

web



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www.webdesignermag.co.uk

designer

DREAMWEAVER FLASH PHOTOSHOP

ISSUE 129

TM

FUTURE OF FLASH DESIGN

THE NEXT GENERATION WEB TRICKS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- SWF movies on the mobile web
- Dynamic site designs showcased
- 3D interface techniques revealed

CSS EXPRESSION

Microsoft's new web editor unveils a commitment to creating great style

HOW TO:

Add depth to your web imagery

Build 3D menus within Flash 8

Create preloader containers in Photoshop

Complete your CSS layouts the correct way

on the disc
**FULL
SOFTWARE**
worth over
£200!



EROL4 STARTUP EDITION

Full version CD software is put through its paces in our companion walkthrough



ELEGANT ECOMMERCE

ShopComposition.com tells all on creating a site that mixes dotcom business with pleasure



THE experts

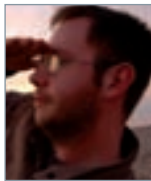
LINING UP THE FINEST MINDS IN WEB DESIGN FOR YOUR ONLINE EDUCATION



Mark Shufflebottom

MAKING MINCEMEAT OUT OF DYNAMIC 3D MENUS

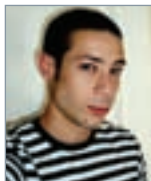
Those wanting to spruce up their site navigation shouldn't look any further than Mark's efforts this month. His stunning exercise in creating a 3D menu system with proper rotation animation and motion blur effects should be just the tonic you need!



Ian Davenport

LEARNING TO 'EXPRESS' HIMSELF WITH STYLE SHEETS

This month Ian goes on a bit of a departure from the normal foray into Dreamweaver territory by having a look at what the CSS features within Microsoft Expression have to offer. You may well be pleasantly surprised by what this suite can do...



James Kingman

CRAFTING PRELOADERS THAT ARE WORTH THE WAIT

The regular Photoshop duties are supplied by James this month, and his attractive guide to designing great looking skins for Flash preloaders. We reckon that any site that looks this good while it fires itself up is surely going to keep visitors hooked.



Rodger Page

CREATING A SENSE OF DEPTH WITHIN VECTOR SCENES

The Flash canvas or stage may be flat, but there are at least a whole host of cunning graphical tricks and techniques you can use to create the illusion of depth within your scenes. Who knows what kind of results you'll achieve once mastering this effort?



S hopping with style isn't always a given when it comes to web selling, but the industry is starting to realise the value in elegant forms of eCommerce

BUT WHAT IS IT that makes a corporate site, a business portal, or fully-fledged .com merchant elegant? Well in many ways that's a matter of opinion frankly, but the definition might normally boil down to the essentials of usability and a fair amount of subtlety. The shopping analogy would suggest a pleasurable experience that isn't hindered by an inability to find the products you want fast and easily enough, or by a constant bombardment of obtrusive marketing. Why can't an online store perform well, be successful, make money, and look beautiful as well? That's the proposition behind our lead feature this month, and it's quite a hot potato given the number of eCommerce usability studies we've seen lately. We're also lucky enough to continue the theme with a slightly extended Behind the Scenes on two fabulous examples of sexy selling currently bringing some much needed style to the marketplace. Then of course, if the inspiration so takes you, we've got the fabulous free Startup Edition of EROL4 worth £150 and an accompanying beginners guide to help get you started. In fact the coverdisc this time around includes so many cool bits of software and resources that we've had to extend our contents listing section - so head over to page 110 to check

it out. The other burning issue is of course mobile development and our special look at building portable content with Flash. Adobe/Macromedia's ubiquitous platform could well play a huge part in the evolution of a genuine dotmobi domain, with inevitable additions to CS3 also sure to take things into the next generation. If you can't really wait for that then you could do a lot worse than investigating the exciting new CSS features that Microsoft Expression has to offer, as Ian Davenport takes a look under its hood on page 66. As if that wasn't enough there's the usual blend of gorgeous gallery sites, industry news, creative tutorials, and a whole host more. Selling out in style has never been so much fun!

Mark Billen
DEPUTY EDITOR

Editor's picks

Web Designer issue 129 can also lay claim to all these little treats too...



36-39

Simon Bisson delves into the world of forging Flash content for mobile phones and PDAs



78-82

Take a look at EROL4 and then use it with our walkthrough and full version software



90-91

Pay per click advertising is the order of the day in our latest eCommerce mini feature



gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP

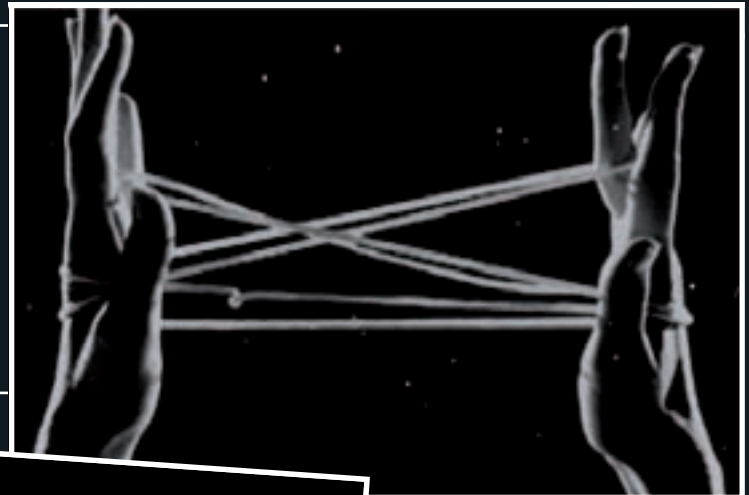
PUSH TO START

www.pushtostart.ca

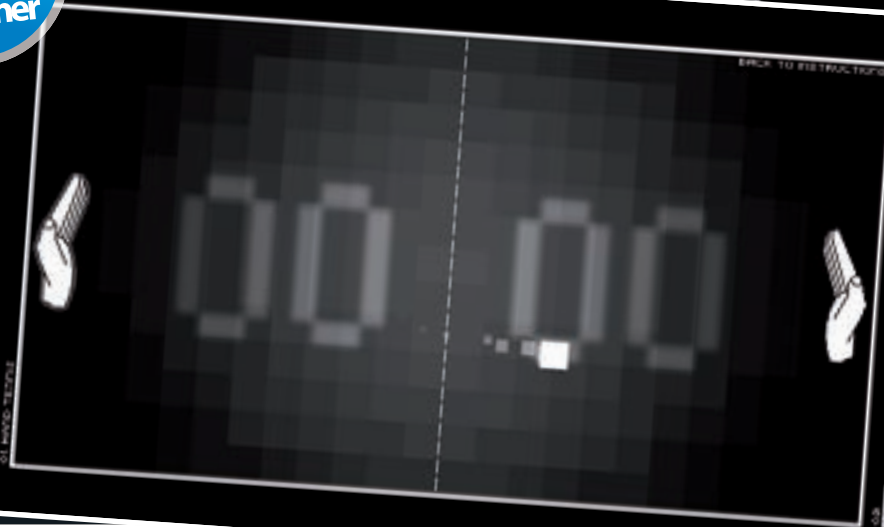
Designed by: Industblue Inc and Lowe Roche

Okay all you gaming nuts out there, it's time for some retro arcade gaming action. Get ready to head back to the Eighties with the help of Nokia's latest online advertisement campaign for its 6133 handset. As a user, you're asked to battle it out over a selection of old-school-style games based around some classics, for your chance to win the phone. The phone's main feature is its one-handed 'push to start' button, hence the campaign's theme. Have a play, just don't let your boss see you!

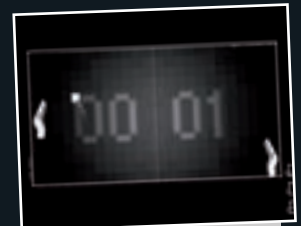
**SITE
OF THE
MONTH**
web
designer



On loading up the site you'll be given a good-humoured, Hollywood-style teaser to build the appropriate ambience for the experience that lies ahead



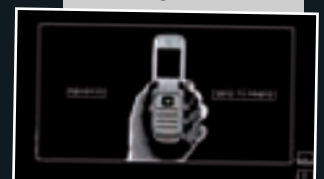
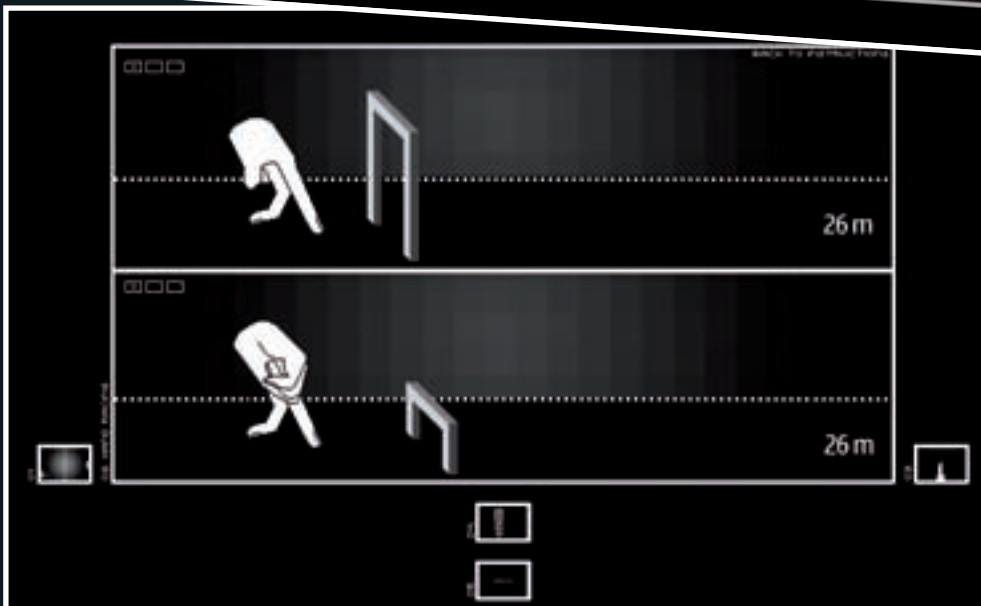
Based on the classic Pong game, you can use the keyboard to play Nokia's own 2007 version that's just as addictive



Site Highlight

The black and white design is a concept based around the classic Pong computer game of the Eighties and is evident in every facet of the website. This is combined with the chance to win a mobile phone and together makes the website a pretty special piece of online marketing from Nokia.

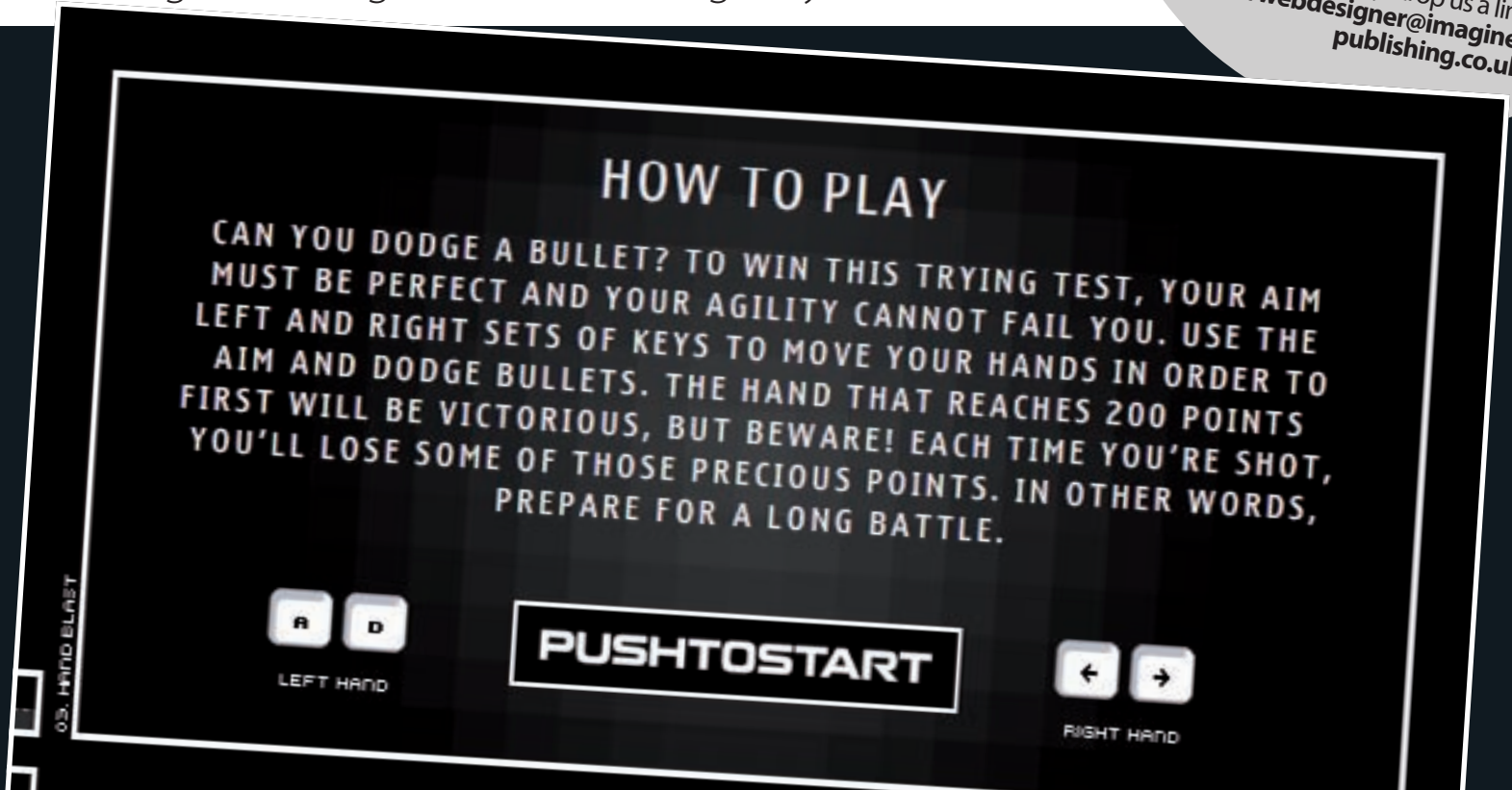
Test your agility and endurance with the second game, Hand Racing, where you simply have to hurdle yourself to victory



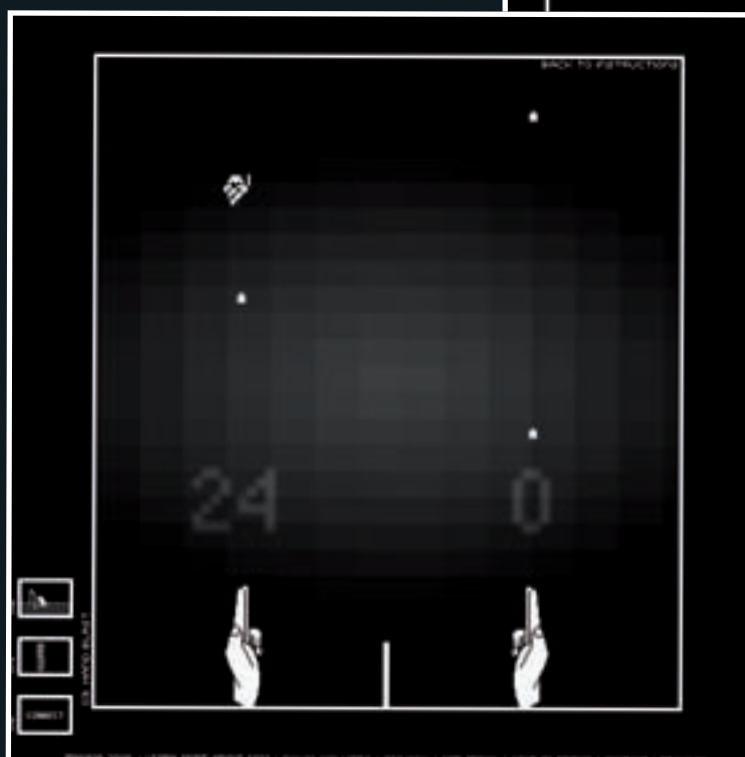
ANOTHER ISSUE and we have yet another hand-picked selection of online gems we know that you'll love and be inspired by. Well we've marvelled at the sights around the web to find the sites that have the *Web Designer* team buzzing and calling for more... it's the gallery!

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



Depending on what game or indeed section you select to view, the interactive elements will shift and sit at different positions for each



It's not all games, here you can view the features of the new Nokia with a short but sweet movie embedded into the page

Think you can dodge bullets? The third game to get your digits working requires perfect aim, how long can you last do you think?

gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



TOOPY AND BINOO

www.toopyandbinoo.com

Designed by: Tribal Nova

This imaginary world of the cartoon characters Toopy and Binoo, will no doubt have your kids in fits of giggles and maybe you as well. This website has plenty of interactive play, fresh out of the toy box, serving to introduce the little websters-to-be to all the fun of the internet. Starting from Toopy's house you can navigate to different interactive games, from an interactive dodgem obstacle course to a jigsaw puzzle. You shouldn't have any problems with these games yourself, but if you do, just ask for Super Toopy!

There is, quite literally, loads to interact with. At the top of the screen you'll see a present that has different puzzles and games to print out



Back at Toopy's home there are plenty of places to visit, but you can also start little animations depending on whether you select the paintbrush, watering can or piece of toast



Mess around with fashion and develop your cartoon-style, by getting Binoo dressed up in different costumes from the various items in the room



Paint your own picture using the bubble pictures provided. Stand back and admire, then drag a musical note to the canvas and watch it dance for you

The site has an interactive music-maker where you can select different instruments and listen to your masterpiece by clicking on Toopy himself



Site Highlight

The main highlight of the Toopy and Binoo website is the fact that it has managed to create an enjoyable interactive playground for kids, simply by keeping a balance between usability, high-quality production and visual elements.



gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



Site Highlight

On selecting the movie option, sit back and enjoy a short commercial where you can witness the extraordinary talents of the four dancers, we won't say any more, so go check it out.



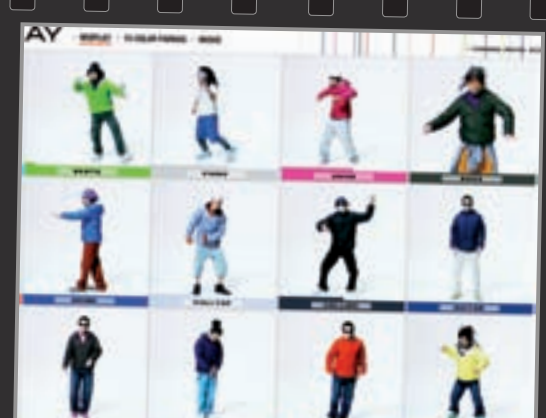
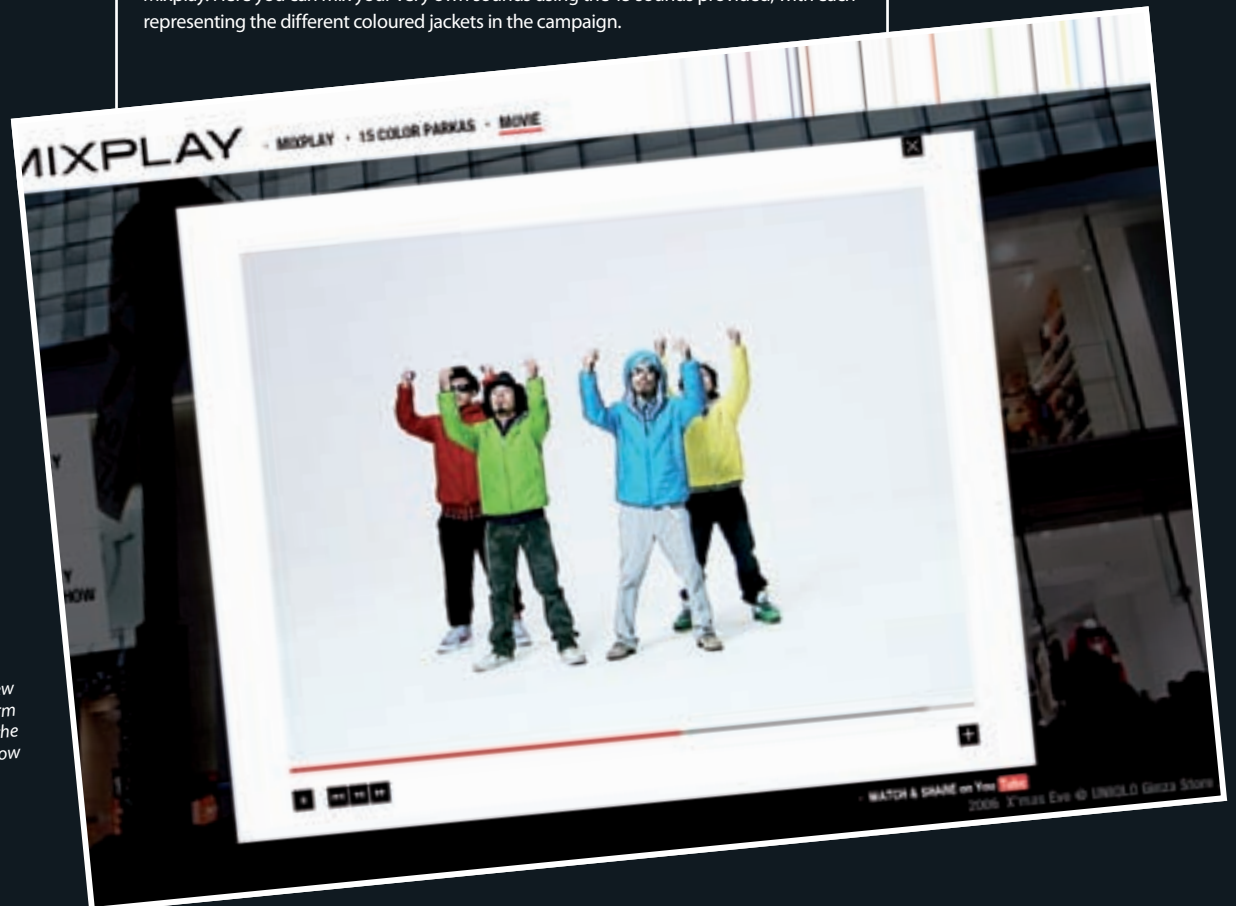
In the movie section you can view two embedded movies in the form of a short commercial and the Mixplay Christmas show

UNIQLO MIXPLAY

www.uniqlo.jp/mixplay

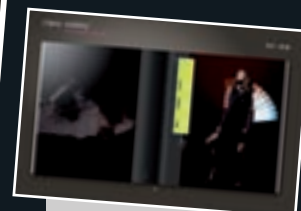
Designed by: **Projector & Unou**

This Japanese website is one of the coolest we've seen of late, so much so, we can't get enough. The site boasts some fantastic interactive elements encapsulated within a stylishly polished design. The aim of the site is to market the new range of UNIQLO colour parkas by utilising the talents of some very special dancers and an interactive sound mixer called Mixplay. Here you can mix your very own sounds using the 15 sounds provided, with each representing the different coloured jackets in the campaign.



