORE was brilliant. I was not just amazed, but compelled to be a part of what I thought was to be the most influential force of the digital abstract genre. I eventually won the admins over with my long-fought application adventure and joined the ranks in early 2003.

Two of the three original co-founders – Kevin Stacey and Dagan Dewar – unofficially left depthCORE to pursue other endeavours. The three founders came to me one day and asked if I could take over the vacant administrative responsibilities with Justin Maller. It was quite a surprise, at first. I was unsure what I did differently, but apparently I did something right to be chosen to undertake such a big responsibility. I was also made to realise depthCORE was having a dilemma on another subject. The programming

infrastructure was failing and Kevin and Dagan didn't have time to keep depthCORE afloat and maintained. I was told what needed to be done and fixed – every detail was outlined, the technical bits were very confusing.

Being as young as I was at the time, all I could think about was the value in the opportunity, so I did what I could to hold onto it! I learned PHP, I learned how to write HTML and I exposed myself to a different kind of world. Being an artist at heart, the technicalities of programming gave me critical mental stress! But I'm not complaining as all of it was definitely worth it, because it brought me to where I am with depthCORE today.

**"All I could think about was the value in the opportunity, so I held onto it!"**

**WD:** What key technical roles did you oversee during the recent redesign of the depthCORE.com website and how did this fit alongside Justin Maller's ideas or visions for what the new site should be? Were there any conflicts?

**BS:** I assumed every technical role: programming, designing, testing – it was all me for the most part. However, Justin and I equally work hand-in-hand. What I do well technically, Justin does well qualitatively. There's only so much my own mind can handle, especially when

having to take care of most things technical. Justin is great at formulating ideas and breaking them down to steps that make sense. The things he comes up with fit alongside my roles tremendously, because it results in less-strenuous programming and more successful outcomes in the end. I can't do what I do without a different kind of brain power to complement my work.

**WD:** How long did the redevelopment cycle for www.depthcore.com last in terms of the practical design, programming, building and so on? Also, how many people were involved in the whole of the redesign process?

**BS:** The redevelopment was at the forefront of all of our minds at depthCORE for a long time. Discussion began very early on and finally fruition started to happen around mid-July 2006. The development went on and off all the way until October 2006 when we finally released it to the public. While I was the only one involved in the process of making the website, I can't take credit for the entire thing. Some of the code and logic behind certain features were contributed over time by Kevin Stacey, who briefly returned to work in tandem with me on the more heavy code. Developing time was certainly saved by recycling the old.

**WD:** What core technologies underpin the site as it stands now, what development tools were utilised to realise it and why were they necessarily chosen?

**BS:** It's no secret that we use PHP and MySQL for just about everything. DepthCORE was originally made in PHP and so that's what I learned to help maintain the website and eventually reprogram it.

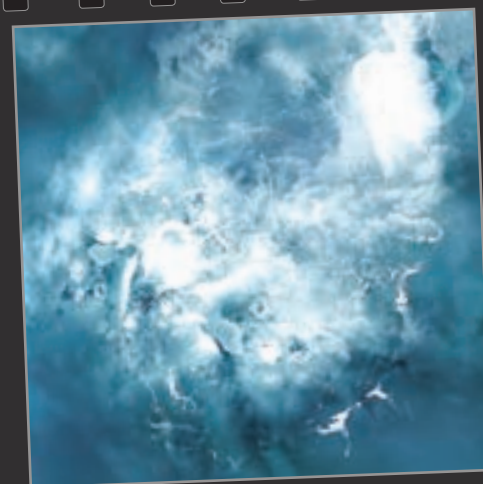
As far as development tools, I used Adobe Dreamweaver MX2004. Mainly because, I love its WYSIWYG capabilities and the text-editor in it isn't too shabby either. There's also something known as WOS



Find out more about Justin, Brian, and all the staff via their profile pages on the depthCORE.com website



Brian is definitely one creative talent to look out for. He's already accomplished so much by the ripe age of 20!



Check out [depthCORE.com](http://depthCORE.com) to discover art talent of the future with some truly excellent designs available

(Web-server On a Stick) that allows you to emulate a server from a USB stick drive. I can have PHP, MySQL and Apache all running off my portable 1GB USB stick, so from any computer I can load up a fully functioning work-in-progress of depthCORE.

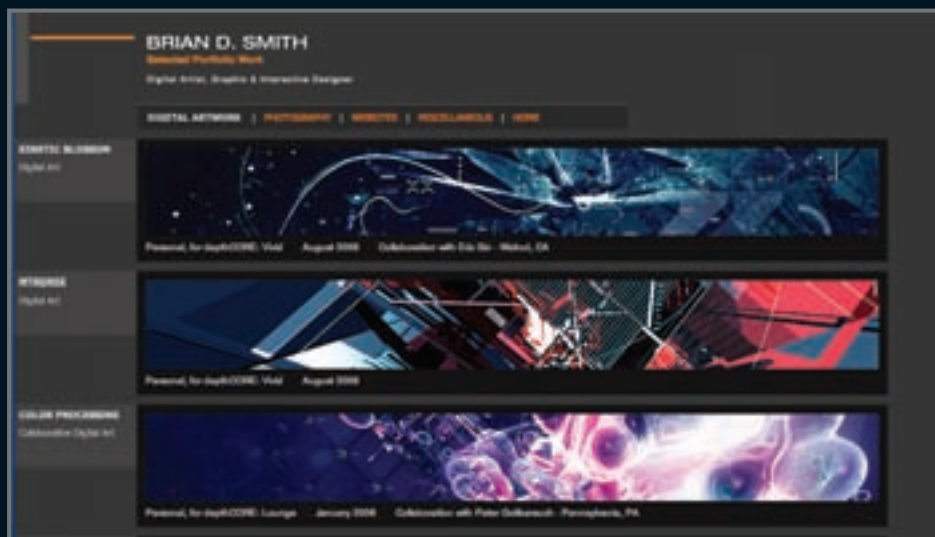
It was especially useful for me since I attend college full-time and work part-time – I would seize free moments to work on depthCORE whenever I could. Not to mention, development is a lot easier when you can go at the speed of your USB stick's read and write.

**WD: Were there any stages or certain periods of the redevelopment that spring to mind as being the most challenging and why?**

**BS:** The CSS stage was an incredible challenge because I had to break free of my normal habits. Since we have the reputation we do, we're expected to be wonderful at everything. It's kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy to anticipate critical response about everything. One of the things I had to consider was following the so-called 'standards', especially with this Web 2.0 concept floating around lately. To be quite honest, I'm not an expert and it's not in my bloodstream yet to be habitual about following page after page of bullet points from the W3C. This redesign of depthCORE would be the first time I actually attempted an all-CSS website and it's so far quite experimental. There's still a lot to fix and tweak, but it's a learning process as I go. I make sure I grab every second of experience I can get from what I feel are perfect development environments.

**WD: What parts of the new site give you the most pride looking at them now that it's up there live and kicking, and why?**

**BS:** The part where visitors can register a public member account and interact with depthCORE artists more than they could before. We've essentially localised all the depthCORE artists in one area so that users can get more personal with the artists and expand their creative horizons comfortably through depthCORE's turf rather than somewhere else. Our artists are scattered around the world wide web, but the base is depthCORE. It only makes sense that we create a dynamic opportunity to strengthen depthCORE's founding visions and goals. It's quite enlightening and gives me great pride to know that Justin and I can create this and make it happen. It's 2007, and we're still breathing and releasing!



Brian is a man of many talents, as well as being a computer and web design wizard, he is also currently a full-time student studying Fine Art. His considerably creative soul is exemplified in artwork featured on both sites



The wait until the redesign surfaced in June 2006 was excruciating for the site staff, who were keen to ensure that their users weren't deprived of their depthCORE fix for too long. All we can say is fellas, it was worth it!





# MASTER YOUR MOVIES ONLINE

WE SHOW YOU HOW TO GO  
FROM THE CAMERA TO DOTCOM  
IN THIS SPECIAL OVERVIEW OF  
PUBLISHING FILMS ON THE WEB





**“THE SOCIAL ELEMENT OF YOUTUBE HAS ALSO BEEN SIGNIFICANT, AS MORE USERS ARE MAKING VIDEOS PURELY TO SHARE WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES”**

**A**

**FEW YEARS AGO, PUTTING VIDEO ONTO THE WEB WAS RESERVED FOR LENGTHY MOVIE-TRAILER DOWNLOADS AND LITTLE ELSE.**

Thanks to the advances in both broadband connections and video codecs, the process of uploading and streaming has become far wider ranging.

As for the purpose of the video, there has been a serious shift from purely functional promotional content, to the more general interest arena – with home videos and short movies becoming more readily available. This is thanks, in part, to sites such as YouTube, which offer fast streaming at a manageable quality level. The social element of YouTube has also been significant, as more users are making videos purely to share with friends and relatives, or just the internet viewing public. With code that can be easily copied into any site, YouTube goes far beyond an insular community with a few dedicated users. Before getting to the advanced stages of uploading video, the files must be prepared and downsized in order to be transferred quickly. There's plenty to consider when editing the video, such as titles, lighting

and animation. Making your video look good also depends on the output format, of which there are plenty to choose from.

### **Editing and organising**

There are plenty of techniques, effects and other elements that can be added during the editing process. Gauging which level to aim at can be a tricky process, but if the files simply need to be converted to another format, then editing will probably be well outside the requirements of your project. One thing editing programs have become adept at over the past few years is rapidly

field of view will be reduced. For example, if the project features text in any form, it will have to be large and bold enough to be easily seen. If the colour clashes with the background or the font is too wispy, the words will be lost after compression. It's best to keep titles to a necessary minimum, used only in the opening and any important credits. Remember that elements such as crew information can be put in the surrounding areas of the web page, so don't necessarily need to be in the video. Lighting is also important, as the compression levels may cause darker objects to sink into the

**“THERE ARE LOADS OF EFFECTS THAT CAN BE ADDED DURING THE EDITING PROCESS”**

making some pretty significant changes to the clips, such as brightening them up or zooming in on certain sections.

Even if the video file has already been created, it's worth having another look through it with the end product in mind. The form that the final file will be uploaded to the internet in will be of lower quality than the original. It will also be viewed on slower connections, meaning the file size must be smaller as well. Any information within the video will have to be clear, as the

background. Footage needs to be bright and have decent levels of contrast in order for detail to be picked up. Video can be manually brightened in most editing programs, but heading too far in one direction will cause the footage to become washed out. There are plenty of consumer editing programs out there that can do the job, with Mac users having iMovie and those on the PC, Adobe Premiere Elements. These two packages can do the job in terms of correcting minor issues quickly and have plenty of exporting options.



Just having video content doesn't mean that you can forgo good design, as you still need to keep interest



## VIDEO CHECKLIST

### Check the length

File sizes will need to be 100MB at the most, so if you want to retain quality it's best to chop the length now, rather than struggle later. Make sections of a larger project, rather than sacrificing quality in order to show the full run time.

### A bright spark

Videos that are slightly too dark will look far worse when compressed, so brighten the footage up using a basic editing program. There needs to be a decent amount of contrast between the light and dark areas of the screen, or details will be lost.

### Textual feeling

Keep any titles to an absolute minimum, as the information will be harder to pick up at lower resolutions. Information such as cast and crew lists can be saved for the web page, rather than forcing people to squint at tiny type.

### Re-export, not fade away

Whenever possible, go back to the original files to export to minimise the amount of compression.

The more times the same file is outputted, the more breakup will be evident on the final version. Always export a high-quality version at the same time to keep for the archives.

Film trailers are a very popular use of online video capabilities

you should be safe. QuickTime's H.264 is a bit more universal and retains quality well without making the file sizes massive. By downloading the latest QuickTime player the codec is immediately available, so is well worth adding to your collection. Finally DivX, which has gained a certain degree of infamy as the pirate file-sharer format of choice. DivX does have the benefit of managing to be capable of high levels of compression and is becoming more widely accepted by the online video community.

The quality level can then be tampered with within the codec, allowing for a higher level of compression. The setting shouldn't really drop below 60 per cent, or the final result will verge towards being unwatchable. If the size is still too large by a long way, drop the resolution. If it's only a few MB away, knock the quality level down. All three codec types are much of a muchness and looking at the upload site should help determine which choice to make.

## Streaming and software

After the video has been exported, it needs to be placed into an environment where it can be seen. Rather than forcing people to download the video direct to their hard drive, the file can be streamed. This means the

It's always best, if possible, to export directly from the original project rather than a previously created file. This is simply because the level of compression will be increased each time it's outputted again, causing far more break up and blocking in the final file. If you're planning on outputting a large video, it's wise at the editing stage to split the file into sections by putting a few frames of black in at three-five minute intervals. This means the quality won't be massively compromised because the file is too long and the viewer doesn't have to wait ages for the file to upload. Many sites restrict file sizes to 100MB, so it's best to cut the file down now rather than have random pauses.

## Codecs and compression

Preparing the movie to be exported is only half the battle. Unfortunately, the whole process of creating the finished product has one significant obstruction, in the shape of picking the right codec. Deciding on the file type is only one part, as after either QuickTime, DivX or MPEG are chosen there are plenty of options within them that can benefit either file size or quality. Finding the right balance is a tricky process that takes time to master, but getting it right can mean little is lost from the original.

First off is picking out the resolution. Unless the clip is very short, or the holy grail of codec has been discovered, it will have to be reduced from the original 720 x 576 size. As reducing the pixel count has a serious effect on the end product, it's worth deciding on this early. The site being uploaded to may have some resolution restrictions or recommendations as to the optimum size. It's a fair bet to go for around one and a half times smaller than the original, as it's a decent middle ground between quality and file size. Even if the end product is huge as a result, some ground can be made up in the file type selection.

Each element of the exporting process needs to be kept organic, in that if the end product isn't up to standard, the sections can be adjusted. Next on the scale of significant difference makers is the file type. As the internet is extremely size conscious, all of the quality-led types can be discarded. The main three types are MPEG, QuickTime and DivX. As MPEG is widely available in a variety of guises, it offers the most scope. MPEG-4 is the best version to aim at, as it offers the most balance. Due to the range of codecs, it can be hit and miss as to whether the player will understand it, but by sticking to the options supplied with the editing program





## THE CODEC CONUNDRUM

### MPEG-4

One of the vast family of MPEG codecs and is available with almost every editing program out there as standard.

There are plenty of variations to choose from if your existing one isn't producing the desired results, simply by heading onto the internet. Results do vary though, so check the output prior to uploading.

### QuickTime H.264

Comes with the QuickTime player download, so is simple to install. The codec is used to get movies onto the iPod, so it's designed to get high-quality video onto a small screen. Using one of the fastest and most reliable file formats is a bonus too.

### DivX

Like QuickTime, DivX is another codec that comes along with a free player download. Depending on whether the free copy or the pay-for Pro version is used, determines how much control over the output you get. But the results are normally good enough to be made big screen.

data is stored on a server and played directly through the website. A few elements are required before the footage can be shown.

There are plenty of benefits to using streaming instead of a direct download. First of all, the file is relatively well protected. It's difficult for people to steal the content and use it for their own projects. Also, it gives a reason for web users to return to the site. In

## "THE RISE AND RISE OF YOUTUBE HAS BEEN SOMETHING OF A DIGITAL DOTCOM FABLE"

Both the Pro and free versions of QuickTime are good enough by anybody's standards



## A YOUTUBE TALE

The rise and rise of YouTube has been something of a digital dotcom fable – beginning with a trio of internet-savvy users and ending with a multi-million dollar deal for their creation. Beginning barely two years ago in February 2005, Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim started up the site using an almost universal player interface and reducing the wait times normally associated with streaming video.

The simplicity behind the site has been the most surprising aspect, as simply showing other people's videos has been kicking around on the internet for a while. Having a reliance on the social aspect of sharing video has greatly helped the popularity of the site, enabling users to direct others to files of interest. The free and easy, almost rule-less, outlook of the administrators has got the site into trouble before, such as when a group of Iraq-based soldiers started uploading offensive material.

Google's recent acquisition of the site, which resulted in a tidy sum for the creators, has led to more stringent controls being enforced. Content that breaches copyright, such as recorded television programs, is being systematically removed by the new administrators. Google's links to major music and television studios has been cited as one of the reasons, but the sheer amount of content paired with the previously easy going nature of the site makes it a difficult task for anyone to police it with any major impact.

order to watch the video more than once, the browser must keep coming back. This allows information about the video to be placed around the viewer, as well as providing links to more content. Streaming a video file can be performed in two ways, depending on how involved you want to get.

The first and simplest method is to use an existing web service. There are plenty of these kicking around, with varying compatible formats and levels of popularity. The most obvious to head for is YouTube, if only because it's the first site browsers tend to head to when looking for video. It's also free, simple to use and allows a wide range of files to be uploaded to it. After logging in and uploading the video, the site allows for the code to be copied into a site so people needn't go to YouTube to watch it. The site restricts the user to a 100MB ten-minute end file – plenty for most uses. Beyond that, it's up to the user what the other attributes are. The site favours the DivX format to the other major file types and recommends 320 x 240 resolution. There are plenty of other file types that YouTube can display, but it's best to stick to DivX so there's less risk of a compatibility

iMovie is part of Apple's iLife package and is a simple tool to master



error. As the upload times can be lengthy, only short clips should really be used if another format is being implemented. After the upload, the file is placed into a Flash-based player. This allows even users without the relevant codec to watch the files back, making the end product almost universal. The only possible problems arise when files are too large and take time to be streamed. There are plenty of other video upload sites, such as Microsoft Soapbox, that allow the same free access and uploading.

If the file is larger in either resolution or size, you may want to use a dedicated server of your own. Putting the subsequent information into Dreamweaver takes a few tweaks, as simply linking to the file will lead to it being downloaded in its entirety before it can be watched. Although the code from YouTube can be easily embedded in the site,





Plenty of websites use video to draw users in



Google Video (found at [video.google.co.uk](http://video.google.co.uk)) enables you to search for clips

it is possible to use another type of player to stream directly. The VLC media player can be used to stream the relevant video, enabling the viewer to watch, but not download. All that's then needed is to set the relevant window size in Dreamweaver and link to it.

## How to get noticed

The internet is perfect for grabbing people's attention quickly and can act as an excellent gateway to larger forms of media, such as the mighty genre of film. Plenty of film trailers are now almost exclusively on the internet, and so-called 'viral marketing' uses video incredibly effectively. Even though video can



DivX is a very popular codec as it contains a free version available to download

## SOFTWARE SAVIOUR

**Adobe Premiere Elements** £59.99

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

One of the simplest video-editing programs available for the PC. Along with the usual titles and transitions available is a healthy list of effects to play around with, including the ability to perform green-screening. With PSD files compatible and an in-built video capture utility, this is a simple program to drop into your workflow.

**iMovie** £55

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

As part of iLife, iMovie gives the average Mac user an excellent starting point for video editing. Everything is easily laid out and even though it isn't massively powerful, the program can be learnt in a few hours. The output options are kept up to date with any improvements in the QuickTime codec, so you're never short of the latest update.

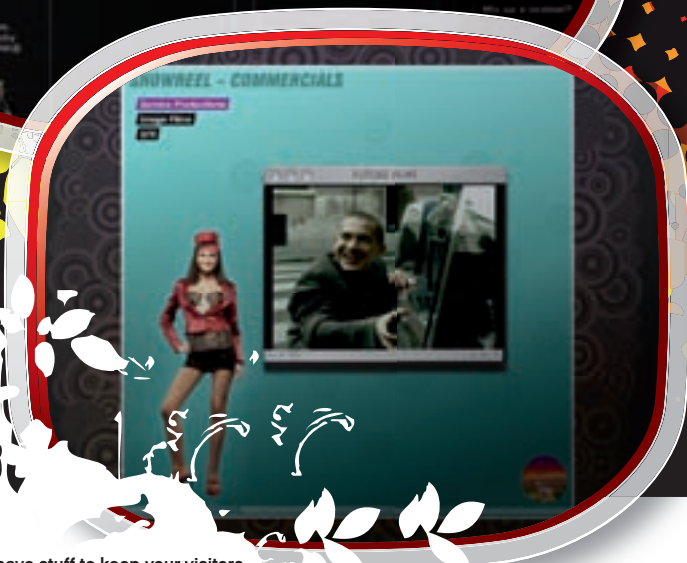
**VLC Player** Free

[www.videolan.org](http://www.videolan.org)

An important utility to have kicking around for a number of reasons. First, it can understand almost any format and convert it and it enables Dreamweaver to stream video without having to mess around with modifying code. Add to that the free nature and availability of user-made macros, and VLC is a must-have utility.



Make sure you have stuff to keep your visitors interested while waiting for showreels to load



## "THERE ARE PLENTY OF EDITING PROGRAMS OUT THERE THAT CAN DO THE JOB"

make the difference on a website, it's worth building enough information around it to draw people in.

A video will take time to load up if it's of any length and there's nothing more annoying than clicking along to a website and having to wait ages for it to load up. So to keep visitors interested and to give them a reason to stick around, make sure you give people all the information relevant to the file within the site, either surrounding the player or on separate pages. The use of text is of great benefit, as facts about locations used in shooting, the cast and crew, or contact details can be read while the video is loading up. Most of the commercial movie-trailer sites will make surrounding information available and will ensure there's a front page to get past with the title and release date of the film.

The length of the trailer is also an important attraction to the browser, as they know before hand that the media will last no longer than a few minutes. Unless the movie content is specifically advertised as such, or is also available for download, staying under the five-minute mark is a must. Showreels must be similar to film trailers,

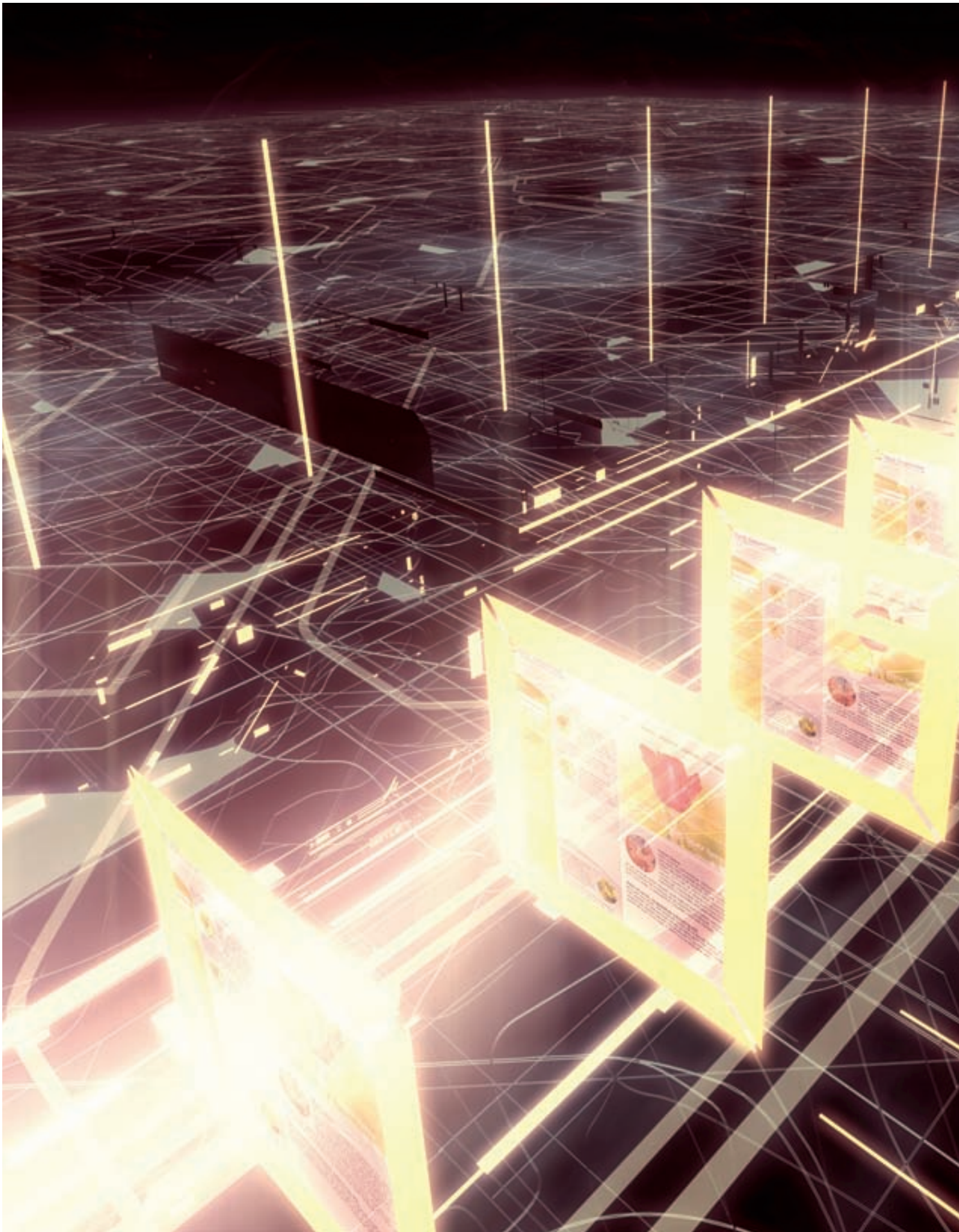
in that they present eye-catching images in a short space of time. Using a song as a stopwatch is a clever trick to ensuring the video will not only be kept short, but that it'll be in sync with the music as well. Much like the websites themselves, having a level of memorable immediacy makes the video far more relevant. Whereas a showreel can be hidden within the site, a trailer needs to be on a straight, logical line from the first page. Even if the site has already been constructed, it's worth making a specific front page via an obvious link.

Getting the film noticed is partially down to immediacy, but the content also plays a part. You need to wow the audience with the short video, making an impression almost instantly. Look at movie trailers and take into account not only the aesthetics, but the structure of the video. Each trailer is like a mini story – with a beginning, middle and an end. Even though it's taken from a much larger project, the isolated video makes sense within itself. Try sending the link to a friend or family member and see how much you have to explain to them – the more self-contained and obvious, the better.

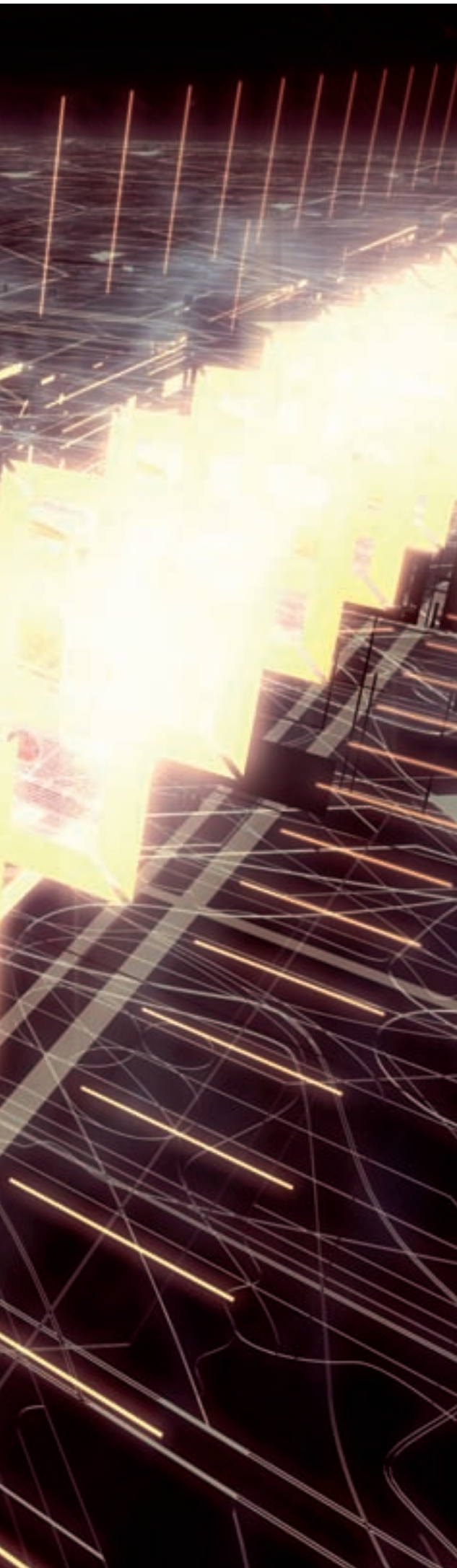


*e***Mag**









# Design by Template

**LOVE THEM OR LOATHE THEM, WEBSITE TEMPLATES ARE HERE TO STAY. DAVE HOWELL DISCOVERS THAT THEY CAN BE A MEANS TO FAST SITE DEVELOPMENT AND A LUCRATIVE SOURCE OF INCOME FOR ANY WEB DESIGNER**

**BRINGING UP DREAMWEAVER TO BE CONFRONTED WITH THAT WHITE BLANK SCREEN CAN BE A DAUNTING PROSPECT IF YOU INTEND TO BUILD A WEBSITE FROM SCRATCH.**

If you don't have all the design skills you need to build the site you want, or are pressed for time, utilising a template could be the answer. There is now a burgeoning market for website templates and with thousands available across every imaginable category, you're sure to find one to suit.

Whether you use a template with little or no modifications, or one as a starting point for your own unique design, the jury is still out on whether templates really have any place in the website design community. However, for a budding web designer,

businesses like Actinic still use this approach. You can even get a bespoke template designed for your business if the built-in offerings aren't what you're looking for. Point your browser at <http://tinyurl.com/yj8lmd> to see who is offering this service.

"Template-driven web builders are an excellent way for any user to get online in around half an hour," says Richard Stevenson, 1&1 Internet Ltd ([www.1and1.co.uk](http://www.1and1.co.uk)). "1&1 domains, hosting, dedicated servers and eShops are supplied with both 1&1 WebsiteBuilder and 1&1 DynamicSiteCreator (for Flash sites). Nowadays, website templates can look every bit as professional as a scripted site and can deliver great interactive features. They offer the best solution for a good number of business and personal users. As

**"COMMISSIONS CAN BE QUITE HEALTHY IF YOU CAN DESIGN TEMPLATES THAT BECOME VERY POPULAR"**

creating templates for the leading vendors could become a lucrative sideline. A customer buying the exclusive rights to use a template will pay hundreds of pounds for the privilege – so commissions can be quite healthy if you can design templates that become very popular.

## **Cut and paste websites**

Template-based website design has, of course, been around for years. Many of the early eCommerce site design applications were based on templates. You chose a design you liked and then customised this to create your online store. This is still the case with many of the currently available eCommerce packages. Even leading eCommerce

new templates are always being released, and the design and build process is quick and easy, templates provide a good way of refreshing your website periodically."

Business sites are driving the template market as micro enterprises look for a fast and easy route into eCommerce. Lacking the knowledge and finance, templates seem like a great proposition, but as we'll see later, templates for business sites can sometimes hide the true level of investment that's needed to move them from an empty template to a fully working online store. Many of the template vendors also offer specialised templates for leading eCommerce applications, including osCommerce. You can even find templates that are designed for

# Design by Template

specific content management systems, if you intend to use this route to update the content on your site's pages.

Alongside business-aimed templates, there are a plethora of other categories to choose from. If you want to have a blog that's not identical to all the others on the web, buying a template could be the answer. Or if you're looking for a site design for a personal website to showcase your photography, or perhaps you want to build a site for your children – the template-vendor sites are crammed with hundreds of these templates.

From a professional design perspective, the design community, who state that truly outstanding websites must be built from scratch, often frown upon using a template. Greg Huntoon, creative director, Go Farm ([www.gofarm.la](http://www.gofarm.la)) notes: "Personally, I've never used a template and don't intend to. Also, if I found out that an employee or freelancer of ours was building sites based on templates they would find themselves out of a job. In my mind, there's nothing

## INTERVIEW: JASON RECKERS VP OF SALES AND MARKETING, PIXELMILL



**Q: The website-template market seems to have become a familiar part of the web design landscape. Do you think that designing templates for sites like yours is a legitimate design avenue for budding web designers?**

A: Templates are a great way for anyone to get started. We all use some form of 'template' in our business and personal lives, whether that's getting started with word working or learning about art techniques from those that came before us. We add our special touches and personal style and the result is our 'own'. Of course, web builders need to evaluate the template sources to determine the quality of the template they're purchasing. If I purchase a product with poor instructions, I'm likely to finish with poor results.

**Q: Small businesses, in particular, are attracted to using website templates, as they can provide a shortcut to setting up a website**

**– or can they? Do you think that buying a template is a good idea if you have little or no website design experience? Do they require more work than meets the eye?**

A: Templates are an excellent way for small businesses to save time and money with their website. At the same time, small businesses should not be blinded by the glitz and glamour of some templates and make the assumption that templates are an off-the-shelf solution. Websites are not easy to build and maintain and that is why there are 'professionals' in the web design industry. PixelMill's goal is to do as much of the harder, professional work as we can to make website building easier and more affordable for a larger part of the population interested in building their own website.

**Q: Do you think there's a stigma attached to using templates for rapid website development, or are they now an accepted part of a designer's armoury of tools?**

## "I WOULDN'T GET INTO DESIGNING TEMPLATES IF YOU'RE AN UP-AND-COMING DESIGNER"

wrong with using templates or designing templates. But as a designer, I tend to hold that using templates makes you more of a website assembler, not a designer. Design takes creativity, risk and a higher degree of skill than what it takes to make modifications to an existing design."

Many of the templates that are available can be used off-the-shelf, but often some kind of modification is required. This can be the downside to using templates. As you didn't build the template yourself, it's very easy to break a page and it can be a daunting task to fix the areas of the page that have moved. Kent Hertzog, web director, Inclined Inc, emphasises this point ([www.inclinedinc.com](http://www.inclinedinc.com)): "Templates require more work than meets the eye. For instance, if a template is assembled using tableless CSS, the end user

With very low costs it can be tempting to use stock photography in a site template. If you do, check out the copyright and usage rights before you offer it to a vendor

is in trouble. They won't have a clue how to tailor the template to their needs. All they have to do is delete a colon or semi-colon somewhere and it's broken. Also, some web templates utilise Flash. For someone with no Flash experience, opening up that template FLA could look pretty confusing."

Just buying a site template is also only half of the story. Often, you'll want to include other elements such as contact forms and other interactive components. These can require knowledge of server-side technologies that, of course, the template doesn't supply. Richard Stevenson at 1&1 Internet continues: "From a hosting point of view, most static-website templates customers buy from third parties are uploaded simply via FTP. There are typically no real technical requirements. However, if you use templates to create a site with FrontPage, you'll need a hosting plan with FrontPage-Extensions. Similarly, templates for Sharepoint or osCommerce will need a Sharepoint hosting package or osCommerce installed on a Linux hosting platform.

"Feedback forms can be written in PHP, Perl, Python or as a FrontPage Extension. Users should bear in mind that FrontPage Extensions most often do not run as effectively on Linux packages as they do on Windows hosting for which they were designed. Any 'dynamic' part of a website tends to require maintenance. For example, hackers can sometimes exploit downloaded or scripted forms if they're not updated regularly. Large web hosts such as 1&1 support the vast majority of templates or contact forms or scripting language they may be programmed in."

### Template commerce

The template market can also be a possible avenue to flex your design skills. Some designers have a lucrative sideline in template design. The level of your income will, of course, be solely dependent on how popular your site designs are. Many template vendors offer a two-tier pricing structure. A template can be bought without any exclusivity from the site, but some vendors also offer the template as an exclusive design. A business would, for instance, buy the exclusive rights to that template to protect them from another business coming along and buying the same template. No business wants their site to look identical to another. From the template designer's point of view, exclusive sales are worth hundreds of pounds more. It all depends on how the sale is set up – either based on commission, or as an outright sale of the site template where the copyright of the design is signed over to the template vendor.

Kent Hertzog, however, is adamant that using your design skills to create templates isn't a course that any designer should take: "I wouldn't get into designing templates if you're an up-and-coming designer. Reason being, you should learn how to design for content, not have the content be an afterthought. Your design should reflect a clever way of communicating what the site is all about. Not a slick vacant box that any information can just be plugged into. Also, I offer free Photoshop brushes I've created for download from my [www.digitallybranded.com](http://www.digitallybranded.com) website. I recently received an email from someone who purchased a template that they said I had made and wondered if





A: Sure, there is a stigma attached to templates among some groups. Templates can be considered a threat to the professional web designer – just as digital cameras were thought a threat to professional photographers. Today we see that these photography tools are not a threat, rather a benefit in that the amateur learns to appreciate the true knowledge and value of the professional. We collaborate with professional web designers every week that use templates for some portion of their business. If you talk specifically to website developers (coders) you start to see templates becoming more a part of their armoury, as long as the template has clean, standards-based code. Overall, the small to medium-size business, professional consulting firms and localised website builders find the most value in website templates.

**Q: What advice would you give to anyone that was thinking of buying a template to set up their website?**

A: Do your homework! The most important question is where does the template provider source their photography and is it from an established image company? We have image licensing agreements with Getty Images, Corbis and Jupiterimages. PixelMill guarantees that all products use only legally licensed images, code and design graphics from established sources.

In truth, I would suggest that anyone buying a template should contact the template provider and challenge it to prove its guarantee and clearly show that it has the appropriate licence for every element of the template. Where was the product originally produced? Who holds copyright to the template? Where were the images sourced and what are the licence limitations? What are your options if you have a problem with the template, or find that it doesn't fit your needs? Be aware of your ability to address any copyright issues with the provider and the country where the company is based.

I could help them. Seeing that I have never made a template, I enquired further. Turns out, a company was selling a template created using my brushes, but where they stepped over the line was that they used my logo in the template! That was a bit too far in my book. They had other template designs that used my Photoshop brushes but didn't use my logo so that was fine. I created my Photoshop brushes for designers to use, but using my logo in a design went way too far."

If you're keen to explore this area of the website design market, one option is to design components for websites instead of the entire site itself. This is the approach taken by Rob Young who has built his business Cool Focus ([www.coolfocus.com](http://www.coolfocus.com)) on this concept. With Rob's site navigation and display components, any designer can have professional Flash navigation on their site without any knowledge of Flash itself. Rob outlines how Cool Focus came about: "I'd seen Java applets around at the time and just started playing around to see what I could come up with. I soon realised that although the majority of other applets were rather silly, pointless, things you could use Java to do much more useful things for websites. The web was becoming mainstream and sites were getting bigger and more complex, so there was an obvious and growing need for better navigation than long lists of HTML links. Since then, of course, we've expanded into Flash applets and our range covers much more than menus – image display controls, media players, RSS readers, to name a few."

Clearly the attraction of website templates is the speed with which you can set up a website. Greg Huntoon isn't convinced that this is entirely the case: "I'm not sure that templates really deliver on the promise



**Don't forget that you may have to deal with any server-side issues when you buy a template. These won't be set up for you**

of setting up your website in minutes. Of course, if you do purchase the template and make zero modifications to the design, it is something that can be accomplished fairly quickly. However, in the last ten years of designing websites, I've never come across a single site that hasn't required continual and frequent updates and modifications. I think they always require more work than what's advertised. It's not good enough to know how to build a website in HTML 1.0 using Notepad; many templates use simple HTML and rely on CSS to apply the design or theme. Trying to modify a site's HTML when it's really the CSS that needs to be modified can create significant problems in both the short and long run."

## Design dilemma

Whichever side of the fence you're on, website templates is a market that's here to stay. "Overall, I think that there are some really good template companies starting

## TEMPLATE SUPPLIERS

**Template Monster**  
[www.templatemonster.com](http://www.templatemonster.com)

Template Monster is one of the longest standing template suppliers on the web. If you're in the market for eCommerce templates it also has its Monster Commerce service.



**PixelMill**  
[www.pixelmill.com](http://www.pixelmill.com)

Becoming synonymous with the template market, PixelMill has a cast range of site designs. No matter which web design application you use, PixelMill has a wide range of templates to choose from.



**Hypertemplates**  
[www.hypertemplates.com](http://www.hypertemplates.com)

Hypertemplates has a mind-boggling array of templates across many categories. If you want to move into eCommerce, check out its range of osCommerce templates.



**Templates Box**  
[www.templatesbox.com](http://www.templatesbox.com)

Templates Box offers a well designed site with easy access to the template samples so you can easily get a flavour. Try a tutorial if you're unsure about how to modify the content on any of its templates.



**4Templates**  
[www.4templates.com](http://www.4templates.com)

If you're looking for more than simple HTML and Flash templates, 4Templates offers XHTML and CSS-enabled templates to really make your site designs stand out from the crowd.



**The Template Store**  
[www.thetemplatestore.com](http://www.thetemplatestore.com)

This site offers a comprehensive range of Dreamweaver, GoLive and FrontPage templates, plus CSS and XHTML layouts to tempt.





# Design by Template

## LEGAL EAGLES - WHAT'S THE LAW ON WEB TEMPLATES?



**Dino Wilkinson**

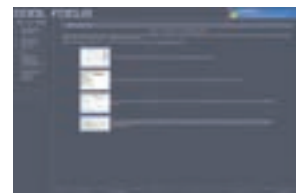
Dino is an associate in the communications media and technology department of international law firm Norton Rose. His experience covers a wide range of technology and commercial contracts. Dino is also a member of the Society for Computers and Law.

In essence, website templates may comprise of a number of original elements, including computer code, images and illustrations, unique fonts or other design elements. These are all potentially protected as copyright works. Copyright protects original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works (which includes computer programs in the sense that they're deemed 'literary works' in coded form) and it's unlawful to reproduce such a work without authorisation from the author or creator.

A template provider must therefore have obtained the authority to use the template from the original creator. They would presumably do this by acquiring the exclusive right to distribute the template. In legal terms, they would probably take an assignment of the copyright from the author, in other words the designer passes the copyright over to them. When it comes to redistributing the templates, they would be licensed by the template provider to end users in the same way as a software house grants a licence to end users using a piece of software.

It would be possible to limit the scope of the licence (for example, if a provider gives someone a 'non-exclusive' licence to use a template then that template may also be licensed to other people. If the provider gives them an 'exclusive' licence, then that end user is the only person entitled to use it).

The biggest issue would be a template provider licensing material that it doesn't have the right to licence (because it doesn't have the author or creator's authority). This may come about, for example, because a designer included copyright-protected works in the template he assigned to the provider. The end user is unwittingly infringing copyright and must look to the terms on which the template was licensed to him. In a negotiated software licence, you would look for an indemnity from the software provider, ie, a statement that the provider will cover any losses if a third-party make claims against the end user for infringement of that third-party's intellectual property rights. I would be surprised if they offer this sort of protection.



**Cool Focus offers a wide range of navigation and display components you can simply add to your existing template**

to deliver great designs and highly specific styles and themes, not the tired old generic templates which dominate most template sites," concludes Greg Huntoon. "There are some fantastic designers making their living designing fully functional and animated templates that are driven by nice content management systems. It's simply cost verses benefit. If you need something highly customised, templates probably aren't the best way to go. But, if you have a small budget and simple content, I would definitely recommend getting a great website template

When I see a site that has been created using a template, it automatically lowers my assessment of the site I'm viewing. It says to me, that if this company didn't care enough to take the time to build a proper site, why should I believe they'll take the time to make the product first-class? A company's website is a direct reflection of themselves. And a template shows me that they're just chasing the dollar and not putting a whole lot of thought into creating the best brand possible." Rob Young, however, believes that templates do have a place in the web

will require that you not only have the skill to manipulate Flash movies, but also the software with which to carry out the changes. As well as not being able to change content, templates are very easy to break. If you're not at least competent with HTML, XHTML, CSS, Flash and server-side expertise, tread carefully. Most template sites have tutorials but these are no replacement for knowledge hard earned at the web design coalface.

And if you're looking at the template vendors as possible markets for your site designs, ensure that you're clear about

## "GET A GREAT WEBSITE TEMPLATE FOR \$100 AND PAY A GOOD PRODUCTION DESIGNER A FEW HUNDRED BUCKS TO MAKE ALL OF THE MODIFICATIONS YOU NEED"

for \$100 and paying a good production designer a few hundred bucks to make all of the modifications you need."

However, as Kent Hertzog points out, websites that are based on a template that hasn't been significantly modified are still looked down on. "I do think there is a stigma to using a template. There is to me anyway.

design community and can provide a good income for a competent designer: "The vast majority of people who design websites are doing so to promote their own business or organisation and don't have the design skills to create a compelling site. It's just not their field of expertise. There's definitely a market for good off-the-shelf templates. The difficulty, as always, is letting potential customers know they exist."

There is a vast market of website templates if you're looking for a quick way to build a site, but don't fall under the impression that a template will present few technical challenges. If you buy a template and don't intend to modify it at all, they can be cost effective. But the vast majority of sites will require some level of technical skill to make even small changes to their layouts, content or navigational components. If you choose a Flash-based site, then you'll have limited control over the movie, with perhaps any text it contains being the only element you can actually change. Any other major changes

how your designs will be marketed. Some templates that sell as exclusive designs can change hands for thousands of dollars. Talk to the vendor about the commission you will get. But above all else, make sure you have copyright clearance for any elements of your site template design that you haven't created yourself. Liability for any copyright claim could end up at your door.

The appetite for new website designs is driving the template market that continues to grow year-on-year. Whether you're looking to buy a template for a site you're putting together, or want to sell your own designs to the many template vendors that now exist, always take your time to understand what you're taking on if you're buying or selling a template. Do you have the technical skill to make the modifications you need? If you want to sell site designs as templates, ensure they are original creations. Templates are now a familiar element of the web design landscape. They could offer you fast site development or a new lucrative market.



**eCommerce applications are often based on a set of templates. Actinic enables all its store users to build bespoke designs if the supplied range is not suitable**



# ADOBE TALKS FLASH

**SIMON BISSON TALKS  
TO ADOBE'S MARK  
ANDERS ABOUT FLEX,  
APOLLO AND THE FUTURE  
OF ALL THINGS FLASH**

One of the creators of Microsoft's ASP.NET, Mark Anders, joined Macromedia to lead the development of Flex Builder. He's now senior principal scientist at Adobe, where he's working on turning Flash into a platform for building next-generation Rich Internet Applications. We sit down with Anders to have a chat about Flex and the future of Flash.

It's a cross-platform future, where Flash doesn't care which operating system you're using. After all, Anders himself realised that he didn't develop tools for either system – what he developed them for was Flash. He's enthusiastic about the future of Flash and the up-coming Apollo release: "I think it's really catching on very nicely. We've shown an Apollo demo from eBay and it's gorgeous – a beautiful app completely branded." It's another move down the road to Rich Internet Applications, which are more closely related to desktop applications than your browser. Apollo lets developers design applications on one platform that work just as well on another. Since it's all Flash you can have different chromes – and with the system chrome you get a Windows or Macintosh user experience.

Apollo lets you also have a custom chrome with a transparent background. This means you can build irregularly shaped applications, which used to be very hard to do in Windows. There are similarities between Apollo and what you can do with Windows' new WPF user-interface tools, but Anders isn't too bothered by what he has seen of Microsoft's new tools: "It was kind of amazing because it was to see the latest apps – and by and large I don't think they look dramatically better than the apps I've seen done in early Apollo."

Taking Flash out of the browser is important. Anders describes it as pushing the boundary, by offering a "cross-operating system runtime environment that allows people to build applications using the skills that they have with existing technologies such as HTML, AJAX, Flash and PDF and to run those applications outside the browser." It's an interesting approach, delivering a desktop host for applications developed with those technologies. As Anders says: "We're doing it with skills people have today, but with some new twists. The way that Flash and HTML combine today is the HTML page contains the Flash." Apollo changes that: "The way we're doing it with Apollo is to turn it around and embed HTML within Flash. We've integrated the Webkit HTML engine, which is what powers Safari on the Mac, but it's composited through the Flash rendering pipeline. So you can take HTML and have it in a piece of Flash and apply filters to it, rotate it, skew it and use it as an integral part of a more

**"Apollo lets developers  
design applications on  
one platform that work  
just as well on another"**



Flash-based presentation." Apollo will take advantage of the work done on Adobe's Spry AJAX framework, so you'll be able to embed applications in your Apollo began life as a proprietary tool, but the latest version is based on the open-source Eclipse IDE. Originally designed as a Java development platform, Anders describes Eclipse as "a great environment for building tools". Working with Eclipse made Flex Builder easier to deliver. It certainly made a difference, as Anders points out: "We shipped Flex Builder almost exactly 18 months after we began it from scratch – that is beginning on a new code base." The developers weren't Java developers either – they were C++ programmers from Macromedia. The task was made harder as it was being built around a framework that was still under development. Flex was being ported to ActionScript 3, so every module of code was gone over and was much stronger. While they went from nothing, to a full development platform in a year and a half, it still took longer than planned due to the complexity of working with so many different tools.

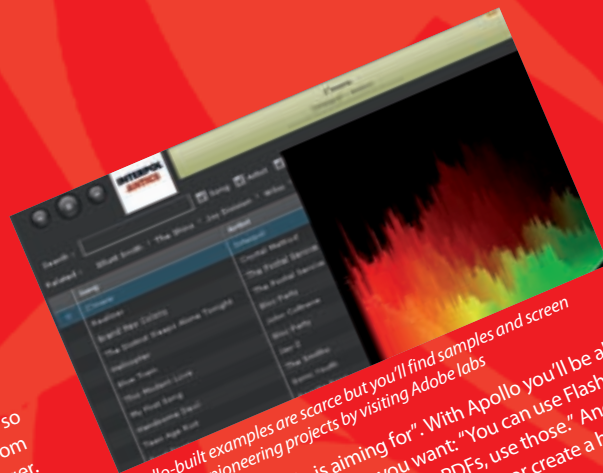
Some of the credit for that success has to go to Eclipse, which Anders describes as a fabulous framework. He made the initial proposal to use Eclipse for Flex Builder shortly after joining Macromedia. There were two other alternatives. One was a custom C++ development tool of Macromedia's existing tools and frameworks. The other was to use Microsoft's .NET platform. Anders was a big .NET fan, having been involved with it at Microsoft from the early days – but there was one big problem: it wasn't cross-platform. As Anders says: "I've spent the last six years working on building a managed code platform, I thought it was goofy to build in C++. The thing I concluded about .NET is that if you're trying to build code to run on a variety of platforms .NET could offer you nothing and in fact, where's the cross-platform Windows form, but that just makes a great environment for writing Linux applications. I didn't want a Linux application, I wanted a cross-platform application." For Anders, Eclipse was a better approach: "Although I liked .NET more than Java and even though I like C++ as a language, the fact is that if you're building a tool, .NET has nothing – Eclipse is incredible for building tools."

In fact, Eclipse nearly didn't make it as the basis of Flex Builder. Eclipse 2.0 wasn't quite good enough for Macromedia, so Anders and his team began to build their own platform. A month or so later Eclipse 3.0 arrived on the scene and everything changed. Anders had his platform, and work on Flex Builder could switch to the more mature Eclipse IDE.

Adobe also had to integrate Flash into Eclipse as the whole of Flex's design view was written in Flash. Anders was pleased with the result: "The advantage is that we're running all of the live components and so you see exactly what you're going to get." It's a very different way of using Flash, Anders points out: "You're dragging Flash components round on screen and manipulating them, but at any time you can flip back to source code."

Flex does away with the Flash timeline, which pleases Anders: "That's why I quit Microsoft and went to Macromedia – the timeline. I'm a developer and there was the dual realities. I would see amazing stuff done in Flash and think 'that's incredible' and then I would pick up the tool and panic." Even so, he saw a lot of potential in Flash. It's easy to see what people are doing in Flash compared to other web development technologies, but Anders felt that Macromedia could do better – building on the work done with Flex 1.0.

There needed to be changes. Anders thought: "We could create a tool that would appeal to developers – and we wanted to make the SDK free." Moving away from being a server was also key, as it allows Flex to be widely adopted beyond the enterprise market. The next step is to take Flash offline, which Anders says,

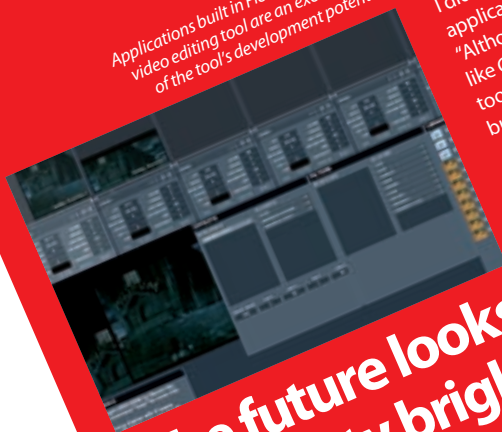


Apollo-built examples are scarce but you'll find samples and screen grabs from pioneering projects by visiting [adobe.com/apollo](http://adobe.com/apollo)

"Is really what Apollo is aiming for". With Apollo you'll be able to use whatever techniques you want: "You can use Flash, Apollo, you don't have to run in a browser or create a hybrid application with online and offline versions. The future looks pretty bright, as Anders says: "What we're doing with Flash is forever pushing the boundaries and enabling new things – in Flash 8 there were new visual effects, new video codecs, filters, alpha blended video and new drawing commands. People took incredible advantage of it. Flash 9 focused on memory access and a new language, as Anders concludes: "We'll always be looking to increase the richness." Adobe's plans for Flash are ambitious: "We're going to be working on new stuff too. We did Flex Builder 2, start to finish, in 18 months and we'd like to ship more often than that. We're working hard on Apollo and we want to get it out by June. Beyond that we have been showing Flash 9 and there's some really exciting things going on there. I think you'll see much better integration between all the tools. One of the things we're focused on at Adobe is that we have all of these great tools and making them work well together is a critical thing."

So what of the future of Flex? Anders plans to increase the Flex community: "I think one area where Adobe can improve is in how we talk to developers and how simple we make our message. I would like to see [www.flex.org](http://www.flex.org) be more effective in communicating what Flex is. But overall it's been good – I hear from people here in London there's a huge demand for Flex programmers. Luckily there are good problems to have and bad problems to have. To me the good news is pretty much everybody I hear who takes a look at Flex and tries it out says 'hey, it's a great product'. To be more successful we need to do a better job of communicating what it is and who should be interested in it. The good news is it's not the product – it's not that we have a bad product, we just need to evangelise a little better."

Applications built in Flex like this online video editing tool are an exciting sign of the tool's development potential



**"The future looks pretty bright. What we're doing with Flash is forever pushing the boundaries and enabling new things"**



### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

Tutorial files:  
trace.flv  
finished fla

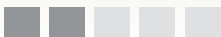
#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Draw rotoscoping animation over live action using Flash

#### TIME REQUIRED


5 hour

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Use Flash to create rotoscope animation over live action film

LEARN THE TECHNIQUES OF ROTOSCOPING TO CREATE COMPELLING ANIMATION FOR YOUR WEBSITE, AS USED IN THE FILM *A SCANNER DARKLY*

 **HOLLYWOOD IS** well known for leading the way in state-of-the-art animation techniques, some of which leaves us wondering how it was done and others cost so much that we'd never be able to add similar content to our own creations.

Richard Linklater has created two films that can be achieved by almost anyone using Flash. *A Scanner Darkly*, his most recent effort, features taking a standard video and tracing over the top to create an animated version of the action. This technique

is known as rotoscoping, and in Flash we can easily use this technique to trace the animation over the top of any video we choose ourselves. Rotoscoping can look quite wobbly, and if you're watching it for some time it can make you feel quite dizzy! We show you how to avoid this by using Onion Skinning. It's considerably easier to complete this tutorial if you have a graphics tablet and so we'll also show you how to set the Wacom Intuos up to work with Flash.





## 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.

# Use Flash to create rotoscope animation over live action film



## 01 Setting up the tablet

It is possible to complete the tutorial without a graphics tablet, however it's recommended that you use a Wacom tablet such as an Intuos. Go into the tablet's Preferences to set up the tablet buttons. In the Tool option select the Functions icon, here we can choose the ExpressKeys.



## 02 Add functions

Select the first drop menu and choose Keystroke. You'll be presented with a pop-up menu. In here, type the F5 key. Press OK and you'll be prompted to name this key: name it 'Add Frame' and press OK. Repeat the process for the second button, this time with F6 and naming it 'Add Keyframe'.



## 03 Final functions

Select the third key and add the keystroke of F7, naming this key 'Add Blank Keyframe'. For the last function button, press the Space bar and name it 'Space'. This will be used to pan around. The scroll touch-strip takes on the zoom in Flash, so with this Intuos pad the keyboard is redundant.



## 04 Set up the document

Close the control panel now and open Flash. Create a new Flash document and make the size of the document in the Properties palette 720 pixels wide x 480 pixels high. Also, give the document a dark grey background colour as the animation will work well over this.