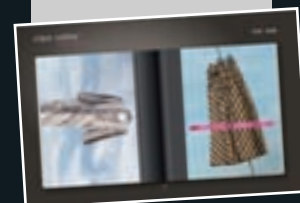


Each flipbook allows you to turn a page by simply clicking on it. Each page's imagery subtly changes from the last, with some stunning results



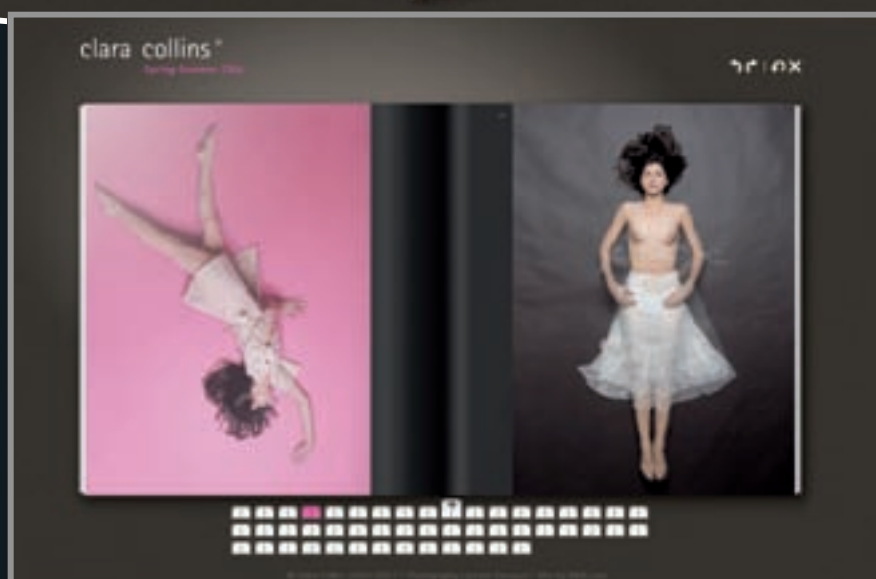
Site Highlight

The usability and navigation of this website enables this showcase to take centre stage and float effortlessly on your screen. Viewing this site is a real pleasure.



At the top right of the screen there are a series of arrows that enable you to spin through each flipbook's pages really fast or even spin the book itself around

Rolling over the small arrow at the bottom of each flipbook opens up a quick launch to the pages in each book



CLARA COLLINS

www.claracollins.com

Designed by: **Pierrick Calvez**

This website serves up a showcase of numerous collections from 2004 to the present from the renowned French stylist Clara Collins. It features some fantastic interactive elements that will prove to be a great source of inspiration for those of you who love their Flash. The site includes innovative and rapid navigation, with a perfectly executed flipbook at its core, all displaying each collection with great elegance and vigour which certainly doesn't do any harm to the work being showcased.



gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP

ENVIGA

www.enviga.com

Designed by: **Rokkan & Anomaly**

This highly branded website provides Enviga with the perfect tool to bring its unique beverage to its inquisitive audience. The drink is advertised as the first sparkling green tea drink, proven to burn calories and the website uses its portal to market the drink by presenting all the facts, information and science behind it. The functionality of the site has been carefully crafted and includes simple navigation, seamless transitions and animation helping the site to achieve its task effortlessly.



Site Highlight

Included on the website is a graphic comparison chart of Enviga, set against its competitors and other regular drinks. This has been executed well, displaying clear results for all to see.



Each of the three flavours – Berry, Green tea and Peach – are displayed in a mini interactive animation that provides information on each

The website cuts to the chase, enabling you to learn about the product from the off, by providing quick links on the homepage

For such a unique product there will always be questions, so you can ask about the product in the field at the top of the screen



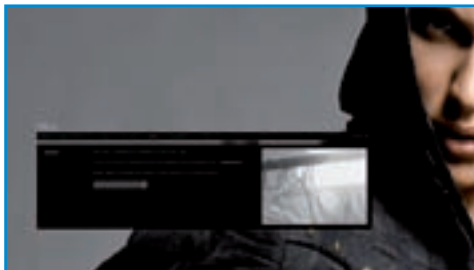
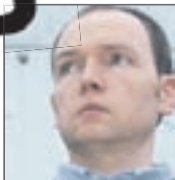


bulletin

HOT NEWS FROM THE WEB DESIGN WORLD



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



minus

www.minus.dk

Designed by: www.hellomonday.net

Be sure to check out the fullscreen image viewer and expect to see more of this in the future.



I want to see a ghost

www.iwanttoseeaghost.com

Designed by: www.cproximity.es

A great viral campaign that's not quite what it seems. We won't spoil the surprise... just wait and see!

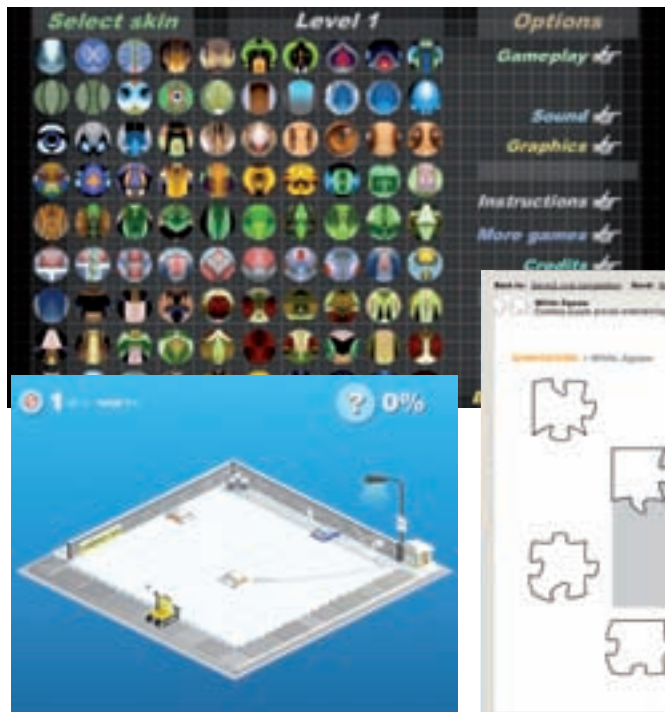


Bellecour Ecoles D'Art

www.bellecour.fr

Designed by: www.diplomatic-cover.com

A wonderfully fresh atmosphere exudes from this site. Spring is in the air!



BoreMe.com champions all sorts of viral content from interactive games, comedic clips, sports-related funnies and pretty much anything that will amuse your inbox

Germ's aren't necessarily a bad thing! Enter this year's Germ awards and you could be up there with the viral elite



Contagious contest

CHANNEL 4 AND BOREME LAUNCH ONLINE VIRAL COMPETITION

CHANNEL 4 HAS teamed up with the world's top time-wasting, viral website BoreMe.com to launch the annual international viral awards.

For the second year running, Germ is giving students a chance to study virals as part of their degree course. Viral content on the web is so dominant in today's society that its link to graphic communication and contemporary media is becoming a standard study area in many arts and design courses. This year BoreMe.com will be working with seven courses at Kingston University, Central Saint Martin's, Leeds Metropolitan, London College of Communication and University of Central England. Students will be allowed to submit their projects as coursework as well as entering it into Germ in order to stand a chance of winning the title Best Commercially Produced Viral of 2006.

The Germ judging panel, made up of practitioners from online and broadcast industries, will select a shortlist of finalists, which will be put up for a public vote from the beginning of April. Winners and runner-ups of the competition will

be showcased at the Germ annual viral exhibition at London's ICA later in the year. Adam Gee, new media commissioner at Channel 4 comments: "Channel 4's 4Talent is committed to identifying and nurturing hot new talent and showcasing some of the best ideas around. The Germ awards are now an important annual fixture in the viral calendar. With Germ, we're showcasing some of the best viral creativity international agencies have to offer."

If you want to swot up on the standard of competition, visit www.channel4.com/germ where last year's winners are showcased.



"WINNERS WILL BE SHOWCASED AT THE GERM ANNUAL VIRAL EXHIBITION AT LONDON'S ICA LATER IN THE YEAR"

Disability breakthrough

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY DEVELOPS PROTOTYPE TO HELP VISUALLY IMPAIRED GET THE MOST FROM WEBSITES

WITH MORE AND MORE emphasis being placed on accessibility for web users with disabilities, Queen's University, Belfast, has developed a prototype to aid visually impaired people access online information more effectively. The newly developed interface combines visual, tactile and audio technologies to improve the user's browsing experience.

The new software monitors the cursor's location on the web page, detecting objects and informing the user by activating the tactual and audio features. If the user's cursor rolls over an image, for example, the mouse creates a buzz effect and a short audio clip of a camera shutter makes the user aware of elements on the screen.

Dr Graham McAllister at Queens comments: "There is a real need for a tool that will enable visually impaired people to use the web. Existing devices are not always able to process complex graphics or embedded files, making many activities such as online banking laborious." Visit www.eduserv.org.uk for more info.



Latest developments in accessibility technologies could enable visually impaired users to enjoy a more fulfilling internet experience across the board



Perplexing web puzzles

ALTERNATE REALITY GAMING NETWORK ANNOUNCES LUCKY SEASON ONE WINNER AFTER A TWO YEAR CHASE FOR PRIZE

A SPECIAL ONLINE entertainment network that uses mixed-media marketing has revealed the winner of its £100,000 prize.

The cleverly named Perplex City (www.perplexcity.com) is a completely immersive web-based treasure hunt produced by the award-winning team at Mind Candy. As specialists in Alternate Reality Games (ARGs), it has produced an incredibly rich array of digital and printed materials to complement the campaign, including a series of cryptic websites and collectable clue cards. These featured a series of optical illusions, messages in heat sensitive inks, origami, cryptography, mazes and riddles to ultimately lead the obsessive participants across a two-year challenge.

It was left to contestant Andy Darley to outwit 50,000 competitors from 92 countries and locate the prize-winning Receda Cube that was buried in a Northamptonshire wood. The find was then publicised via Perplex City's fictional daily newspaper *The Sentinel* (www.perplexcitysentinel.com), on 8 February and word



quickly spread among the international fanbase. Work has already begun on the second season, which will boast a more accessible and episodic approach to storytelling and an even more immersive experience for all users.



The riddles certainly perplexed many, but locating the Cube in a Northamptonshire wood was down to Andy Darley

NEWS in brief



SOCIAL NETWORKING

Ecademy.com states that the key to a successful social network is in establishing emotional connections and a sense of community. Founders Penny and Thomas Power have put together a set of predictions for the Social Networking Boom in 2007, which includes the continuing success of blogging and richer online communities. To read up on their predictions visit www.ecademy.com.



M@ILSTING

Communications and content portal, MailSting launched last month with its site that combines the best of today's Web 2.0 applications with delivery to worldwide mobile handsets. The service offer users 100MB of email space and media storage, file sharing, instant messenger and blogging facilities. Registration is free and pages can be custom edited to suit personal needs. Visit www.mailsting.com.



ROO'D VIDEOS

MGN digital has partnered with internet video specialist ROO to develop a ground-breaking portal for its flagship sites www.mirror.co.uk and www.sundaymirror.co.uk. The Mirror's homepage will host three embedded videos, featuring core categories of news, sport and showbiz. Advertisers can purchase pre-roll video and banner ad formats that can be synchronised by campaign and will eventually be available across all of MGN Digital's video channels.

Europeans in union

NEW .EU DOMAIN NAME A BIG HIT FOR THE UK

THE NEW WEB domain suffix .eu has proved successful for small businesses that use it, according to 1&1's EU Domain Survey recently carried out.

However, the research also suggests that only half of Britain's businesses actually understand the meaning behind the domain. 1&1 Internet's study collaborated answers of more than two and a half thousand European SMEs across the UK, France and Germany. Over 68 per cent of the UK businesses using a .eu domain name believed it to be an effective identity for their sites. 43 per cent had seen increased accessibility to opportunities in Europe.

However, worryingly, a further survey of small businesses revealed that 51 per cent of British SMEs were confused over what an .eu domain



While UK users get good benefits from having an .eu suffix, many UK businesses don't actually understand what .eu really means

name represented. Andreas Gauger, CEO at 1&1 Internet says: "It's concerning that the majority of British businesses appear misinformed about the potential benefits of a European web identity. Our research clearly indicates the success businesses have experienced with the new .eu domain. The problem is, that the research also indicates that British companies are missing the trick. With only a nominal investment, an .eu domain name can open new doors for any business."

Giving it the edge

SIX CORPORATE EDGE CLIENTS PICK UP INOVA AWARD

CORPORATE EDGE, a communications company that aids corporate branding and delivers innovation and development in products and services, has dominated this year's iNOVA awards, including receiving one Grand Award, for its online work.

The iNOVA awards are the web world's only international awards dedicated to recognising and promoting overall achievement in creative design, written content and functional performance of corporate websites. In this year's competition over 260 sites from ten countries entered the competition.

Corporate Edge swept the floor with the competition this year and gained awards for the following sites:

- Gold for Tesco plc Corporate Website in the category *Corporate Website: Retail Store*. (www.tescocorporate.com)
- Gold for Shell Chemicals Customer Lounge Tour in the category *Marketing: Flash Technology*. (www.shellchemicals.com/cltour)
- Silver for Tesco plc Annual Review and Summary Financial Statement 2006 in the category *Online Annual Reports: Retail*. (www.tescocorporate.com/annualreview06)
- Silver for adidas Group Corporate Website in the category *Corporate Website: Sporting Good Manufacturer*. (www.adidas-group.com)
- Silver for O2 Corporate Responsibility Report *Mobile Matters*. (www.o2.com/cr/report2005)

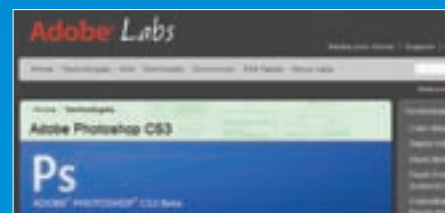
To top it off, Corporate Edge also went on to win a Grand Award for Best of Flash Technology for its Shell Chemicals Customer Lounge Tour.

Richard Coope, Head of Online at Corporate Edge says: "As online communications continue to develop with the pace that it's currently showing, there is a challenge in striking the balance between visual appeal, relevant content, usability and accessibility. Alongside this, developers also need to make sure they are fulfilling business requirements and embracing new technologies." Speaking on the overall success of Corporate Edge he states: "We're proud that work for our clients has been recognised at an international level."

To read up on Corporate Edge visit its site at www.corporateedge.com. For the iNOVA awards visit www.mercommawards.com/inova.



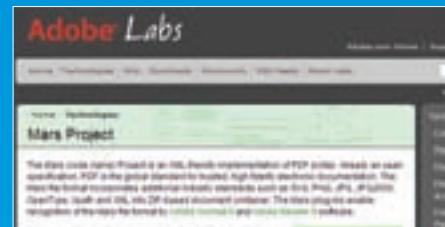
TOP Downloads



PHOTOSHOP CS3

<http://labs.adobe.com/technologies>

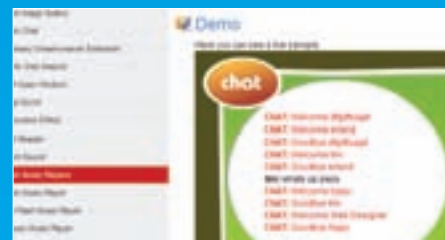
For the first time ever, Adobe has offered a public beta of the forthcoming Photoshop CS3. The beta is available as a Universal Binary for Mac, Windows XP and Vista computers. The release of CS3 is planned for Spring 07.



MARS PROJECT

<http://labs.adobe.com/technologies>

This is Adobe's code name for an XML-friendly implementation of PDF syntax. Incorporating file formats such as PNG, JPG and XML into a Zip-based document container, the plug-ins enable recognition of the Mars format by Adobe Acrobat 8 and Adobe Reader 8.



FLASH CHAT

<http://components.developers4web.com>

Flash Chat uses Flash and PHP technologies to add a chat to your website. Compatible with most browsers and both PC and Mac, there are no programming skills required. Macromedia approved, Flash Chat costs a reasonable £10.



COMMENTS SCRIPT

<http://components.developers4web.com>

Comments Script allows users to post comments on your website and pass on comments related to your site content such as photos, videos and articles. It's available at a price of \$29 (about £15).



hot stuff

Spotted an über-cool gadget that every self-respecting web designer should own? Tell us about it by emailing webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Our regular product roundup breaks free into a larger format to accommodate the latest and greatest in gadgets, peripherals, books, software and designer toys. Go on, treat yourself people!



1 *Advertising Now. Online*
£24.99

www.taschen.com

This latest design title from the gorgeous coffee-table-book publishers Taschen is a joy to behold. If clasping at the matt finish cover, complete with flocked title, doesn't float your boat then the exhaustive collection of stunning site images should do. Essentially what we have is a load of screengrabs for some of the most notoriously beautiful commercial URLs that mankind has ever crafted. Offerings from corporate giants such as Coca-Cola, Victoria's Secret, Nike, Nintendo and Audi are laid out in full colour while a companion DVD shows them all in action. This is utterly essential reading!

2 Jamango Squbes
£44.95

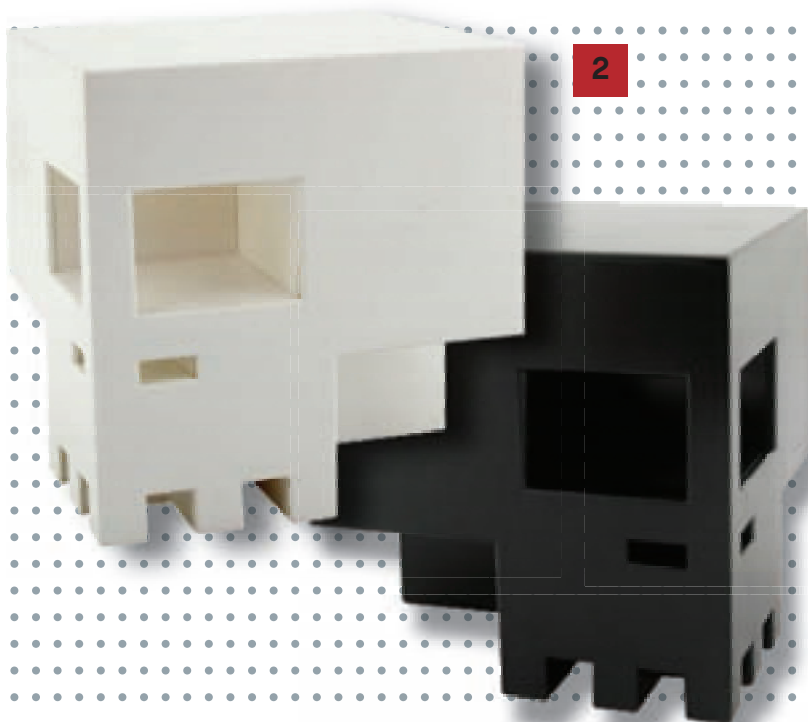
www.kidrobot.com

We're not quite sure what they do, but we want one! Sqube is a new stacking figure model by artist Ferg. Produced by Jamango, the Sqube measures four inches wide and they can be stacked on top of one another. If you did want to make your own Sqube tower there would be no danger of them breaking if they do accidentally topple over, as the figures are moulded from hard ABS plastic. If you fancy getting your hands on a limited edition piece then you'll be interested to know that the black Sqube is produced in a limited run of 350 pieces. A future collectable possibly, a present necessity certainly.

3 *Digital Retro* by Gordon Laing
£19.95

www.ilex-press.com

If you're constantly caught up in the tidal wave of gadgets, web styles and new fads, sometimes it can be good to take a step back and look at some technological-styles past. Everyone loves a bit of retro and if you're into your kit styling and admit to being a bit of a computer boffin, this book will be perfect. *Digital Retro* tells the story of classic home computers, from the rubber-lovin' Spectrum, to the majesty of the Acorn Electron you can be sure that your favourite model is there. To sum up, this book is: "An essential work for anyone interested in the development from the primitive home computer to the present-day PC".