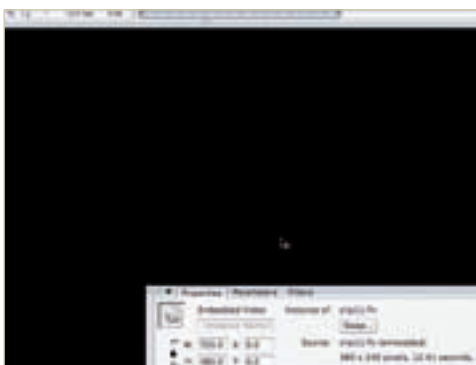
## 05 Import the movie

Go to the File menu and choose Import>Import to stage. From the CD find 'trace.flv'. This movie is already in Flash format. In the first pop-up window for the video import, click the Continue button, then on the next screen choose 'Embed video in SWF and play in timeline'.



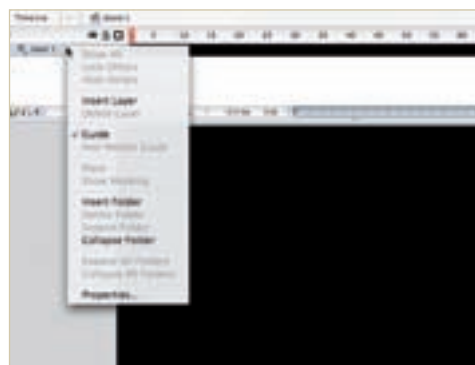
## 06 Embed the movie

Click Continue and on the next screen click Continue again. Press the Finish button and after a few seconds you'll be prompted to extend the timeline to fit the video onto it, answer Yes to this. Position the video at 0 pixels on both the X and Y axis in the Properties palette.



## 07 Double the video size

In Properties go to the width and increase the size from 360 pixels to 720 pixels. If the lock is on next to the width and height, then the height should increase to 480 pixels. If not do this manually. The video should now fill the stage. Place your mouse over layer 1 and right-click.



## 08 Create a guide layer

From the right-click drop menu on layer 1, select Guide layer. Press Ctrl+Enter to test your movie and you'll see that it's blank. This Guide layer we've created does not publish but allows us to trace over the top to create our animation. Now create a new layer above this and name it Body.



## 09 Start the drawing process

Select Frame 10 and press the Add Keyframe key (F6) on your Wacom tablet. Use the Pencil Tool to start to draw around the outline of the actor. This is quite tricky at first, so take your time, you will speed up as you get used to it. When done, fill in some minor details in the image.





## 10 Fill in colour

Use the Pen Tool to draw areas inside the actor that are in shadow. Use the Paint Bucket Tool with the option Fill Large Gaps selected to fill in the shadow areas. Then add the lighter fills. Now select the lines around the shadows and delete them to give a two colour cartoon look.



## 11 Convert to symbol

If you have traced the right hand, remove it by selecting the lines and cut it. This hand moves independently of the rest of the body for the first 90 frames, so we'll place this on a separate layer to the body. Select the Body (Ctrl+A) and choose Modify>Convert to Symbol.



## 12 Animate body movement

Name the symbol 'figure1'. Move the playhead along the timeline and when the actor appears to have moved slightly under the illustration, add a keyframe using your Wacom tablet shortcut key. Move the illustration to match the actor – you may need to rotate it slightly.



## 13 Gradual movement

Don't go beyond Frame 112 as the body starts to change shape here. Once you've positioned the body select a frame between the first two keyframes and Shift-click a frame between the last two keyframes. In the Properties palette add a Motion tween so the body moves gradually.



## 14 Add a new layer

Create a new layer and name it 'Hand'. Drag this below the Body layer. You're going to draw the right hand in here. As this does move every frame it'll take time, however it doesn't change shape every frame, therefore you may not need to draw it new each frame, but rather just move it.



## 15 Draw each hand

Press F7 or the Blank Keyframe key on the Wacom tablet if the hand changes shape drastically, then you can easily redraw it. If the shape stays roughly the same but just moves, press F6 instead. Here you can rotate or move the hand to fit the shape on the screen.



## 16 Fill in the frames

Once you get to when the hand points, the hand changes very little. You'll be able to just amend the pointing finger to follow the actor. By just changing these details you will save yourself a lot of time in redrawing every detail. The hand will drop to the actor's side at around Frame 112.



## 17 Start the body

Select Frame 112 and press F7 to clear the timeline beyond this point. Select Frame 112 of the Body layer and press F6 to add a keyframe. Select the Body symbol and press Ctrl+B to break apart. Use the Move Tool to move the lines slightly as the body starts to change shape very slowly.



## 18 Rotate the body

The body of the actor now slowly starts to rotate to face the camera. There's no easy way to do this – most frames are unique – so it's a painstaking job to draw each frame of the actor separately. Don't try to fill in any shading or colour at this stage, just work on tracing the outline.

# Use Flash to create rotoscope animation over live action film



## 19 Watch the frames

This is quite a time-consuming part of the process. Be sure to take breaks and when a frame looks quite similar to another, then just miss tracing that one and move onto the next, this'll speed up the process. Keep testing your movie and look at how smoothly the animation plays back.



## 21 Fill in the shading

To get the shading right from frame to frame, turn Onion Skinning on and move the markers so that the left marker displays just the previous frame and the right marker displays no frames in front. You'll need to use the same colours for your actor in each of the frames.



## 23 Fill all frames with colour

Move through each frame and fill in the colour for each frame. By using the Onion Skinning you'll be able to see the areas of shadow on the previous frame and keep this consistent. This again will take time but will look great when done. Keep testing the file at regular intervals.



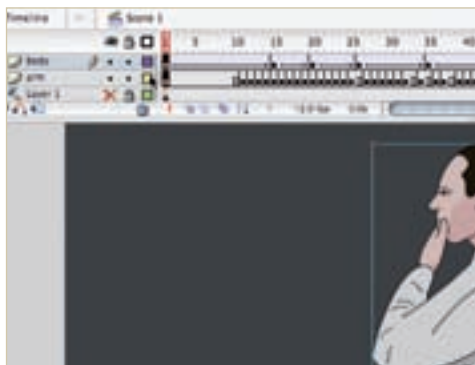
## 20 Look for shortcuts

Another way to make the process quicker is when one part of the illustration stays the same but the rest changes, eg, the head stays relatively still while the body moves. Press F6 to add a keyframe and delete all the illustration but the head – this way you will save drawing that again.



## 22 Consistent colour

On a new layer sample the colours you have used previously and paint coloured 'blobs' onto the document for each colour. You can now sample these colours using the Eyedropper. Once selections have been made with the Eyedropper it changes to the Paint Bucket automatically.



## 24 Remove the blobs

Once you've finished the colouring process, delete the layer with the coloured blobs because they're not needed. Now to tidy up the beginning and end of the movie, go to Frame 10 of the Body layer. Drag this to Frame 1 and do the same for the Arm layer.

## TECHNIQUE

### Time-consuming process

Rotoscoping takes time, but can be very profitable. Here we show you how to make the finished animation even better



## 01 Colours

In our main tutorial we have kept the animation shading down to two colours, but if you take a look at the animation in *A Scanner Darkly* you'll notice that it looks almost photo-realistic.



## 02 Highlights

To get the same effect, add another layer over the top and add highlights and other details to the animation. This is best done freehand with a brush, but will take a very long time.



## 03 Detailed backgrounds


Most of the backgrounds in *A Scanner Darkly* are highly detailed. To get the same effect in your production, why not find a picture on the internet and use Modify>Bitmap>Trace Bitmap.



## IN DETAIL

### Creating content for your mixer

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

 **IN THE TUTORIAL** we have provided a video Movie Clip ready for tracing over. This video clip has already been prepared with a suitable background in it from a previous production. This background works well with the type of action taking place within this short clip. This needn't be the case however, as you can film your actor in any environment and replace the props with suitable material in Flash. If you need your actor behind a desk picking up a communicator device, why not film them behind the dining room table picking up a phone? What you're really trying to achieve when you film your actors is to get the right movement, which is always difficult to attain if you're trying to just animate a character. For example, look at most cut scenes in video games, even with motion capture, the characters often look hollow and rarely look convincing.

Another important factor to take into consideration when you film, is what you'll film on. Don't be fooled into thinking that a fancy digital mini DV camera is required. You're not necessarily trying to get high-quality video, merely a guide for tracing. As such, you'll probably find that by setting a digital stills camera into movie mode and recording is high enough quality. Failing that why not give it a go with a mobile phone? The only problem with the latter is that it cannot be mounted on a tripod so you will get camera shake as you trace it, but this can sometimes add to the realism of the animation.

No doubt the most important production element that you'll want to spend getting right is the lighting, because if the lighting is correct, then you'll be able to trace the shadows in your scene.

Keeping these points in mind, to create animation that would rival the likes of *A Scanner Darkly*, you really only need an imagination, as expensive cameras and sets are not that important. Money saved could be spent on a really good graphics tablet such as one from the Wacom Intuos range.



*A standard digital stills camera is more than capable of taking good enough quality video for tracing movement*



*A key tool for creating rotoscoped animation is the highly recommended Wacom Intuos graphics tablet*



### 25 Tidy the end

Move to the last frame of the movie, select Frame 145 and press F5 to extend the timeline. Choose the second to last keyframe, right-click on it, select Copy Frame. Paste this into Frame 146 and extend by five frames. Copy and paste Frame 140 to frame 150 into Frames 151 to 160.



### 26 Create the environment

Now we'll focus on creating a new environment for our actor. Create a new layer and drag it below the other layers, name this layer 'Bg' for background. Use the Line Tool to create a large viewing screen next to the actor, you can use the prop that's already there as a guide.



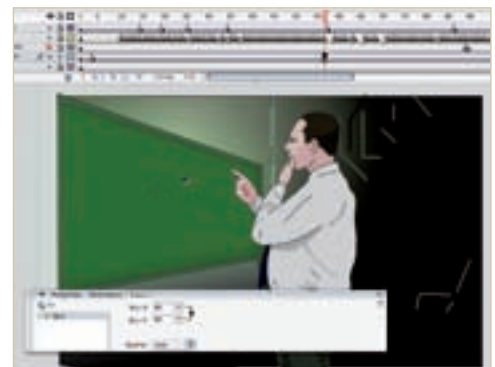
### 27 More background detail

Draw in a base for the screen to sit on, here we've added a Linear gradient to make it look more interesting. Now select the Line Tool and set it to 6 pixels. Add dark and light lines around the background detail that can be made out in the movie behind.



### 28 Add a glow

Copy the green screen. Create a new layer and paste the green screen. Once pasted go to Modify>Convert to symbol, and name it 'Screen'. Now add a 40 pixel Blur filter in the Properties palette. Change the Blending Mode to Screen in the Properties palette, which adds a green glow.

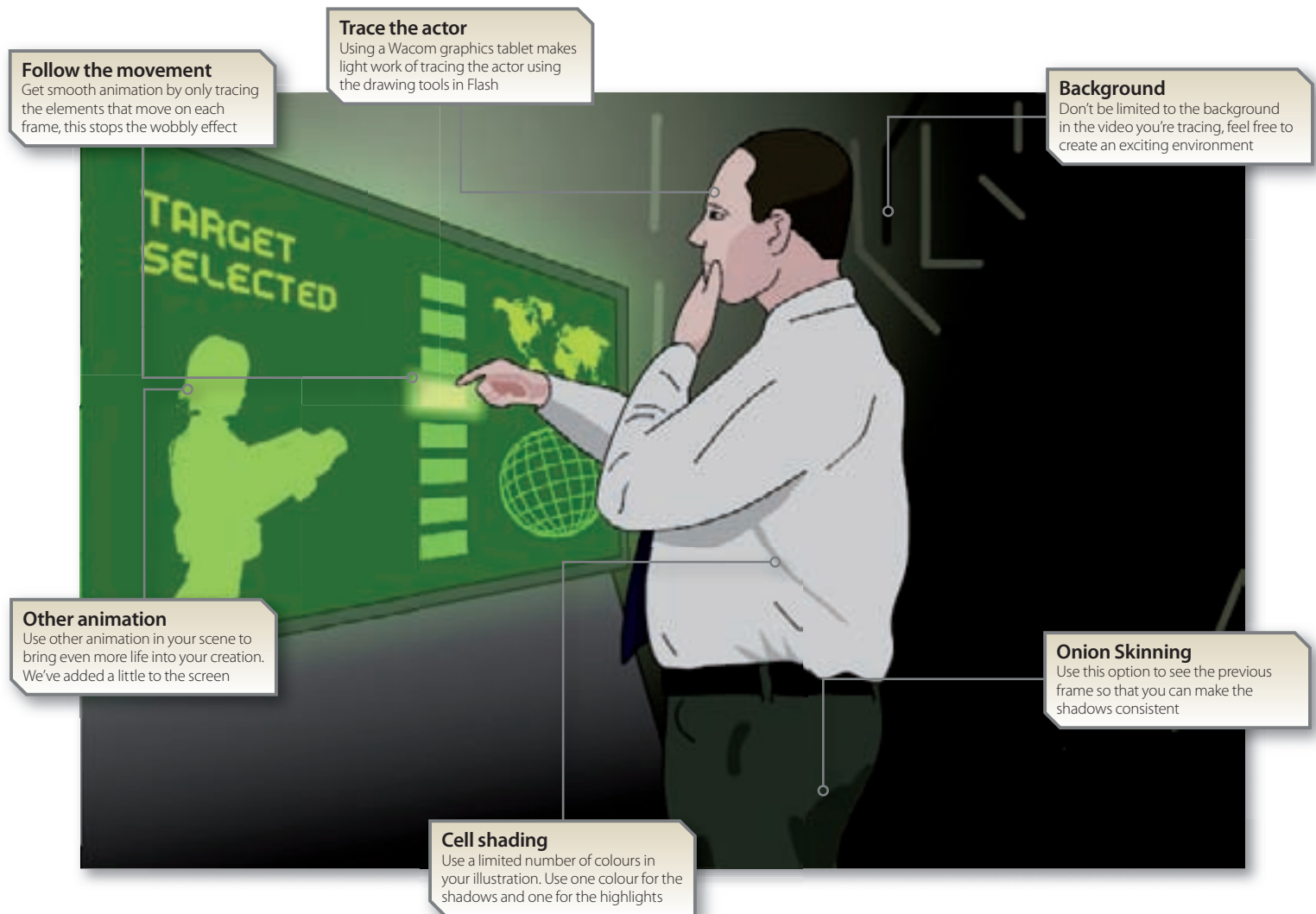


### 29 Random glow

Name the glow layer 'Screen'. Now add keyframes along the timeline. Change the amount of blur at these keyframes, then add a motion blur along the timeline so that the screen appears to pulse. Add a new layer and name it 'Content', placing this just above the Screen layer.



# Use Flash to create rotoscope animation over live action film



## 30 Content layer

Either draw some content on the screen or bring in some graphics from an existing animation you may have to add to the effect of your project. Position them with the Free Transform Tool and use the Distort option to skew the graphics properly.



## 31 Action at Frame 90

Find Frame 90 of the Content layer and add a keyframe. As you'll see from the actor, at this frame he appears to select something from the screen, such as pressing a button. Change the colour of a button to show it being pressed and add some text to show that the display has changed.



## 32 Save and test

To finish, select the last frame of any layer and add a keyframe. Open the ActionScript panel and type 'stop();' so that the movie doesn't loop. Save the finished file and then press Ctrl+Enter to test the movie. Now just sit back and watch your finished animation!



### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

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

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Learn how to add cue points to  
your Flash Video

#### TIME REQUIRED

2hrs

#### SKILL LEVEL



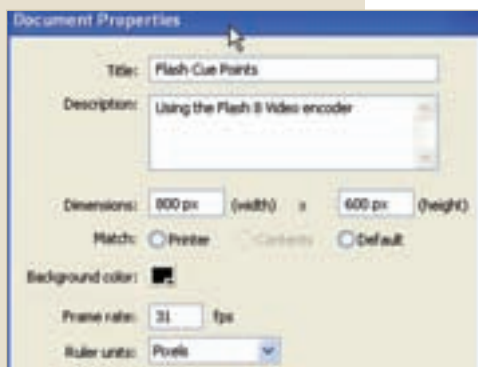
# Flash Video cue points

DON'T JUST ADD VIDEO TO YOUR WEBSITE, BUT ADD DYNAMIC VIDEO BY USING CUE POINTS AND FLASH TO TRIGGER EVENTS

**IF YOU'VE SURFED** the web for inspiration lately, you can't have failed to notice the growing number of websites that have introduced video. The main reason for this is that, despite appearances, it's actually very easy to do! Plus, and perhaps more importantly, it gives the site an extra layer of visual eye candy – which we as website designers all appreciate!

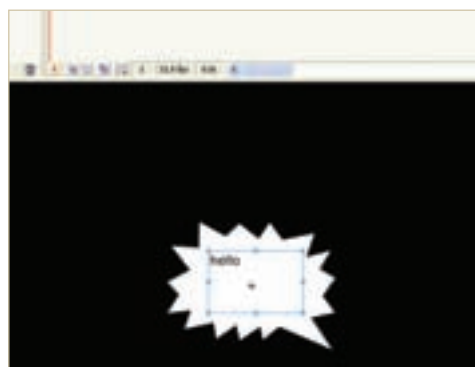
By adding cue points to your video, you're adding yet another layer of interaction by enabling your video to trigger animations, textual changes and lots more. Our main feature this month looks more closely at including video in websites, so take a look at p28 onwards for a more detailed overview.

For now though, over the next five pages, this tutorial will be looking at the three different ways to add cue points to video in Flash. One of the options will require you to have the Macromedia Flash 8 Video encoder – and before we get subjected to a barrage of emails, don't worry we haven't been living in a cave! We do know that Macromedia is now Adobe, but in your Start menu (or Applications folder on a Macintosh) you'll see the old company name, so we thought we'd stick with that so as not to confuse you. So anyway, enough of this useless chatter, let's get down to the reason we're here! Read on as we get creative with video!



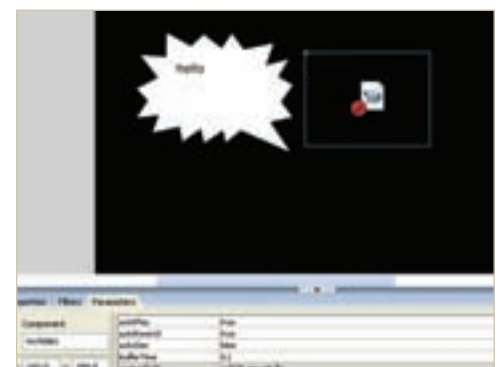
## 01 Setting the stage

Open Flash 8 and set the stage to 800 x 600px with a black background and frame rate of 30fps. Press OK and save the document as 'WD128\_encoder fla'. Add three layers called: 'balloon', 'video' and 'code'. Create a new Movie Clip, call it 'speak\_mc', press OK and open it up.



## 02 Speak to me

Create two layers called 'text' and 'gfx'. In the gfx layer, draw a speech balloon like you see in comic strips. Lock that layer and now add a dynamic text field over the top of the balloon. In the Properties palette call it 'balloon\_txt'. Save and navigate back to the main stage.



## 03 Video control

Drag the 'speak\_mc' onto the balloon layer stage. Name it 'speak\_mc' in the instance name in the Properties palette. Add to the video layer stage a 'FLVPlayback' component from the Components palette. Call it 'myVideo' in the instance name, set the Skin to 'none' in Parameters.





## YOUR EXPERT

**Darren Richardson** works as head of development at Magic Lantern Production based in London and has been in the business for over ten years. In his spare time he runs a couple of Flash resources [www.actionscripts.co.uk](http://www.actionscripts.co.uk) and [www.flashgroup.net](http://www.flashgroup.net).

# Flash Video cue points



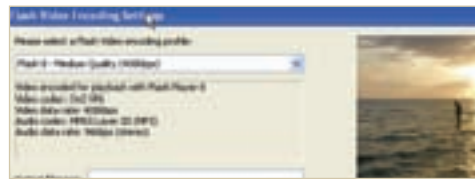
## 04 Video code

In the same palette add 'WD128\_encode.flv' to the ContentPath field. Add the code below to the code layer. This adds a listener to the cuePoint method. When the cuePoint is triggered it's sent through a 'switch' statement, causing the 'speak\_mc' to change the text in the balloon.

```
var ourListener:Object = new Object();
ourListener.cuePoint = function( eventObject:
Object ): Void {
var cuePointName = eventObject.info.name;
trace("in listener");

switch (cuePointName){
case "cue1":
speak_mc.ballon_txt.text ="Hit Cue
Point No.1";
speak_mc._x =200; break;
case "cue2":
speak_mc.ballon_txt.text ="Hit Cue
Point No.2";
speak_mc._x =300; break;
case "cue3":
speak_mc.ballon_txt.text ="Hit Cue
Point No.3";
speak_mc._x =400; break;
case "cue4":
speak_mc.ballon_txt.text ="Hit Cue
Point No.4";
speak_mc._x =500; break;
case "cue5":
speak_mc.ballon_txt.text ="Hit Cue
Point No.5";
speak_mc._x =600;
break;
}
}
```

```
myVideo.addEventListener( "cuePoint",
ourListener );
stop();
```



## 05 Flash encoder

This shows you how to encode your own .mov file. Open the Flash encoder, add a .mov file. Press Settings>Advance Settings, then Cue Points. Press the plus to add a cue. Name it, then drag the time bar to set the cue time. When you've added your cue points press OK, then Start Cue.

Name	Time	Type
cue1	00:00:05.000	ActionScript
cue2	00:00:10.000	ActionScript
cue3	00:00:15.000	ActionScript
cue4	00:00:20.000	ActionScript

## 07 Embed cue points

Save the current .fla and then as 'WD128\_component.flx'. Change the Video Content path to 'WD1281Mbps\_Stream001.flv' in Parameters. Double-click on the cuePoint field, add the above info. You're manually adding cue points to be embedded to the .flv. Press OK, save and test.



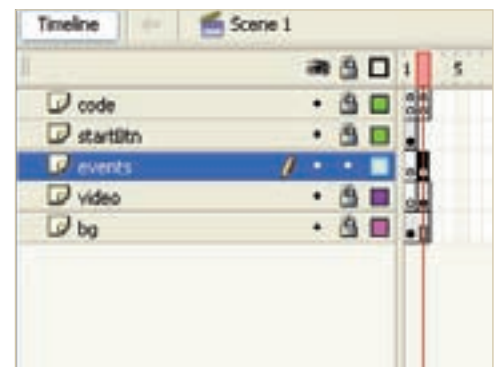
## 08 ActionScript cue points

Save the file and again as 'WD128\_AS.flx'. Remove the cue points just added by selecting and pressing the minus key. Add the code above to the existing code just before the addEventListener call. You have more control this way and can tweak the time codes to suit while developing.



## 06 Test video

Make sure the .flv files from the CD are in the same place as your .fla files. Go back to Flash and test the movie. The 'speak\_mc' should move across with the text changing. Look at the video component Parameters and you'll see the cuePoints field with all the embedded triggers.



## 09 Timeline

Save the .fla as 'complete.flx' and remove the clip from the stage. Make that layer 'startBtn' and add two more layers called 'bg' and 'events'. Drag the keyframe in the code layer to Frame 2. Do this for the video and events layers too. You should have your layers like above.

## TECHNIQUE

### The Sorenson encoding tool

In the tutorial we had a brief look at the Flash 8 Video encoder, now let's encode the video using Sorenson Squeeze



#### 01 Load the .mov file

Open up Sorenson and press the Import File button at the top left of the interface. Select your .mov file. Notice you have filters to the left of the interface as well, apply these to see what effects you can create.



#### 02 Playback control

With Sorenson you have the ability to change the play head so your output will be different to that of the imported video. This is a small editing feature that is useful when you want to cut out the beginning or end of a video.



#### 03 Export

On the left you will see Export and Compression Settings. Select the Macromedia Flash Video and choose the compression type. Drag this to the main panel, all you have to do now is press 'Squeeze it'. Hey presto, a .flv file.



#### 10 Background

Make the stage 900 x 598px and import the 'bg.png' into the library. Select the bg layer and drag the image from the library onto the stage. Place it at 0 on the X and Y. Lock the bg layer. In the startBtn layer select Frame 1 and draw a circle. Select it and click Modify>Convert to symbol.



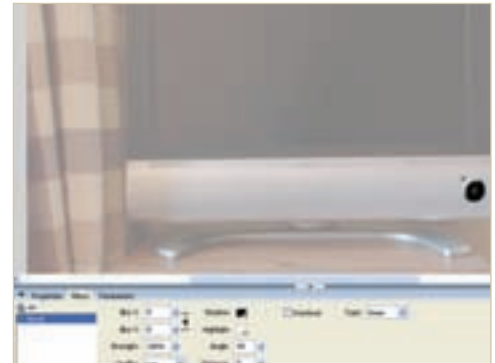
#### 12 Button code

Navigate back to the main timeline and select the button again. In the instance name field in the Properties palette put 'start\_btn'. Now select the Code layer and in Frame 1 put the code above. This will just move to the next frame in the timeline.



#### 14 Events

In the Events layer add a keyframe at Frame 2. Create a new Movie Clip, in the instance name call it 'ani\_mc'. Inside the clip add the layers above with six frames in each. You have a masks layer on the textAni and animations layers. Right-click the masks layer and select Mask.



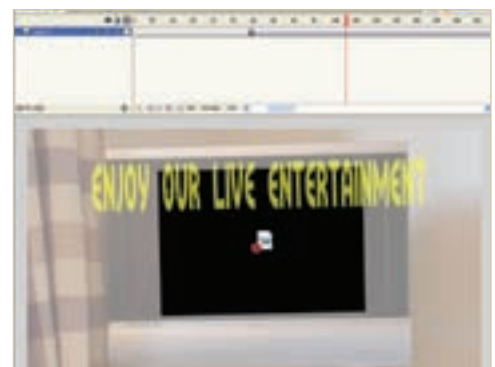
#### 11 Start button

Make the circle a button and call it 'startBtn'. Double-click the button to enter the Button States. To make it more interesting, select the circle again and make it a Movie Clip. You can either enter this and add a Pulsing Glow, or add a Bevel by adding a filter in the Properties palette.



#### 13 Skew video

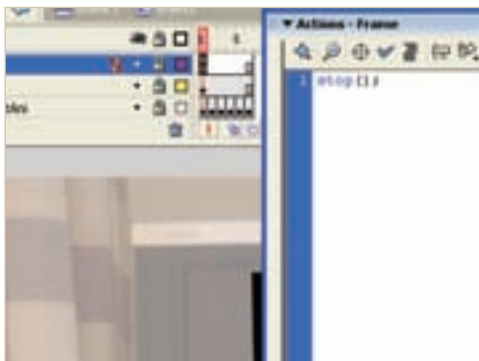
You'll notice the TV is a little on the skew, so to make the video look more realistic you need to skew the video to match the TV. Select the Free Transform Tool then the video component and skew to fit. Zoom in when you're skewing or rotating to rotate or skew in smaller amounts.



#### 15 Textual animations

In the textAni layer, add a keyframe to all six of the frames. In the 'WD128\_complete.flv' on the disc we've created a different animation for each frame. Try and make your own. So create a new Movie Clip on each frame, add some text and animate, use a nice holiday font too.





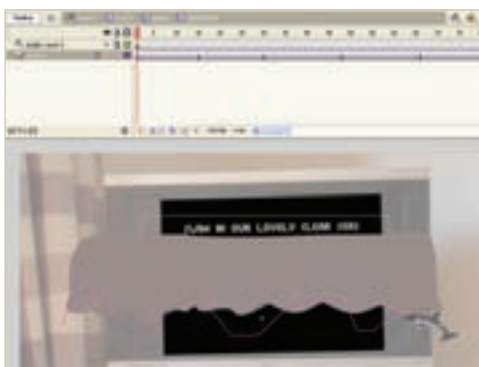
## 16 Code layer

In the code layer, add a keyframe at Frame 1. Open the Actions palette by pressing the F9 key and add a stop();. This is so that the events movie doesn't just loop through all the textual animations really quickly. Save your progress at this stage.



## 17 Mask it up

Select the masks layer and draw a rectangle. Make masks bright colours, so you can find them later. In the picture above, the mask is slightly skewed, this is so whatever is under the mask will only show over the video component. So skew the mask to match the video component.



## 18 Diving dolphins

In the animations layer, select Frame 2, add a keyframe. Create a Movie Clip in this frame. We created a motion guide layer and got the dolphin to ride along it. Then we put that clip into another Movie Clip so we could mask the dolphin to make it appear to be jumping.

## IN DETAIL

## More Flash Video information

Flash Video is a large subject just in itself, so this box out will cover some more areas with research links and further reading that will help you in your quest to master the art...

**IN DARREN'S JOB** at Magic Lantern, he's lucky enough to be at the forefront of cutting-edge technology. His latest project is an interactive story, which uses video and Flash games, aims to teach children maths. It's done in a way that children will not even know they're actually doing a maths class! The game trailer can be found at [www.podville.co.uk/trailer](http://www.podville.co.uk/trailer). This shows just what is possible with Flash and video integration, so check it out to witness how smooth the transition between the two can be.

Now let's have a look at some useful links and tools you can use with Flash Video. With the introduction of Flash Lite 2.0 came the option to port Flash Video files to mobile devices. This opens up the market for advertising on mobile devices with video, a great new book from Friends of Ed called *Flash Applications for Mobile Devices* is a recommended read.

The first and more widely used option for loading video into Flash is progressive download. This is used for small videos and the files are stored locally on the same server as the .swf file. Ideally the content delivered should have no copyright infringements because the video file will download to the client's PC. The next option is streaming video, this is the better option but the more expensive of the two. The files are kept externally on a streaming server, you have more control over your video, delivery of large files is smoother and you can stream live video. Here's a link to external hosting for streaming video [www.influxus.com](http://www.influxus.com).

When you get a video file, nine times out of ten it's a .mov file and as you know Flash has to use .flv format. So how do you encode to .flv? You can use the Flash 8 encoder, as seen in the tutorial, or there are other software applications out there that offer more options. Our favourite is Sorenson Squeeze ([www.sorensonmedia.com](http://www.sorensonmedia.com)). If you fancy reading up further, check out this link: [www.adobe.com/devnet/flash/video](http://www.adobe.com/devnet/flash/video).



Podville is the brain child of Magic Lantern and is a Flash Interactive Story using games and video to teach children maths

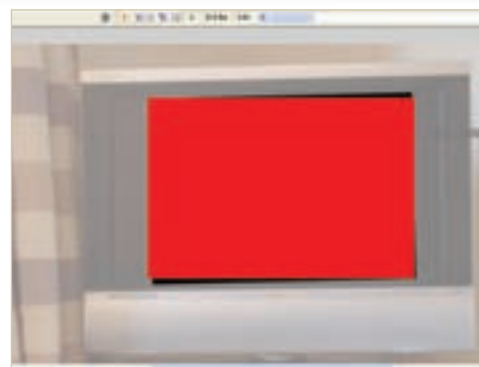


A couple of good reads are the Friends of Ed titles Foundation Flash 8 Video and From After Effects to Flash



## 19 Cocktail anyone?

Select Frame 5 in the animations layer and, as before, create a Movie Clip. We created a little animation that rocks a cocktail glass from side to side. This was created in Swift3D, which is very good for simple 3D objects. Again all these files are on the disc.

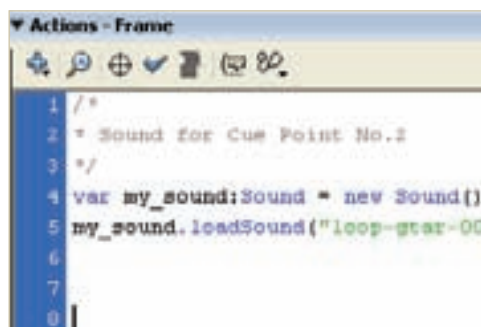


## 20 Skew the events

Navigate back to the main timeline and select the events Movie Clip. This next part is a little tricky and requires a bit of back and forth. You have to skew the events clip to go over the video component. Draw a rectangle in the first frame of the events layer to help, then delete it after.



# Tutorial



## 21 Add some sound

On the cover disc there is a sound file called 'loop-gtar-006.mp3'. For this tutorial place it in the same directory as the .fla, now select the second keyframe in the code layer and add the sound code below. If you follow this correctly it will set up a sound object and load the MP3 file ready to play when called:

```
var my_sound:Sound = new Sound();  
my_sound.loadSound("loop-gtar-006.mp3",  
false);
```

## 22 More code

Under the sound code, add the code below. This adds a listener to the video object and a 'switch' statement to trap the cue points. Then 'ani\_mc' stops at a frame to play the text and graphic animation and at cue point 2, play sound.

```
var ourListener:Object = new Object();  
ourListener.cuePoint = function( eventObject:  
Object ): Void {  
var cuePointName = eventObject.info.name;  
switch (cuePointName) {  
case "cue1":  
_root.ani_mc.gotoAndStop(2);  
break;  
case "cue2":  
my_sound.start(0, 999);  
_root.ani_mc.gotoAndStop(3);  
break;  
case "cue3":  
my_sound.stop();  
_root.ani_mc.gotoAndStop(4);  
break;  
case "cue4":
```

```
_root.ani_mc.gotoAndStop(5);  
break;  
case "cue5":  
_root.ani_mc.gotoAndStop(6);  
break;  
case "cue6":  
_root.gotoAndStop(1);  
break;}};  
myVideo.addASCuePoint(5.000, "cue1");  
myVideo.addASCuePoint(10.000, "cue2");  
myVideo.addASCuePoint(15.000, "cue3");  
myVideo.addASCuePoint(20.000, "cue4");  
myVideo.addASCuePoint(25.000, "cue5");  
myVideo.addASCuePoint(29.000, "cue6");  
myVideo.addEventListener("cuePoint",  
ourListener);  
stop();
```

## 23 It's the end

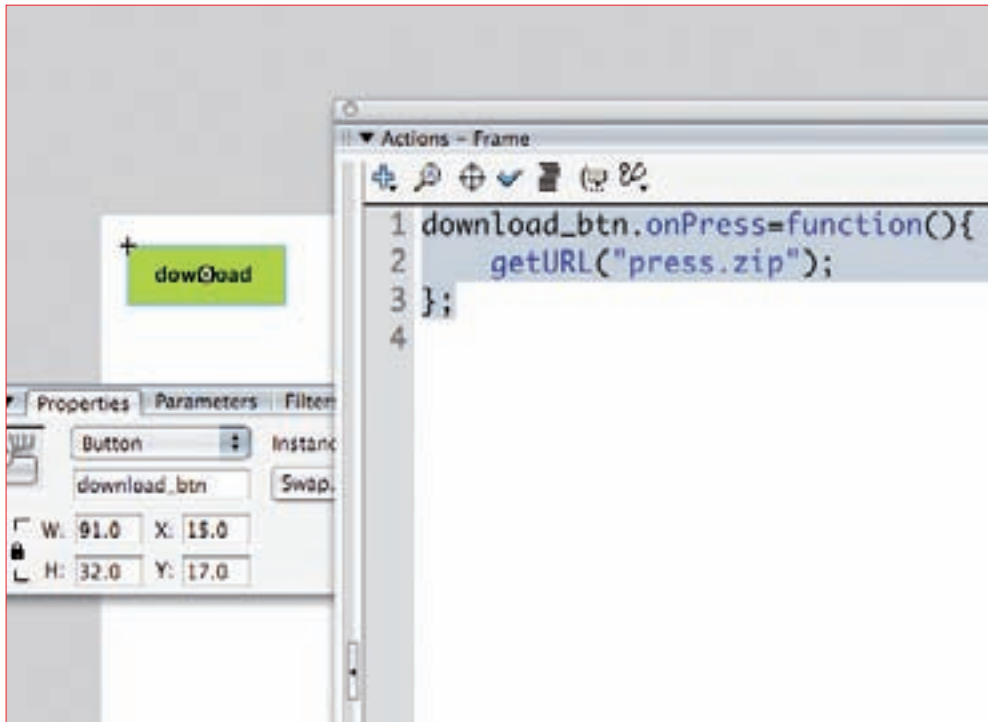
All that's left to do is test your movie. Press Start and you should see the text animations swap when a new cue point is triggered. You've now learnt the three ways to add cue points to video and some fun things you can do.





# Tech Support Flash

Creating PDF links, keeping images vibrant and creating alert messages, are among this month's Flash problems posed to Mark Shufflebottom



Getting files to download in PDF format will always happen if you zip them up first. This simple code shown in the screenshot links to the zip file from Flash

## Q PDF ponderings

At the moment I am creating a Flash website for a music group. They're going to be selling their show to orchestras. How would I create a downloadable press pack in PDF format that when someone clicks on a link, it just downloads straight to their computer?

Jessie Ketteridge

A This is a question that seems to crop up frequently and all depends on whether the person viewing the file has Adobe Acrobat or not. If the end user has PDF software such as Acrobat on their computer, when they click a link to a PDF file the browser recognises the mime extension and opens the Acrobat software and the user gets to see the PDF right there in the browser without it downloading.

This is not necessarily a bad thing, as in the top left-hand corner of the Acrobat interface is the option to save a copy of the file. However this can easily be missed and novices might think they have a copy on their computer. If the end user doesn't have Adobe Acrobat

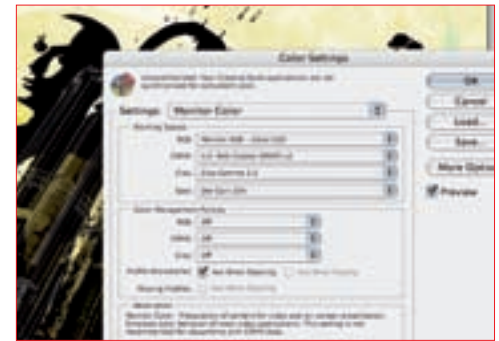
installed, then the browser should ask them if they want to download the file. So obviously this is no problem. Because you don't know the competency of user and whether they have Acrobat or not, the best way to handle this is to zip the file. So imagine you now have a zipped file of the PDF named 'press.zip'. This is the code that you put on a frame action:

```
download_btn.onPress=function(){  
    gotoURL("press.zip");  
};
```

This assumes that you have a button on your stage with an instance name of 'download\_btn'. Give it a try and it should now download for every user.

## Q Flash of colour

I'm having some trouble keeping the images I've placed in Flash looking as vibrant and colourful as intended. Once I import the image into Flash it loses its contrast and looks desaturated. I've tried many alternatives (gif, .png, different colour modes and adjusting saturation and levels) and the only one that works is adjusting the



Make sure Photoshop displays images the way they'll be displayed in Flash. Edit the colour settings to change the colour management to work like your monitor

saturation and levels. The problem with this is it's subjective and I have to guess what the amount of each should be. Has anyone else had this problem, or can you suggest a solution?

Simon Marshall

A The problem lies in the colour management of Photoshop. When image editing in Photoshop, all images look much more vibrant than when you save them for web. This isn't a problem with the images upon saving, but rather with the way that Photoshop handles its images on screen. Even when you choose Save For Web from under the File menu, the preview will give you a less vibrant image, which should be how it's interpreted in the browser or other applications that don't use the same colour management as Photoshop.

Looking in the Preferences doesn't help as the colour management is not set up here, instead you'll need to go to the Edit menu and choose Color Settings. In the pop-up window try changing the colour to Monitor Color under the settings. This seems to turn off any colour management and show colour exactly how it is on your monitor. One of the reasons that Photoshop displays colour differently is because it tries by default to emulate print colours, which comes from its original publishing history.

Once you have changed these colours you'll see that there is no difference between the display in Photoshop and with the Save for Web. Meaning that the saturation you apply in Photoshop will look the same when viewed on your application.

## Q Alert the user

I have five buttons, only one of which will allow the user to start a demo. My problem is this: I need to let the user know when they have pressed the wrong button and indicate that with an alert message. Then if they make another error, I need to show a different alert message signalling that.

How do I let the 'wrong' buttons know that one of them has been pressed incorrectly, therefore if pressed again, will show the second alert message?

Colin Jarvis

**"WHEN IMAGE EDITING IN PHOTOSHOP ALL IMAGES LOOK MUCH MORE VIBRANT THAN WHEN YOU SAVE THEM FOR WEB"**



## 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

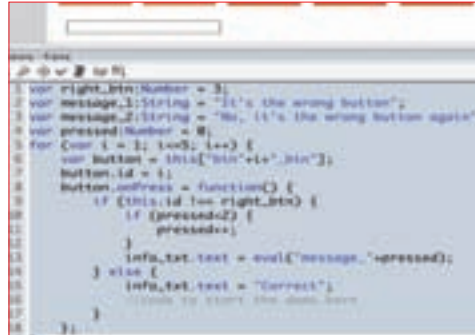
## Q&A

## Tech Support

# A

Right, a small amount of ActionScript should be all you need to solve this. First of all we need the five buttons on the stage, each with an instance name 'btn1\_btn', 'btn2\_btn', 'btn3\_btn' and so on up to button 5. Then add some text to the stage, changing the type of text to 'dynamic', giving it an instance name of 'display\_txt'. We now need to add some ActionScript, so just add a new layer and copy in the code laid out below:

```
var correct:Number = 3;
var message1:String = "It's the wrong button";
var message2:String = "No, it's the wrong button again";
var pressed:Number = 0;
for (var i = 1; i<=5; i++) {
    var button = this["btn"+i+"_btn"];
    button.id = i;
    button.onPress = function()
    {
        if (this.id != correct) {
            if (pressed<2) {
                pressed++;
                display_txt.text = eval("message"+pressed);
            } else {
                display_txt.text = "Correct";
            }
        }
    }
}
```



Getting custom responses to button presses can be done easily with this code which checks five buttons for the right one to be pressed

```
start the demo here
};
};
```

The first line holds the correct button, so button three will start the demo. The next two variables hold the messages to feedback to the user if they press the wrong button. The last variable stores the number of incorrect presses that have been made.

The 'for' loop loops through each button on the stage every frame and checks to see which one has been pressed. If the incorrect button is pressed then the first message is displayed, however if another incorrect selection is made then the second message is displayed. If the right button is pressed at any time, however, then the word 'Correct' will appear, just for our own information, so we know it's right. Then just add your code to start playing the demo for it to work.

## Expert advice

### ActionScript code

A common question that users new to Flash have is wondering where they should actually put the code. It's advisable to place all your code on a new layer and to name it something obvious like 'code'. Then you should place the code on a keyframe directly in line with the graphics or buttons that you want the code to point to.

So, if you have buttons that only appear at Frame 20, then create a keyframe at Frame 20 and place your code here which talks to those buttons. Every element on the stage that you wish to talk to should have an instance name, just make your code talk to those instance names.



Selecting the Multiline option within your Text fields is worth remembering, otherwise you're liable to lose words

## Technique: Smart linking

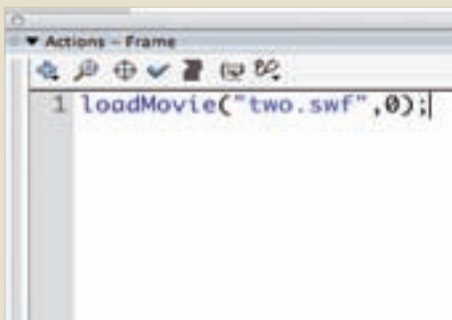
# Q

I made a small movie in Flash. I made three different FLA files and now I want to bring it all together. I have tried to import each file a number of different ways using scenes and importing SWFs, but to avail. What would be the best way to assemble all the different SWFs in one easy to preview file or way?

Gabrielle Holford

# A

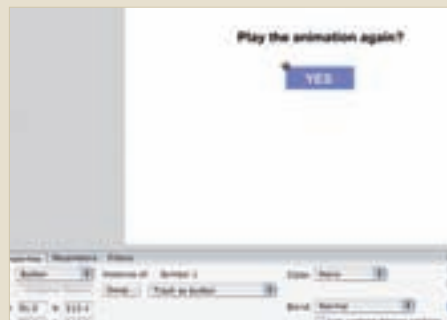
There's actually no need to import each SWF file back into one Flash document. All that's needed is to start playing the next file when one finishes. So just point one file to the next file and that way they'll play through perfectly. The mini tutorial below assumes that each file is called 'one.swf', 'two.swf' and 'three.swf'. Replace these with the correct names.



### 01 Link the files

Open your first Flash file that contains your animation and move down the timeline to the very last frame. Once here, add a keyframe and open the ActionScript panel and place this line of code in:

```
loadMovie("two.swf",0);
```



### 02 Repeat the process

Repeat step one for the last frame of your second Flash document, then open the third and navigate to the end. Then add a button to the stage and some text asking if the viewer wants to watch the animation again.



### 03 Test the file

Give the button the instance name of 'playAgain\_btn'. Now add the code shown above which stops the playhead here, but if the button is pressed it will load the very first SWF again and start the animation playing again.





### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
All files included on  
your free CD

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create a clean but vibrant web  
template with photography

#### TIME REQUIRED


2 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



# The key to clean and sharp template designs

COMBINE VARIOUS DIFFERENT PHOTOGRAPHS AND PLAY WITH THE PERSPECTIVE AND SIZE TO ACHIEVE A STRIKING WOW EFFECT

 **THIS TUTORIAL IS** aimed at creating a Graphical User Interface in Photoshop, then redesigning it in Dreamweaver or Flash depending on how you want to build it – it's up to you. The artwork combines various background imagery and individual graphical elements. The elements differ in scale and perspective in relation to how they interact with the background imagery to create a gigantic effect that helps your interface jump right off the screen.

About ten years ago, the Rolling Stones released a single with the music video that used the effect of giant men and women walking through the streets of New York. This tutorial

uses the same style, but applies it to the speakers and guitar. The main imagery is the focal point, creating a flow through the interface, while leaving plenty of space available on the right where information can be placed.

To ensure that the guitar fits in with the surroundings, a combination of drop shadows are applied that follow the perspective of the building and the road. This effect lets the graphics interact with the overall perspective of the design. We reckon this is a great way to display your work on the internet and, by simply changing the main guitar image, the theme can be altered to make it accessible to any audience you choose.



## YOUR EXPERT

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

# The key to clean and sharp template designs



## 01 Create a new document

Create a new document to the dimensions of 1200px by 720px at 72dpi. This interface is intended for viewing on the web so working in the actual size is the way to go here. This project incorporates Smart Objects that enable you to preserve the quality of a graphic when resizing.



## 02 Cut out the city

Open 'city.psd' from the CD in Photoshop. Select the Pen Tool and ensure the Paths option is selected in the main menu bar. Cut out the skyline, maintaining the detail in the object on the roof. This often provides some happy 'accidents' that add to the quality of the work.



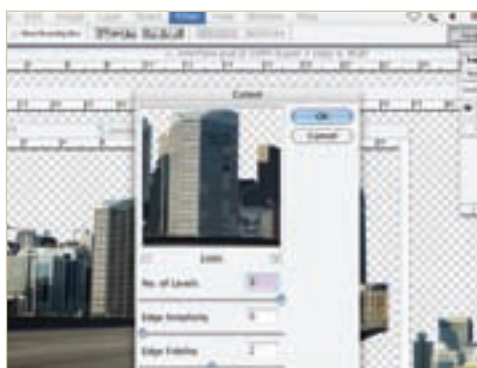
## 03 Isolate the city

Now begin to cut out the road. Edit out the bottom right quarter of the image while following the curved line of the bridge. From the Paths pallet, double-click on the Work path layer. Save it as 'Path 1'. Make a selection of the path and copy and paste to a new layer.



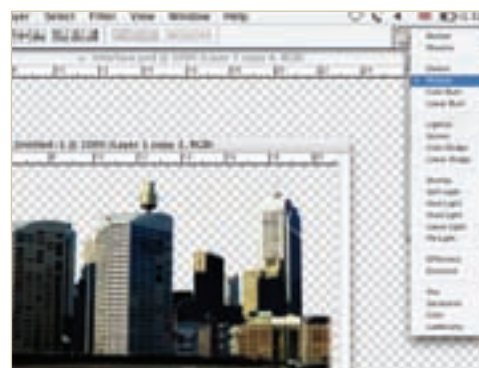
## 04 Smart city

Select the new layer and convert it into a Smart Object. Double-click on the newly created Smart Object within the Layers palette to open the Object in its own document. Duplicate the City layer (Ctrl+J), hide the top layer and select the bottom one.



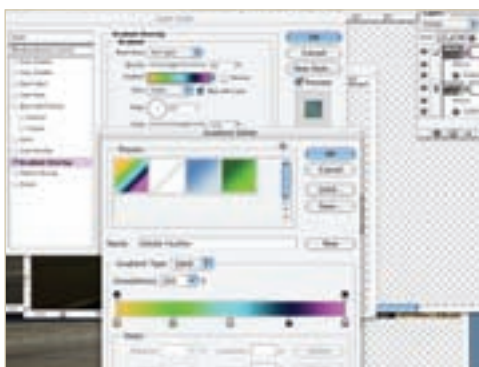
## 05 City effect

From the Filter menu select Artistic>Cutout. Input the following values: No. of Levels = 8, Edge Simplicity = 0 and Edge Fidelity = 2. Now add a Gradient Overlay layer effect: Blend Mode = Overlay, Colour = Black to white, Style = Linear, Angle = 90 degrees. Hit OK to confirm the changes.



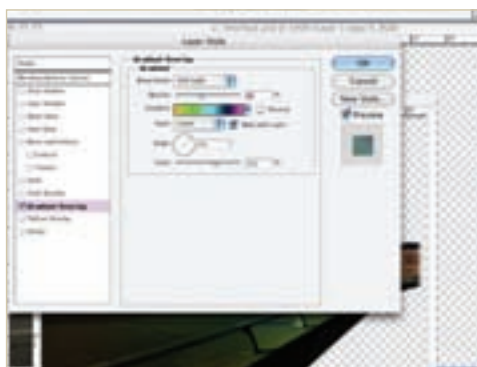
## 06 Change the blend

Set the Blending Mode of the bottom layer to Hard Light. Select the top layer and make it visible again. Now change the Blending Mode of this layer to Multiply and set the Opacity to 75%. Ensure that the top layer is the unaffected image and reapply detail back onto the bottom layer.



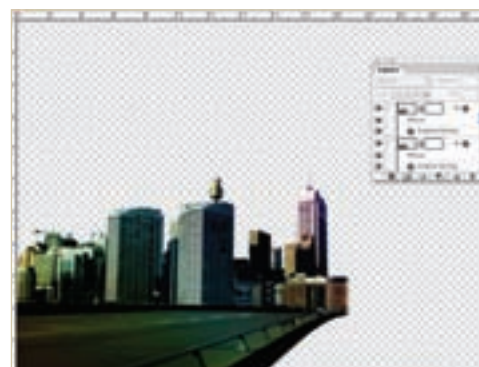
## 07 Main layer effect

This effect is duplicated on several objects, so make sure to copy the layer effect or refer back to this step if needed. Open the Gradient file from the CD. Add a Gradient Overlay layer effect and select the newly imported Gradient, located at the bottom of the palette.



## 08 Blends, gradients, angles

Still in the Layer Style palette, set the Blend Mode to Soft Light, reduce the Opacity to 40%. Keep the Gradient Style on Linear, but other objects have this set to Angle and the Blend Mode set to Hue. Change the angle to match the vanishing point of the city, about 40 degrees. Hit OK.



## 09 Add the city

Close the Smart Object document window to save it. Drag the layer into your main document and select the Move Tool. Change the scale of the city to fit in the lower-left quarter of the document and adjust the rotation. Make sure the bottom and left sides of the image are cropped.



# Tutorial



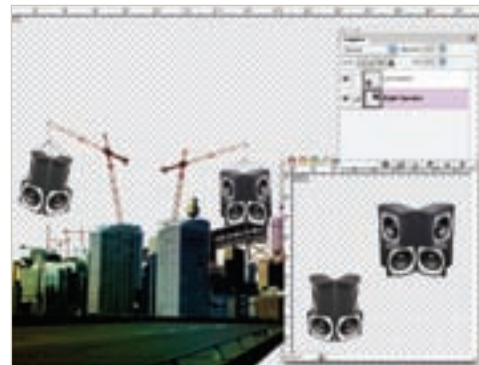
## 10 Crane image

From the CD provided, locate the 'crane.psd' and drag in the Bridge layer behind the two City layers within your main document and position it just below the skyline. Now drag in the Crane layer and again position it behind the skyline on top of the building on the right.



## 11 Flip it into position

Duplicate the Crane layer, then flip it horizontally and position on top of the building roof to the left (see screenshot). Convert them both into individual Smart Objects. Now transform the perspective and rotation of both the cranes so that they reach out across the city.



## 12 Add the speakers

Open the 'speaker.psd' from the CD, select both of the layers and drag into the main document. Transform the scale, rotation and perspective to hang from the end of the cranes. Match the space that each of the speakers inhabits, to make them look like part of the scenery.



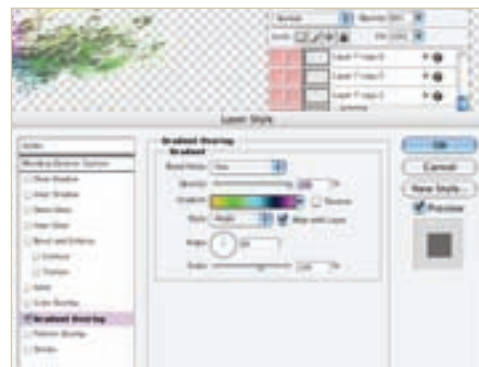
## 13 Add the wires

Select the Brush Tool and select a 1px soft tip. Set the foreground colour to Black. Click on the top-left corner of the speaker, hold down the Shift key and click in the centre above the speaker to draw a straight line. Continue this for the rest of the wires.



## 14 Add the layer effect

Apply the same Gradient Overlay layer effect, as outlined in step 8, to the right-hand speaker. Double-click on the layer effect to edit and change the angle to 90 degrees. The main background element is now complete and it's time to start adding some detail.



## 15 Ink splatter

Open the 'inksplatter.psd'. Drag the Ink layer into your main document. Position it behind the city in the Layers palette and in the top half of your document. Open the Layer Style palette, change the Blend Mode to Hue, the Opacity to 100% and the Style to Angle.



## 16 Duplicate the splatter

Duplicate the Ink splatter layer several times and reduce the scale and opacity of each of the layers. Scatter them throughout your document and position a few behind the skyline. Hold down the Ctrl key and make a selection of the City layer by clicking it in the Layers palette.



## 17 Add layer mask

As there are two different Blend Modes set to both of the city layers, the ink splatter that's placed behind it shows through, therefore we need to hide these portions. Select Layer>Add Layer Mask>Reveal All and fill in the selection with black to hide the portion.



## 18 Add the Guitar

Go back to the CD and open up the 'guitar.psd' and drag it into the main document. Transform the scale, skew, rotation and perspective of the image to give the impression that it's resting on the building. Now time for some cunning layer effect jiggery-pokery.



## 19 Drop Shadow

Select the Guitar layer and add a Drop Shadow layer effect. Set the Spread to 0px and the Size to 10px, leave the rest of the settings and hit OK. Right-click on the Layer effect in the palette and select Create Layer. This will release any layer effect to its own unique layer.



## 20 Duplicate and Transform

You'll notice a new layer has been created containing the Drop Shadow and the effect has been removed from the Guitar layer. Duplicate the Drop Shadow layer and change the angle to match the building. Transform the other Shadow layer to match the angle of the road.



## 21 Two layer masks

Add a layer mask to each of the Drop Shadow layers. Select the Gradient Tool and, in the main menu bar, choose the Linear Gradient option and the Black, White colour option from the drop-down menu. Now, using the Gradient Tool, draw in both the layer masks to gradually hide the shadow.

## IN DETAIL

### Save For Web

Get your artwork out of Photoshop ready to be used in Flash or Dreamweaver. Use the correct file format to ensure your loading times are as reasonable as possible

THE INTERFACE WE'VE created in this tutorial is quite graphics-heavy and although most of the elements have their own unique layers, they all combine together to create the overall effect.

Some of the graphics used in the artwork contain layered Blending Modes and some are then blended to the background colour. This does present a problem when we need to export the graphics, because when the background is removed, so is the applied effect. What we need to do then, is copy the graphic with its appropriate blend colour intact. This can be easily achieved through a simple flattening of the artwork.

Hold down Ctrl and select a graphic layer to create a selection of its contents. Now flatten the artwork (this should maintain the selection) and copy and paste it into a new document. This keeps the effects and isolates the graphic, with the added bonus that it's cropped to the contents. Other elements are easier to isolate, which is where using the Slice Tool can speed things up a great deal.

Now, using the Save For Web function export it as a GIF, JPEG or PNG. Depending on the amount of colour data or gradients contained within the graphic, toggle between the three 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 for a GIF, select the background colour (make sure this is a solid fill colour) and in the Color Index palette click the Transparency button to hide the colour in the palette.

Most of the browsers available on the market today support the PNG format, but there are still some glitches that crop up from time to time. Despite the occasional problem however, it is moving to the point where the PNG format is becoming the standard... and it's about time too in our opinion.



Merge down several of the layers and create a selection. Copy and paste into a new document and Save For Web



Use the Slice Tool and isolate the object in the Save For Web function to enable you to import it much easier



## 22 Add the finishing touches

The design allows for information to be displayed on the right-hand side of the GUI. So add some buttons, a menu bar and some additional graphics to fill in this space and make it more of a web page. All of these elements can be found on the CD.