5



6



4 Wacom FAVO Comic Pack

£74.99 (exc. VAT)

www.wacom.eu

There's no denying it – Manga art is just about the coolest form of animation this planet has to offer. Fact. Most of us at some point will have tried to imitate the stunning scrawlings from our favourite Anime adventures, in which case this brilliant pack from Wacom is a godsend. If you can bring yourself to tear open the cool Japanese box it ships in, you'll find the sexy white tablet and pen plus two vital software suites. Not only do you get Painter Essentials 2, but Manga Studio Debut 3.0 – the leading digital Manga-making tool available today. Even if you don't actually use it, this is just a fantastic collectable.

5 Archos 604

€499.99 (approx £328)

www.archos.com

It's unfortunate that Archos doesn't have as much oomph behind its marketing as other well-known brands, as its products really are pioneering. We absolutely love the Archos 604, a 30GB hard drive video player that allows you to store up to 40 films. This is perfect for those who are in for a hard day's travelling. The PC-encoded 604 has a beautifully resolved 4.3-inch LCD. You can also use it to record TV or footage from an external video source. Not just a video player, the 604 also doubles up as an MP3, although it's pretty big for just this one job, it's still an impressive piece of kit.

6 rock Xtreme CTX PRO

£1699 (inc. VAT)

www.rockdirect.com

If powerful gaming displays and application performance are perfect considerations for you when purchasing a new laptop, then look no further than the new offering from rock. Although the model's name is a bit of a tongue-tangler, you can guarantee great performance with rock's thinnest ever 17-inch notebook. The model features an Intel Core 2 Duo T7600 2.33GHz processor with a high-quality NVIDIA GeForce Go 7950 GTX 521MB graphics card. It comes complete with Microsoft Windows Vista Home Premium and includes a WebCam, Bluetooth features and card reader.

4



Message board

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

FORUM: www.webdesignermag.co.uk/forum

EMAIL: webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Hearing from *Web Designer* readers is critical to gauging what you want from your magazine, so it's time to open the mail!

Yank thanks

I recently purchased your magazine for the first time and I have to say, wow! I'm a graphic designer, turned fledgling web designer that subscribes to your sister mag *Computer Arts*. Knowing the quality of that publication, I checked out your last issue and needless to say, I'll be subscribing to your magazine come payday! I build all my sites in Flash, as I'm a Dreamweaver rookie and I have had multiple requests recently to produce sites with eCommerce capability. Your articles on that subject were most helpful, and thanks for including some US-based sites for eCommerce kits as I'm a yankie. I was hoping maybe in a future issue you could do a tutorial on sites made solely in Flash that can integrate some sort of eCommerce, as I'm sure this will be helpful to your legion of faithful readers. Keep up the good work, and for a quick shameless plug, check out my site at www.arthitexture.com!

Spenser Hatch (via email)

Hello Spenser, and a big hello to all our valued American readers across the pond! First, we must respond by clarifying that *Computer Arts* is in fact not our sister but actually a rival title – although we're very pleased you can see the value in reading both! It's true that we're more web-driven and so possibly more geared to the kinds of projects you're now undertaking, so hopefully you'll stick with us. We'll check out your site and make a note of that tutorial idea, so watch this space!

CD problems on 127

Hi,
Sorry to bother you with a question that will more than likely leave me with egg on my face. I'm doing a website for a local charity for free and my friend, who is the chairperson, bought me *Web Designer* 127 as she thought the templates on the CD might be of some use. However, I can't see anything on the CD, I have done everything I can think of, checked it on my other PC – and still nothing. I checked that I can view contents on other CDs, which were all fine.

I'm sure it must be me having a stupid moment, but I have run out of things to try – although the idea of using my new staple gun on the CD is beginning to make me smile. Please save my small threads of sanity... and tell me, is it me or a problem with the CD?

Regards,

Rebecca Catterall (via email)

Sadly Rebecca we must take the blame for this one. Your sanity should be preserved as we've had many complaints over that particular disc not running correctly on certain CD drives. It seems to have been a duplication error affecting a minority batch, as our own office copies are fine, therefore it's something we need to investigate. Keep your eyes on the *Web Designer* forum for updates and potential download links to the missing files, while please accepting our sincerest apologies for the inconvenience.

MAIL OF THE MONTH

Saving the day

Hi *Web Designer*,

I recently picked up a job creating a CD-ROM for a medical conference. Having no experience of using Director but a good understanding of Flash – this was the application I decided to use. I thought I had bitten off more than I could chew after finding out that a large part of the project was adding video footage of the speakers and then playing their power-point presentation alongside. I researched the ways this could be produced, but came up with nothing. I was stumped and very close to calling the client to cancel the job, when the new issue of *Web Designer* magazine dropped through the door. Your article, *Flash Video Cue Points*, was exactly what I was looking for. It couldn't have been more perfect! The client is very happy with the final product and I've learnt something new. This isn't the first time this has happened. You seem to have a knack of running these helpful articles just at the right time.

Many thanks. Keep up the good work.

Stephen (via email)

Hi there Stephen, that is exactly the kind of sentiment we love to hear at *Web Designer* and it's great you felt compelled to let us know. What's particularly nice here is that we've managed to help you not only learn some new skills, but also find your way around a professional project – which is ultimately where we're pitching things these days. That particular tutorial was one we had wrestled with to present as nicely as possible and ensure all the code listings were printed in their entirety. I'm sure everyone who has followed it will appreciate Darren Richardson's ability to convey a tricky topic very effectively. As for us running the right articles at the right time, well, we'd like to call it coincidence but it's actually down to careful planning!



American reader Spenser's tidy portfolio site may well have benefited from our many Flash tutorials if his letter of praise for the magazine is anything to go by...



Behind the Scenes



SHOP COMPOSITION.COM

In keeping with our elegant eCommerce theme this month, we profile a site that has elevated a promising real-world store to a dotcom trend-setter

One of the genuinely beautiful things about the web is that it's exquisite at building things up, creating a buzz, or making something seem larger than life. In eCommerce terms this can be invaluable when trying to raise the profile of a potentially small or fledgling business, whereby a clever approach to digital marketing or promotion can really push things on very quickly indeed.

When it comes to selling online and representing an actual high-street store virtually, you have the advantage of being able to elaborate the physical space you trade out of on a daily basis and create a perception of grandeur that an international clientele will appreciate.

This doesn't mean that our subject this month should be noted for style over substance in any way, but it's fair to assume that this magazine wouldn't be chronicling the exploits of a Denver-based retail outlet had it not been for its impressive internet presence. Composition is a stylish purveyor of designer wares that has been

around for only three years, but has in that time developed a clever awareness about the importance of looking great on the web and has received praise from sites like styleboost.com. We were fortunate enough to hook up with store owner Jennifer Roberts and her web designer Ian Coyle to find out not only how the site was produced, but also their own first-hand thoughts on what a notion of elegant eCommerce means to them.

JR: Jennifer Roberts, Owner
Composition and www.shopcomposition.com
IC: Ian Coyle, creative director, FL-2
www.fl-2.com, www.iancoyle.com

WD: Let's start with some shameless plugging – what is Shop Composition all about and why is the site (shopcomposition.com) a place to get excited about?

JR: Shop Composition is the online presence of a retail store based in Denver, Colorado. From a personal perspective, it's difficult to convey why Shop

Composition is so exiting without a bit of background. The store, Composition, opened in March of 2003 in lower downtown Denver, with the aim of bringing design-oriented products to the area. Composition opened in an impossibly difficult retail location and with only 450 square feet. From a business perspective, it had everything against it. However, through determination, sacrifice and encouragement from a growing community of design fans, the store recently moved to a 2600 square foot location and has a brilliant future. Shop Composition is a fundamental part of its current and continued success.

From an industry perspective, Shop Composition is exciting because it's part of a greater shift that's occurring in eCommerce. The shift, in my opinion, is from businesses providing needs-based shopping to those providing experiential shopping. Shopping on the web has primarily been geared for someone who knows exactly what brand and product they're looking for and simply wants to find it at a better price, or



Providing great products is vital in eCommerce, but equally important is the way the products are displayed to the customer... Something Shop Composition has got down to a tee



quicker delivery, etc. The shift is towards eCommerce as recreation. Just as shopping at physical locations has become recreation in our society, I believe that successful eCommerce now must meet consumers' expectations for an engaging experience.

WD: How important is the site to your business and do you think the deliberate stylishness of its design reinforces the identity of your store in the mind of potential customers?

JR: The website and the brick and mortar location are both integral to the overall business and at this time I couldn't imagine having one without the other. From a financial standpoint, the sales generated from each are essential to the survival and growth of the business. However, I find greater value in having both a site and a store for the different opportunities each provide in communicating with a growing client-base. The website has the ability to reach more clients outside of the store's geographical range but within its core audience. The style and design of the site speaks directly to the interactive/graphic designers, artists, architects and other creative professionals who also have an affinity



Shop Composition has attracted admirers from many eCommerce players, such as styleboost.com

"The site was created out of a real need to reach a wider audience and increase sales"

for the products offered. In contrast, the store reaches a much broader audience, which is necessary for the growth of the business. The store has relocated to a larger space within a new urbanism development called Belmar, west of downtown Denver. This type of location attracts a diverse range of people who live, work and shop in the area. It has been very exciting to watch people outside of the store's core audience engage with design through the aesthetic environment and graphics of the store. The physical space continually provides new opportunities to communicate a passion for design to a wide-based audience.

The style and design of both the site and the store communicate the identity of Composition. Clients from the site love to visit the store when they come to Denver. I think they want to see the physical depiction of the experience they have had online. Conversely, clients from the store are excited to check out the site and have their experience communicated through a different language.

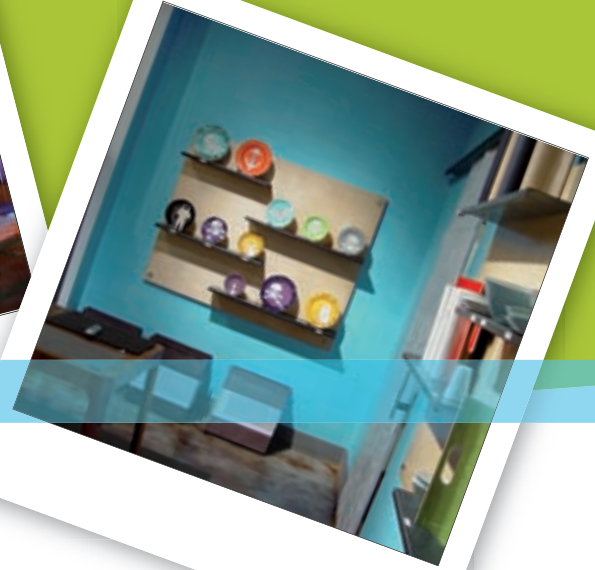
WD: The site has already garnered praise from sites like styleboost.com for its commitment to elegant eCommerce. How important is this praise to you and did you set out to impress in this way?

IC: Accolades are by-products of a successful project, not the initial goal. Working with clients that desire progressive and innovative solutions creates an environment in which you set the bar high for yourself and the project. We first created the site in 2004 (later redesigned in 2005), when Flash wasn't considered an appropriate venue for eCommerce applications. As a developer, my goal was to create a new eCommerce experience that could showcase Flash's ability to improve upon the existing eCommerce model. As a designer, I set out to elevate Composition's online presence above that of the typical eCommerce store; because Jennifer's brick and mortar store was so unique. The praise it garnered only proved that we achieved the goal we set out for ourselves.

JR: The praise and awards for Shop Composition were a complete and lovely surprise. The site was created out of a real need to reach a wider audience and increase sales. The physical location and small size of the actual store was a large deterrent to growth and a website provided a tangible way to reach the people that the store was unable to reach. The approach to creating a website was the same as the approach to opening the store. The focus has always been on creating a unique shopping experience that connects people with high-quality, well-designed products for everyday life. This approach is a lot different than the way a business-oriented person would set out to create a store or an eCommerce site. I don't think that either approach is inherently better than the other, but this approach is what was authentic to Composition. Of course both Ian and I hoped that the approach would have an end result of increased sales, but this goal has never been the guiding principle of the business. I think that this has resulted in a slower growth model but it's one that I can feel proud



Behind the Scenes



of. I think it represents my commitment to building a brand based on providing a high-quality shopping experience, selling products for a design-oriented lifestyle and actively participating in and responding to the community that develops.

WD: How did the design of the site come together in regards to working with the designer Ian Coyle, and was this very much a collaborative effort to try and achieve the right look and feel for the site?

JR: Ian's company, FL-2, was located around the corner from the first location of Composition. He came to know the business through frequent visits, interacting with the products and by talking to me about my goals to make Composition an approachable place where people see how design can be integrated into everyday products and everyday life. I did not have any eCommerce or web-design experience, but based on the relationship we had built and his understanding of the business and my goals, I trusted that he could create something that was an authentic representation of the experience of being in the store. My desire was to create something unique that helped me communicate my vision for Composition. However, I never imagined how eloquently he would be able to do that!

I was able to much more actively participate in the re-design of the site (November 2005). By this point, I had the hands-on experience of maintaining and updating the site with new products, processing orders, etc. So I was able to provide more direction for the functional aspects of the site.



Composition started as a real-world store and has seamlessly made the transition to eCommerce, not an easy thing to do!

IC: As a designer that already appreciated the store's aesthetic, we started this project with a shared vision of what we wanted to achieve, in both style and function. However, it was freedom in the design and development process that allowed me to create a truly unique site. I find, and I'm sure many designers will agree, that clients often try to be too hands on, when in fact it takes a large amount of trust and the ability to give designers more freedom to see their clients' vision through to fruition. Jennifer was able to provide insight, while letting me have the space to explore and create a new eCommerce experience.

WD: What development technologies or web design software tools were used predominantly during the build of shopcomposition.com?

"I'm particularly proud of how well the site represents the products"

IC: The site was developed in Flash. ASP.NET runs the backend and checkout process using XML for data transfer. The database is MYSQL. The Content Management System and Order Processing System are custom applications developed by myself and FL-2.

WD: What elements or particular parts of the site give the most amount of pride to both shop owner and site designer – and why?

JR: I'm particularly proud of how well the site represents the product lines that I carry. I have talked about the importance of Composition's relationship with its clients, but it's equally important to me that I build – and maintain – strong relationships with vendors. I'm proud to represent some very creative and talented individuals and companies who are making high-quality, well-designed and functional products. I want them to be excited that they are in Composition and feel pleased that their products are displayed with great care and style both in the store and on the website.

IC: The effect the site has on the user gives me the most pride. Most users, after viewing the site, realise that this eCommerce experience is greater than what they have

experienced before. Ideally this enlightens them to the notion that eCommerce can emotive and inspire, rather than exclusively push products.

WD: In your own experience, how might you define a concept of elegant eCommerce and how might that apply favourably to shopcomposition.com?

IC: Elegant eCommerce creates an emotional experience that connects the user to the store. It doesn't try to force sales onto users like many eCommerce applications do. The goal should be to create the same experience that is in the brick and mortar store, delivered through the interactive medium. People remember great in-store experiences – the online world should be no exception. While Shop Composition is an eCommerce site, it creates an experience that elevates it in the eyes of the consumer.

WD: What kind of positive feedback have you had from Shop Composition's customers about the site's design and, further more, do you anticipate any new features occurring in response to any requests or comments you may have had?

JR: I think that we both have a lot of ideas on how to improve and enhance the site. Naturally the limiting factors are time and money, so I have to prioritise and balance these desires with the demands of the physical store as well. Some of the changes are based on customer feedback, including the addition of a registry feature and the ability to email product details to yourself or friends. The larger changes I think that we're both more interested in, are how to integrate community into the site. The store has a great feeling of community that comes from the daily interaction between myself and staff with clients and between clients directly. The store has a very personal and approachable feel that basically comes from my hands-on style and passion for Composition's success. Ian has great ideas on how to integrate more community interaction on the site. At times, I think that the site comes across as too polished and we both want people to see the authentic and personal side of Composition come through more.



Elegant eCommerce

The online retail channel is now an established component of the commercial landscape. But as Dave Howell discovers, great design and eCommerce are far from being mutually exclusive

Christmas 2006 was a bumper year for online retailers. UK consumers spent £7.66 billion shopping online. Sales were close to £1 billion a week during the first three weeks of December according to eCommerce analyst IMRG. From a shaky start that culminated in the dotcom crash, eCommerce has now come of age.

Building a professional eCommerce site is, however an art that many businesses have yet to master. Research by the leading web hosting company 1 & 1 Internet indicates that business is still not making the internet a business imperative. Also, bad website design is still common, which is turning away paying customers.

The research concludes that 53 per cent of consumers would walk away from any business that doesn't have a website and that more of Britain's 3.7 million SMEs could be losing sales if they have a poor quality website. The results found that 85 per cent of consumers have doubts or reservations when buying from a business with a poor quality website. A further survey, conducted by Coleman Parkes Research worryingly reveals that despite these overwhelming figures, one in five UK SMEs don't believe that a substandard website could have any negative effect on sales.

Andreas Gauger, CEO 1&1 Internet says: "It is clear that consumers nowadays expect every business to have a professional web presence and are turned-off by second-rate websites, yet clearly many SMEs are confused over the importance of the issue.

If businesses want to maximise sales, they must be online with a website that gives the right impression."

eCommerce DNA

In the frenzy to cash in on the dotcom boom, eCommerce site design threw the retail rulebook out of the window. Early eCommerce sites lacked any coherent style, design or functionality. Designers wrestling with this new design paradigm looked for a set of guidelines they could use, but found none in existence. Since then, guiding principles have appeared through trial and error. Consumers began to learn the new language of online shopping, with web designers honing their skills to the point where a professional and usable eCommerce site could be built quickly. This doesn't mean, however, that all eCommerce sites follow what have become established standards. Mistakes are still being made that damage usability and the shopping experience that customers react to by simply clicking

we have to support this key driver. It means things like fast-loading pages, clear layout, straightforward navigation and searching, an emphasis on providing sufficient space for full product information in order to enable the decision to buy to be made and quick and easy checkout. These factors are a given for any successful store."

This doesn't mean that all eCommerce sites are identical facsimiles of each other. Although you could be forgiven for thinking just this as the websites of many of the most successful online brands have a striking similarity to each other. Innovation is still possible from a design perspective, but as Ian Davis, director of product strategy, ATG comments, brand and customer support should be your guide when developing your own site's design principles: "There isn't a generic formula for all eCommerce sites and successful web designers will be the ones that recognise this. Although it's true to say that the common aim for all eCommerce sites must be to provide a strong customer

"EARLY ECOMMERCE SITES LACKED ANY COHERENT STYLE DESIGN OR FUNCTION"

away to a competitor's site. The bar is now so high in eCommerce design, that new entrants must pay close attention to how their site design will service their customers if the business that the site is supporting will deliver a good return on its investment. "We now understand that convenience is one of the main reasons why people shop online," says Chris Barling, chief executive officer and co-founder of Actinic Software (www.actinic.co.uk). "So in design terms,

experience and convenient shopping facility, each site must be designed and created to reflect individual brand values." This is reinforced by Chris Lake, editor at The E-consultancy who says: "eRetailers have copied Amazon because it's successful, thus it must work. But there's another reason – if it ain't broke, why fix it? Is there a competitive advantage to reinventing the wheel? Maybe there is, but maybe consumers don't want to learn how to use a website every time

SECRETS OF OUR SUCCESS

So, what makes leading eCommerce businesses so successful?

Figleaves

www.figleaves.com

"At the core of every creative decision we make at figleaves.com is the customer experience. What's important to our customer is the most important thing to us – clear, consistent navigation, detailed product presentation and clear messaging expressed by a combination of attractive images with well-considered typography and engaging copy." Creative director, Kevin Redman.



Firebox

www.firebox.com

"There is not one single element that can turn an eCommerce site into a successful retailer, rather a combination of factors that work together to make a site truly special. Since opening its doors eight years ago, Firebox has fine-tuned its site to make it as efficient, open and friendly as possible to make shopping with us a simple but enjoyable process. The site itself has been built from a consumer's perspective (ie, you don't have to register to buy) and we believe that by putting the fun back into retail, you'll have customers returning again and again."

Senior designer, Justin Greenwood.



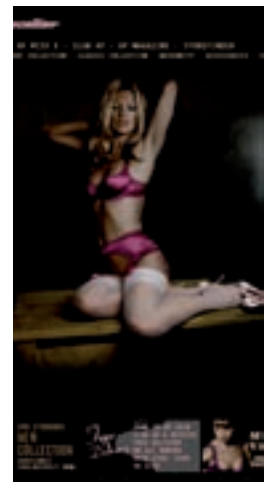
Agent Provocateur

www.agentprovocateur.com

"The Agent Provocateur website is not just a showcase for our stunning product – we also aim to provide the visitor with a unique experience. Our intuitive functionality and striking imagery go towards replicating our intimate store encounter online. We want to envelope the visitor in the brand so they get the thrill of the experience."

We do this by contextualising the product with content whether that is writing, film or features. Our site entertains as well as sells, we value our visitors and strive to reward their patronage."

Head of eCommerce, Paula Roberts.



Apple's online store is a great example of how to mix business acumen with genuine style and usability

they visit a new one? Consider that in the offline world there is a best practice design for supermarkets. Fruit, veg and flowers at the entrance... consumers expect that from a supermarket, so maybe they'll also expect an Amazon-like checkout process on the John Lewis website for example?"

eCommerce has certainly moved through a renaissance over the last few years. What was the poor cousin of real-world highstreet stores, has now become a retail space in its own right as customers have changed their buying habits. But these habits have gone hand-in-hand with the maturing of the design awareness that is required to build a successful eCommerce site. As Richard Stevenson, 1&1 Internet comments, eCommerce website design has improved because it had to: "The DNA of a good eCommerce site embodies the right balance of form and function. The public is becoming increasingly savvy about the websites they do and don't enjoy using and if your shopping cart process is either too abrupt or too convoluted, the buying experience will suffer or they will vote with their feet. Design should be concerned with the whole shopping experience and not just how your products are presented. The right combination of product info, customer support and an effective checkout process will secure online sales. The main risk nowadays is that you can overwhelm the consumer with a crowded design."