## 23 And you're done...

Use the Slice Tool to isolate some of the elements and export using the Save for Web function. Other elements will need to be isolated, but as these are on their own layers it won't be a problem. Design in Dreamweaver or Flash, depending on how you want the page to be viewed.





### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

Tutorial files:  
man, splatter, limb, limb2  
and more

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

To create a distressed-look montage  
for use in a web template

#### TIME REQUIRED

2 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



## Bring a punk-style look to your web work

### CREATE CUT-AND-PASTE-STYLE GRAPHICS FOR YOUR WEBSITE

**SEARCH THE WEB** and you'll find reams of pages that look like carbon copies of each other. Whether the style is a simple linear program or something a little more artistic, web design goes through the same ebbs and flows of fashion as every other design genre. Here we look at one style that has seen a revival of late – distressed effects.

Giving your page a grungy look isn't as easy as it first appears. Mastering the right blending modes for the job is a must, as is an awareness of the final image. Slapping three or four images together to create a cohesive composition is also a difficult task. Try sketching your ideas before you even switch on your computer and think what connotations your graphic holds.





## YOUR EXPERT

**James Davies** is art editor on our sister mag *Next3*. Since graduating Thames Valley University with a 2:1 in Digital Arts he's had commissions for *Digital Creative Arts*, *Advanced Photoshop*, and renegade t-shirt label *Dirty Velvet*, [www.dirtyvelvet.co.uk](http://www.dirtyvelvet.co.uk).

# Bring a punk-style look to your web work



## 01 Getting started

Open 'card.tif' and use this as your canvas. Next, open 'man.tif', cut it out using the Pen Tool set to Paths and import it onto your canvas. Go to Filter>Pixelate>Color Halftone and adjust as shown in the screenshot. Set the layer Blending Mode to Hard Light.



## 02 Wing and a prayer

Open 'wing.tif'. Have a play around with the Brightness and Contrast sliders until you get a harshly contrasted image. When you're happy with the effect you've achieved, go to Filter>Pixelate>Color Halftone and set at a bigger dot ration for a coarser effect.



## 03 Gives you wings

Import Wing onto your canvas. With the Select Tool, hold down the Alt key and drag a copy to one side. Flip one wing horizontally (Edit>Transform). Rotate slightly to fit. Set the layer Blending Mode to Multiply. Delete any excess by selecting Figure and deleting from the Wing layers.



## 04 Custom built

Now it's time to start adding some of your own drawings. With the Pen Tool set to Shape Layer, draw out a simple leaf shape. Then right-click on the path using the Path Selection Tool. From the drop-down menu that appears, select Define Custom Shape. Then name it 'Leaf'.



## 05 Them bones

Now, using the same process as described in the previous step, draw a skull and crossbones and place it at the bottom of the figure. The next step is to select the overlapping parts of the Man layer with the Polygonal Lasso Tool and delete.



## 06 The vines

Using the Pen Tool once again set to Shape Layer, create a tendril-like stalk emanating from the skull. Select your Leaf custom shape from the Custom Shape palette, hold down Shift and draw. Repeat until you have a vine filled with leaves like the screenshot in the next step.



## 07 Balancing act

Once you've got a lovely, leaf-filled vine, duplicate the vine (in the Layers palette, drag the layer onto the New Layer icon), then flip it. Position, resize and angle it until you get the desired effect. Add some extra skulls to balance the composition.



## 08 On a limb

Go back to the cover disc and open 'limb 1' and 'limb 2'. Now position them to look like legs. Have a play around until you're happy with the positioning. Delete any excess by selecting the Man layer as a mask and deleting from the Limb layers.



## 09 The splats

Open 'splats.psd' and import it into the main image. Set the Blending Mode to Screen to knock out the black and position. Select an appropriate font, whichever suits your project best. We've used one from House Industry's FlyerFonts set.



## TECHNIQUE

### Blending Modes made easy

When creating montage graphics or a distressed look you'll need to know about Blending Modes, so read on...



#### 01 Multiply

This multiplies the colour of any colour that lies underneath the one you've applied the effect to on the layer hierarchy. Blacks will only produce blacks and whites will disappear. This mode is perfect for knocking white out of a layer.



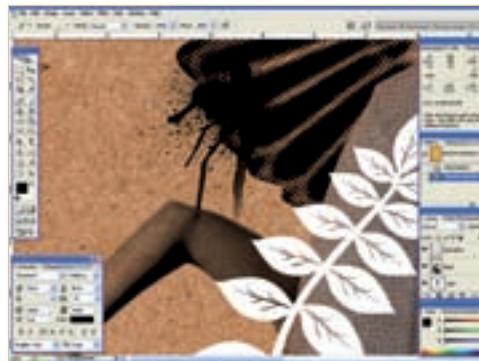
#### 02 Screen

This basically inverts an image's colour values using the values of the blend layer and the layer underneath. Unless the colour value is white or black, in which case it knocks out the black leaving the white. We used this on the 'splatter' layer.



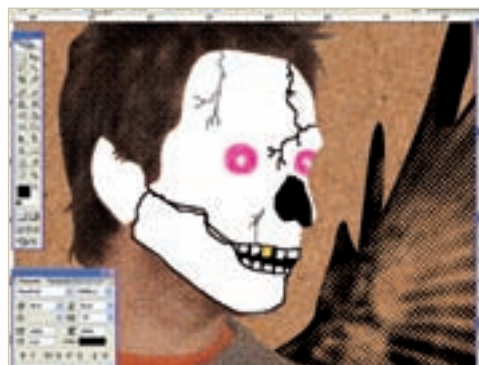
#### 03 Hard Light

Good for coloured layers placed over textures. It allows the texture to show through, but doesn't lose the tonal values of the applied layer. It takes colours from white to mid-grey and lightens them and the colours from mid-grey to black and darkens them.



#### 10 Preaching to the inverted

Open up 'splats.psd' again and do the same as what you did in the previous step. This time however, go to Image>Adjustments>Invert and invert the Splat image. Set the layer Blending Mode to Multiply. This will give us black splats.



#### 12 Paint by numbers

Now select the Paintbucket Tool and use this tool to fill in the lines. This will hopefully give them the effect of looking really coarse. They should also look a bit fatter too. Next, fill in the mouth and then refill the mouth again for the same effect.



#### 14 Splash of colour

Always look at your work from a distance to see which parts need balancing. Add some colour where it needs it. We right-clicked the Skull layer icon and selected Blending Options to give either a Gradient or Color Overlay – decide which one works best for you.



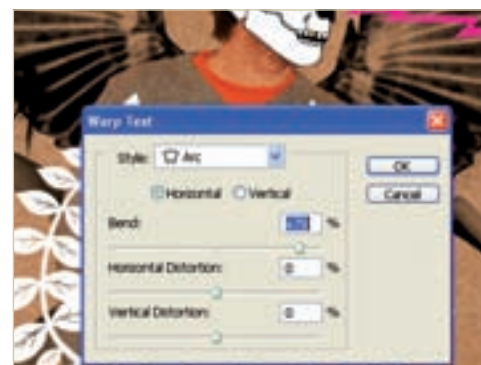
#### 11 Face off

Using the Pen Tool again, draw a Shape Layer around the face and fill it in with white. Set the Opacity to 50%, you should now be able to see the face underneath, which is the effect we want. With a pencil from the Dry Media brushes, draw in the features.



#### 13 Thunderbolt and lightfoot

Now change to the Pen Tool. Set this to Shape Layer. Use this to draw in some thunderbolts. At this stage the composition is almost complete, so it should be looking pretty good by now. We haven't finished just yet though, it still needs some more colour to balance it out.



#### 15 Nearly done

To finish, in order to add balance to the top of the graphic, add a motto. Write your chosen saying, then right-click on the Text layer within the Layers palette and select Warp Text. Have a play with each style to decide which one sits best in your composition.





## Habbo Hotel

www.habbo.com



### TOP TIP



### Animation station

Using manipulated layers, animation is simple to create

As mentioned, one of the best things about Habbo is that the site offers visitors the chance to enter and explore a pixel-art community in real time. But unlike the static nature of the site's main pixel art images, here the pictures are brought to life with animation. In fact, because of its blocky, simplified nature, pixel art is actually extremely easy to animate in ImageReady, with basic routines taking but a few minutes to create through manipulated layers.

A few issues ago, the Photoshop Site Doctor turned its attention towards the pixel art-based website, eBoy. We explored the rudimentary techniques of pixel art and looked at how the creators of the site used standard techniques (you could also call them clichés, though we don't mean this in the derogative sense) to build an instantly recognisable site simply bursting with impact.

This month, we're pointing the good doctor towards pixel art again, although this time the site under the microscope takes a looser approach to design rules and regulations. Ironically it's also a site that issue 124 examined within Dreamweaver which lends itself extremely well to both programs.

Habbo provides pixel art enthusiasts with an astonishingly well-designed forum and gallery where users are free to view examples of work, and discuss trends and techniques. So far, it's looking very similar to eBoy. However, Habbo offers a great twist: here, you can create an online pixel-art character for yourself and enter a wonderfully evocative pixel-art world in real-time to meet up with other members of the community.

Across these two pages, we'll delve into just what makes the site so full of character aesthetically and also such a great place to explore. So come on, let's hop aboard the pixel art bandwagon once more and hopefully hail a retro revolution for one and all!

### Simple menus

Tabs are easy to read and decorated with tiny icons representing each link's theme on your site

### Grabbing attention

Using dramatic images on the homepage, like these fireworks, is a great way of attracting attention

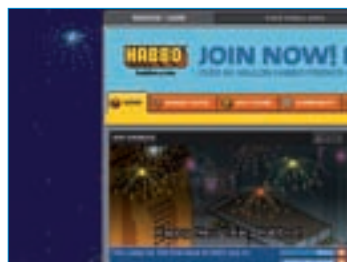


## Art on a theme

Don't fade into the background, instead use the image to create continuity

Sometimes, a background image on a website can offer much more than just a simple bed of colour or texture that sets off the main site content. At Habbo, the entire site has a very hands-on, creative feel and this is enhanced by the fact that even the background reinforces the theme of the homepage's main story – a New Year's celebration and polling contest.

The fireworks really help sell the idea and remind visitors of the main story, no matter where they are on the site. What's more, the patterns, shapes, sizes and colours are varied so that the pixel-



art items never feel rehearsed – despite the fact that many rockets and explosions are the same design. Never underestimate the power of varying colour, position and size!

## Bending the rules

Rules are there for a reason, but as Habbo shows, they're also made to be broken

If you've ever tried creating pixel art, you'll be familiar with the fact that strict rules need to be followed in order to avoid nasty looking jaggies and ensure the final image appears crisp. However, as with the best artists in any discipline, the creators of Habbo have actively bent some of the hard and fast pixel-art design laws to create a unique style.

Take the logo, for example. Here, there are very few – if any – straight lines and one-up, two-along outline paths. Instead, the artists have gone for subtle curves and softened edges to give their digital characters a sense



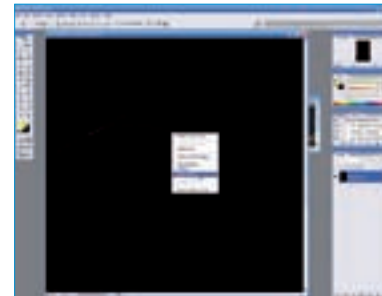
of approachability and charm. So, the bottom line is, with pixel art, laws are made to be broken – just so long as the final result works that is!



## STEP BY STEP

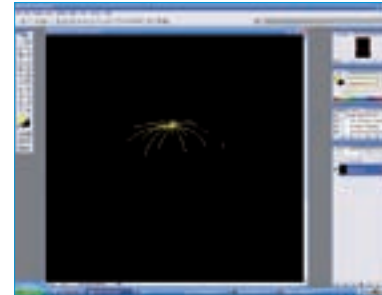
### Making fireworks

Remember, remember the 5 November... with some fun pixel rockets!



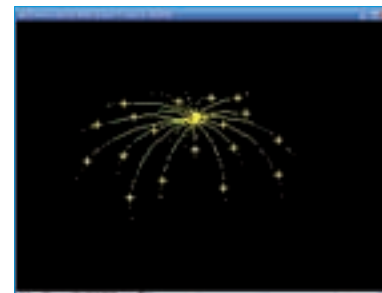
#### 01 Path of flight

Create a small blank canvas at 72 pixels per inch and fill it with black. Then set a yellow foreground colour. Select the Pencil Tool, set the brush size to 1px then grab the Pen Tool. Now, draw out a smooth, short curve to map out the path of the first shooting star. For the next step, right-click and hit Stroke Path.



#### 02 Build it up

Now using the technique described in the above step, start to build up a range of light paths to mark the shape of the firework explosions. Try to keep the curve trajectory similar between paths, and don't forget to vary the lengths in order to add a random nature to the image, representative of real fireworks!



#### 03 Colour and decoration

When your explosion is in place, start re-drawing over segments of the paths with the Pencil Tool set to a slightly different colour. Next, add in some star shaped points of light, then use the Eraser set to 1px to remove some random points on the path to give a slightly speckled effect.

## Multiple lead stories

It's not easy to choose a lead story... so Habbo lets the visitor decide

When you're updating your site's homepage, it's often hard to decide on a main story to really sell the page. With so much good content to choose from, how could picking one story over another ever be that straightforward?

However, the Habbo designers have overcome this problem by ensuring that their homepage can house multiple lead stories and images, by employing a native, numbered system within the main story image preview window. Basically, this means that a visitor can quickly sift through and preview a selection of main stories without



actually having to navigate away from the homepage. And as you can imagine, the less time it takes a visitor to find content of interest, the more user-friendly your site will be.

## Keeping things simple

Habbo.com epitomises the phrase 'simple, yet effective'

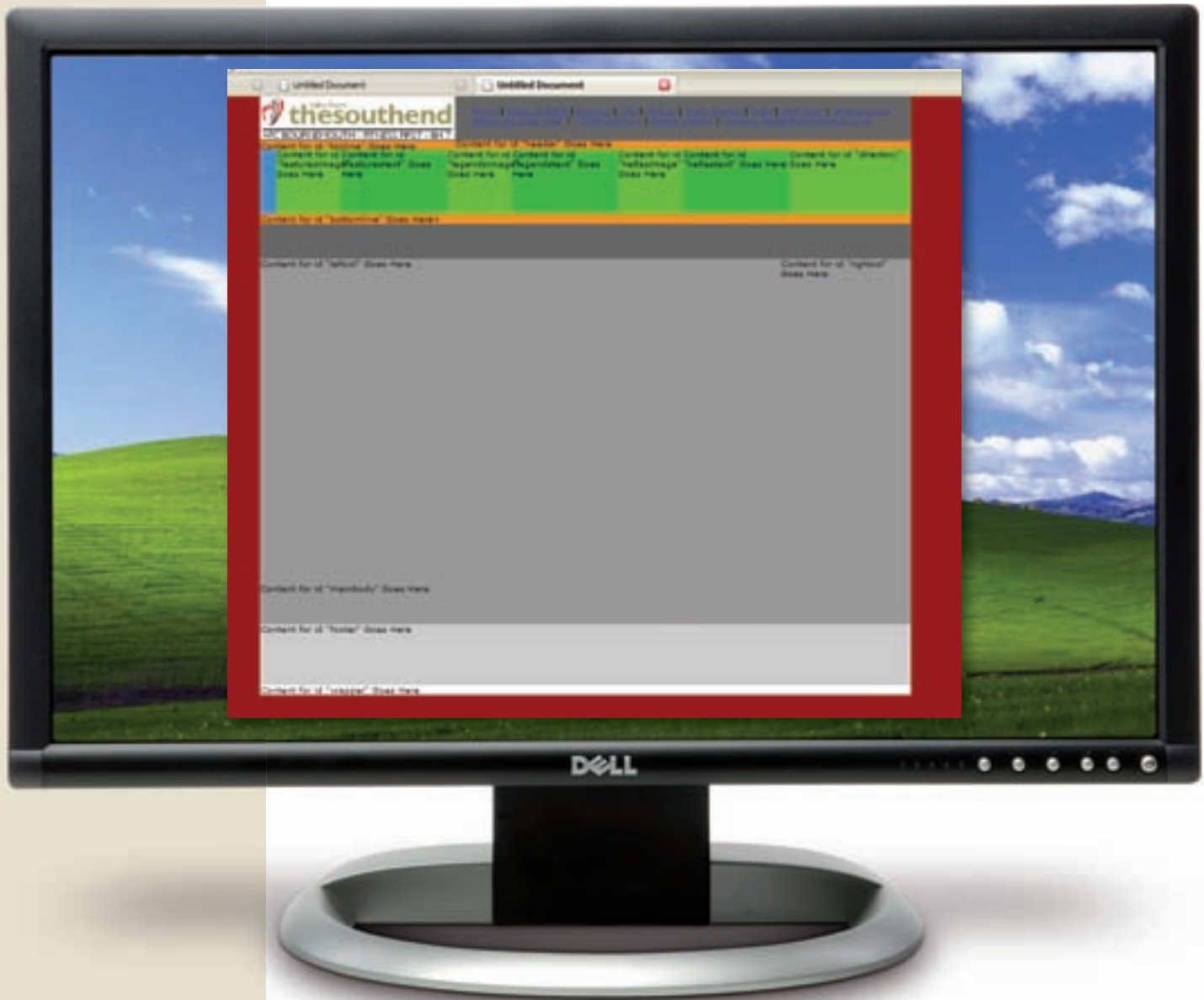
One of the cardinal rules to adhere to when creating any website homepage is 'KISS' – Keep It Simple, Stupid! Take a minute to think about your first impressions upon visiting a new website. We bet you'll find that you're less inclined to delve into sites that offer confusing, overly complicated page layouts, than you are with sites that are easy to read, navigate and understand.

The Habbo site is a prime example of the latter. With small, softened boxes offering bite-sized previews and images of linked pages, it's at once easy to read, quick to digest and simple to find



the content you require. It also helps that the designers have added some excellent pixel-art characters to each item, ensuring them equal attention.





### THE BRIEF

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

To create and position the CSS building blocks for the finished article

#### TIME REQUIRED


30 mins+

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Build your first CSS PART 2 site from the ground up

WITH THE INITIAL DIV TAGS STYLED AND IN POSITION, IT'S TIME TO START CREATING THE CONTAINERS FOR THE CREATIVE CONTENT

 **IN THE LAST** issue we introduced the first steps of building a site from scratch, from the paper planning stage through to the initial Div tag containers with accompanying CSS. In this issue we travel further along the design scale and introduce the more concise elements needed to reach the next stage.

This tutorial introduces the placement of left and right Div tags with the help of the Float command. Combined with the width, height and type options, perfect pixel placement is a

breeze. The standard two columns with Div tags and CSS is the bread and butter of a layout. However, the placement of more than two columns across a single tag is a little more intensive, which is a consideration to take into account at the initial design stage.

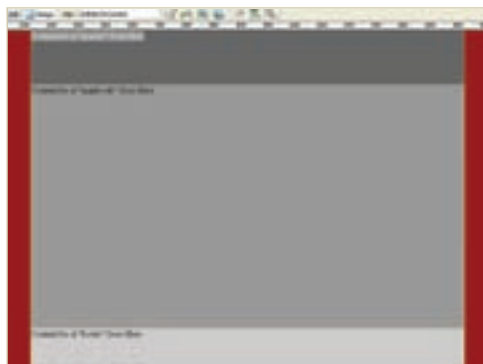
There will, however, always be the need for more than a simple left and right tag, and here we take the Float command and go beyond the basics.



## YOUR EXPERT

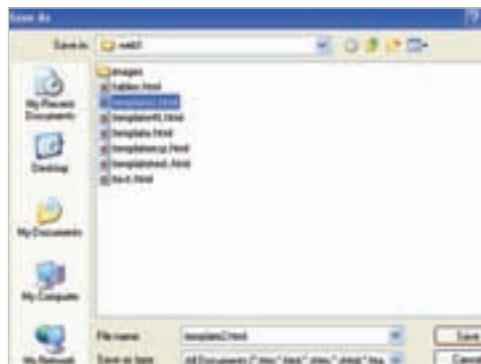
**Steve Jenkins** is a keen designer and developer who started creating websites after attending Bournemouth University and loves tackling the most testing of Dreamweaver problems. To see a sample of Steve's work, take a visit to [www.thesouthend.co.uk](http://www.thesouthend.co.uk).

# Build a CSS site from scratch (part 2)



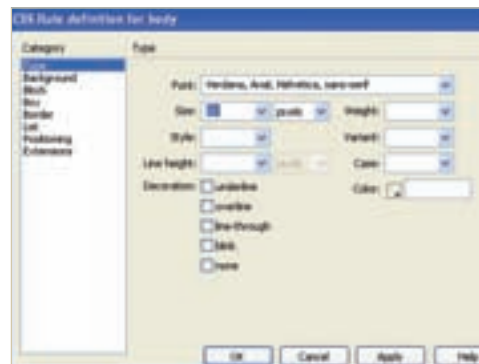
## 01 Start at the top

With the site's basic layout decided, the next step is to start arranging the different elements and components that will make up the page. The general rule is to work from the top down, so the header tag is the place to start adding the necessary Div tags.



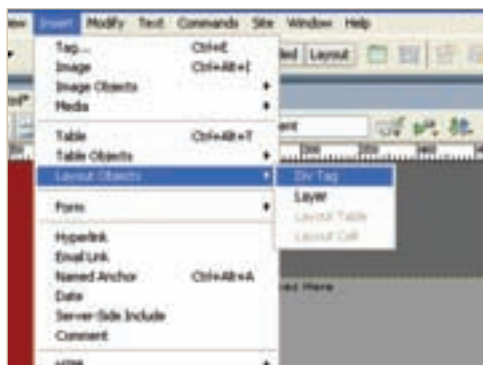
## 02 Save and save again

Save the document before proceeding any further. At this point it's a good idea to make a backup of the document by going to File>Save As and giving it an alternative name, ie, 'template2'. This ensures that any mistakes can be easily rectified by reverting back to the backup.



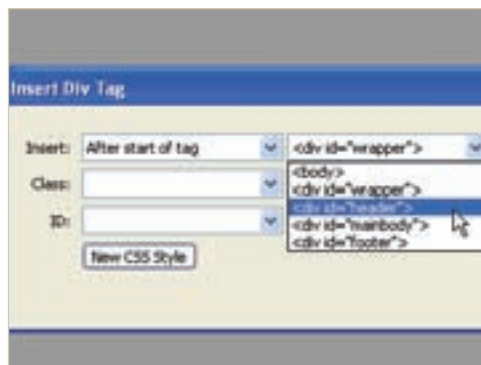
## 03 Body text

Before adding any Div tags, it's good practice to establish the CSS for the body text. The chosen text format will apply to all text in the document and will also help with the placement of tags. From the CSS panel, double-click 'body' and define the text, ie, font, size, etc.



## 04 The first Div

In our example, the header is to be broken down into a number of components. A header image is to appear on the left, a collection of links to the right, two solid lines and four sets of images. To start the process, head to Insert>Layout Objects>Div Tag.



## 05 After start of tag

The first decision to make is where the tag is to be placed. The Insert Div Tag window is set to 'At insertion point' by default. Change this to 'After start of tag' to activate the secondary drop-down list. From the secondary list, select <div id="header"> and press New CSS Style.



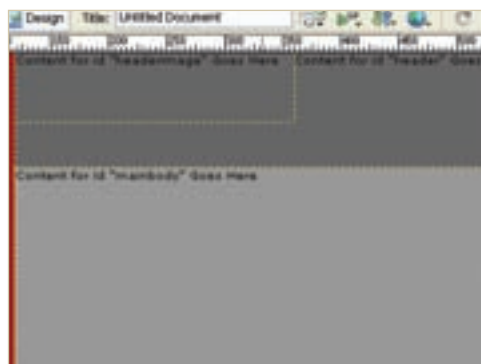
## 06 Name and define

The New CSS Rule window is displayed with the Selector Type set to Advanced. If not, first make sure that it is. Now name the tag with a relevant moniker, eg, '#headerimage'. Define in 'This document only' and press OK. This will open the CSS Rule definition window.



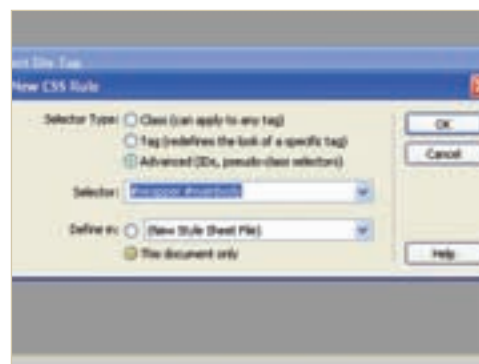
## 07 Define the Box

As the 'headerimage' tag is to contain an image and no text, the Box category needs to be selected to continue. The width and height of the tag need to be decided. For this example it's a simple decision, use similar dimensions as the image. Select Left in Float. Press OK and OK again.



## 08 Not yet pixel perfect

This establishes the Div tag at the chosen size and positioned to the left within the header div tag. Note that at this present stage in the development of the site, the #header and #headerimage tags do not fit precisely. This will be modified at a later date.



## 09 Insertion point

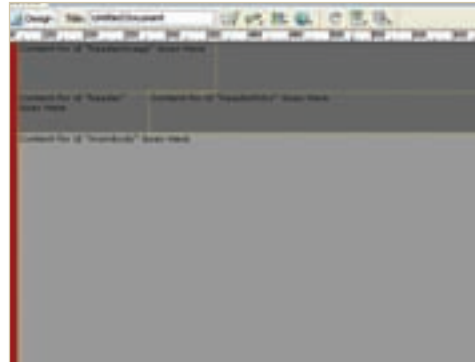
The next step is to establish the second element of the header. Again, head to the Insert menu and select a new Div tag. This time select 'After tag' and select the new tag just created, <div id="headerimage">, from the second list. Press the New CSS Style button to continue.





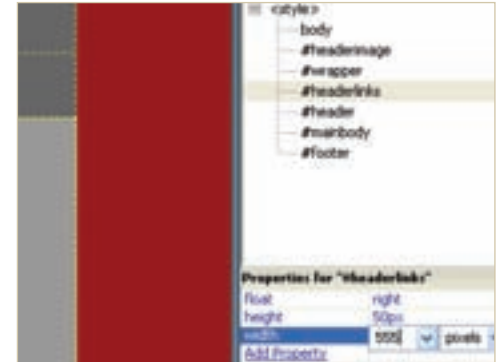
## 10 Right dimension

Delete any text in the Selector field and add the new name for the Div tag, in this case, '#headerlinks', then press OK. Now click Box to establish the credentials for the tag. The width is established by taking the dimensions of the #headerimage away from the #header.



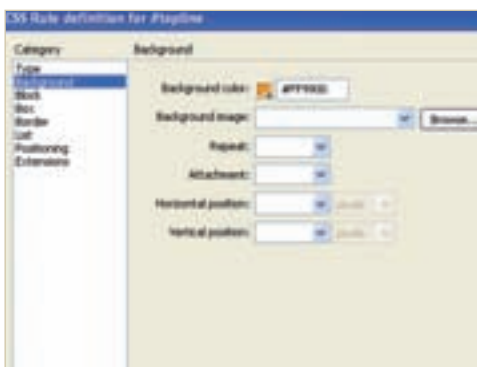
## 11 Links to the right

With the width of #headerlinks decided (remember it doesn't have to be exact as it can be modified later) it's time to position the tag. Head to the Float field's drop-down list and select Right. Now click OK and OK again to view the new tag.



## 12 Slim down

The previous screen demonstrates that the #headerlinks tag is too wide. The width needs to be reduced so that the tag will sit alongside the #headerimage tag. Select #headerlinks from the CSS panel and then adjust the width accordingly by adding a new dimension.



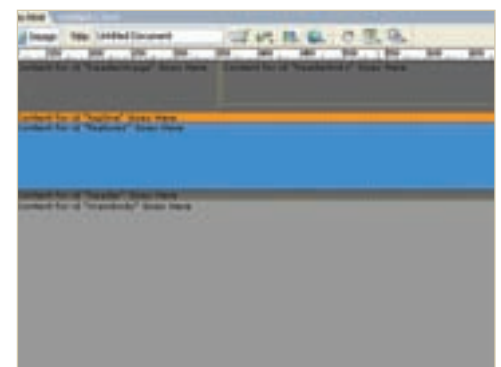
## 13 Solid line

With the initial elements in place, the next step is to add a solid line, which is essentially a Div tag with a background colour. Head back to the Insert menu and insert a Div tag with the name #topline after the #headerlinks tag. From Background select an appropriate colour.