Integrating a brand with a good eCommerce experience can be a difficult feat to accomplish. Simon Crab, creative director, Lateral says: "When it's done well, the real-world retail experience is much more of an integrated brand experience

– this opportunity is often overlooked on eCommerce sites. Once the customer embarks on a sales procedure the site changes to a purely commerce-based design and tone and seems to assume that the brand job has been done once the credit card has been produced."

It's easy to become complacent when developing an eCommerce site. With template driven hosted systems an eCommerce site can be up and running in a matter of minutes. If you use an out-of-the-box solution, or intend to create a completely bespoke site, remember to place your customers desires at the heart of your design. Following some simple rules about site layout, navigation, search and product details will ensure that you get the basics right. It's then up to you, armed with your customer data, to look at how you can wrap these essential components in an engaging and innovative design. "eCommerce design is much more guideline-driven than other types of site," says Trenton Moss, director, Webcredible (www.webcredible.co.uk). "There are three essential components for a successful eCommerce website that makes up the DNA of eCommerce sites. They are: that people have to be able to find a product, they have to be persuaded to buy the product and they have to checkout easily."

The good, the bad and the ugly

Think about your favourite eCommerce sites. What do you like about them? Now think about the sites you found frustrating to use. Why was this? eCommerce stores like Apple (<http://store.apple.com>), Tesco (www.tesco.com), Ocado (www.ocado.com) and

BOOKS

Boo Hoo

ISBN: 0099418371
£7.99

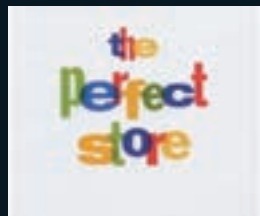
The story of what was perhaps the most spectacular dotcom failure. All budding eCommerce entrepreneurs should read this blow-by-blow account as a cautionary tale of what could go wrong.



The Perfect Store: Inside eBay

ISBN: 0749924039
£7.99

The online store with no inventory has conquered the internet to become one of the most successful eCommerce businesses operating today. Hosting thousands of small enterprises, this is story of how it all began.



Business the Amazon.com Way

ISBN: 1841120545
£9.99

Amazon single-handedly illustrated how eCommerce could work and has become the template for many other online enterprises. Read how its founder, Jeff Bezos, took his grand idea and made it the commercial success it is.



Direct from Dell

ISBN: 1861975570
£8.99

Michael Dell showed how using the web as a storefront was only one way that a business could utilise the internet. This is Dell's own story of how he built one of the most recognisable eCommerce businesses operating today.



Web Design: E-commerce (Icons)

3822840556
£5.99

If you want to see the latest and greatest in eCommerce design, from small retailers to online superstores, this guide brings you the most cutting edge eCommerce sites on the web.



The Long Tail: How Endless Choice Is Creating Unlimited Demand

ISBN: 184413850X
£17.99

eCommerce has provided consumers with endless choice (the long tail). Read how this phenomenon is now shaping today's eCommerce businesses.



ANATOMY OF ECOMMERCE

Back to homepage

All eCommerce sites should allow a customer to return to the homepage. This is very important in complex sites

Search secrets

There is no black art to searching an eCommerce site. Always make sure your site's search is fast and accurate

Efficient navigation

The use of the left navigation interface components is perhaps the most widely used of all navigation aids

Waterstones

After breaking away from Amazon last year, the new independent site from Waterstones is a great example of how eCommerce sites should be built. The site uses the now well-understood design components of search, left navigation and tabbed pages that tell you where you are on the site. Jeremy Spiller, managing director of the online marketing agency White Hat Media says: "This site is pleasing to the eye and is a pleasure to use. Waterstones are clearly trying hard to compete against Amazon's marketplace dominance. Thankfully the Waterstones site is devoid of the unnecessary razzmatazz of some US-based sites."

Extra information

A tabbed interface is a great method of highlighting additional information on an E-commerce site

Free UK Delivery
to store & on orders over £15

What's new | Bestsellers | Coming soon

Pay Day Sale

An extra 10% off every

Click here >

Book of the day



The Goddess

A highly covetable, life of a goddess. With experiences, 'The Goddess' is unforgettable...

£9.00 - List price

Add to basket

R & J's Book Club 2007...



The Richard & Judy Book Club starts

No hidden extras

Some E-commerce sites still don't list prices. No customer is going to buy a product without knowing costs!

"THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE FEELS RIGHT AND THE CONSUMER FEELS SUPPORTED"

John Lewis (www.johnlewis.com) all have excellent sites that support their customers by presenting their goods effectively and ensuring that there are no barriers to using their checkouts.

In contrast, take a look at the online stores of Clinton Cards (www.clintoncards.co.uk) – prices of its cards don't appear on the site's homepage. Game (www.game.co.uk) that has a homepage so cluttered it's difficult to spot any promotions or simply browse the site. HMV (www.hmv.co.uk) don't provide any kind of site navigation once you've clicked on an item. Using a breadcrumb trail would enable customers to see where in the site they are without getting lost. And if you want to see an eCommerce site where Flash has run amok, point your browser at La Perla (www.laperla.com), but compare this with Shop Composition (www.shopcomposition.com) that uses Flash to enhance its brand and how it presents its products.

Locating the items you want often means browsing. eCommerce site users tend to

browse first and then use search if they can't locate the item they want. But take a look at the site of WH Smith (www.whsmith.co.uk). The homepage contains just one link to 'Books'. You would expect its full category list to appear on the next page, but instead you have to click on 'Browse departments'. In contrast, the Waterstones site (www.waterstones.com) permanently displays all book categories on every page. Another good example of less than intuitive site navigation is on Bagga Menswear (www.baggamenswear.co.uk). The site assumes that you know that Penguin is a brand of polo shirts or that Schmoove are shoes. It requires you to read the text next to each brand name when a simple photo would be much better.

With broadband access to the internet now almost ubiquitous in the UK, eCommerce site designers can be a bit more creative with the images that they use. As a customer can't handle any of the goods in an online store, using high-quality photography is the next best thing. Richard Stevenson, 181

What's in the trolley?

Shoppers like to keep a check of what they've got in their trolley to avoid any nasty shocks at the checkout

Home | Sign in | My account | Help | **My basket** 0 items

Events | Children's | Students | News | Offers

Something for just 40 hours

Links to the real world

If your business is a bricks and clicks enterprise, use this as unique selling point

Keep in touch

Newsletters are great at maintaining links with customers, but don't make the sign-up process complicated

Measured promotions

Waterstones display their offers, but don't give the visitor a headache watching animations or Flash movies

Internet highlights this point: "A site that has really stood out for me over the past year is marksandspencer.co.uk. I think the design has achieved the perfect balance between extensive product material and straightforward functionality. The images provided are absolutely key and M&S adapts the scale and type of image to the type of item involved. M&S has cleverly realised that people just won't buy clothes or furniture online unless the images and supporting info are just right. Both the shopping-cart process and site design compliment M&S's ethos of style and quality. The shopping experience feels right and the consumer feels supported throughout."

Ian Davis of ATG, an expert in content management systems that are used by some of the world's leading eCommerce businesses, also gives details of his current favourite eCommerce sites: "Two strong examples of good design are Nike and Royal Mail. Nike uses rich media to enhance its brand image by offering a market-leading image lead website while ensuring it's easy to use. Royal Mail's site is excellent as it shows a clear understanding of its user who

goes to the site for quick and fast access to information and services. As such, its homepage is well presented with good categorising of information and all relevant links available on the home page."

"Agent Provocateur and Oasis Stores are two sites (both designed by Large) that recognise the commercial imperatives, but also work hard for the brand," comments Jim Boulton, Managing Director, Large Design (www.largedesign.com). "They try and balance depth of experience with product, concentrating as much on brand building as sales. Two sites that aren't so great are Ikea and Habitat. They have both failed to recreate the magic of the offline experience, online. They are both destination stores in the real world – people get out of bed on a weekend and say 'Let's go to Habitat/Ikea' – and they fail to live up to this online."

Jeremy Spiller of White Hat Media concludes: "Gratuitous design has no place on an eCommerce website. But innovations that improve the buying experience are well worth the investment. For example the innovations in User Generated Content are generally positive. This often takes the form

GOLDEN RULES OF E-COMMERCE DESIGN

RULE 1

Keep the search function in the same place

On this site the search function appears on the homepage but is then missing from all the other pages in the store. Always ensure that your search feature is on every page and is in the same location for ease of accessibility.



RULE 2

Don't confuse checkout and basket

Never confuse your customers about how your trolley and checkout systems work. Argos doesn't make it clear that you have to click through to your trolley to enter its checkout system. Whereas Early Learning makes it very clear which button to click on.



RULE 3

Avoid too much Flash animation

Using Flash in an eCommerce site can be done successfully, but Habitat's over use of Flash makes its site hard to navigate. The small size of the Flash movie window also doesn't enable them to present their goods to persuade their visitors to buy.



RULE 4

Design clear site navigation

As visitors click around any E-commerce site its easy for them to forget which pages they have been on, or which products they have looked at. Marks & Spencer change the colour of their product links so visitors can instantly see which products they have viewed before.



RULE 5

Enable easy browsing

Visitors often just want to browse a site, but many businesses don't make this very easy. Debenhams uses clear tabbed category listings for easy browsing, with Amazon opting for left navigation to take visitors to their individual stores to have a look around.



RULE 6

Product information

As customers can't handle goods on an E-commerce site it's imperative that they have as much information as possible about an item so they can decide whether to buy. The Digital Direct site is a great example of how detailed product information can be very persuasive.



RULE 7

Make checkout easy

Once a customer has entered the checkout process its important that they know what to do and where they are in the system. Confusing a customer at this crucial point may well result in an abandoned trolley. Early Learning use superb iconography to show their customers where they are in the checkout process.



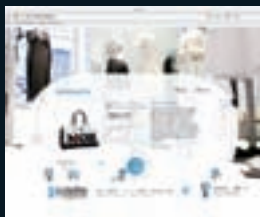
BREAKING THE RULES

Following established rules will ensure your eCommerce site functions as your visitors expect, but sometimes breaking the rules can enhance an eCommerce site as these stores do well at illustrating

Colette

www.colette.fr

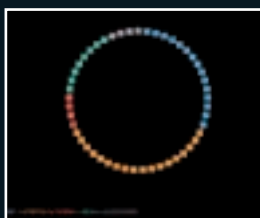
Great design, strong branding and superb integration of Flash makes this site innovative but still usable by customers. Products are clearly displayed. Trolley and checkout are also handled well.



Feel The Power

www.feelthepower.biz/main.htm

If you intend build an E-commerce site with an innovative interface remember to include the core requirements such as product details, shopping cart and easy navigation.



Freddy & Ma

www.freddyandma.com

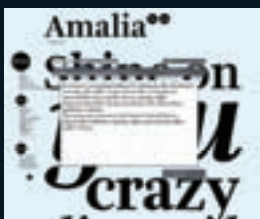
E-commerce sites can now enable customers to design their own products. This site uses high quality graphics and easy site navigation so visitors can design and buy their own unique handbag.



Our Type

www.ourtype.com

This site offers the ultimate in try before you buy. Customers can enter their own text and see it displayed in the typeface of their choice. Bold graphics support a well thought out E-commerce foundation.



Shop Composition

www.shopcomposition.com

Flash combines with large bold images to create a superb shopping experience. Navigation, categories and search are all handled slightly differently to other E-commerce sites, but the effect sets this site apart from the rest.



STATS

- The proportion of retail companies using eCommerce rose from 8% in 2005 to 11% in 2006.
- 75% of retailers who accept mail and telephone order still do not have an eCommerce facility.
- 90% of companies with an eCommerce facility said their website was profitable – up from 70% in 2005.
- On average, companies paid 40% less than expected for their eCommerce solution. The average anticipated cost was £2416, whereas the average price paid was only £1585.
- 45% of companies built their own eCommerce sites. Of the remainder, 85% used a web designer. Very few used other third-parties such as consultants or IT resellers.
- Internet shopping is perceived to be not price, but convenience – named by 75% of retailers as the main reason why customers shop online.

of comments from people who have bought the product. If these are honest then the buyer can get a good understanding of how the product compares with other similar products to aid the buying decision. This also helps build up trust."

Future commerce

What will eCommerce sites look like in the future? It's a question that all online retailers are asking themselves as they attempt to identify the next trend in online commerce. Business now understands that the web is a powerful sales channel, but is one that can change rapidly. Only those businesses that adapt quickly to these changes will remain.

How goods are collected and placed in trolleys looks likely to be one area where changes will become most apparent first. Web 2.0 and its use of AJAX technologies clearly point to a move to dynamic but customer-focused websites. But as Simon

over the next few years. If e-money arrives on the mobile phone of your online customers, they will want to pay for goods on your site using these systems as well.

We can already see the influence of Web 2.0 technologies now with sites like Amazon.com's diamond ring buying service. Webcredible's Trenton Moss explains: "With innovations such as Web 2.0 and AJAX as long as what you're doing supports the users ability to find a product they're looking for in the case of search then these technologies can be a real benefit. But if you're using AJAX just for the sake of it and don't think about your customers and testing with them first, then there will be no benefit. A great example is buying diamond rings on Amazon.com (www.amazon.com/gp/gsl/search/results). This works brilliantly as you can locate the diamond among 13,000 they have available without doing any traditional searching, or using menus you have to drill down into."

"WEB 2.0 HAS HAD A HUGE EFFECT WHEN IT COMES TO CONSUMER DECISION MAKING"

Crab at Lateral points out, how you use Web 2.0 techniques must be handled carefully, or you risk alienating the customers that you want to attract: "Web 2.0 has had a huge effect when it comes to consumer decision making. The first port of call when deciding which product to buy is often user reviews, independent blogs and so on. Some brands are subsuming Web 2.0 terminology into their digital presence but in a rather cynical way – have a look at TopShop's 'blog' (www.topshop.co.uk), which patronisingly presents advertorial as a blog – no user input here!"

Second, checkout systems and electronic payments will continue to evolve as e-money finally hits the mainstream. eCommerce sites will have to reflect this change if they are to compete successfully. Often, eCommerce site design will have to support changes that are taking place in the tactile lives of their customers who ultimately will be the guardians of how eCommerce sites develop

Making the online shopping experience more virtual could also be part of the future of online retailing. Dell – who has become one of the great success stories as a pure-play online brand recently developed a presence in the Second Life virtual environment. It plans to sell virtual PCs to the virtual residents of Second Life. With over 1.4 million residents, this is a market that could see eCommerce become more virtual instead of attempting to integrate with the tactile world.

eCommerce has evolved into a commercial channel that now touches every business. Leading brands in the high street generally have excellent online components to their business, but even here there are notable exceptions. Smaller enterprises continue to compete effectively online as they leverage the art of elegant eCommerce to form a profitable niche, and with new technologies available more innovation is just around the corner. The future looks very bright indeed.





FLASH 4 MOBILE

SIMON BISSON TALKS FLASH, FLEX, JAVA AND APOLLO IN AN ATTEMPT TO FIND A BETTER WAY OF GETTING RICH CONTENT ELEMENTS ONTO PHONES AND PDA'S. THE FUTURE OF THE WEB IS GOING PORTABLE, SO WHY NOT MAKE SURE YOU'RE UP-TO-DATE WITH ALL THINGS MOBILE?

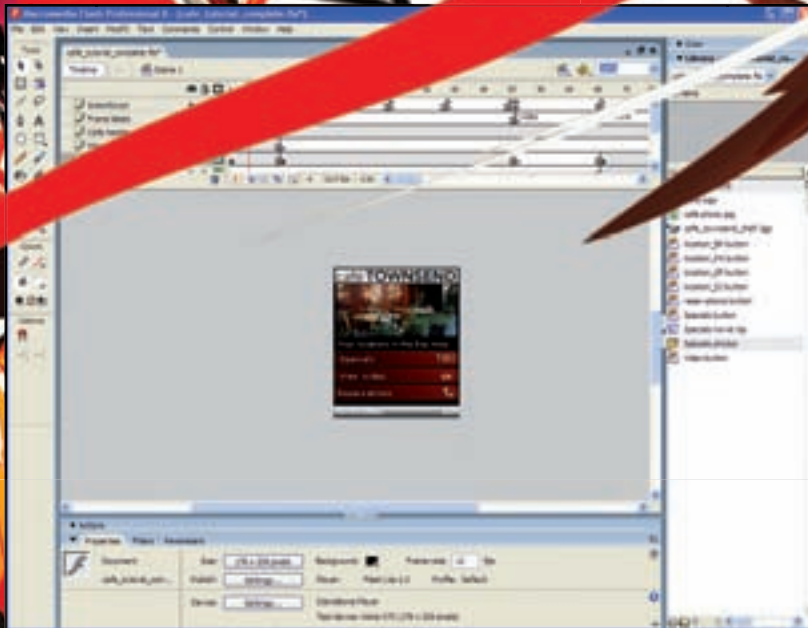


With the arrival of the .mobi top-level domain, intended for mobile-only sites, there's a lot more scope for delivering rich web experiences to mobile users. While Opera has pushed the boundaries of mobile HTML, the QVGA phone screen isn't a match for today's high-resolution monitors and desktop web browsers. Therefore Web 2.0 isn't going to come to the mobile phone any time soon.

Java applications go some way to filling the gap, with Yahoo!s Go and Google's mobile version of its mapping tools showing just what Java can do. But developing mobile Java applications isn't easy and an application that runs on one phone may not work on another. Sun has open sourced mobile Java, with the aim of delivering a standard JME that will be the same wherever it runs – but we're still a long way from seeing it on our phones.

There are other ways to deliver Rich Internet Applications to phones. You could sign up for developer programs and get access to proprietary development platforms and tools. Alternatively you could work with 'open' phones – using languages like C+ and C# to build your code. It's still not enough, requiring lots of work to build even the simplest of Hello World applications, let alone developing a graphically rich application that can cope on the phone.

What we need is an alternative platform, one that can deliver the same experience on any device. One option is Flash. A surprising number of phones already have Flash installed and many more are on the way. At this year's 3GSM conference, Adobe announced the latest numbers – there are now over 200 million mobile phones out there that can use Flash. That's three times as many as this time last year. Those 200 million phones are all over the world and in many different form factors. With over 300 devices now supporting Flash, from 16 different manufacturers, there's a lot of scope for mobile web designers to go beyond the limitations of today's mobile



Although Flash 8 has mobile editing features, we anticipate more in future versions

“IT’S ONLY RECENTLY THAT MOBILE FLASH HAS REALLY BECOME POPULAR WITH WESTERN DEVELOPERS AND DESIGNERS”

browsers. Mobile Flash used to be most common in Japanese phones, but they’re becoming an increasingly small proportion of the Flash mobile marketplace – and Adobe’s latest figures show more than 70 per cent of Flash devices are now made for the rest of the world. That’s partly down to the arrival of Japanese phones in the European and American markets, with Nokia shipping recent versions of Flash Lite on many of its devices – including its E and N series phones. Some of the most fashionable devices around, like LG’s Prada-branded phone use Flash. It’s even turning up in MP3 players (though there’s no sign of it on the iPhone.)

There have been mobile versions of Flash around for a while. Pocket PC users were able to use a version of the Flash 6 Player and early embedded versions of Flash were used in some proprietary devices. Prototype devices that used Flash for their entire user interface – from the home screen, to the dialler, to downloadable content modules have also existed. Mobile Flash was closely related to the unsuccessful Central project and Macromedia concentrated on getting Flash working in the browser. But it’s only recently that mobile

Flash has become popular with western developers and designers. That’s partly due to device manufacturers taking lessons from the Japanese markets, and bringing Flash to the

rest of the world – but it’s mainly due to the success of rich Web 2.0-style applications and the need for something similar on the mobile web.

Flash Lite is Adobe’s name for the mobile version of Flash. Based on the desktop Flash Player 7, the current version also supports ActionScript 2.0. You can even play Flash Lite content in a desktop player, so mobile users can have exactly the same experience with your content as your desktop users – however you won’t be able to use the latest Flash features, or generate content from Flex. Some key Flash 7 features are missing from Flash Lite. You won’t be able to use Flash Video (so you won’t be able to build your own mobile YouTube) and there’s no support for CSS. Complex animations may also have trouble running, as mobile processors and graphics chipsets aren’t as powerful as desktop hardware.

It’s even possible to make money from Flash Lite. US mobile operator Verizon now has a store for applications that target its BREW platform, while Handango will sell your Flash applications to Windows Mobile and Symbian users. Whichever route you take, you’ll need to get your code certified and tested first – just like any other mobile application.

You can download the latest build of Flash Lite at www.adobe.com/devnet/devices. Versions for Symbian and Windows Mobile 5.0 are currently available, along with a Windows Mobile content development kit.



There's also a version for the Qualcomm BREW platform used by Verizon in the US. Mobile phone companies can also license the player for their own operating systems – so there's support for Flash on proprietary operating systems as well as the most common open phones. The Flash Lite 2.1 player is backwards compatible with Flash Lite 2.0 and 1.1 (which is based on Flash Player 4) and can be used to test content targeted at those platforms.

While developers can download the player for free, they're not entitled to distribute it. Adobe licenses the player to mobile device manufacturers and network operators. If Flash isn't installed on a phone you can point your users at the Adobe site where they can download the player themselves.