## 14 Line size

Now head to the Box category to determine the width, height and position of the #topline tag. Make the width 100% to ensure that the line goes across the complete width of the #header tag. Select the height, 10px in this case, then position by selecting Right from the Float list.



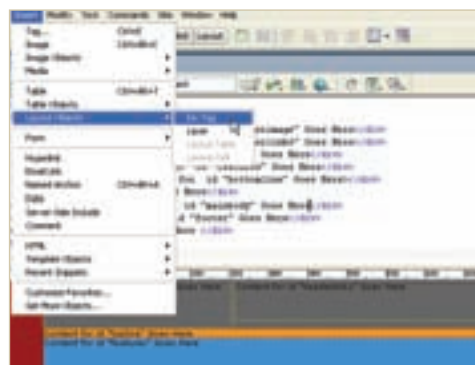
## 15 Features tag

The next step is to introduce a selection of elements, which includes four blocks, each containing an image and text, all placed on the same row. All these elements are to be kept inside a new Div tag called '#features'. Create and name as before, inserting after #topline.



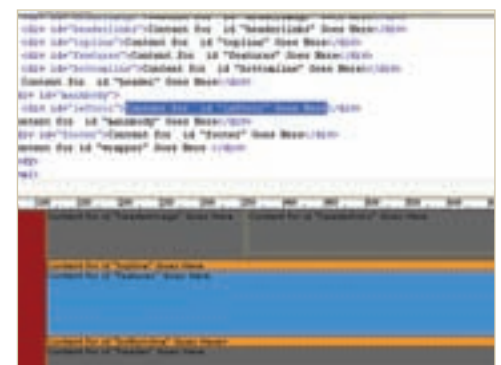
## 16 Call it #bottomline

Now to complete the header, another line is to be placed underneath the #features tag to match the #topline tag. Head back to the previous steps for creating the #topline tag and follow the same pattern. The insertion point this time should be after the #features tag.



## 17 New tag

With the header tags in place, the next step is to create the tags for the #mainbody. This is set to have two columns, the left column contains the content for each page. The right column contains a standard set of features to appear on every page. Head to the Insert menu and select Div tag.



## 18 Left column

Select 'After start of tag' followed by mainbody in the secondary list and press New CSS Style. Name the Selector '#leftcol' and press OK. Now enter the width and height, remembering to leave space for the right column. Select Left from Float, click Positioning and select Relative. Press OK.

# Building a CSS site from scratch (part 2)

## TECHNIQUE

### Get to grips with margins

Creating perfectly placed tags is easy. Here we show you how to include margins for perfectly placed content



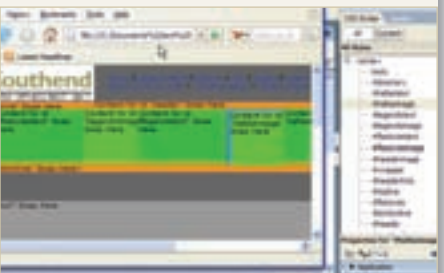
### 01 Get ready

Adding margins to an already established tag is a relatively simple task. First, double-click the tag in the CSS panel to open the CSS Rule definition window. Now select the Box category to reveal the dimensions and Padding and Margins sections.



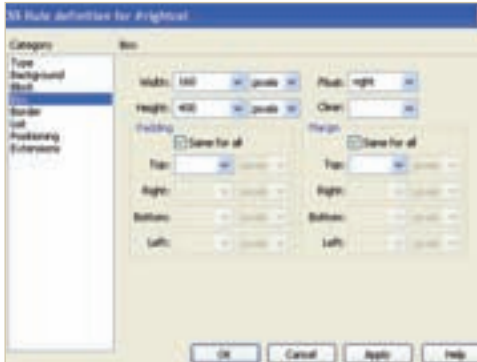
### 02 Specific size and side

By default, Margin has the 'Same for all' checkbox activated, which applies the margin dimension, eg, 2 pixels, to all sides of the tag. To add a margin to a specific side of the tag, deselect the checkbox and then add to the appropriate side, ie, left, right, top.



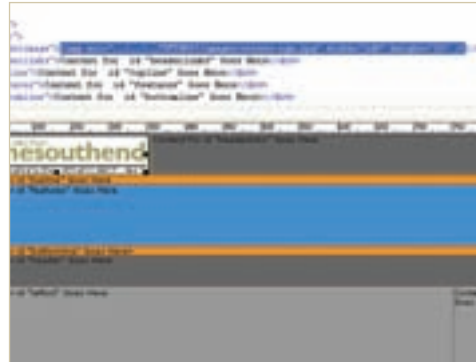
### 03 Too much padding

Adding a margin will expand the selected tag to include it, effectively changing its size. For example, an 80 x 80 tag becomes 83 x 83 if a 3px margin is added. To compensate, the holding tag can be expanded or the original tag reduced by 3px.



### 19 Right column

Select 'After tag' followed by #leftcol in the secondary list and press New CSS Style. Name the Selector #rightcol and press OK. Now enter the width and height, ie, 160 x 400, so not to overlap the two columns. This time, select Right from Float, click Positioning and select Relative. Press OK.



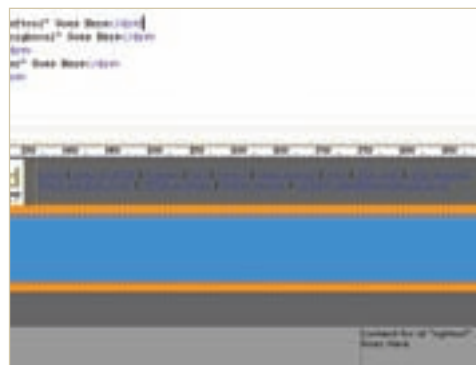
### 20 Add header image

It's now time to start adding content, starting with the #headerimage tag. First delete the text within the tag and then head to the Insert menu, select Image, pick the appropriate image and press OK. Now adjust the tag dimensions to fit the image if necessary.



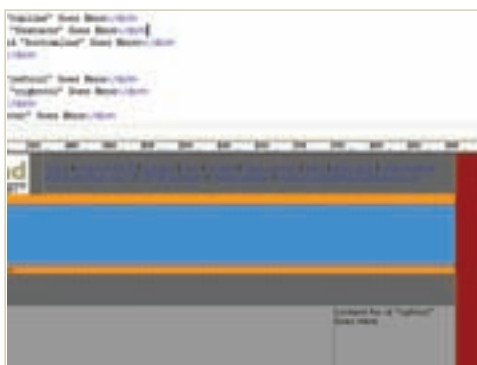
### 21 Header links

Now add the header links to the next tag. Add the link (type it in or copy and paste.) These will be placed in the top left corner. To adjust the position of the text, add some padding. Double-click #headerlinks, select Box, click 'Same for all' under Padding and add a size to the Top field.



### 22 Adjust and reduce

Adding the padding can push adjacent tags out of position, in this case #topline, as this is the next tag in the equation. To counteract this, simply reduce the height of the tag. Select #headerlinks from the CSS panel and then adjust the height by adding a new value.



### 23 Positioning text

The text within #headerlinks still resides to the left of the tag. This can be repositioned in a number of ways. The simplest option is to select the text and click the Align Center icon in the Properties window. Alternatively, to keep the left align, reduce the width of the tag.



### 24 Pad it out

Before adding to the #features tag the #topline needs adjusting. A top margin of two pixels is going to be added to put space between the #headerimage and the line. Double-click #topline, select Box, click the 'Same for all' checkbox under Margin to deselect and add 2 to Top.





## 25 Features content

The next step is to populate the #features tag with the necessary images and text. When adding a single row of a number of individual components, the process works right to left. So the first component will be positioned to the right of the tag using the Float command.



## 26 Right tag

Head to the Insert menu and add a new Div tag. Insert 'After the start' of the #features tag. Name the selector '#directory' and click New CSS Style. Select Box from the left list, add Width and Height (150 x 80) and Float = Right. Under Positioning, choose Type = relative, Right = auto.



## 27 Preview layout

The placement of the #directory tag may look a little out of place in Design view. To establish its position in a browser, first double-click #directory in the CSS panel and select a contrasting background colour. Now save the page and Preview in Browser via the File menu.

## IN DETAIL

## Getting the perfect position

Finding the perfect position for Div tags can prove to be a frustrating experience. Here we explain the common positioning types and how they render in different browsers

**THE ONE ELEMENT** that comes to the forefront when dealing with Div tags and CSS is positioning. There are various techniques available to allow for the perfect position of a Div tag. Which option you decide to use is defined largely by your chosen layout.

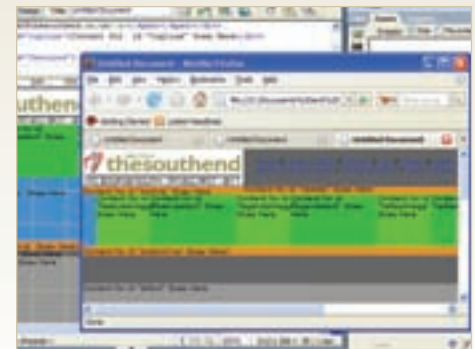
The standard page layout that uses the top left corner as a starting point, is often the domain of Absolute positioning. This uses the top left corner as its focal point and then precisely places a tag with the use of what are, essentially, co-ordinates. For example, an Absolute tag will first determine its width and height before heading to Placement to provide the positioning. From here it's the Top and Left fields that take control. If the first tag is to be at the top and left of the page, 0 is placed in Top and Left. If the next tag is to be placed alongside the first tag, the placement is determined by the width of the first tag. If then, the width of the first tag is 200 pixels, placement would be set as 0 for Top and 200 or greater for Left. Relative positioning is slightly different, its position is determined by the body tag or the Div tag it lies within. However, the principle is still the same.

The beauty of CSS is that one of its intended purposes is that it will create cross-browser compatibility. For a very large percentage of the time, this does happen. However, there are still a few minor discrepancies even between the major players. Taking into consideration the slight variations between browsers, it's always a good idea to have Internet Explorer open at least and Firefox running in the background. Each time a tag or element is modified, the page can be saved and refreshed in the browser to view how it displays.

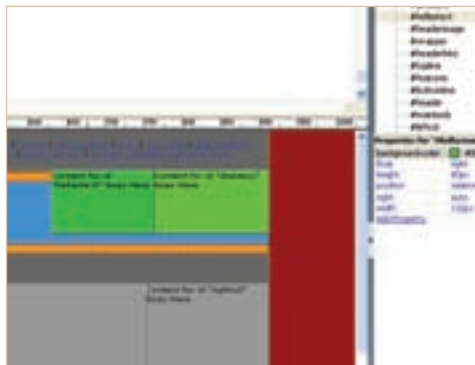
A simple example of how the browsers differ lies in the site being created in this tutorial. Add a break tag <br> after a Div and Internet Explorer displays the gap while Firefox chooses to ignore it.



Use Absolute positioning for a left aligned site. This will ensure your pages are always perfectly positioned



The inclusion of a break tag <br> doesn't effect the positioning and layout when viewed in Firefox. Internet Explorer is not so forgiving



## 28 First text tag

To add the next element follow the procedure to add a new Div tag and insert after the #directory tag. Click New CSS Style, choose a contrasting background, select Box, add Width and Height (130 x 80) and Float = Right. Select Positioning and choose Type = relative, Right = auto.



## 29 Repeat and create

Add a Div tag after the previous tag. Name the selector 'hellasimage'. Click New CSS Style, choose a colour, add Width and Height (80 x 80) and make Float = Right. Select Positioning, choosing Type = relative and Right = auto. Repeat this and step 28 to get three sets of text and images.



*e***Mag**





### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

All the files you need for this tutorial can be found on the CD

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Connect and update a MySQL table using OOP PHP and MVC techniques

#### TIME REQUIRED


30 minutes

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Interact with MySQL using PHP OO methods

OOP IS THE FUTURE AND PHP5 INCLUDES AN OO INTERFACE THAT MAKES INTERACTING WITH MYSQL AND OTHER DATABASES EASY

 **ALL MODERN PROGRAMMING** languages support OOP (Object-Oriented Programming) because OOP makes building easily updatable and reusable code simple.

In this article, we'll build on what we learned in the OOP article in *Web Designer* 125 and build a practical OOP-based web application that connects to a MySQL database, displays the records in an HTML table and even allows you to send an email with a simple click of a button.

The point of the tutorial is to teach you how you can use OOP-based PHP in a practical project, where, in the end, you'll have reusable PHP code that you can update easily and then use in other PHP projects.

You'll also learn a few new OOP ideas that are extremely important these days: the separation of concerns and the MVC (Model View Controller) method of designing/structuring database-driven websites.



## YOUR EXPERT

**Stefan Mischook** has been designing web pages since 1994. He has worked on all types of web projects. Along with his web design experience, Stefan is also knowledgeable in many programming languages including PHP, JAVA, ASP, ASP.net, SQL and Javascript.

# Interact with MySQL using PHP OO methods



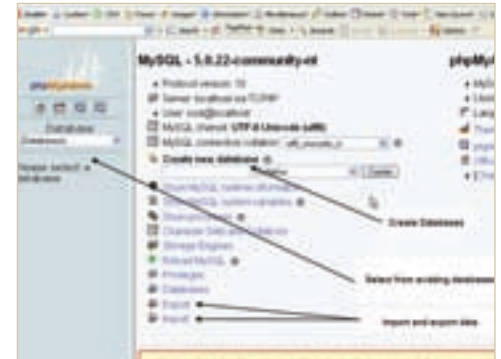
## 01 Methods of design

When starting a project, there are several different approaches to choose from to design an OOP-based website. The three most common are, designing the database first, designing the screens first or designing the PHP objects. For this project, let's start with the database.



## 02 phpMyAdmin

We like to start with the database because it's really the core of most PHP web projects. We need to set up a MySQL database and to create a few tables. There are several ways to set up databases in MySQL. We'll use the phpMyAdmin because most hosting companies use it.



## 03 Decoding phpMyAdmin

phpMyAdmin is a web application that's written entirely in PHP. It allows you to do just about anything to a MySQL server, including creating new databases, creating new tables, adding new database users, etc. Most hosts though will only provide a limited version (for security reasons).



## 04 Finding phpMyAdmin

Most hosting companies have phpMyAdmin installed for you – so if you have a hosting account, you should be able to create the database online. If you have cPanel as your web hosting interface, click on the MySQL button, scroll to the bottom of the page and click the 'phpMyAdmin' link.



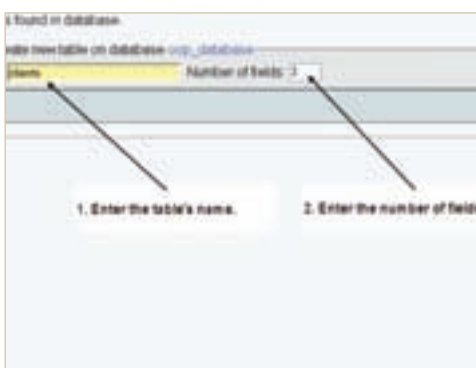
## 05 If you don't have a host

If you don't have a hosting account, or your host doesn't provide phpMyAdmin, your best bet is to install WAMP or XAMP (for Mac users) on your computer, so that you can follow the tutorial. You can find video tutorials on installing WAMP and XAMP at [www.killerphp.com](http://www.killerphp.com).



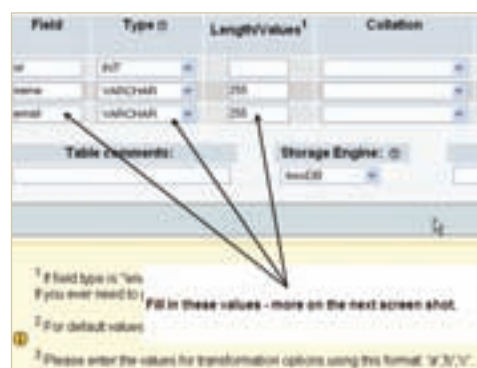
## 06 Create a new database

Now it's time to create our new database using phpMyAdmin. Give your database a name that's easy to remember and tells you something about the project. We're calling it: 'oop\_database'. If you choose your own name, remember to change your PHP code accordingly.



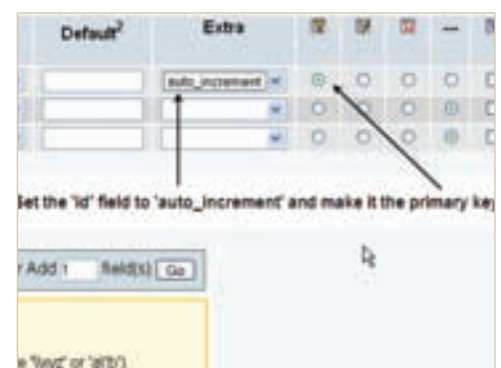
## 07 Create a table

Once you've created your database, phpMyAdmin will take you to a page where you can create tables, among other things. Let's create a table called 'clients' and give it three fields – see the screenshot. When you're done, click the Go button in the bottom-right corner of the interface.



## 08 Name the fields

On this page you'll be able to specify the table fields; things like field, column names, type, etc. There are so many ways and so many options on how you could set this up. We've opted to keep it simple for this tutorial. Just follow the screenshots for details.



## 09 Set the id

Next, you need to set the 'id' field to 'auto\_increment' and make it the primary key. We're assuming that you understand the basics of database theory. But if you don't, don't worry as it won't impact on you understanding the tutorial. Okay, now hit Save to actually create the table.

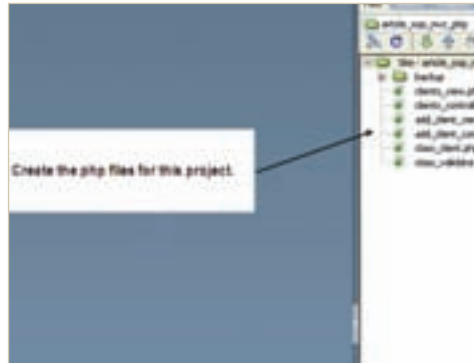


# Tutorial



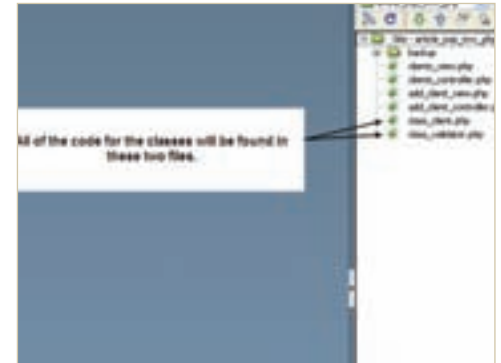
## 10 The table info

After you hit Save, you'll be taken to the above page that provides all the table's information and even provides the SQL script used to generate the table. From here you can manipulate the table anyway you like – it's very powerful. But for this tutorial, we can now leave phpMyAdmin.



## 11 Create the PHP pages

Using Dreamweaver, we've created the PHP files that will make up this project. Since this is an OOP project, we're using a strategy of web application development called MVC. It looks to divide applications into three logical units to make it easier to maintain. More on this later.



## 12 The PHP classes

We have two PHP files with names starting with 'class' – 'class\_validator.php' and 'class\_client.php'. The PHP code related to these two classes will be found in these files. By placing the PHP code in their own files, we've gone a long way to turning our code into reusable objects.



## 13 The 'client' class

Let's start by taking a look at the 'class\_client.php' file and the class 'client'. This class is an example of what we call the 'Model' (from MVC). The Model contains code/classes related to your core PHP objects – think database code, business logic code, your core (concrete) objects.



## 14 The core

The client class contains the core PHP code that creates the fundamental object of the system – the client. Notice that it has the code (database code) that builds 'clients'. Because it's Model code, it doesn't contain code related to how 'clients' objects work with pages people actually see.



## 15 MySQLi extension

The first function (method) in the client class is 'connect()'. The function connect() handles the connection to the database, in this case MySQL. We're using one of PHP's OOP database libraries (MySQLi) instead of the classic procedural MySQL library.



## 16 Reusing code

We placed the MySQL connection code in its own function, because it will be reused in many other functions in this class. Now we have better code reuse and if the database connection information ever changed, we only have one place to change it.



## 17 'show\_all\_clients()'

This is an interesting function that grabs records from MySQL. It also does something you don't really see in Model code – it builds part of the user interface. Normally this would be breaking the rule of MVC because we have View code in our Model. But we have our reasons!



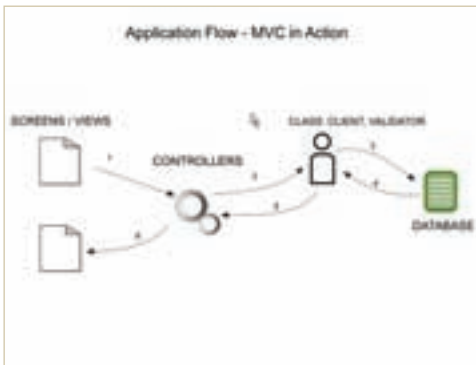
## 18 Say no to loops

In the 'while' loop, we build a series of table rows (and hyperlinks) but not the actual table... just the rows. We do this here because we don't want any looping code in our view pages. By creating only rows, the table can be styled in the view.



## 19 'clients\_view.php'

The page 'clients\_view.php' is an example of a View in the MVC paradigm. Views should contain no Model code – no database or validation code, etc. The only code it should contain, is code that builds the user interface. Notice there's little PHP code in this page to break!



## 20 MVC Controllers

So far, we have looked at View and the Model in MVC. The last piece of this trinity is called the Controller. The Controller's job is to manage the interaction between the Model and the View. You can think of a Controller as a conductor – someone who directs the traffic if you like!



## 21 Handling HTTP post

'add\_client\_controller.php' is one of our Controllers. Its job is to handle HTTP post from 'add\_client\_view.php'. The file name tells us about the code. This Controller grabs the post information and uses the validation object to validate the data. It then calls the client object to insert the data.

## IN DETAIL

## Why use MVC with PHP?

MVC (Model View Controller) is a proven method of structuring database-driven websites. It's now the preferred way of doing things in languages such as Java, Ruby and, of course, PHP

THIS IS A RELATIVELY simple project (for the sake of the tutorial) but because it's written using Object-Oriented PHP (using the MVC design pattern to structure the web application) it would be really easy to expand it. That's the whole point of doing things this way.

MVC keeps work separate. Designers can design the web pages without fear of messing up PHP code and PHP programmers can safely work on their part of the programming, without worrying about what the other person is doing. Below we've outlined a MVC checklist to keep close to your heart:

- Controllers should be paired with Views.
- Views (the PHP pages people see,) should be free of any Model or Controller PHP code. So you should not have database code, looping code or business logic in there. Views should contain mostly HTML, CSS and other page structuring code with just a few lines of PHP to bind the pages to the objects and Controllers.
- Views and Model objects are the reusable parts of the system – pieces that can be used/adapted to other PHP projects. As you continue to develop Object-Oriented (MVC based) PHP projects, you will build a very useful PHP library that you will be able to leverage in all your projects. That's where the profits (\$) really start to roll in!
- Controllers coordinate the dirty work between objects and the Views, so (typically) they are the throw-away parts of the system.

Building an elegant MVC framework is not an easy task... many have tried and failed. Instead, pick one of the many frameworks out there and learn it. Much of the dirty work has been done for you already!

Have a look at Zendframework (<http://framework.zend.com>), PHP on Trax ([www.phpontrax.com](http://www.phpontrax.com)) or Symfony ([www.symfony-project.com](http://www.symfony-project.com)).



Most PHP web application frameworks are MVC-based and Object-Oriented. Popular frameworks include Zendframework, seen above



CakePHP ([www.cakephp.org](http://www.cakephp.org)) is just one of the many MVC frameworks available to the enterprising PHP nerd



## 22 The 'validator' class

We've kept this class simple with only one function. Normally our validator objects would contain 10-15 functions whose job would be to keep the data 'clean'. We create separate validation objects because these functions can easily be reused in many PHP projects.



## 23 'clients\_controller.php'

This is the second Controller. Its job is to handle requests from 'clients\_view.php'. MVC flow can be engineered in different ways, for this project we're using the popular method of pairing a Controller with each view. This keeps things consistent and makes it easier to manage code.





### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

All the files you will need are on the accompanying CD

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create a Dashboard widget for your Mac OS X desktop

#### TIME REQUIRED


2 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Deck out your Dash with a custom widget

CREATE YOUR VERY OWN MAC OS X WIDGETS USING NOTHING MORE THAN CSS, JAVASCRIPT AND GOOD OLD-FASHIONED HTML

 **ONE OF THE** most interesting additions to version 10.4 of Mac OS X (or Tiger, if we're on first name terms) was the addition of the Dashboard. This rather clever application plays host to a range of mini tools known as widgets. They're called into being at the user's command with the sort of graphical sleight of hand we've come to expect from the Mac operating system. Closer inspection reveals these widgets to be little more than HTML pages, bundled alongside a few custom CSS,

JavaScript, XML and image files. This, of course, means that if you can code a web page, you can just as easily whip up a widget! Countless home-grown widgets are already on offer, but there's always room for more.

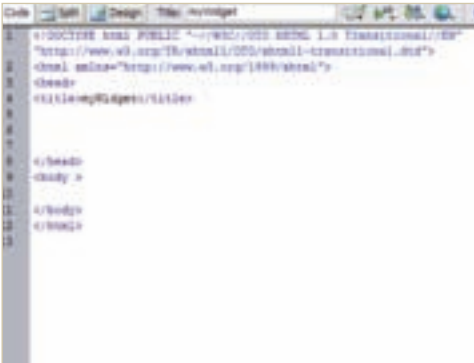
Over the next few pages, we'll be showing you how to put together a widget to perform a basic domain name search and taking advantage of Apple's nifty animation classes to incorporate a WhoIS look-up on the flip side.



## YOUR EXPERT

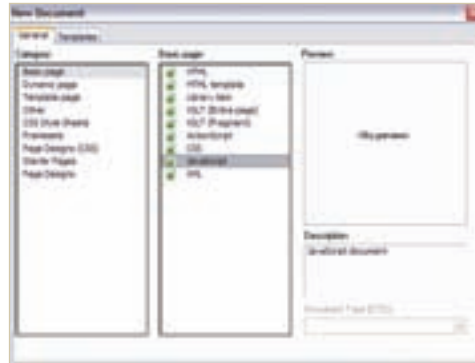
**Ian Davenport** has seven years of professional web design and interactive development under his belt for some of the world's biggest corporations. When he's not up to his elbows in code, he can also be found tinkering with Photoshop and Flash.

# Deck out your Dash with a custom widget



## 01 Getting started

Your widget will find its home on your trusty Mac, but since it starts life as a humble HTML page it doesn't matter where we piece things together. Just make sure you have a Mac for the testing later! Let's start with a new XHTML document in Dreamweaver (Strict or Transitional Doctype).



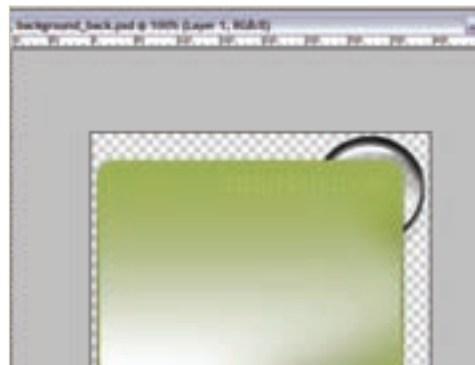
## 02 Essential files

Just like any other web page your widget relies on a supporting cast to make it really sing, so we'll need to include a CSS and a JavaScript file. Either create these with the text editor of your choice, or use the blank files provided on the CD. Save these with your widget HTML.



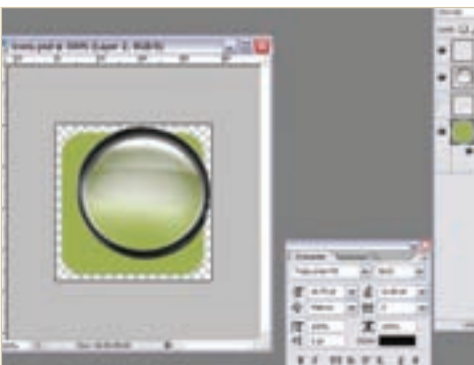
## 03 Now to business

Include the CSS and JavaScript files as normal in the <head> section of your document. It's time to fire up Photoshop and get creative! Designing the graphical appearance of the widget at this early stage means we can easily see the dimensions of the final widget.