As Flash uses vector graphics, and bundles all its content in SWF files, it's possible to build a complete application and deliver it in one small file. With data costs still high and bandwidth still limited, there's a considerable advantage to using Flash to deliver content to your users – a Flash game that downloads in a few seconds is going to be a lot more likely to be played than something that takes several



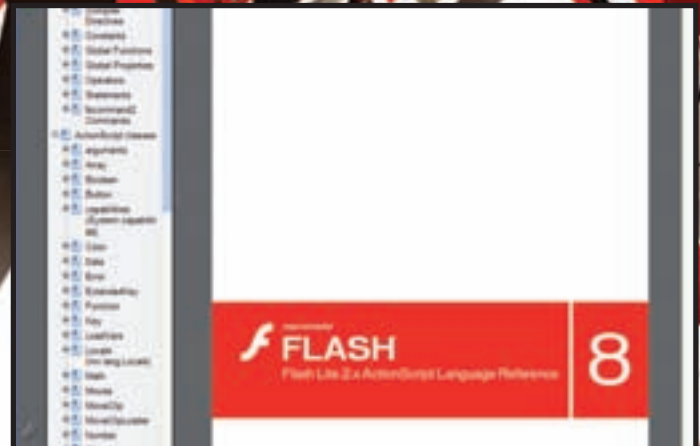
The ability to model content on virtual devices is a must for anyone looking to develop effectively

minutes to install.

To start building mobile applications you'll need to download Flash Professional 8. This is a 21MB file and adds the latest device emulators so you can start designing applications and writing code. Installing the update is easy enough – just click and run. If you're only planning on supporting older devices, the Adobe site also has updates for older versions of Flash Lite, which also support other languages. It's a good idea to download content development kits. These are available for specific Flash Lite implementations – including i-mode. Some of the latest versions require you to have the default CDK installed before you install a device specific version.

The CDK documentation gives you all the information you need to write mobile Flash applications. It's important to understand just what components of ActionScript you can't use – and the ActionScript PDFs in the CDK download explain just what you can and can't do. As mobile devices don't have a mouse, you won't be able to use many of the mouse controls (obviously), nor will you be able to get the details of many of the system capabilities of the devices you're targeting. We've already mentioned that there's no direct video support (you can use the phone's built in video player if it's available), but you also won't be able to use a phone's camera or microphone.

Building mobile applications is just like building any other Flash movie. Start by creating a new Flash application and choose the version of Flash Lite you're targeting in the Version dialog box. You can then set the device settings for the application – including the screen resolution and the



Flash Lite is Adobe's version of Flash for the mobile, based on Flash 7, it's still lacking some features of desktop-Flash versions

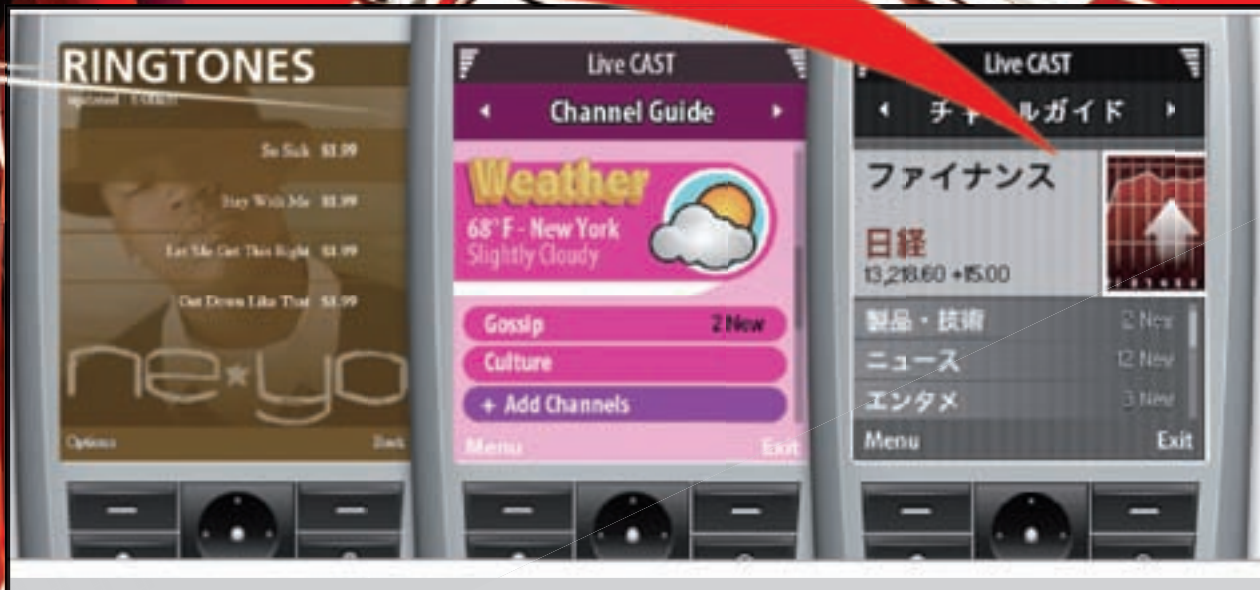
By building in Flash, it'll dramatically reduce file size and therefore download times, so it's perfect for games!

Flash Cast

In Japan, NTT DoCoMo is using Flash Cast to deliver streaming media to mobile devices. This uses channels that can be quickly subscribed to using an on air catalogue – or a desktop application. Flash Cast is best thought of as an inFormation portal, albeit one that looks a lot better than many of the WAP and WML portals currently in use. You can use Flash Cast to deliver inFormation From RSS Feeds, as well as delivering images, audio and video. The channel metaphor is relatively easy to navigate, and you can quickly scroll from one channel to the next.



Sites such as BitFlash are providing much needed support to technologies like SVG and more



Flash Lite can be used to produce screensavers, standalone applications and even Flash-tastic ring tone animations... so there's no end to the creative possibilities!

“ONE FUTURE LIES WITH APOLLO, A STANDALONE FLASH APPLICATION ENVIRONMENT FOR THE DESKTOP PC”

content player you're targeting. Flash calls the available screen real-estate the Stage and your applications will need to fit this. Any larger (or smaller) and they'll be scaled to fit – which can look odd. You'll be able to create applications that can be used as screensavers, applications that can run standalone, or applications that need to be hosted by a device browser (some devices even support Flash-based animated ring tones!)

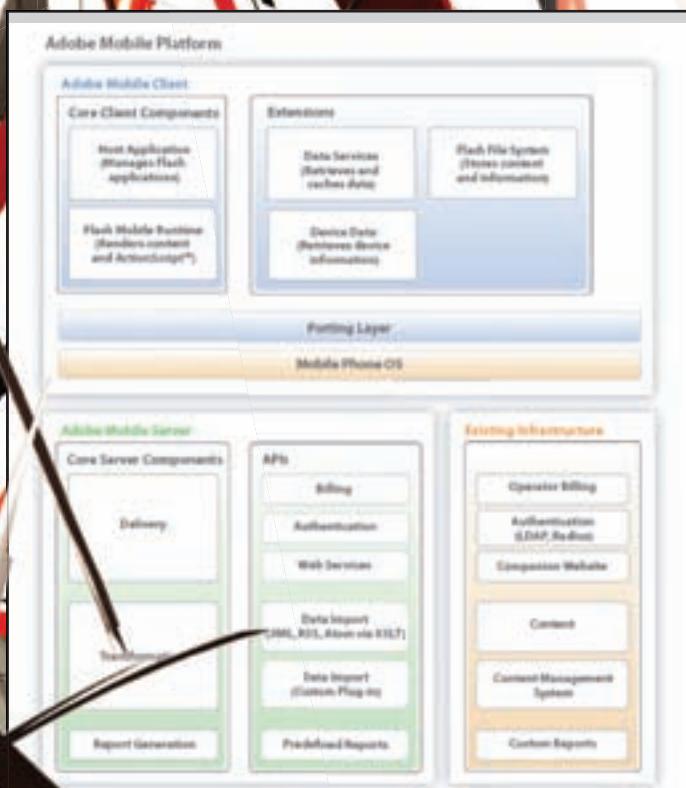
Once you've created a stage and built your application, you can test it in the built-in emulator. Open your movie in the emulator and then choose the device type you want to use. You'll see a sample phone, you'll be able to use its buttons to test that your application works as expected before deploying it to a real phone.

Adobe's mobile Flash player is only part of what it calls the Mobile Experience Suite. Intended for mobile operators, the Experience Suite is a set of tools for delivering dynamic Flash content to phones. As well as providing the Flash player and development tools, there's also a Mobile Server and a set of Flash-based applications: Flash Cast and Flash Home. The server is designed to deliver data to the two client applications and runs on a single server that can be hosted in an operator's network data centre.

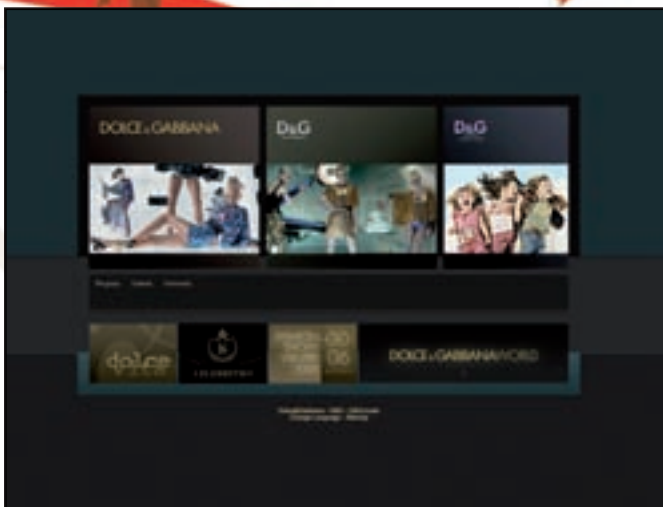
The server will take data from external sources – including RSS feeds – and deliver them to Flash Cast or Flash Home. These run using the same Flash run time as your Flash applications, but also get access to a set of

extensions that handle incoming data and provide a local file system. Data from the server is rendered and displayed in page templates that have been designed in Flash Professional 8. It's not Flex by any means, but the platform is able to plug into most existing phone networks and includes billing tools.

Adobe isn't one for doing things half-heartedly, so Flash isn't the only mobile technology the software giant has invested in. SVG-Tiny is a mobile version of the open Scalable Vector Graphics standard, and you can use GoLive and other development tools to create SVG-T content. The World Wide Web Consortium is working on making SVG-T part of its next-generation mobile standard, CDF. The Compound Document Format will be based on XHTML and will include CSS and JavaScript support, as well as using SVG to deliver images without using too



Building Flash content for the mobile is just like building Flash movies for the desktop... so no excuses really!



Fashion giant D&G has produced a site that mobiles will love. It clearly sees the mobile as the future due to the release of the D&G-branded Motorola phone



The mobile phone and other hand-held media is the future... people expect to be able to access media on the move, make sure your site can keep up!

Flash Home

Every mobile phone has a home screen. It's often pretty bleak, perhaps with a wallpaper image, and a scattering of text showing how many texts or emails you haven't read yet. Flash Home uses the mobile Flash Player to change all that. Home screens can be animated and can even automatically display data from data services. Like Flash Cast, this is an application for mobile operators and needs a server to both deliver and sell new home screens.

much of your precious mobile bandwidth. There's some question as to Adobe's future involvement with SVG now that it owns Flash after the Macromedia takeover— and it has recently discontinued development of its own SVG viewer, so this shows that perhaps Flash is deemed the future.

So what other tools are able to help the mobile Flash developer? The recent beta version of Photoshop CS3 showed off tools that will help the mobile designer. With its Device Preview tool, you can quickly see how your images will look on a mobile screen — and with tweaks for illumination and reflection, you'll be able to see how they'll look in different lighting conditions.

So what will the future bring? Flash development remains key to Adobe's strategy, but the desktop Flash is now two player generations ahead of its mobile sibling. With Flash Player 9 comes a new version of ActionScript, so any new version of Flash Lite will require significant changes. However, any Flash-Player-9-derived Flash Lite, should also be able to work with Flex, opening up the platform to developers who want to build more complex applications. There's also scope for mobile Flash to take advantage of future mobile browsers, using the FABridge JavaScript tools to link mobile AJAX applications to Flash Lite code.

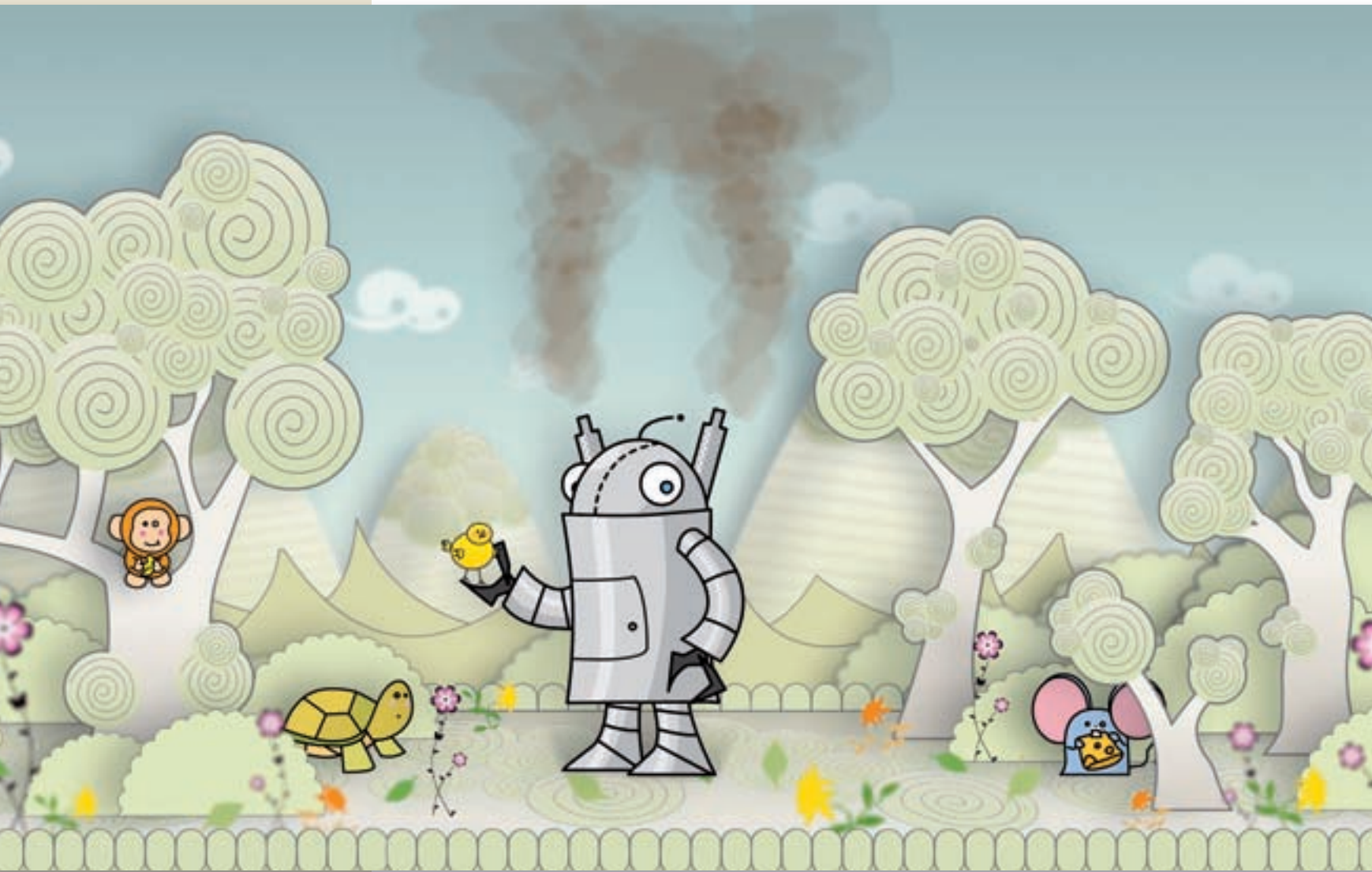
There's competition coming from Microsoft who is developing WPF/E, a cross-platform version of its Windows Presentation Foundation. A mobile version is on the cards, which will bring its XAML graphics programming language to phones and PDAs. Apple is also working on bringing its HTML and JavaScript widgets from the OS

X Dashboard onto the iPhone. Widgets that work on OS X are likely to run on the iPhone without needing any changes. One possible future lies with Apollo, a standalone Flash application environment currently being developed for the desktop PC. It's easy to see Apollo forming the basis of a next generation mobile Flash, especially with a new generation of high-resolution phones just around the corner. Mobile processors have also become significantly more powerful, so there's scope for Apollo to bring complex, desktop Flash applications to mobile devices. The new hardware is impressive. OpenMoko's FIC Neo1973 is a Linux phone with a VGA screen, and Toshiba is offering similar resolutions on its new Portege Windows Mobile devices. Both these devices would make ideal platforms for Apollo, making it easier for developers to create new applications, and giving the humble phone (even if it's a smartphone) a new lease of life.



Apple's widgets could be functionally useful within a mobile phone context





THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
Ground.jpg, LineTexture.gif, TheSweetLife.swf

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Design a theatre scene entirely in Flash using a combination of filters

TIME REQUIRED

3-4 hours

SKILL LEVEL



Create a theatre stage scene entirely in Flash

THIS TUTORIAL IS AIMED AT OUTLINING SOME OF THE FINER POINTS OF CHARACTER DESIGN IN FLASH. DESIGNED USING FLASH 8, IT USES FILTERS TO ACHIEVE AN EFFECTIVE SENSE OF DEPTH

THIS TUTORIAL UTILISES several of the filters that are available in the latest version of Flash. If you don't have Flash 8 then the same effect can be achieved by using Photoshop and PNGs with drop shadows, but this will increase the file size of the movie dramatically. Our main aim here however, is to demonstrate that it's relatively easy to produce a depth of field by using vectors and filters without the need for Photoshop. This is the first step in creating an animated

environmental interface, so at this point there's no need for ActionScript. This is because the entire movie is built on several layers, in many symbols, but still only residing on the first keyframe on the root of the timeline and within the symbols. Keep in mind that you can later go on to animate this scene, so don't take any shortcuts now. This'll ensure that you don't have to redo several of the graphics when it comes to adding animation and interaction.



YOUR EXPERT

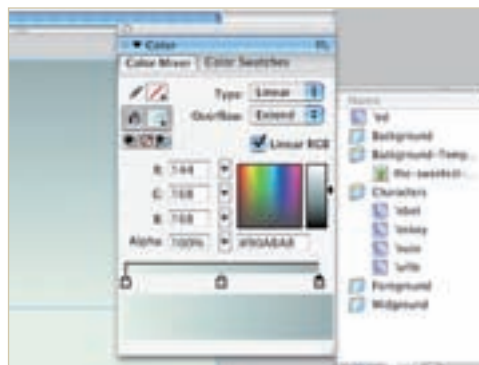
Rodger Page is a new-media designer and multimedia editor who has been using Photoshop and Flash for years. His plans are to teach digital arts at a college or university, but for the moment enjoys authoring CD and DVDs here at Imagine Publishing.

Create a theatre stage scene entirely in Flash



01 Create a new document

Open up Flash 8 and create a new document. Set the dimensions of the movie to 1200px (W) x 720px (H), with a white background colour and a Frame rate of 30fps. The movie is not animated, but it's always good practice to set the frame rate to 30.



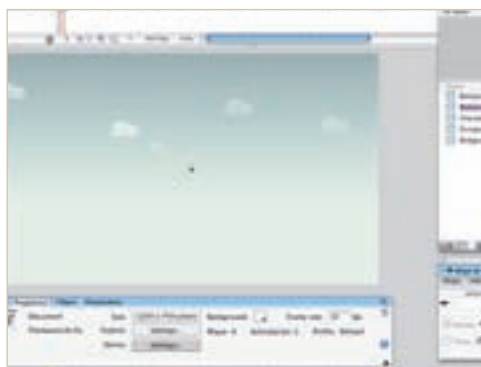
02 Sky high

With the Rectangle Tool, draw over the stage. If there's a stroke, delete it. Select the rectangle. In the Color Mixer select Linear. Change the colours: #E5F1E7 (left), #B9D2CE (middle), #90A8A8 (right). With Gradient Transform, rotate so the darker colour is at the top. Convert to a sky symbol.



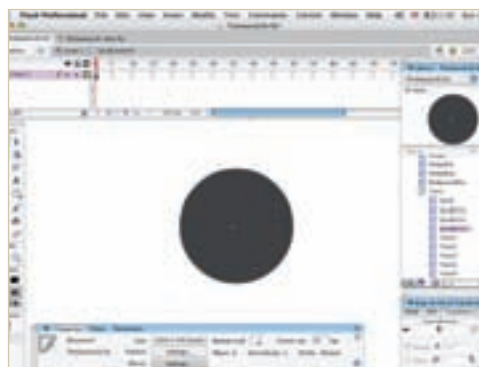
03 Lonely as a cloud

Still in the sky symbol, create a new layer. Select the Oval Tool. Draw a small white circle on the stage and draw a smaller circle in that. Delete the inner circle. Draw a small swish connecting with the smaller circle. Copy this graphic and transform the scale. Convert the cloud to a symbol.