## 04 Two sides to every story

One of the great features of the Dashboard was the ability to flip widgets, to show additional functions on the back. We'll be doing this with our widget, so it makes sense to design the reverse while we're still feeling inspired. Both images should be saved as PNG-24 with transparency.



## 05 Iconic images

We also need a suitable icon for our widget. This should be 75 pixels square and again needs to be saved as a PNG-24 with the name 'icon.png' (note the capitalisation). All our image files should then be saved alongside the HTML files, with the front graphic renamed 'Default.png'.



## 06 Adding the background

Now we all know the best way to apply a background image is to use good ol' CSS. Resist the temptation though, as Dashboard prefers widgets to be upfront with their images. Instead, use the following code within the document body:

```

```

The "default" identification is important here – more on that later.

## TECHNIQUE

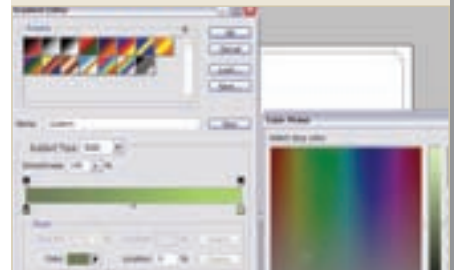
# Creating the background

Your widget is going to be rubbing shoulders with some of the hippest icons on the scene. Make sure it looks the part



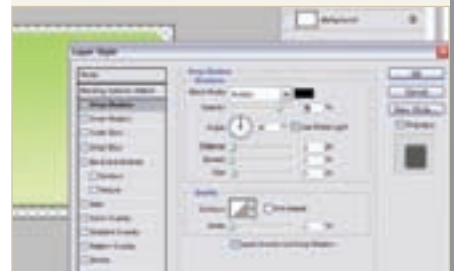
## 01 What goes around...

We see the return of some tried and tested classics. Think Bevels and Drop Shadows, given a subtle Web 2.0 twist! In Photoshop create a new layer and draw a rounded-rectangle path with a corner radius of 20px. Load the path as a selection.



## 02 Going green

Natural colours are the way forward, so pick an 'organic' shade. Create a gradient with a slightly darker tone and fill your selection. Contract your selection by around three pixels (under Modify on the Select menu) and then Feather it by two pixels.



## 03 Finishing touches

Create a lighter toned gradient, fill your selection at a slight angle, giving you a discreet Bevel. Hide the background layer and apply a Drop Shadow to your panel. With shadows, less is more. Save the file as a PNG-24 and you're good to go!

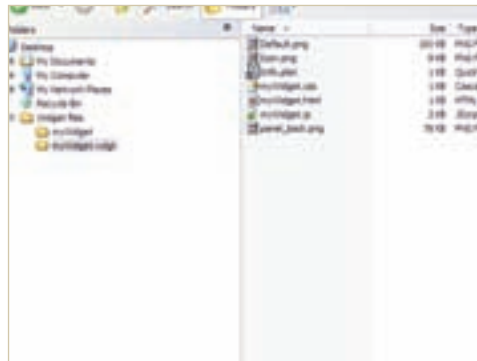


# Tutorial



## 07 Making a list

The 'Info.plist' is an XML file containing information specific to our widget: including a unique identifier, HTML file name and dimensions (although it will use those of 'Default.png' if none are available). Update the 'Info.plist' and save it alongside our other widget files.



## 08 Packaging it up

Okay, we have all the files we need, all we have to do now is to package them correctly. Create a new folder named after the widget and copy to it the HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PNG and 'Info.plist' files. Rename the new folder by adding the suffix '.wdgt'.



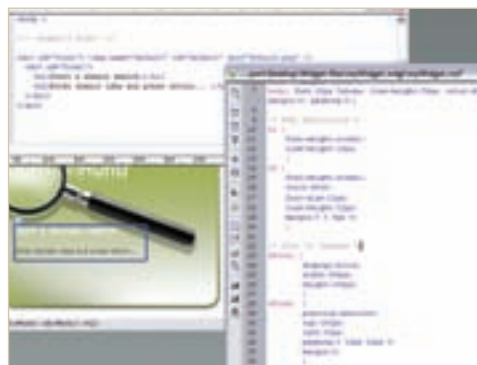
## 09 Putting it to the test

Time to give things a whirl in OS X. Copy the renamed folder to the Mac desktop. It'll now boast a glossy Dashboard icon. Double-click this and your package will be copied into the Library folder, while you find yourself presented with your very first live widget.



## 10 Adding structure

Time to start fleshing the widget out a bit, starting with the CSS. We'll begin by setting a few global properties for the document, including 100% font-size, 100% height and zero padding and margins. The first two aren't strictly necessary in this instance, but it's a good habit to get into.



## 11 Content over style

We now need to add content. Wrap the 'Default.png' in a layer with id='front', display set to 'block' and sized to match the image. A second layer nested within this contains our text and search box, absolutely positioned to float it over the background image.



## 12 Browser-friendly testing

We all know what a trial-and-error process CSS positioning can be. Clearly it isn't practical to package the files into a widget and install it to the Dashboard to preview each change. Fortunately the HTML files can be viewed in Safari, Firefox or any other standards-compliant browser.



## 13 Adding the search box

Search boxes are easy with a widget. Too easy in fact – you don't even need a <form> tag. Instead Apple has provided a custom type of input box, logically named 'Search'. We'll add an onSearch event to this. (See the In Detail box for more information on how we make the JavaScript file).



## 14 Creating the back

The structure duplicates that of the 'front' layer, simply renamed to 'back', switching in our rear graphic and creating duplicate CSS definitions as appropriate. The search input box also requires a unique ID and a new onSearch event.



## 15 Tidying things away

A bit of a mess eh? The problem is that the contents for both the front and back layers are trying to occupy the same space, while the rear image hides away at the bottom. To fix this, we simply set the display property of the rear layer to 'none', keeping it hidden until we need it.



## 16 Out of sight, out of mind

Once we've hidden the rear layer we need to find a way of making it visible on command. Apple provides a series of JavaScript classes to enable this with customary visual flair. These are stored within the system folder: /System/Library/WidgetResources/AppleClasses/AppleAnimator.js'



## 17 Flipping things over

We need to create a button and suitable event handler to activate the flipping routine. Dashboard offers a discreet 'I' icon as part of its default toolset, but you can use any image you wish. We then need to add an 'onClick' event handler to the image, calling the function 'showBack()'.



## 18 The 'showBack()' function

The logic behind the function is really quite simple. Use 'document.getElementById' to grab hold of the front and back layers, set front layer display to 'none' and the back to 'block'. Then use Dashboard's 'performTransition' function to switch the two.

## IN DETAIL

## Adding functionality with JavaScript

An input box alone does not make a search box. We need to send our query off into the outside world and bring us back some results in the browser, so time to break out the JavaScript

DASHBOARD'S **ONSEARCH EVENT** allows the user to run all kinds of custom functions on submission of the search query. We need two separate search functions: one to perform a domain name look-up and one to carry out a WhoIS query. The scripts behind each of these are almost identical, the main difference being the unique search box variables and the URL we'll be querying. For the domain name search we've opted to use [www.ukreg.com](http://www.ukreg.com) and <http://whois.domaintools.com> for the WhoIS lookup.

Using the domain search as our example, we've requested that the function 'srch(this.value)' be called following the onSearch event. We'll need to set up a few initial variables for the function first though, including an empty string ('s'), the URL for the domain search script and the search mode. Not all domain services will require this last variable, but the example provided instructs the UKReg server to search all TLD suffixes (.com, .co.uk, etc). You'll also see that we've included a fourth 'space' variable, the purpose of which will soon become clear.

Once run, the function gets the value of the search box and passes it to our empty string. We then run a simple replace routine, substituting any gaps in our value for our space variable. Domain names don't allow spaces, so this way we ensure 'my domain', for example, is changed to the more acceptable 'my-domain'.

Having run a quick check to make sure we've actually got a value for our 's' and that our widget is the active window, we glue our URL together with the search box value and mode and instruct the widget to send it off using the default browser. The 'widget.openURL' is imperative here, otherwise widgets have a tendency to bring back results themselves without calling on the services of the browser, with somewhat mixed results. There you have it. Easy custom search submissions using just a search input box and a little simple JavaScript.



Custom search queries can quickly and easily be constructed using some simple JavaScript



Multiple search functions can be constructed, making sure to give each unique variable names



## 19 Back to the front

This requires a button on the back layer, with the onClick event calling the showFront() function. This performs the reverse of showBack(), switching the display modes of the two layers and performing the necessary transition. Details can be found on Apple's Developer Connection site.

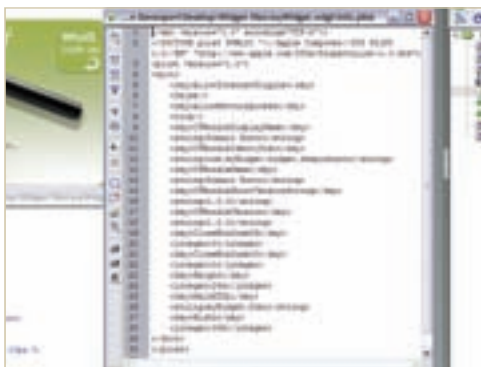


## 20 Testing the flip

It's worth checking the flip functionality of your widget at this stage. You've had your head buried in code for the past hour, so you deserve a bit of light relief. Package the files up into your .wdgt folder and go and have a play. We'll be here when you get back...



# Tutorial



## 21 The home stretch

Have fun with that? All that remains now is to make sure your `.wdgt` package contains all the necessary files, make any last minute CSS tweaks and ensure the 'Info.plist' contains all the necessary information to identify your widget to the Dashboard application.



## 22 Final testing

Now ask yourself, does everything work as it should? Is it possible to break it? Is the interface so intuitive your cat could use it? Most importantly, does it do the job it's supposed to? A project is only complete when you can say 'yes' to all of the above (except maybe the cat bit).



## 23 Share it with the world

You may want to share your widget with the world. Apple's Dashboard portal ([www.apple.com/downloads/dashboard](http://www.apple.com/downloads/dashboard)) provides the means to submit a widget, or download one of the thousands developed by other Dashboard devotees. Happy widgeting!



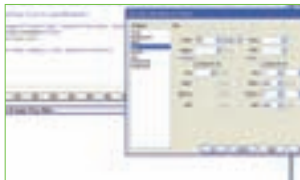


## Gordon Ramsay

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



### TOP TIP



#### Central container

The virtues of using Div tags has been discussed many-a-time, but use of the tag, especially in design terms, is still very much like tables. When creating a site that uses a central column design, the first step is to create a centrally placed Div container. All further Div tags are like nested Tables and positioned within the first main tag. To start the whole process, insert a Div tag and create a new CSS rule that places the tag in the perfect position. The following provides a central 795px wide Div tag: `#main{width:795px; margin:0 auto; position:relative;}`

**T**he Scottish-born Gordon Ramsay is as famous for his fragrant use of four letter words, as he is for his culinary skills. However, his career looked to be treading a very different path when he was signed by Glasgow Rangers at the age of 15. However, after three years he returned to college to complete an HND course in hotel management and tread his path to fame and fortune. He then went on to publish a number of books and set up a chain of restaurants, before starring in several restaurant-based TV shows.

The man's quest for improvement and perfection in his food is reflected in his site. It's clean, simple and stylish and boasts a collection of background images that contain the man in several casual guises. The home page incorporates a couple of well-placed navigation aids, alongside a crisp, clean and uncluttered background. The whole site has the touch of the modern design and a quick peek at the code reveals that Div tags, layers and CSS make the site what it is.

Beyond the home page the theme continues with a central container tag boasting the content for each page. A nice touch is the implementation of a slideshow. Gordon is obviously not a man afraid of his face. This presents the option to view the background in all its resplendent glory before moving backwards or forwards through the many Ramsay backgrounds on offer.

## Background image

Integrate background images to simply enhance a page

The site makes good use of quality background images. Coupled with a single script, a range of backgrounds make an appearance each time a page is visited. Adding a background image in Dreamweaver is relatively painless. Head to **Modify>Page Properties>Appearance**. To select an image, press the **Browse** button that resides after the **Background image** text box. This will tile the image horizontally and vertically across the page. The **Repeat** drop-down list allows for greater control. Selecting **No-repeat** will leave only one instance of the image in



the top left corner. Repeat is the default option, while Repeat-x and Repeat-y will repeat the image horizontally and vertically. To add a background image to an individual Div tag simply edit the definition rule to include the desired background image.



## Page layout

Simple but effective use of Div tags produces a well-designed site

The page layout is a site-wide template that dedicates itself to the use of Div tags. There are three main tags containing all the elements. The majority of the work is done by the left tag, which contains global navigation elements and the main container, which includes all the content. The third element is the page footer, which hosts the copyright logo and links to essential information. These are all contained within a main tag, which is centred horizontally within the body. To add a Div tag in Dreamweaver go to **Insert>Layout Objects>Div Tag**. In



the **Insert Div Tag** window select an **Insertion point** to place the Div tag where the mouse cursor currently resides. For more precise positioning select an alternative option, ie, **After start of tag**, and then select the appropriate Div tag from the active list.



## 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

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

MSAY

SHIP TRAINING HUMAN RESOURCES ENQUIRIES

### Rollover links

All three sections of the navigation use rollover links to emphasise the current option

### Page Brand mast

This is kept within its own Div tag and simply matches the background colour with the image itself

## STEP BY STEP

### Lists and definitions

Discover how to define lists using the DL tag and add data for navigation



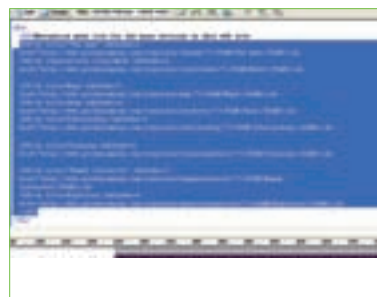
#### 01 Definition List

The DL (Definition List) tag sets out a list with content made up of terms (DT) and definitions (DD). The first step to creating the list is to add the opening and closing tags, <DL> and </DL>. Head to Code view and add in the appropriate section of the page.



#### 02 Definition Term

With the DL tags in place the next step is to add the DT tag. This is essentially a description of the content for the Definition List. This can be added at the beginning of the list or at any point desired. If using for navigation, a tag could be added for each link.



#### 03 Definition Items

To finish, in order to complete the list the addition of the DD tag needs to be put in place. This is essentially the tag that will contain all the content and information relevant to the list. When using for navigation an opening and closing DD tag needs to be used for each link.

## Aural Style Sheets

Accessibility is key to a good site. Here we reveal the nature of CSS and sound

The site uses a subtle feature in the shape of Aural CSS. This creates style sheets that inform how a web page should be heard in a screen reader. It adds a number of audio and voice characteristics to a standard tag, ie, body, including the following: body {voice-family: announcer, male; speak:normal; volume:medium; pitch:medium; richness:50; stress:50; pitch-range:50; frequency:medium; speak-punctuation:none; speak-numeral:continuous; }. Aural properties are specified in a 3D physical space, like surround sound. Plus the volume and



style of any synthesised speech can be modified. For example, voice-family determines the style of the voice with male and female being common choices. Specific voices can be chosen as well. Speak determines how the voice will be rendered audibly, eg, normal uses standard pronunciation, while spell-out spells out the text by letter.

## Tab Index

The Tab key provides the alternative option for navigation around a site

Navigation is key to any site – the better it is the happier the visitor. Hyperlinks have always been the connection between pages and with a quick click of the mouse it's off to the desired location. However, with accessibility now being an essential requirement for all good sites, the keyboard has a part to play in the navigation process. This is the domain of the Tab Index, which determines the order of the links when the Tab key is used. Ideally, this should start in the top left corner and work horizontally or vertically depending on design. To create a hyperlink with a tab



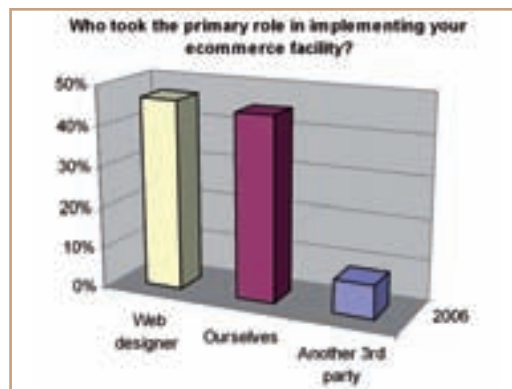
index go to Insert>Hyperlink to open the related dialog window. Now add the text, the link address and the Tab Index number. If starting at the beginning this should be 1, but the order is the designer's choice.



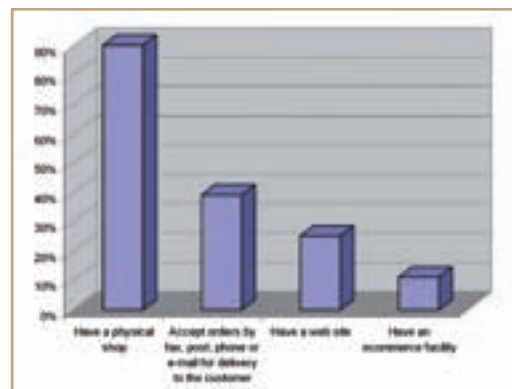
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eCommerceTHE SHOP-BUILDING SOFTWARE MERCHANT ISSUES SURVEY  
RESULTS FOR THE 2006 MARKET

**ESHOP BUILDER** Actinic has published some interesting findings regarding key trends or design decisions within the eCommerce sector. Its random questioning of 600 small and medium-sized retailers, of which only 145 indeed had web presences to speak of, yielded figures for profitability and general performance. Ninety per cent of those with an eCommerce facility claimed their sites made money, with a 2 per cent rise in those accepting online transactions still only reaching a pretty paltry 10 per cent. In terms of the actual development of these solutions, 45 per cent could boast building their own eCommerce sites, while 85 per

cent of the remaining parties could testify to hiring a web designer. Few to none appeared to enlist the services of specialist consultants or IT resellers, while most were able to say that they had paid up to 40 per cent less for their eCommerce solutions than they had expected. An average anticipated cost of £2416 gave way to a figure of just £1585. Last, it was revealed that 10 per cent of retailers believe that web shoppers are predominantly lazy, with convenience over price being attributed as the overriding reason why customers make purchases online. A more detailed report on the findings can be viewed at [www.actinic.co.uk](http://www.actinic.co.uk).



Actinic's investigations looked into who is building new eCommerce sites



Check out [actinic.co.uk](http://actinic.co.uk) for a detailed breakdown of the findings

## Positive web thinking

ONLINE COMPANIES ADOPT GOOD WILL TACTICS IN THEIR OPTIMISTIC PURSUIT OF  
EBUSINESS ACCEPTANCE

**WE LIVE IN** a pretty cynical world by all accounts and although organisations have attempted to pull at our heart strings with various marketing tactics in the past, we shouldn't be totally dismissive. Take **Everyclick.com** for instance, who claims to be one of the fastest-growing search engines and UK charities. Committed to donating 50 per cent of its revenue to selected charities, the service represents an admirable attempt to use the web as a vehicle for raising vital funds. The searcher started in June 2005 and has been given accolades from the HSBC Start-Up Awards and named Hottest New Start Up by the Interactive Digital Awards. To date, it boasts a fund-raising tally of over £100,000 for domestic charities – can Google say the same we ask?

On similar lines, hosting firm The Positive Internet Company Ltd is making a name for itself with a smiley attitude to serving sites. Famous for hosting the record-breaking *Ricky Gervais Show* podcast as well as for work with clients like Barclays, Sky and Honda, it has a strong attitude towards good customer service and a friendly ethic. Its competitive shared and dedicated server packages have also helped it scoop a prize at the 2006 Linux and Open Source Awards. More information is available via its brochure home page at [www.positive-internet.com](http://www.positive-internet.com).



Ethical search engine Everyclick is growing by the minute



Record-breaking and award-winning... you'd be laughing too!



## MOBILE COMMERCE (PART 2)

Our  
eCommerce  
evangelist  
David Howell,  
picks up the baton  
from last month with  
a concluding look at  
what designing mobile  
applications could yield in  
the digital marketplace

### WEB IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

Producing great-looking mobile websites and offering goods and services for sales, is only one component of the mobile web equation. Mobile network providers also have to step in and understand that their pricing policies have to change if the mobile web is to become as ubiquitous as the world wide web is at the moment. The good news is that a shift towards sensible pricing plans is now taking place. The 3 Group has announced a flat-rate mobile data plan – just what businesses who want to create a presence on the mobile web have been waiting for.

“Mobile operators in Western Europe have mostly been trying to avoid having their data business follow the internet business model,” says John Delaney, a principal analyst with Ovum. With the launch of 3’s X series of handsets, a change in direction is clearly evident. “What is free to use on the web ought, in principle, to be free when you use it on the mobile web,” says Frank Sixt, group finance director for Hutchison Whampoa, 3 Group’s owner.

“I think the watchwords with these sites is ‘the customer experience,’” concludes Ben Taylor of Vodafone UK. “The innovation is there and it’s coming at a rate of knots. What we’re trying to do is ensure that the experience of the customer, whether they’re on Vodafone-approved websites or a wider mobile internet, is that the experience is good for them. We’re trying to ensure that mobility is not only an indispensable element of a web offering, but that it offers something that you can’t do anywhere else.”

Chris Barling gives these closing comments: “For the majority of businesses, the .mobi domain has passed pretty much unnoticed, just like .info and .biz. This may change if the mobile web really takes off, which it hasn’t yet. After it has, there could be big benefits for companies that create clearly differentiated mobile content. For those with information or transactions that work well on the mobile web, the decision to go ahead will make itself. The companies that lose out, will be those that assume that because there’s demand for their sites from PCs, people will also want access from their mobiles. In many cases, that won’t be true.”

Whatever business you’re in, the mobile internet will soon come knocking at your door. Whether your customers will expect your goods and services to be available on their handsets, is an important question that you should be asking now. The tools to build effective mobile sites are becoming available in ever-increasing numbers. eCommerce has shown how the online channel can be an effective commercial environment. Expect the mCommerce market to do the same for the mobile web.



## INTERVIEW: PINKARD ALAN "PINKY" BRAND DIRECTOR, NEW MARKETS, DOTMOBI



Pinkard Alan "Pinky" Brand is directing new market development for .Mobi ([www.mtld.mobi](http://www.mtld.mobi)). He co-founded two multinational domain name registration and portfolio management companies that were both sold to public companies. The first was in 1996,

Internet Domain Names, Inc. d/b/a idNames – sold to Network Solutions and later acquired by VeriSign for billions. That company was among the first in the world to develop commercial, world-wide domain name registry search software, plus a corresponding database of registration requirements for over 200 country-code top-level domains.

The second, Arcemus, a registrar that targeted major global corporations as clients, was sold in 2004 to Iron Mountain, a leading records and information management company out of Boston.

*Even with the arrival of 3G, the network providers have had a hard time convincing consumers to use their services.*

*Do you think that more websites built specifically for mobile handsets will kick-start the mobile data market?*

Absolutely. While network speed is very important, it is easy and consistent navigation, clean pages, simple graphics, mobility context specific and location specific content that will drive more traffic. You can't just jam an existing .com or .co.uk site designed for a 17-inch PC screen experience, onto a three-inch mobile phone screen and expect consumers to believe your company now has a bona fide mobile service offering. The associated ill-fitting graphics, frames and difficult navigation, will not entice potential data users/customers to come back.

*Mobile data was tested with WAP a few years ago, but simply over promised and under delivered. Do you think we now have the technology to deliver real rich data to handsets, or are we hurtling head-first towards another WAP debacle?* WAP 1.x was a closed standard that had limited adoption and posed restrictions on usability for the end user. What we have now in WAP 2.0, is a next generation open standard (XHTML Basic) that's supported by .mobi and standard-setting bodies, such as the W3C in its *Mobile Web Initiative* document. We're not headed for another debacle because handsets now have great colour

## "THE SUCCESSFUL ONES WILL REALISE THAT THE PHONE IS ALWAYS WITH THE CONSUMER"

screens and rich media features. The markup language on mobile phones is more or less the same as desktop sites, which ensures the mobile web will not yet again stagnate. Networks are getting faster and cheaper and there are a lot more mobile phones around now than was the case years ago with WAP 1.x.

*Japan is clearly the model for mobile commerce. What's your best bet for the payment system that will become universal on mobile phones?* In Japan, DoCoMo has had

tremendous success by offering an on-deck payment system that's friendly to all content providers. But it's a smaller market where one carrier just about controls everything. As for the rest of the mobile world, we have multiple carriers and the lack of open and multiple payment options has dragged down the growth of off-deck mobile content. Business people and content owners who want to develop a mobile channel should be able

to choose from multiple mobile payment providers that integrate with their eCommerce software or point-of-sale systems. We're not placing bets on any particular payment system, but the entrance of PayPal and other solutions into the marketplace will be welcome developments.

*Mobile search is one area that looks likely to gain huge amounts of market share over the next few years. What other sectors do you think will embrace the market?* Mobile search will be big, but what consumers are searching for

could be vastly different depending upon whether they live in the developed world or the developing world. Sectors that could benefit in the former are location-based services, advertising, social networking, shopping, news, traffic, music, video and, of course, private services such as dating and porn. The ones that lend themselves to providing relevant data when searching the physical world around you or your immediate situation will be the ones that benefit the most. The successful ones will understand that the phone is always with the consumer and has built-in payment systems, but is a private device in a way a PC can never be. Therefore companies must be careful about how they communicate with that mobile consumer.

For developing nations, the landscape is different and more open. In some countries a PC's costs far outweigh a mobile phone's costs, so very few people will own a PC. The mobile phone then takes on a new status of the only affordable computer and the only connection to the web. In these countries, the phone is likely to be used for a huge variety of things, in the same way that we used the desktop web in the western world.

## MOBILE RESOURCES

### MobiReady Report

<http://mr.dev.mobi>



Simply enter your site's URL and 30 separate checks will be made of your site's content. A score is then given to indicate how well the content will perform on a phone handset.

### Opera mobile

<http://tinyurl.com/yhfokb>



Many businesses are trying to use their existing .com content and repurpose this for the mobile web. The Opera browser illustrates how to take existing content and view it on a mobile handset.

### Mobile browser content

<http://tinyurl.com/48t3k>



Hand-coding a website aimed at the mobile market requires you to understand the underlying technology of this platform. This two-part introduction is an excellent overview of the subject.

### Mobile web design

<http://tinyurl.com/cyx5n>



This from Cameron Moll is a great overview of designing for the mobile web. Over three parts, you'll learn about the current state of the mobile web and what methods to use to build content.

### Flash mobile devices

<http://tinyurl.com/mexbn>



If you want to develop Flash-based content for the mobile handset market, this resource centre should be your first port of call. All the tools you'll need to build great Flash-based content is readily available.

### Mobile Web Initiative

[www.w3.org/Mobile](http://www.w3.org/Mobile)



Standards are important when designing any content for the mobile web. Keep bang up-to-date with what's happening as the mobile platform develops on the W3C website.

## Interview: Adam Goodvach Who's the website for?



ADAM GOODVACH, CO-FOUNDER OF CUSTOMER-EXPERIENCE BENCHMARKING FIRM, GLOBAL REVIEWS, DISCUSSES HOW TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS OF OPERATING A WEBSITE FOR THE CONSUMER WHILE WORKING FOR A COMPANY

### There's an inherent conflict between a company operating a website and the consumers who use it.

Failure to understand these conflicts leads to a website that satisfies neither the consumer nor the company.

Even with the best intentions, the stages involved in website development (see below) divert it from the consumer-focused ideal. Companies, therefore, need to align measurement with consumer desires and give greater flexibility to the eCommerce experts.

### Stage 1: The eCommerce team

Website creators plan to build a website that gives consumers everything they could possibly want. They carefully consider how a user will navigate the website, what they will think at each step and which clever elements can be introduced throughout the process. This team contains online experts who understand the latest technologies, but they may also be led astray.

A trap for the eCommerce team is its natural desire to make the website bigger, bolder and more creative than it was yesterday. The team's familiarity with the latest technology may lead it towards implementing the technology before the basics of the website have been covered.

### Stage 2: The marketing department

The website is then presented to the broader marketing department. At this stage, reporting and additional business objectives come into play. These include budgets, branding and market positioning.

The marketing department can trap the eCommerce team with how the performance of the website is measured. The primary measure must be ROI elements such as conversion, average purchase value and so on. However, these measures relate heavily to the value and marketing of the product being sold. Fixating on these metrics leads developers to produce websites that placate business demands rather than consumer needs. Filling a website with Apply Now or Add to Cart buttons may have the reverse effect if they appear prior to a consumer making a decision.