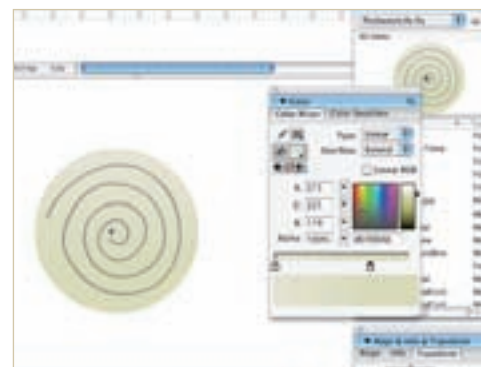
04 More clouds

Select the cloud symbol. In Properties select Filters. Click on the Plus icon to add a filter. Select Blur, set the X and Y to 4. From the drop-down menu set quality to High. Select Properties, set the Alpha to 70%. Copy and paste the cloud across the stage, adjusting the scale and transparency.



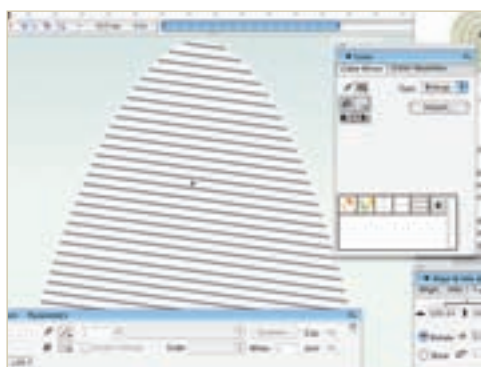
05 Tree leaf

One of the main elements that's used throughout the movie is the circle with the spiral in it. This is used in the mountains, on the trees and on the ground. Select the Oval Tool and, holding down the Shift key, draw a perfect circle on the stage. Convert to a symbol.



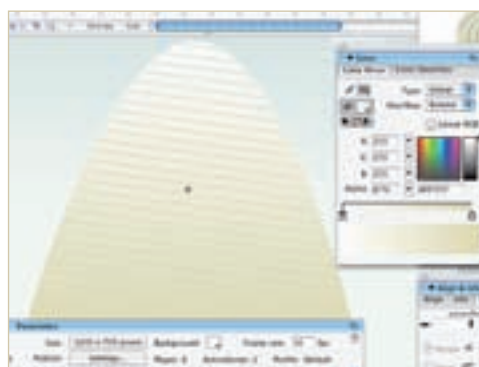
06 Circle and spiral

Delete the circle stroke and select the main element. Open the Color Mixer and change the colour from #E8E7D2 to #D7DDAE. Select the Gradient Transform and rotate so the lighter colour is at the top. Select the Pencil Tool, ensure the mode is set to Smooth, draw a grey spiral.



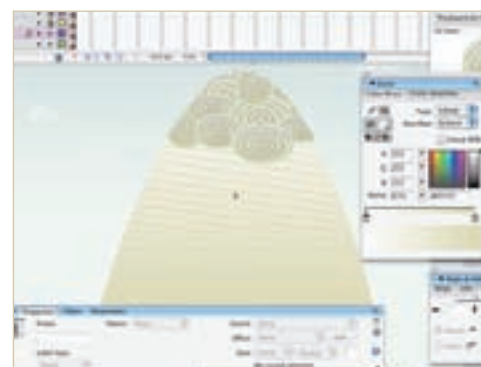
07 Mountain range

Create a new layer on the root of the timeline named 'Mountains'. Select the Pencil Tool. Draw a simple shape like in the screenshot. Convert to a symbol and reopen. Open the Color Mixer and from the drop-down menu select Bitmap. Import 'lineTexture.gif' from the CD.



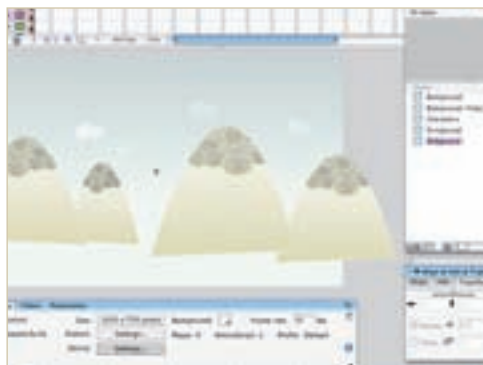
08 Duplicate the mountain

Duplicate the mountain keyframe onto a new layer. In the Color Mixer select Linear from the drop-down menu. Change the colour sliders to #FFFFFF at 85% Opacity to #DCDCA3 at 100% Opacity. Now rotate the gradient so white is on the top.



09 Mountain Tops

Create a new layer. Drag in several of the tree leaves from the library. Transform the scale of all of the elements, distort the proportions so they're not all even. Duplicate the Mountain layer, place on top of the stack. Right-click, select Mask. Ensure only the Tree leaves layer is masked.



10 Mountain scene

Create a new layer on the root of the timeline named 'Mountain scene' and a new symbol called the same. Drag four mountains into this symbol. Transform the scale of each of the mountains not in proportion. Flip two of the mountains, ensuring that they don't look uniform.



11 Add the effects

Select one of the mountains. In Filters add a Blur, set to: X=4, Y=4, Quality to High. Add a Bevel: X and Y to 100, Strength=98%, Angle=157 and Distance=7. Add a Drop Shadow: X=30, Y=30, Strength=47%, Angle=131 and Distance=20. Save in Presets and apply to the others.



12 Mountains foreground

Select the Pencil Tool and on a new layer draw a wavy line across the stage joining together at the bottom. Set the stroke to 1px and colour to #666666 and the fill colour to #D7D79F. Convert to a symbol and apply the three different filters. Copy, flip horizontally and position it.

IN DETAIL

Depth of field

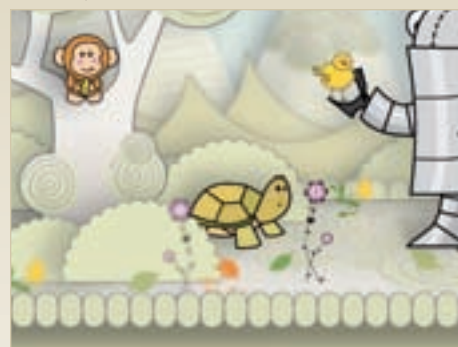
It's very easy to create a depth of field in Photoshop by using a combination of blurs, shadows/highlights and masking layers to achieve the effect of movement through the image

WE'VE HAD FLASH 8 for well over a year now and in this latest version we once again saw some leaps and bounds in our favourite 2D-animation package. Of course, as much as we wanted to start using these new features right away, if we wanted to ensure accessibility then we just had to wait for everyone to catch up. But it's now time to throw caution to the wind and start designing the hell out of our projects, as we wait in nervous anticipation to see what version 9 has in store for us after the merger of the two software giants.

The filters that are found in Flash 8 work in the same way as their counter part layer effects, but without the added benefit of blending mode options. This enables us to design and work much in the same way as we would do in Photoshop, ensuring that all of our lovely vector data stays as such.

The depth-of-field effect we created in this tutorial is built up by combining two filters – the Blur filter and the Drop Shadow. As this is screen-based media there is, of course, no Z axis – meaning no depth. Using the layers therefore, will help you keep track of what elements need to be affected and what elements need to stay unaltered. It's also imperative that certain graphic elements sit in front of others on the same layer, so using the Arrange function on individual elements will ensure the scene is built up in the correct order.

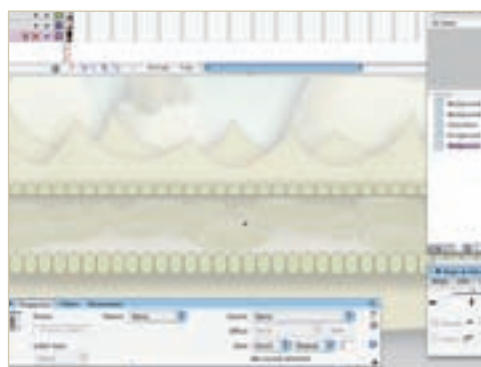
As the focal point is in the midground, elements in the background and immediate foreground need to have the Blur filter applied to them. The elements in the midground remain sharp, but have a Drop Shadow applied to them at a 190-degree angle ensuring the shadow doesn't appear in the sky. The foreground blurred objects don't have a Drop Shadow applied, whereas the background has a Blur filter and a Drop Shadow set to 130 degrees to give a more natural appearance.



Apply the Blur filter to the immediate foreground elements leaving the midground sharp



Apply the Blur filter to the background and a Drop Shadow set to 130, while midground-element shadows should be set to 190



13 Forest floor

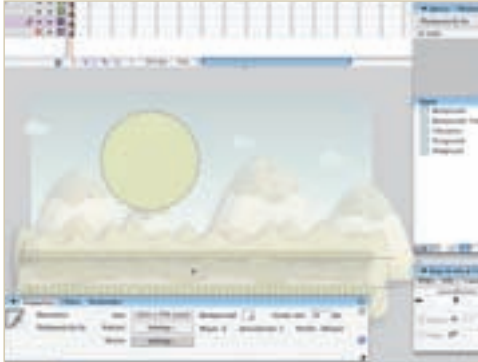
Open 'ground' from the CD and import. Create a layer on the root of the timeline, drag in the image and convert to a symbol. Create a new layer in this symbol, draw a simple hedgerow on top. Convert to a symbol, copy, paste and place at the bottom. Apply the filters on the top hedge.



14 Rounded hedge

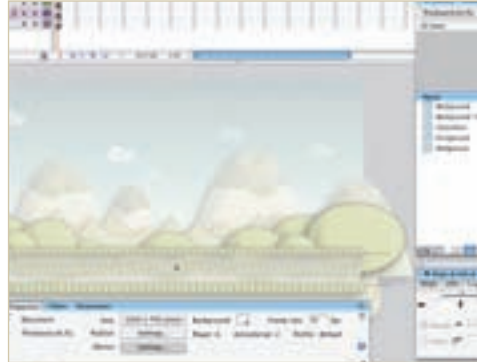
Select the Polystar Tool and in the Properties palette select Options. In the Tool Settings select 'star' from the drop-down menu. Enter Number of Sides=32 and Star point size=1.00. Hit OK. Draw a star on the stage and convert it to a symbol named 'hedge'.

Create a theatre stage scene entirely in Flash



15 Soften the hedge

Delete the stroke of the star and select its content. Select from the menu **Modify>Shape>Soften fill edges** and enter the following: Distance=32px, number of steps=1. Hit OK. Set the fill colour to #E0E7B3. Select the Stroke Tool and add a grey #666666 2px stroke to the object.



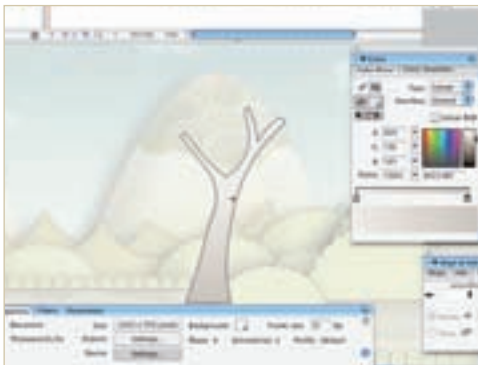
16 Add to the scene

In the same symbol as the ground graphic, create a new layer below the forest floor and add in 8 or 9 of the hedges. Squash the height and reduce the scale of the hedges. Spread them out across the stage and add the Filter effect to all the hedge symbols.



17 Midforeground

Add a new layer, 'Midforeground', to the root of the timeline. Create a new symbol on this layer, open it. Duplicate the hedge symbol in the library and drag into the symbol. Open this, divide the graphic in half, delete the bottom. Close this symbol. Copy across the scene.



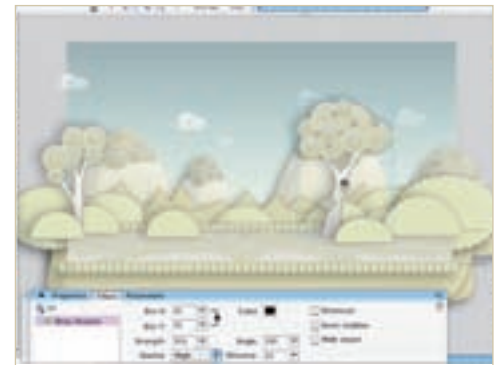
18 Woodland trees

On the Midforeground layer, select the Pencil Tool. Draw a tree trunk. Convert to a symbol named 'tree01' and open up. Select the tree, delete the stroke and change the fill type to Linear. Set the colours from #F2EFE8 to #CCC4B7, rotate the gradient so that the lightest colour is on top.



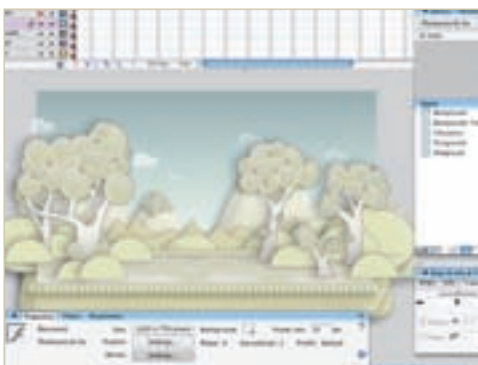
19 Tree leaves

Add a layer in the tree symbol. Drag the leaf into the symbol, duplicate several times. Adjust the scale of the leaves, spread them over the trunk. Select the trunk and leaves, paste to a new layer, break apart the leaf symbols, add a #666666 2px stroke on the outside of the tree.



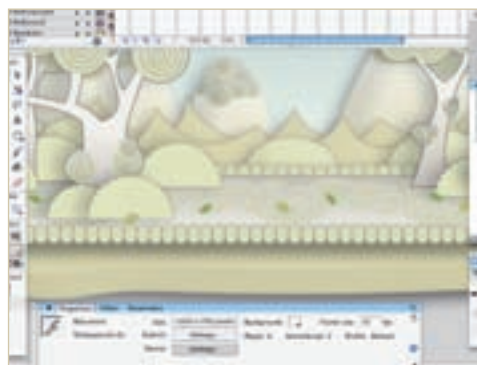
20 More trees

Create another tree on the same Midforeground layer following the same method and position on the stage. Place hedges on them if needed. Add a new Drop Shadow filter set to X=30, Y=30, Strength=30%, Quality=High, Angle=190 degrees and Distance=20.



21 Create a trees layer

Add a new layer above Midforeground and name it 'Trees'. Create three more trees following the same method and position them on this layer and spread them across the stage. Also add some more hedges to this layer and add the Drop Shadow filter to the trees and also the hedges.



22 Fallen leaves

Create a new layer on the root labelled 'Foreground'. Select the Pencil Tool and draw three different coloured leaves on the ground, convert each of them to a symbol and add a Blur filter to each of them. Paste them across the ground adjusting the rotation as needed.



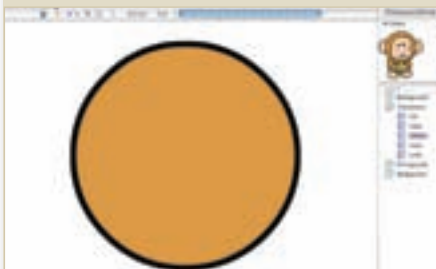
23 Flowers

Again with the Pencil Tool draw three different flowers on the stage and convert them to symbols. Position them across the stage on the Foreground layer. Add a blur to the flowers at the very front of the stage to aid the perception of depth.

TECHNIQUE

Characters with the Pencil Tool

The Pencil Tool is a powerful utility. It averages out the line that's drawn while the pointer can smooth or straighten it



01 The main element

We're going to concentrate on the monkey here. Select the Oval Tool. Draw a circle with a 2px black stroke and a #E78C18 fill. Select the Pencil and draw in the body attached to the head. Add ears, a face and some details. Most other animals will be a circle or oval for a body with a circle for a head.



02 Draw the body

Select the Pencil Tool, mirror the stroke and fill of the main element. Draw out the body, hands, ears and legs all connecting to the head. Select paths individually, hit Smooth until you're happy. Re-edit the paths to bring back the curve as needed.



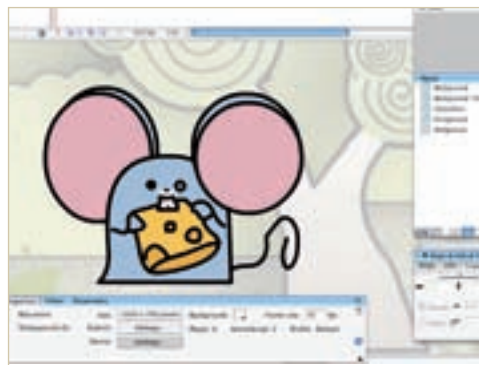
03 Add the detail

With the Pencil Tool, draw in the detail. Remember that when an un-grouped filled object (not paths) is placed on other objects and deselected, once removed it'll leave a gap. Use a combination of symbols, groups and layers to build up characters.



24 Baby monkey

Select the Oval Tool. Draw a circle with a 2px black stroke and a #E78C18 fill. Select the Pencil and draw in the body attached to the head. Add ears, a face and some details. Set the flesh colour to #F7CE9C for the ears, hands and feet. Give him a banana and apply a Drop Shadow.



26 Making mouse

Create a new symbol. Using the Pencil Tool draw a mouse body with a blue #9BB6D6 fill and a 2px stroke. Add in some detail in the face, select the Oval Tool. Draw a circle, copy and paste and position just off-centre. Fill in the flesh with #F7CE9C. Remember to give him some cheese.



28 Add some highlights

Add in highlight #EAEAEA and shadow #AEEAEA to the body and group. With the Pencil, draw in arms, legs and a head. Add highlights and shadows, group the individual objects so they don't cut each other out and layer them together. Close the symbol, add a 190-degree Shadow.



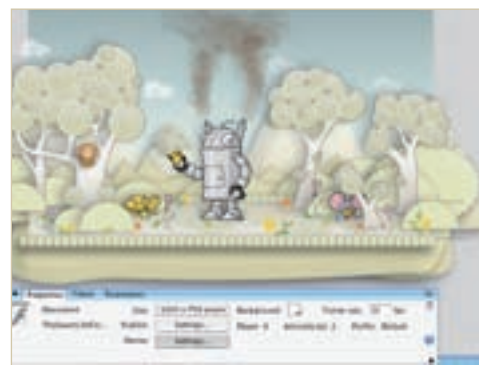
25 Drawing the turtle

Create a new symbol, add in two new layers. Select the Pencil. In the top layer draw a shell and an underbelly. Divide the shell into hexagonal sections, select all and group. Draw a head on the same layer, add some features. Draw in legs on the bottom layer, use four shades of green.



27 Robot rendering

Create a new layer on the root called 'Robot'. Select the Pencil. In Properties change the stroke to 2.75px. Set the colour to black and fill to #D1D1D1. Draw an irregular rectangle, convert to a symbol called Robot. Open this, select the shape and stroke and hit Smooth a few times.



29 Blowing smoke

Draw a cloud with the Pencil with no stroke and a fill of #643A13. Hit Smooth a few times. Select Modify>Shape>Soften fill edges and enter Distance=20px and Steps=4, hit OK. Convert to a symbol, add a Blur filter and duplicate several times adjusting the opacity, scale and rotation.





THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
start.fla
finished.fla and more

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create a 3D interface

TIME REQUIRED

1 hour

SKILL LEVEL



Create a 3D rotating menu with Flash

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR WEBSITE INTERFACE BY GIVING IT THE FULL BELLS AND WHISTLES WITH THIS FLASH-BASED 3D SPINNING MENU

WHAT DOES EVERY website have in common? It's simple, navigation. If you want to give your site a makeover so that it has that jaw-dropping effect on visitors, then why not start with giving your navigation an overhaul?

We've got a special tutorial for you this month – we're going to create a 3D spinning menu. All the elements appear around a circle, which, rather than just spinning, seems to spin off into the distance as well. To make this work, the menu icons will get smaller as it moves into the distance and larger in the

foreground. However, we know you want more than that, so we're also going to add a dynamic blur to the menu. The further into the distance the menu icon rotates, the more blur will be added and less as it rotates back into the foreground.

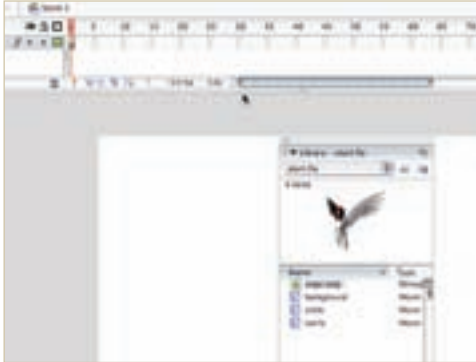
To add to the overall effect we will also add a highlight, which sparkles as the menu item is in the foreground. To continue this theme, we'll also program some random sparkling particles flowing around the angel. All graphics are on the CD as a starting point.



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.

Create a 3D rotating menu with Flash



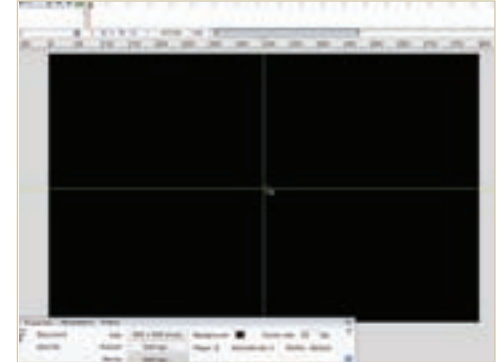
01 Open Flash 8

Start your copy of Flash 8 and from the cover CD open the file 'start.fla'. This file has some graphics we will use in the library already. Press Ctrl+L to open the library so that the symbols are readily available during the building process in the interface.



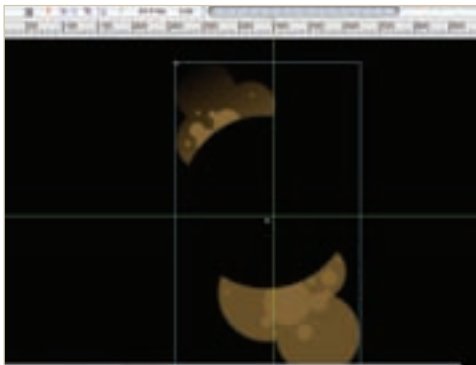
02 Modify the document

In the Properties palette click on the size button and in the pop-up window, change the size of the document to 800 pixels wide x 500 pixels high. Change the background colour of the document to black. Then make the Frame rate 24fps. Click OK to close the pop-up window.



03 Add a guide

So that we can line our content up centrally on the stage, go to the View menu and choose Rulers. From the top ruler, click and drag a guide onto the document. Drop the guide at 250 pixels. Add another guide from the left ruler and drop this at 400 pixels.



04 Add the background

Rename layer 1 'Background' by double-clicking on the layer name. From the library drag the symbol Background onto the stage. Position as shown in the screenshot above. With the Background instance still selected, click Filters in the Properties palette. Add a 4px blur to the background.



05 The centre graphic

Now create the graphic for the menu to revolve around. Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new symbol, make sure it's a Movie Clip. Name it 'Angel'. Click OK then add the 'angel.png' image to the centre of this new Movie Clip. Select the Paintbrush and choose black as the foreground colour.



06 Paint a blob

Paint a black area over the leg on the left side of the angel. Select the black area that's behind the angel. You'll have to drag around both with the Pointer Tool and Shift-click the angel so that only the blob is selected. Go to the Modify menu and convert this to a symbol naming it 'Dark'.



07 Make it transparent

With the paint blob selected, change the Color drop menu in Properties to Alpha. Change the Opacity to 80%. Now add a 20 pixel blur to this from the Filters tab in the Properties palette as before. This just darkens the back leg slightly, which makes it work better in the final piece.



08 Lock the layer

Lock this layer and create a new layer. Drag this new one below the first. Add the 'Circle' symbol from the library and drop it onto the stage. Position this using the Properties palette to -143.2px on the X and -139.4 on the Y. Alter the position of your angel to match the screenshot.



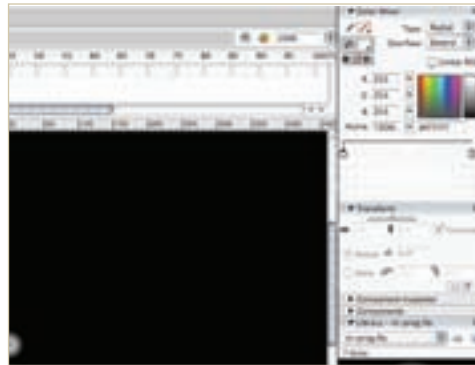
09 Add swirls

From the Properties palette add the symbol 'Swirls' to the stage and position on X at -151.6 and Y at -209.1 as before. Change the Color drop menu in the Properties palette to Alpha with a value of 80%. Change the Blend drop menu to Screen as shown above.



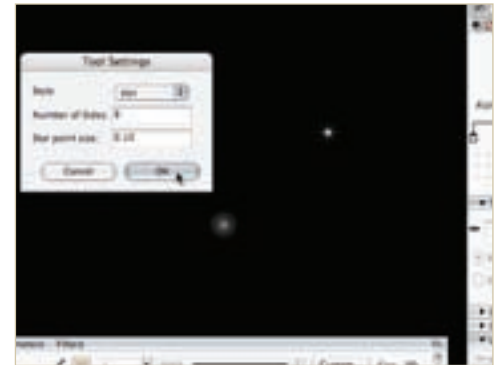
10 Add to the stage

Return back to the main stage of Scene 1 by clicking the icon just above the timeline. From the library drag the Angel symbol you just created onto the stage and position as shown in the screenshot above. Give the symbol the instance name of 'angel_mc' in the Properties palette.



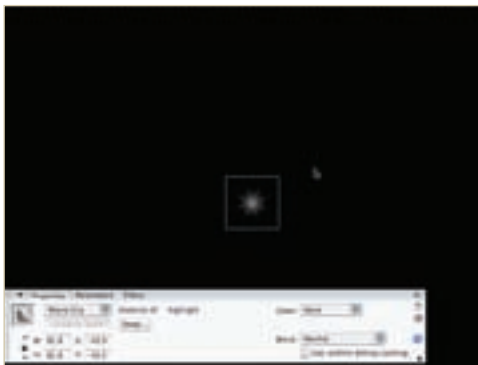
11 Create the highlight

Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new Movie Clip symbol. Name it 'Highlight' and press OK. Draw a circle on the stage, double-click the stroke and hit Delete. In the Color Mixer choose Radial for the fill. Make the left swatch white. Make the right swatch white but with an Alpha value of 100%.



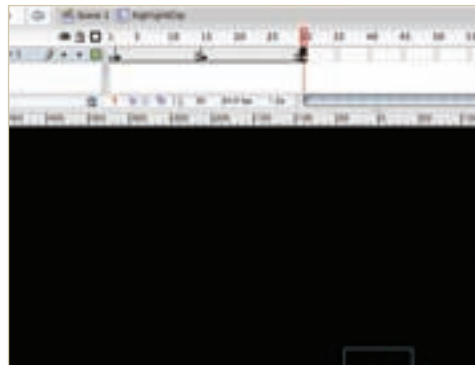
12 Add another swatch

Click on the gradient to add another swatch, make this white with a 20% Opacity. Position as shown. Use the Paintbucket to fill the circle. Now hold down the Rectangle Tool and select the Polystar Tool. In the Properties palette choose Options and fill in the pop-up menu as shown.



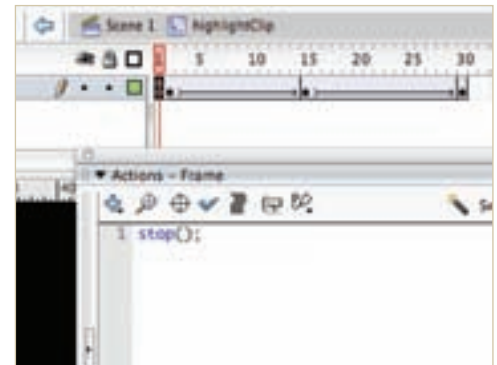
13 Combine shapes

Add the star, double-click the stroke and hit Delete to remove it. Place the star over the top of the circle, which should look like a sparkle. Now press Ctrl+F8 to create a new Movie Clip symbol and name it 'highlightClip'. Press OK and drag the highlightClip symbol to the stage.



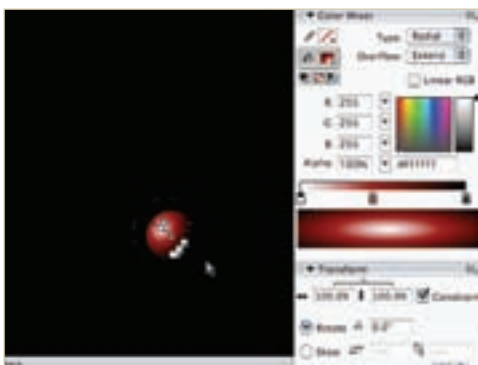
14 Spin the symbol

Drag the keyframe to Frame 2 so that Frame 1 is blank. Select Frame 15, add a keyframe. In the Transform palette add a 90° rotation. Add another keyframe at Frame 30. Here add a 180° rotation. Select a frame between the first keyframes and Shift-click a frame between the last ones.



15 Tween the symbol

In the Properties palette add a motion tween, this will rotate the highlight that will be used later. Now select Frame 1 and open the ActionScript panel. Type a 'stop();' command. Now press Ctrl+F8 again and create a new Movie Clip, name it 'Orb'. Press OK.



16 Add a circle

Use the Oval Tool to add a circle and double-click the stroke. Hit Delete to remove it. In the Color Mixer palette choose Radial as the fill and add a white, red and black swatch. Fill the circle then use the Fill Transform Tool to alter the shading as shown in the screenshot above.



17 Create the menu

Now we're ready to make the menu. Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new Movie Clip symbol, name it 'Menu'. Press OK. Drag in the Orb symbol and give it a red, 20 pixel Outer Glow. Select the Text Tool, making it Dynamic Text in the Properties palette. Add a letter as shown over the orb.



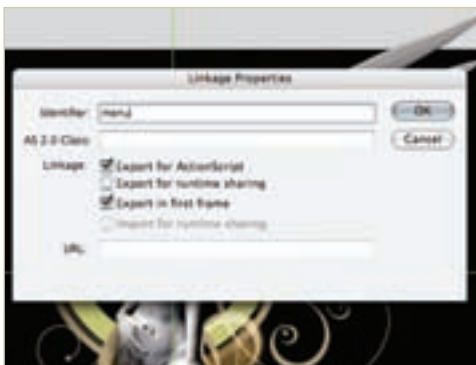
18 More dynamic text

We've made the text 48pt and typeface 'Diploma'. Click Embed on the Properties palette and add upper case letters, then close the window. Give the text field a variable name of 'txtLetter'. Add another text field below this and fill the Properties palette as shown above.



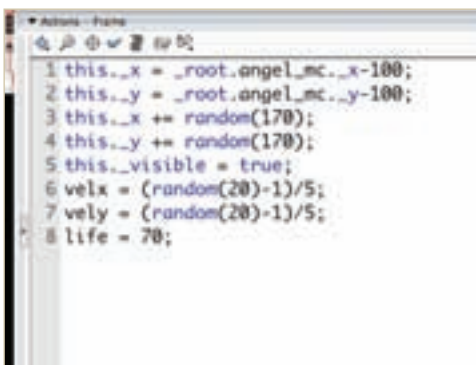
19 Add a highlight

From the library, drag the highlightClip to the stage and position the white dot over the highlight on the orb. Select the orb again and in Properties change the Color to Alpha with a value of 80%. Right-click the Menu symbol in the library and choose Linkage from the pop-up window.



20 Add a linkage name

In the pop-up window click the option 'Export for ActionScript' and name the Identifier 'menu'. Now create some random sparkling particles. Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new Movie Clip symbol and name it 'Sparkle'. Press OK. Drag the highlightClip symbol onto the stage.



21 Add code

Select Frame 3 and press F5 to extend the timeline. Now create a new layer, select Frame 1 and open the ActionScript editor. Add the code as shown above which positions the sparkles on the stage in a random position around the centre of the angel. Then some random numbers are set up for movement.

IN DETAIL

Customising the menu

Obviously you'll want to put this tutorial into action within the context of your own project. Here we explain exactly how to add more or less links and change the graphics

THIS MENU HAS been designed entirely with the thought in mind that other menus will probably have more links or less links. The list of links is generated automatically from the number of entries in the Array, which keeps track of all the links. This is dynamically calculated in line 14 of the code in the document 'final fla'. The links themselves can be added by replicating any of the lines of code between line 4 and line 9. All that has to be changed is the number in square brackets, so, the next menu item would be:

```
links[7] = ["url_here", "name_of_link", "letter_to_display"];
```

Once the number of the link has been changed, then there are three pieces of information required. The first being the URL of the link, as you can see from the above code. Following that, is the name that you want to give to the link, such as 'tutorials'. The last bit of information needed is the letter that will be displayed larger. In this case it will be 'T'. There are ways to extract the first letter from the link, but this is probably a quicker way to write it in code as it would require splitting the text into an Array for each letter and grabbing the first to display it.

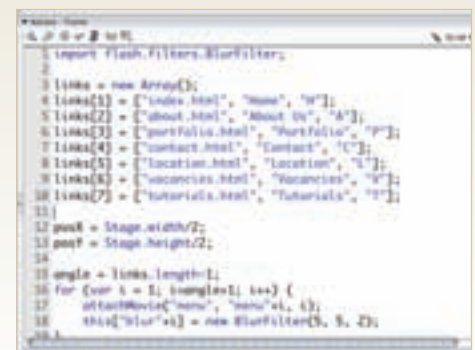
If you don't want to load a new SWF to load and replace the existing one. If you want to load it over the top, then change the digit '0' at the end of the line to '1'.

This would cause the new SWF to load and replace the existing one. If you want to load it over the top, then change the digit '0' at the end of the line to '1'.

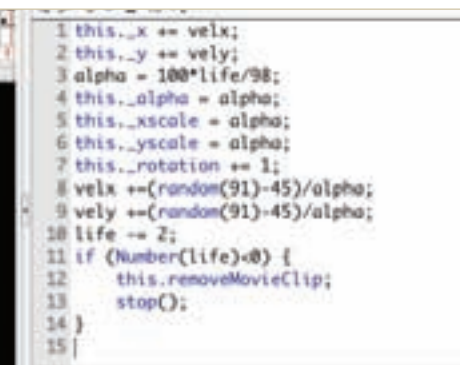
If the graphics for the links need to be changed then open up the Orb symbol in the library and replace the sphere shape in there. This will update the menu accordingly. The angel in the centre may not suit your own site, so you can replace this and give your new symbol an instance name, just ensure you also add the same instance name to line 82.



Not every menu you create will have the exact same number of links. As such, it's easy to add extra links in to the menu

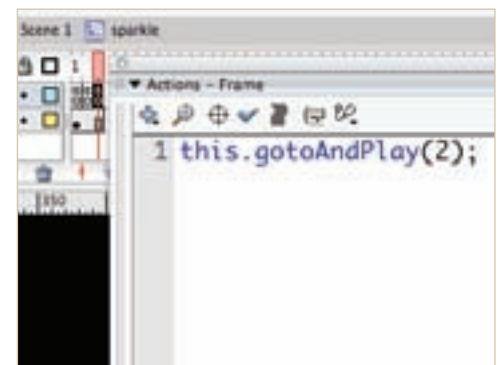


Simply adding another Array to the list will be enough to place the link in the spinning menu. Add as many as you like to customise



22 More code

Select Frame 2 and press F6 to add a keyframe then add the code shown above. This adds the random positions to the X and Y co-ordinates and sets up the Alpha value and scaling for the Movie Clip. Then new random positions are generated for the X and Y axis. If the 'life' reaches 0 then the Movie Clip is deleted.



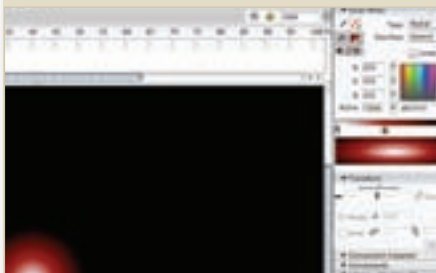
23 A bit more...

Add another keyframe at Frame 3 and add the ActionScript shown in the screenshot. This loops the playhead back to the previous code so that the particle is moved to the new random position. This means that the particle will dance around gently as it slowly fades out and gets smaller, eventually disappearing and spawning again.

TECHNIQUE

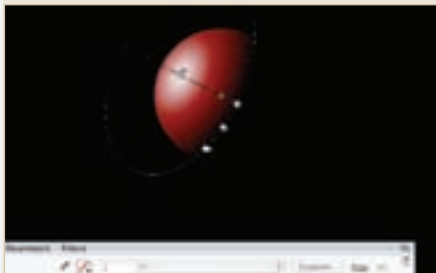
Custom gradients

In the main tutorial we use the Gradient Transform Tool to create gradients. Here we describe how this is achieved



01 Applying gradients

Once a gradient has been set up in the Color Mixer, it's really easy to apply this to any graphic on the stage. Select the Paintbucket Tool and then click on the graphic. The only problem is that we quite often need to edit the direction or size of the gradient.



02 Gradient Transform

Select the Gradient Transform Tool from the toolbar. Click on the graphic with a gradient applied and you'll see a circular shape for a Radial gradient. The white spots allow you to scale, rotate and squeeze the gradient as well as move the centre.



03 Linear gradients

If you're using a Linear gradient then the options look slightly different to the ones for a Radial gradient, but have the same functions – rotation, squeezing and moving the gradient. This tool is invaluable to set up realistic shading.



24 Position on the stage

Return to the main stage of Scene 1 and drag the Sparkle Movie Clip to the stage. It doesn't really matter where you place this as it will be moved in the code we added. With the symbol selected name the instance 'particle_mc' in the Properties palette as shown above.

26 Attach Movie Clips

Now add the code that's laid out below. This next lot of code grabs the centre of the stage width and height, storing the values in variables posX and posY. The angle variable is given the value of how many entries are in the Array. A 'for' loop is used to add a Movie Clip to the stage for each menu item and the blur filter is added to it.

```
posX = Stage.width/2;
posY = Stage.height/2;

angle = links.length-1;
for (var i = 1; i<angle+1; i++) {
    attachMovie("menu", "menu"+i, i);
    this["blur"+i] = new BlurFilter(5, 5, 2);
}
```

```
_global.rotating = true;
mousePos = ((_root._xmouse-posX)/100);
```

28 Check the distance

The distance variable is taken from the current depth that the Movie Clip is at, which will be somewhere around 1000. So the number is reduced down by subtracting 900 and dividing by 4. This leaves a number between 0 and 5. The 'if' statement checks this number and applies a blur.

```
distance = this["menu"+i].getDepth()-900;
distance = Math.round(distance/40);
if (distance == 5) {
    this["blur"+i].blurX = 0;
    this["blur"+i].blurY = 0;
    this["menu"+i].filters = [this["blur"+i]];
    this["menu"+i].highlight_mc.play();
}
if (distance == 4) {
    this["blur"+i].blurX = 1;
    this["blur"+i].blurY = 1;
    this["menu"+i].filters = [this["blur"+i]];
}
```

25 Code layer

Now we're moving into the coding steps of this tutorial. So start by creating a new layer and name it 'Code'. Select Frame 1 of the Code layer and open the ActionScript editor. Add the code as shown below to the editor. The first line imports Flash's blur filter code so that we can dynamically blur the menu as it rotates. Next we set up an Array and nest another Array in each position with the link information.

```
import flash.filters.BlurFilter;

links = new Array();
links[1] = ["index.html", "Home", "H"];
links[2] = ["about.html", "About Us", "A"];
links[3] = ["portfolio.html", "Portfolio", "P"];
links[4] = ["contact.html", "Contact", "C"];
links[5] = ["location.html", "Location", "L"];
links[6] = ["vacancies.html", "Vacancies", "V"];
```

27 Check each frame

Add this code next. It checks every frame to update the position of the menu items.

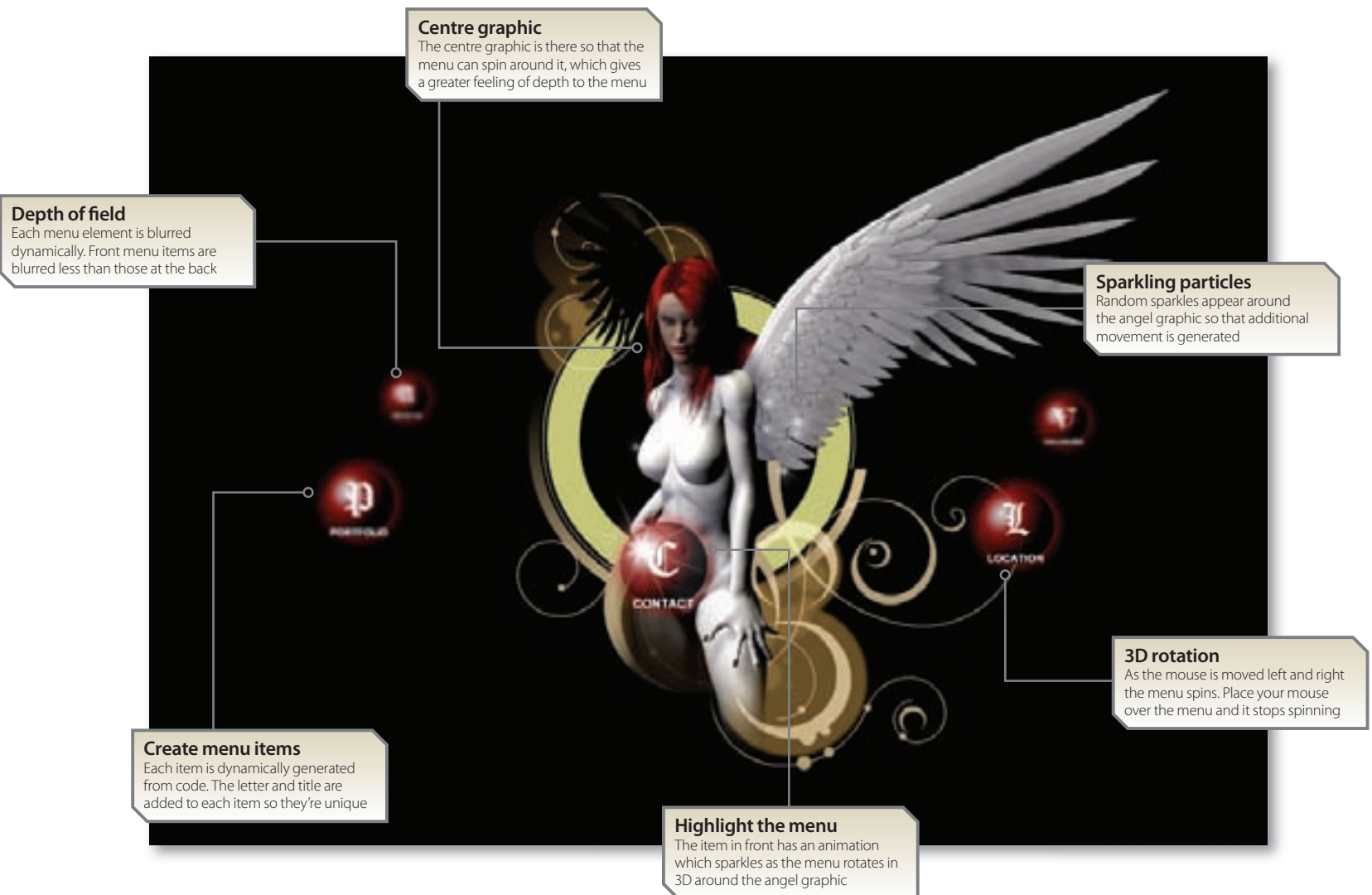
```
this.onEnterFrame = function() {
    if (rotating) {
        mousePos += ((_root._xmouse-posX)/100);
        for (var i = 1; i<angle+1; i++) {
            depth = ((mousePos+(360/angle*i))*Math.PI)/180;
            this["menu"+i].x = posX+(Math.sin(depth)*300);
            this["menu"+i].y = posY+(Math.cos(depth)*83);
            this["menu"+i].xscale = 100+(Math.cos(depth)*50);
            this["menu"+i].yscale = 100+(Math.cos(depth)*50);
            this["menu"+i].swapDepths(1000+(Math.cos(depth)*100));
        }
    }
}
```