While it's rational for budgets to restrict the development of websites, branding and positioning are less excusable. Many a website is steered away from its core consumer focus by marketing departments that insist on lots of corporate images or advertising. This is forgivable when the campaign presents a relevant

offer, but must not be too much of a distraction for the consumer. People who visit the website have already found the company and are already considering it as a potential supplier of goods or services. Only companies with a small footprint in the marketplace need to worry about reinforcing the brand.

Market positioning is similar to branding in many respects. Marketing departments are very concerned that the website reflects the look and feel that they want the brand to invoke. While it is important that the website reflects the company's core position, often marketing departments force the website to prioritise positioning over the core consumer experience.

### Stage 3: Senior management

Senior managers will visit a new website and often form an opinion of its success or failure based on its appearance. They don't have the online experience to see beyond what their eyes tell them. This can lead the eCommerce teams to create a website that is aesthetically impressive rather than consumer-focused.

Senior managers can also distract the website away from its consumer focus by imposing broader company policy or personal interest on the site. The company may decide that it's going to take an integrated CRM approach to managing the consumer and force the website to employ supporting technology. However, unless the website has built credibility by providing a consumer-focused experience over time, consumers will shy away from its more advanced features.

### Stage 4: Legal department

Once the website is near completion, the legal department wades in. They generally lack online experience and apply the strictures of contract law to the wording and presentation of the website. Unfortunately, reams of text not only turn consumers off, but it's very unlikely to be read. Legal departments need to gain a better understanding of how consumers use the internet and work with the eCommerce team to make the smallest possible intrusion to the consumer for the sake of legal requirements. Overzealous legal departments make legal approval so difficult that eCommerce teams would rather compromise on the customer experience than deal with the legal team. A legal department that engenders this psychology does a disservice to the company.

### The consequences for the consumer

As for the consumer, they're busy. They come to the website to undertake a particular task and are happiest when able to complete that task quickly, with the least possible expenditure of mental energy. This established fact of consumer behaviour runs contrary to the influences on the development of the website we've discussed in the main body of text here.

### How to alleviate this conflict

The following tips will help companies keep a consumer focus in the face of business pressures:

- Understand what consumers are coming to the website to achieve and keep these achievements central to all discussions on changes to the website. Keep asking the question: "How will this change help a consumer achieve one of their objectives?"
- Develop an understanding across the entire business of the importance of customer experience to the successful deployment of a website. When each area appreciates the importance of customer experience, they will be more willing to subjugate their demands to those of the consumer.
- Measure the customer experience of the website. This gives a framework for the whole company to understand how their suggestions impact on the consumer. It enables them to prioritise website upgrades to concentrate on areas that have the greatest positive impact on consumers.
- Share customer-experience results across the company so that people with less online experience will have a clear impression of how well the website serves consumers.
- Understand the strong points about what competitors are offering without being lured by novel implementations that have little impact on the consumer. Competitive websites tend to heavily influence company opinion, so it's important to ensure that they are accurately assessed and only beneficial aspects are adopted.

### Consequences for the company

Companies have some room to cater to the needs of branding, aesthetics and corporate programmes. However, companies shouldn't push the consumer experience too far from the centre of website creation. It's important to realise, that when it comes to the battle between what the consumer wants and what the company wants, the consumer always wins. The company either gives them what they want, or the consumer simply clicks to a competitor that does. The only way to give the business what it demands from the website is to give consumers what they want.

Find out more about Global Reviews and the work they do by visiting their home at [www.globalreviews.co.uk](http://www.globalreviews.co.uk)



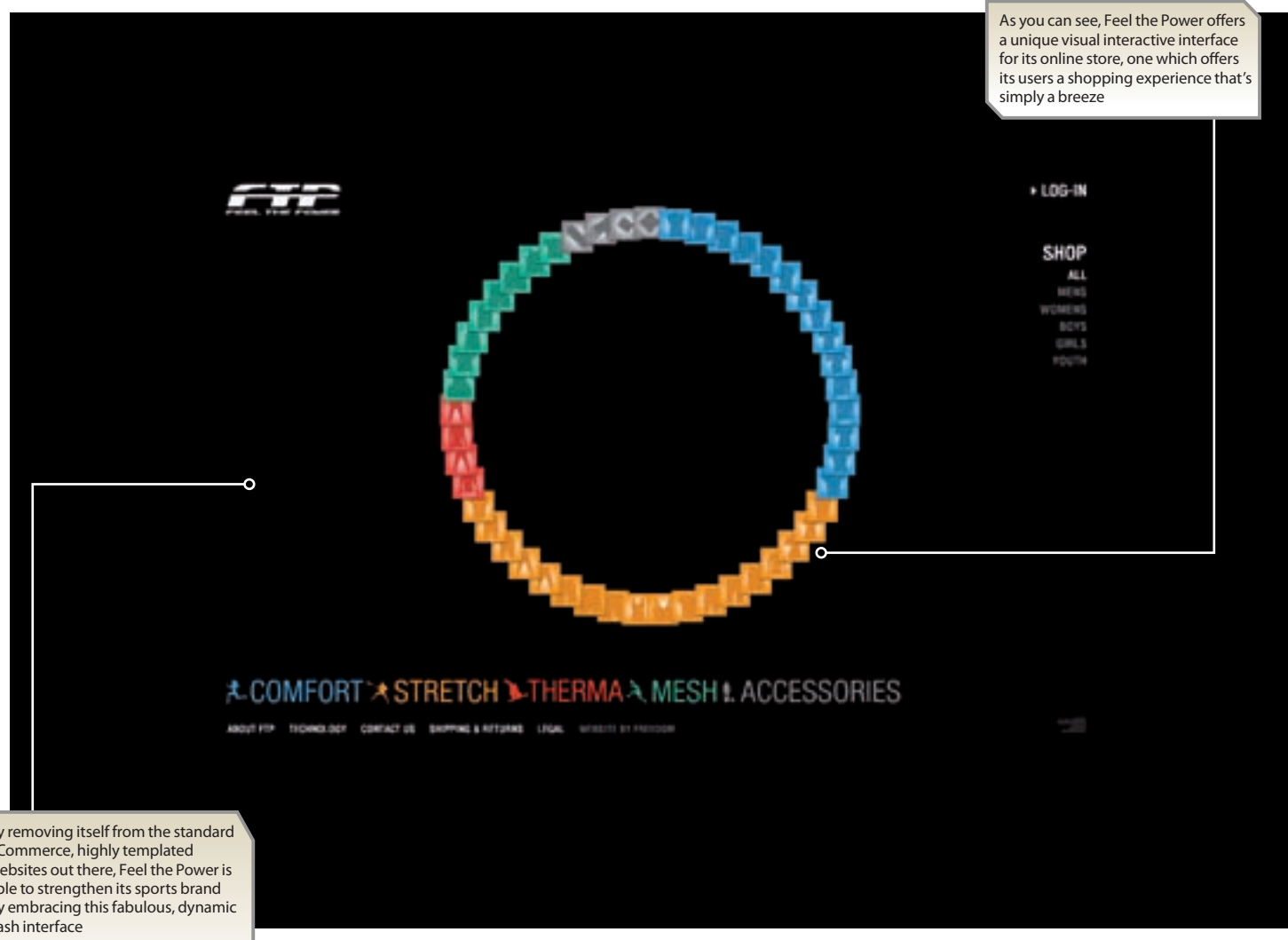
# eCommerce gallery

Getting your projects online has come a long way from simply listing an inventory of items. Here we find a store that injects innovation from its stock into their online presence

## Power shopping goes online [www.feelthepower.biz](http://www.feelthepower.biz)

**COME AND IMMERSE YOURSELF** in the online store for Feel the Power, manufacturer of innovative technology in sports clothing for men and women. The website was conceived and brought to you by the New York creative studio of Freedom Interactive Design. Feel the Power's products are aimed at all athletes and this website serves to showcase its specialist range of comfortable and lightweight, moisture-transport system clothing technology. The range is creatively displayed within five colour coded sections: comfort, stretch, therma, mesh and accessories, all providing a complete shopping

experience for the dedicated athlete. The initial screen of the website welcomes you with a dynamic interactive wheel where you can preview and select any product in the range. You can also be more selective by filtering your search by gender or age group. On selection of a product the pages make good use of the space, maximising the impact of each of the products on show, with high-quality imagery, full descriptions and shopping cart information on the right hand side. In terms of usability, this website is easy to navigate around and provides a simple and fun shopping experience.



## “Change the soundtrack to your shopping experience using the media player”



All the relevant product information is there alongside a large high-quality image. The info is laid out without clutter and is free from confusion



## VERDICT

### Feel The Power:

This website has a strong brand and online presence, which has been carefully crafted. For the seriously sporty of you out there, the guys at Feel the Power provide a fun and energetic way to shop. Its ease of use and availability of the relevant product info puts this site at the top of its game.



# 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 web hosting is a pretty important concern.

If you want people to enjoy and appreciate your hard work, then it will need a spot on the web to call home. Many choices will also expect to find it. In all honesty, the choice can be slightly bewildering thanks to the sheer amount on offer and the technical jargon used to describe the many deals

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

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

In association with [fasthosts.co.uk](http://fasthosts.co.uk)

**fasthosts**

Our web hosting guide is brought to you in association with Fasthosts, the UK's leading reseller web hosting provider.

- Unlimited websites
- Unlimited bandwidth
- Unlimited web space

- Use your own brand throughout
- 24/7 expert UK based support
- No risk trial – 3 months free



### 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)	0870 850 3305	£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)	0870 850 3305	£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)	0870 850 3305	£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)	0870 850 3305	£119.88	2.5GB	20GB	700	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Professional (Linux)	0870 850 3305	£179.88	6GB	50GB	1,500	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 ( <a href="http://www.oneandone.co.uk">www.oneandone.co.uk</a> )	Professional (MS)	0870 850 3305	£203.88	6GB	50GB	1,500	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123 reg ( <a href="http://www.123-reg.co.uk">www.123-reg.co.uk</a> )	Starter	0900 112 2123	£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 112 2123	£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 112 2123	£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	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	1,000	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue ( <a href="http://www.9netave.uk.net">www.9netave.uk.net</a> )	Starter	0870 872 6560	£99	50MB	1.5GB	10	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue ( <a href="http://www.9netave.uk.net">www.9netave.uk.net</a> )	Professional	0870 872 6560	£199	100MB	2.5GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue ( <a href="http://www.9netave.uk.net">www.9netave.uk.net</a> )	Corporate	0870 872 6560	£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	1,000	✓	✓	✓	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	1,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	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	0800 019 9819	£120+	200MB	Unlimited	19	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DataGate (www.datagate.co.uk)	Unix Shared Business Hosting	0800 019 9819	£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	1,024MB	5GB	120	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level6	0800 652 2110	£549	1,500MB	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 741 4151	£470	Unlimited	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Reseller Windows	0870 741 4151	£587.50	Unlimited	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Enterprise Plan	0870 741 4151	£105.75	100MB	2GB	20	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Commerce Plan	0870 741 4151	£211.50	250MB	5GB	50	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Designer Plan	0870 741 4151	£141	100MB	2GB	20	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Developer Plan	0870 741 4151	£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 (eliteukserv.net)	Business Kick Start Linux	0871 717 0390	£49	50MB	3GB	20	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserv.net)	Business Kick Start Windows	0871 717 0390	£75	50MB	3GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserv.net)	Business Standard Linux	0871 717 0390	£99	100MB	3GB	100	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserv.net)	Windows	0871 717 0390	£125	100MB	3GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserv.net)	Business Enterprise Linux	0871 717 0390	£199	250MB	5GB	250	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserv.net)	Business Enterprise Windows	0871 717 0390	£225	250MB	5GB	250	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukserv.net)	Business Pro Linux	0871 717 0390	£399	500MB	10GB	500	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Eurofasthost.com (www.eurofasthost.com)	Soho	0800 3161 067	£99	100MB	3,000MB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Business	0870 888 3600	£175.89	5GB	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Business Pro	0870 888 3600	£249.99	5GB	N/A	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Reseller	0870 888 3600	£500	Unlimited	Unlimited	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	100MB	N/A	15	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Home	0870 888 3600	£43.89	750MB	Unlimited	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Developer	0870 888 3600	£87.89	2GB	Unlimited	600	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Basic5S	0845 641 0776	£24	100MB	1,500MB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Standard5S	0845 641 0776	£45	200MB	3,000MB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Business5S	0845 641 0776	£70	500MB	7,500MB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Advanced5S	0845 641 0776	£110	1,000MB	15,000MB	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Professional5S	0845 641 0776	£150	1,500MB	25,000MB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Basic1R	0845 641 0776	£125	1,000MB	10,500MB	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Standard1R	0845 641 0776	£180	1,500MB	15,000MB	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Business1R	0845 641 0776	£250	2,800MB	28,000MB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Advanced1R	0845 641 0776	£350	4,000MB	40,000MB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
TwentyHost (www.twentyhost.co.uk)	Professional1R	0845 641 0776	£500	6,000MB	60,000MB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Giacom (www.giacom.net)	Business Pro	0800 542 7500	£199	100MB	2GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hostextra (www.hostextra.co.uk)	Pro-Host	08702 501 500	£99.45	100MB	10GB	200	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Global Gold (www.globalgold.co.uk)	Unix launcher	0870 004 4444	£78	50MB	5GB	5	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Global Gold (www.globalgold.co.uk)	NT launcher	0870 004 4444	£80	50MB	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	1,000	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Starter Professional	0845 644 7750	£29.80	2.5GB	10GB	1,000	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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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

In association with fasthosts.co.uk



NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POP3 ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Platinum Plus	0808 180 1880	£599.50	1.2GB	40GB	10	✓	✓	Option	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Hostway (www.hostway.co.uk)	Email Plus	0808 180 1880	£49.95	50MB	N/A	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Lite	0871 277 3494	£14.99	25MB	1GB	5	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Starter	0871 277 3494	£23.49	50MB	1GB	20	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Standard	0871 277 3494	£52.49	100MB	1GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Professional	0871 277 3494	£68.99	250MB	1GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Business	0871 277 3494	£119.99	500MB	1GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Corporate	0871 277 3494	£199.99	1000MB	1GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Basic 50	0870 160 5555	£70	50MB	1GB	5	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Frontpage 50	0870 160 5555	£100	50MB	1GB	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Standard 200	0870 160 5555	£160	200MB	2GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Superior 500	0870 160 5555	£220	500MB	3GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 50	0870 160 5555	£100	50MB	1GB	5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 200	0870 160 5555	£190	200MB	2GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 500	0870 160 5555	£260	500MB	3GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk)	Amethyst (Linux)	0845 200 0699	£24.99	50MB	2GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk)	Topaz (Linux)	0845 200 0699	£49.99	250MB	10GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk)	Ruby (Linux)	0845 200 0699	£99.99	750MB	30GB	300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk)	Emerald (Linux)	0845 200 0699	£149.99	1,500MB	60GB	600	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Krystal Hosting (www.krystal.co.uk)	Diamond (Linux)	0845 200 0699	£199.99	3,000MB	120GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Entry	0115 917 0000	£79.50	600MB	7GB	300	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Business Professional	0115 917 0000	£199	5GB	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Business e-commerce	0115 917 0000	£499	5GB	20GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magic Moments (www.magic-moments.com)	Magic Reseller	0115 917 0000	£500	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
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 612 0330	£11.75	25MB	1GB	5	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Standard Package	0845 612 0330	£35.25	100MB	4.5GB	10	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Professional Package	0845 612 0330	£58.75	250MB	8GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Expert Package	0845 612 0330	£105.75	500MB	15GB	75	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	StartUp	0870 120 8888	£49.99	100MB	2GB	5	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	StartUp Plus	0870 120 8888	£89.99	200MB	5GB	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	Business	0870 120 8888	£149.99	500MB	10GB	25	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	Business Plus	0870 120 8888	£89.99	700MB	15GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	Designer	0870 120 8888	£239.88	1GB	20GB	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Namesco (www.names.co.uk)	Designer Plus	0870 120 8888	£479.88	Unlimited	30GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NetBenefit (www.netbenefit.com)	Unix	0870 264 2298	£180	100MB	2GB	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NetBenefit (www.netbenefit.com)	Windows 2000	0870 264 2298	£229	100MB	2GB	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Starter Package	0800 298 7214	£30	500MB	1GB	100	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Home Package	0800 298 7214	£60	1GB	5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Developer Package	0800 298 7214	£100	4GB	10GB	100	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Commerce Package	0800 298 7214	£180	6GB	20GB	1,500	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netcetera (www.netcetera.co.uk)	Reseller Package	0800 298 7214	£450	10GB	30GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netscalibur (www.netscalibur.com)	Netscalibur Web Unix	0800 072 0000	£324	100MB	5GB	1	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Netscalibur (www.netscalibur.com)	Netscalibur Web Windows	0800 072 0000	£324	100MB	5GB	1	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Lite	0870 059 9599	£29.90	200MB	1GB	1	£1.50	X	X	£1.50/mailbox	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Plus	0870 059 9599	£49.90	400MB	2GB	5	£1.50	£1	X	£1.50/mailbox	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Advance	0870 059 9599	£99.90	1GB	5GB	10	✓	✓	X	£1.50/mailbox	X	✓	✓	✓	✓

## WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

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

**WEB SPACE** This describes the amount of physical data storage space you'll have available to you on the 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	0870 059 9599	£199.90	3GB	15GB	50	✓	✓	X	£1.50/mailbox	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Enterprise	0870 059 9599	£499.90	10GB	25GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Unix	0870 160 8602	£120	10MB	5GB	1	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Windows	0870 160 8602	£120	10MB	5GB	1	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Shared SQL Business 50	0870 160 8602	£300	50MB	25GB	1	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Nildram (www.nildram.net)	Shared SQL Business 100	0870 160 8602	£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	0775 644 1059	£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 8007 0070	£41.88	1GB	10GB	500	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
STRATO Hosting (www.strato-hosting.co.uk)	STRATO PowerWeb	00800 8007 0070	£58.68	3GB	20GB	1,000	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
STRATO Hosting (www.strato-hosting.co.uk)	STRATO AdvancedWeb	00800 8007 0070	£131.88	4GB	50GB	1,500	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
STRATO Hosting (www.strato-hosting.co.uk)	STRATO EnterpriseWeb	00800 8007 0070	£179.88	20GB	100GB	5,000	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	1,200	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Parking	0870 765 6364	£52.88	25MB	500MB	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Forwarding	0870 765 6364	From £15	N/A	500MB	N/A	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Hosting	0870 765 6364	From £7.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win50	0845 125 9500	£58.75	50MB	500MB	5	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win100	0845 125 9500	£117.50	100MB	1GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win200	0845 125 9500	£235	200MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Entry	0800 031 7800	£79.50	600MB	7GB	300	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Home	0800 031 7800	£99.95	1.5GB	10GB	500	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Soho	0800 031 7800	£149.99	3GB	15GB	1,000	✓	✓	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	1,000MB	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're 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

### Curtis Allen

www.curtisaallen.com

**Skills:** Web, print and CD-Rom design

**Employment status:** Freelancer

Curtis is based in Atlanta Georgia and therefore represents our much-valued USA readership in this month's Portfolio pages! He kindly emailed us directly to inform us of his site, so we couldn't resist firing it up and grabbing a few screens for the magazine.

For the most part, the site (of which this is its fourth incarnation) strikes a pretty formal pose, with a single column layout and stark black background presenting more or less a collection of links. The very nice header banner has section links that scroll you down to various project examples from a healthy body of different works. Click on them and you get some lovely menu effects and image loading work without ever requiring any Flash – just CSS and JavaScript libraries. It would have been cool to see more descriptions about each project however – and much more about Curtis himself. This is something that's always worth remembering so that potential employers can find out a bit more about your background, as well as marvelling at your handiwork. So hopefully that'll happen in Version 5 eh Curtis?



The homepage has a very simple layout, with a list of headings and links. Plus at the bottom of the page you can contact Curtis through a link



He's more than just digital... this is a design in print Curtis produced for Reading Hospital

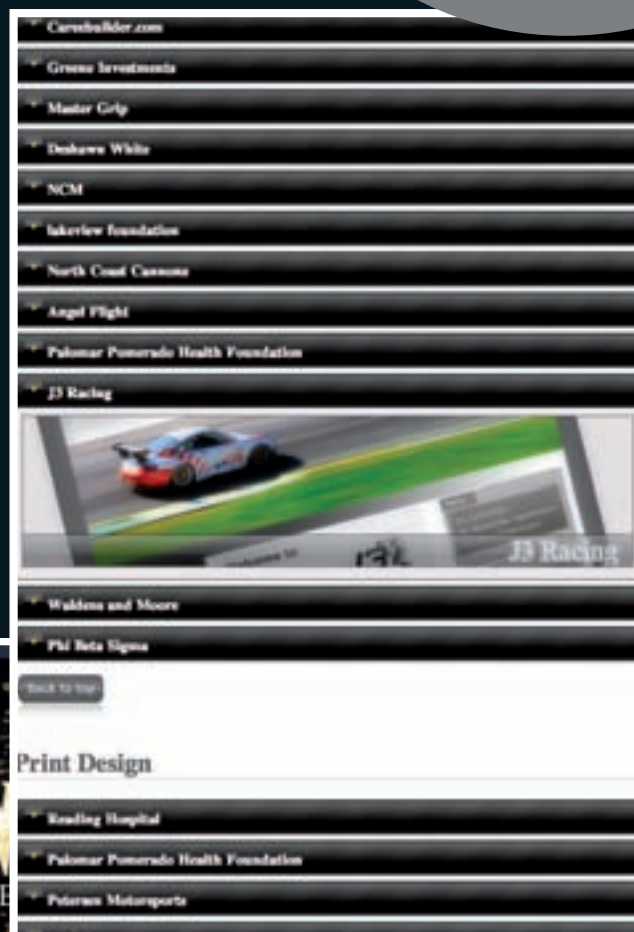
**BEING NOTICED** in the first place for your web design skills is pretty much most of the battle in this hugely competitive industry. This is the place where we allow you to take an initial step into the limelight by publicising your personal URLs via our magazine!

**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)



Don't be fooled by the simple homepage... the site makes great use of space and with a few clicks it's easy to navigate around



## Welcome To DeshawnWhite.com

Clifford "Tip" Harris, better known as Atlanta rapper T.I., returns with "KING," his fourth major label full-length solo release, and third through his joint venture deal with Atlantic Records. Picking up where his previous effort left off, "KING" (Grand Hustler/Atlantic) builds on the sound and the success of 2004's "URBAN LEGEND" - a blockbuster project that debuted at the top of Billboard's "Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums" chart and at #7 on the Billboard 200, spawned the RIAA platinum-certified single, "Bring Em Out" and the Grammy-nominated smash, "U Don't Know Me," registered over three million in worldwide sales, and was certified RIAA platinum, going on to sell over 1.3 million copies in the U.S. alone.

Alongside its commercial success, "URBAN LEGEND" secured a multitude of award nominations, including Favorite Rap/Hip-Hop Album at the 2005 American Music Awards, Best Rap Video ("U Don't Know Me") at the 2005 MTV Video Music Awards, and Choice Rap Track ("Bring Em Out") at the 2005 Teen Choice Awards, plus landing T.I. his second annual VIBE Award for Street Anthem of the Year ("U Don't Know Me"). The album culminated with his Grammy nomination for "U Don't Know Me" for Best Rap Solo Performance, sharing the category with Common, Eminem, 50 Cent, Ludacris, and Kanye West.

## Buy New Album



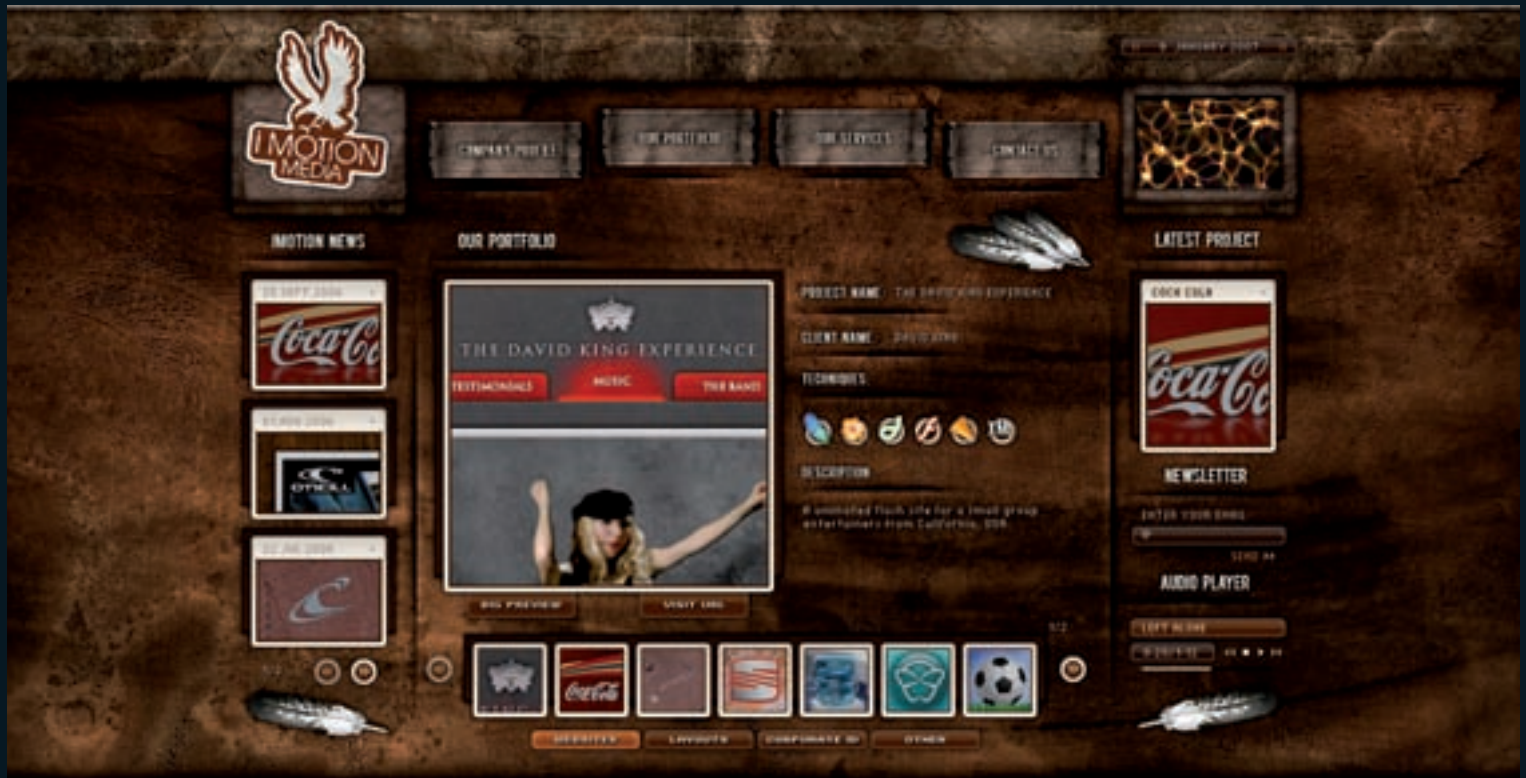
Click on a link and a sample of the design opens up in the homepage, if you want to get in closer, simply click on the image and a bigger version slickly slides into view

This is an example of Curtis' web design work... we urge you to check it out!



# portfolio

## THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING



### i Motion Media

[www.imotion-media.nl/eng](http://www.imotion-media.nl/eng)

**Skills:** Multimedia and web building

**Employment status:** Design agency  
This Dutch firm is actually based in the town of Heerenveen and already seem like it knows how to make a big impression on this fickle industry. This site, however Flash-heavy, is undeniably beautifully put together and just reeks of polish. Feathered preloaders from its eagle logo provide a nice repeated motif, while a commitment to quite an earthy and aged stone aesthetic is well realised. Click through to the Our Portfolio section and you effectively get a masterclass in a clever yet economic study of all its major site projects. A choice of big preview, or launching the live site itself is a welcome way of serving up example projects, while a set of funky icons suggest the technologies used to build each one. Audio players and the like are nice, but it's in the details where this site really shines!

*i Motion's homepage is a Flash-tastic treat! Whether you love Flash or not, we guarantee this will impress*

*The Portfolio section is simple brilliance, roll over the familiar icons to see what apps were involved in the project, or click on the tab to be directed to the URL itself*





Click on the different tabs in the Portfolio section and view examples of websites, layouts – like this one pictured – and corporate IDs



The site has so many links to click, you'll never be bored. Plus the fast loading times are a real bonus!