29 Remaining checks

Add the following. Notice how the higher the number, the less of a blur is given.

```
if (distance == 3) {
    this["blur"+i].blurX = 2;
    this["blur"+i].blurY = 2;
    this["menu"+i].filters = [this["blur"+i]];
}
if (distance == 2) {
    this["blur"+i].blurX = 3;
    this["blur"+i].blurY = 3;
    this["menu"+i].filters = [this["blur"+i]];
}
if (distance == 1) {
    this["blur"+i].blurX = 4;
    this["blur"+i].blurY = 4;
    this["menu"+i].filters = [this["blur"+i]];
}
```


Create a 3D rotating menu with Flash



30 Add menu text

The last check for distance is carried out, then the menu gets the letter added to it in the centre from the Array we set up in step 25. Likewise, the name of the link is added from the same Array. If the menu is pressed, then Flash is told to go to the relevant URL that we added in step 25.

```
if (distance == 0) {  
    this["blur"+i].blurX = 5;  
    this["blur"+i].blurY = 5;  
    this["menu"+i].filters =  
    [this["blur"+i]];  
}  
this["menu"+i].txtName = links[i][1].  
toUpperCase();  
this["menu"+i].txtLetter = links[i][2].  
toUpperCase();  
this["menu"+i].url = links[i][0];  
this["menu"+i].onRelease = function() {  
    getURL(this.url, "_target");  
    rotating = false;  
};
```



31 Roll over and out

If the menu is rolled over then the rotating is paused so that the item can easily be selected. If the mouse moves out from over the menu then the rotating variable is set back to 'true' and the menu will start to rotate again so the user can select a different menu item.

```
this["menu"+i].onRollOver = function() {  
    rotating = false;  
};  
this["menu"+i].onRollOut = function() {  
    rotating = true;  
};  
});
```

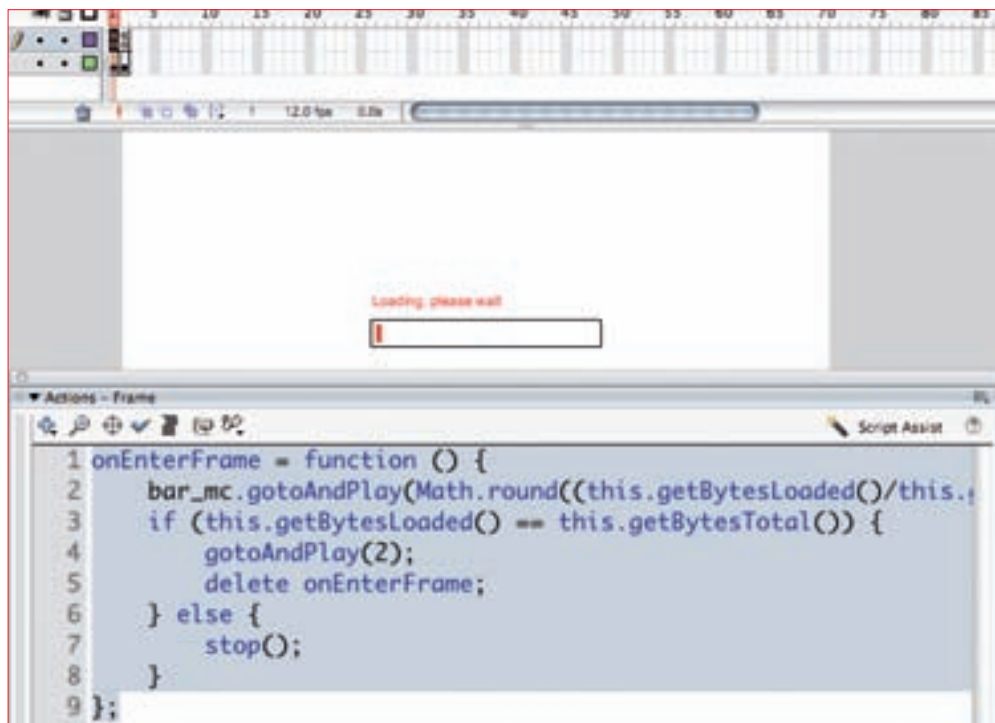
32 Final text

Add the last code which moves the angel Movie Clip so that the menu moves round the back as it rotates. The particle is set to duplicate the Particle Movie Clip at random times. Press Ctrl+Enter to test the final Flash document and use the menu.

```
angel_mc.swapDepths(999+1);  
var n = 1;  
var counter = 0;  
particle_mc._visible = false;  
particle_mc.onEnterFrame = function() {  
    var r = random(5);  
    var clip;  
    if (r == 1) {  
        duplicateMovieClip(particle  
_mc, "dust"+n, n+1500);  
        n += 1;  
    }  
};  
stop();
```

Tech Support Flash

Mark Shufflebottom returns with another dose of technical advice to ensure that your Flash headaches don't leave you banging your head against the wall



Preloaders for SWF files that you're loading into other Movie Clips can't contain any references to '_root', but instead must reference 'this'

Q Preloader failure

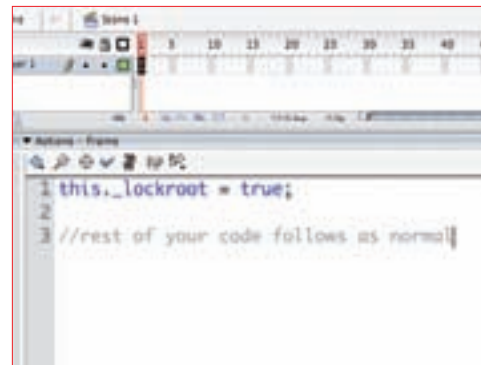
I'm having problems with loading SWFs. I'm trying to load an external SWF into my main SWF but when I do, the preloader for the external SWF doesn't work. I have references to '_root' in the external SWF, as I need to find out the mouse position in order for the animation to work, but if I change it to '_this' it doesn't work. I think this might be what's wrong, but I can't figure out the alternative. Any ideas would be gratefully received!

Gemma Baker

A Essentially what seems to be giving you the trouble here is a simple typo, so the problem should be simple to solve. In Flash there's no such command as '_this', as it's just 'this' without the underscore. Obviously you've got a little confused in the change from '_root'. Here's some code that I've tested working, loading into levels, loading into Movie Clips and replacing the existing SWF. It works in all of those situations so feel assured that this is a sure solution, just drop it into Frame 1 of the movie you're trying to load:

```
onEnterFrame = function () {  
    bar_mc.gotoAndPlay(Math.  
        round((this.getBytesLoaded()/this.  
            getBytesTotal()*100));  
    if (this.getBytesLoaded() ==  
        this.getBytesTotal()) {  
        gotoAndPlay(2);  
        delete  
onEnterFrame;  
    } else {  
        stop();  
    }  
};
```

All you need to do is place a Movie Clip on the stage that contains an animation of a bar loading. This Clip should be 100 frames long with the first frame showing the bar not loaded and the final frame showing the bar 100% loaded. Name the instance of this 'bar_mc' on the stage. This code checks every frame to see how many of the bytes have been loaded from the total number of bytes and this is turned into a whole-number percentage. The bar is sent to



The best kept secret of Flash is a little command called '_lockroot'. Use this if you're loading content that references the main stage of the loading SWF as root

the appropriate percentage frame, so if it's 47% loaded, the bar animation is sent to frame 47, which will show the animation of the bar at 47%. Once it has loaded, the 'onEnterFrame' function is deleted and the timeline is pushed onto Frame 2 which will contain your content. As you can see, it's very simple, with no mention of '_root'.

Q Code complaints

I've realised that when I externally loaded an SWF into my main movie, the ActionScript that I added didn't work. The code worked when it was on its own, but failed once loaded with the main movie. Is there a way I can get it to work?

Steve Carver

A The problem that you're facing is quite common. A file works fine on its own often because certain code refers to '_root'. This is fine, but as soon as it's loaded into a separate movie then it becomes local to the original Movie Clip. This was the problem we faced in our first question from Gemma. The problem is, we don't necessarily want to go through an entire movie and make sure we change all of our code. Thankfully there is a solution which is so small that it should be the first piece of code that anyone learns when attempting to load other SWF files. In the movie you're trying to load open the code on Frame 1 and place the following:

```
this._lockroot = true;
```

As you can see this code is very small and works with the minimum of fuss. The code references itself with the use of 'this' and then tells Flash to lock the root to itself. If you load content to levels such as '_level1', etc, or if you load into a Movie Clip, your SWF should work correctly by inserting this little code in the beginning of the file. Remember, it's added to the movie you're trying to load, not the loading movie.

Q Rewind the timeline

I want to rewind the timeline of an external SWF when a rewind button is clicked. After it has rewound, I want to remove it from the main SWF file. I'm sure this is possible to do, isn't it?

David Murray

"THE ONLY TIME YOU SHOULD ROTATE AN IMAGE IN FLASH IS WHEN IT'S CONTINUOUSLY ROTATING AS ANIMATION"



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

Hi David, thanks for your question and the simple answer is yes, you'll be glad to hear. This is possible to do and doesn't really require too much programming thankfully.

First of all, you need a button on the stage that loads your movie. Give this button the instance name of 'load_btn'. Now create your rewind button and give this the instance name of 'rewind_btn'. To make this work, you need a Movie Clip to load your SWF into. The code below references a Movie Clip with the instance name of 'movie_mc'. Now you need to create a new layer and open the ActionScript editor, adding the following code:

```
var rewind:Boolean = false;
var playhead:Number;
load_btn.onPress = function() {
    loadMovie("external.swf",
"movie_mc");
};
rewind_btn.onPress = function() {
    rewind = true;
};
rewind_btn.onRelease = function() {
    rewind = false;
};
onEnterFrame = function() {
    if (rewind == true) {
        playhead = movie_
mc._currentframe-3;
        movie_mc.gotoAndSto
p(playhead);
        if (playhead<=1){
            unloadMovie(movie_mc);
        }
    }
};
```



Rewinding movies is simple with this code, plus it unloads the movie when it has fully rewound. It can do the same for when it finishes playing too, with just a little modification

```
};
};
```

Two variables take care of whether the movie is rewinding or not, while the playhead variable stores the frame number. The 'load_btn' onPress function loads the external SWF file into the 'movie_mc' when it's pressed and is fairly straightforward as code goes.

The rewind button sets the rewind variable to 'true' when pressed and 'false' when released. This variable is picked up in the onEnterFrame function which does the actual rewinding. In here, if the rewind variable is set to 'true' then the playhead variable is set to three frames prior to the current one. The playhead is moved to this new frame number and an 'if' statement checks to see if the playhead variable is less than, or equal to, one. If it is, then it unloads the movie as requested.

Expert advice

Problem code

If you're new to Flash, you're probably wondering why on earth people are having so many problems getting code to work when they're loading an external SWF into the program. The answer is that often, variables on the main timeline are referenced using '_root.variableName'. This gives easy access to any variable on the main timeline. However, the problems occur because when you import a SWF into another SWF, it's nested, meaning that it's no longer the main timeline. Using '_root.variableName' will try to reference a variable in the new SWF's root. Therefore the code doesn't work. In cases such as these, all ActionScript should be added with reference to '_parent', or alternatively, all code should be placed on the same timeline, so '_root' – which is the problem causer – never has to be called.

```
1 links[4] = ["contact.html", "Contact", "C"];
2 links[5] = ["location.html", "location", "L"];
3 links[6] = ["vacancies.html", "Vacancies", "V"];
4
5
6
7 posX = Stage.width/2;
8 posY = Stage.height/2;
9
10 angle = links.length-1;
11 for (var i = 1; i<angle; i++) {
12     attachMovie("menu", "menu"+i, 1);
13     this["blur"+i] = new BlurFilter(5, 5, 2);
14 }
15
16 _global.rotating = true;
17 mousePos = ([_root._mousePosX]/100);
18
19 this.onEnterFrame = function() {
20     if (rotating) {
21         _root._mousePosX = FF root._mousePosX/100;
22     }
23 }
```

Get to the root of the problem... those nasty little code errors can cause havoc with your pages, so make sure you get it right

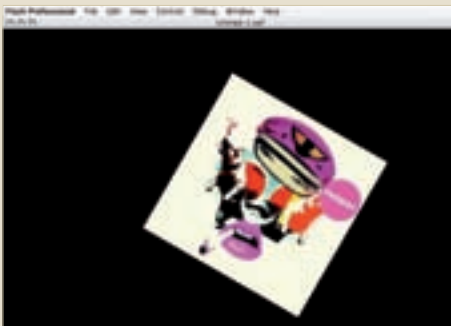
Technique: Rotating images

Q

I have a PNG image that I need to bring into Flash. It's a basic image and when I bring it into Flash it looks okay. When it plays within Flash it's still fine, but when I preview it and it actually runs, it looks really bad. I did have to rotate the image a little – is this the problem? Should I rotate it in Photoshop first? Also, what else can I do to make images look better in Flash? *Carl James*

A

Images always look better if rotated in Photoshop. This is down to the pixels slightly misaligning when rotated, causing one pixel to possibly overlap two pixels producing an ugly effect. You'll notice when you rotate in Photoshop it looks bad until you double-click, then the pixels are changed for good. Make sure the images are positioned at whole pixels and don't overlap.



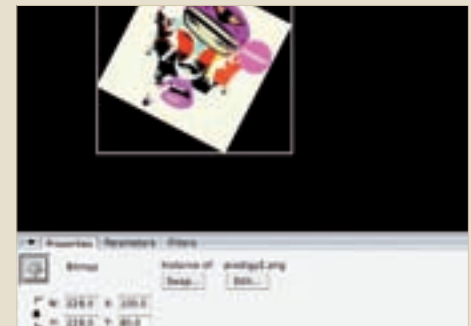
01 Bad rotation

Any rotation that takes place in Flash isn't going to look great. The only time you should rotate an image in Flash is when it's continuously rotating as animation, otherwise if it's stationary, it will look bad because the pixels are not being aligned as they should.



02 Good rotation

Rotate an image first in Photoshop to get a good result. Notice how this image doesn't look right, that's because it hasn't been rendered yet, it's still the preview. Double-click to commit the change, then import this to Flash.



03 Whole numbers

Make sure the image is placed on the stage at a whole number on both the X and Y axis. If you're loading an image dynamically, then add the Movie Clip to the stage at the whole number as well, this way the image will be rendered pixel for pixel.



THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
Flat.jpg, Pattern1.jpg
Pattern2.jpg and more

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

How to create great imagery to entertain your site's visitors

TIME REQUIRED


1.5 hours

SKILL LEVEL

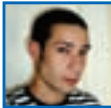


Create edgy frames for your site's loading bar

LOADING BARS ARE THE QUEUES OF THE INTERNET. NOBODY LIKES QUEUES, SO WHY NOT MAKE YOURS SOMETHING TO VISUALLY ENTERTAIN YOUR AUDIENCE AND KEEP THEM HAPPY?

 **ALL LARGE WEBSITES** need a preloader to be fully functional. It's a great way of letting the viewer know that there is content on the way and how long they have to wait, as opposed to a blank screen that can be confused with a crashed site. A common problem for many sites is the loading time and for the viewer, staring at a lonely, slow-loading bar can be agony and may cause them to click away from your website. So

why not create some eye candy to accompany the loading bar and help entertain your audience while your site is loading? This tutorial will guide you through step-by-step to create a load-bar frame with an edgy, urban look and feel. We'll show you how to manipulate photos with ease and how to make the most of some textures you may have lying around, right up to finishing off the image by using adjustment layers.



YOUR EXPERT

James Kingman has been creative since he was old enough to hold a crayon. Despite only just graduating from the UCCA where he studied Graphic Design, he has already worked with a variety of clients, including AOL and Vauxhall www.jameskingman.com.

Create edgy frames for your site's loading bar



01 Creating the document

Open a new document 297 x 210mm, 300dpi, RGB. It's better to start off with a larger document and then downscale it to suit your website, rather than scaling it up as this always causes a loss of quality in the image (unless it's a vector-based one, of course).



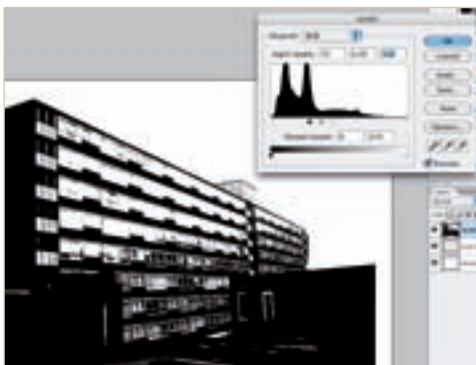
02 The main frame

First, we're going to create the loading bar frame. This will give a visual guideline of what we're going to work around and what size and shape the preloader will be. Think about what you want your load bar to look like, then create your own shape ready for scripting later.



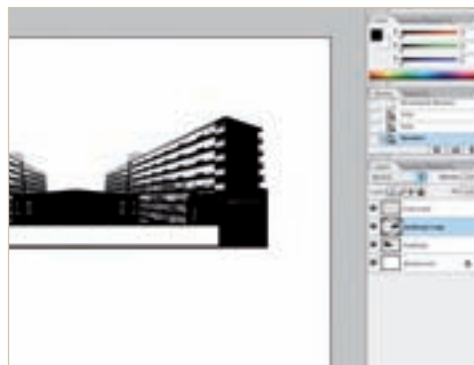
03 Cutting out the building

Open the file 'Flat.jpg' provided on the CD and with the Pen Tool trace the outline of the building. Once you've completed this, hit Ctrl+Enter to make a selection. Copy and paste the building into the main file you're working on. Don't forget to put a title on the layer.



04 Adjusting the levels

We're going to give the building a simple edgy effect. This effect will set the tone of the look and feel of the frame we're creating. Desaturate the building by pressing Shift+Ctrl+U. Then hit Ctrl+L to open the Levels. We've set the input levels to 72, 1.00, 116.



05 Resize the building

Now press Ctrl+T, then resize the building so it fits roughly in the middle of the load bar. Duplicate the building by holding Alt and dragging the building across. Make sure that the Building layer and the Move Tool is selected. Now position them as shown in the screenshot.



06 Security cameras

Open 'Securitycams.jpg' from the CD. With the Pen Tool, cut out the security camera, just like we did with the building. Paste it into the main document. Desaturate the cameras, adjust the levels and duplicate as we did to the buildings. For reference, see the screenshot above.



07 First pattern

Now we're going to start putting in some patterns in the image. Open the file 'Pattern1.jpg' and again use the Pen Tool to cut it out. Copy and paste the pattern into the main image. Put the layer so it's above the buildings and open the Levels and make the Output Levels 0, 0.



08 Positioning the first pattern

Continuing with the symmetrical look we've built up, resize, duplicate and reposition the pattern as in the screenshot. Open 'Pattern2.jpg' and cut out the pattern and paste it into the new document. Place the layer below the Pattern1 layer and above the Building layer.



09 Using masks

Duplicate the Pattern2 layer and add a mask to it, then hide the original. Cut around one of the frills at the end of the pattern with the Pen Tool, make a selection and with the mask layer selected use the Paintbucket Tool to mask out the unwanted part.

TECHNIQUE

Adding some final touches

You've finished your image but it needs tightening. Here are a couple of handy tips that can make an instant impact



01 Deepening the colours

You may notice that the colours seem a bit washed out. To bring the colour out, duplicate all the coloured layers. Straight away you'll see the colours become more punchy. Don't be afraid to take a brush to the mask on the duplicate layer.



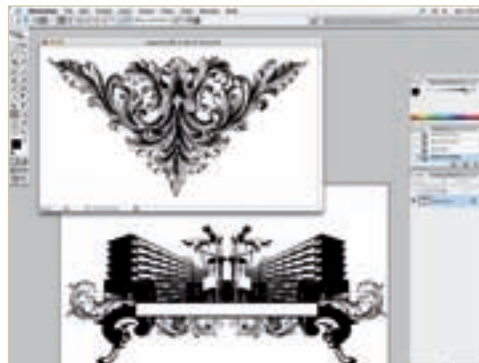
02 Tidying the shadows

Now duplicate the main layer and set the new layer to 50% Opacity. Merge all the shadow layers together and select the main layer. With the merged shadow layer still selected, hit Delete.



03 Colour balance

On the Layers palette next to the Mask button is a New Fill/Adjustment Layer button. Select Color Balance, and adjust the settings to your own liking. We've adjusted the settings to give a slight coffee-stained colour to the buildings to signify age.



10 Building the image

Start layering Pattern2 around the outskirts of the main load bar frame. Duplicate and position them as you wish, but keep things symmetrical. Open 'Pattern3.jpg'. Cut it out and copy and paste it into the main image. Open the Levels palette and adjust the Output Levels to 0, 0.



12 Applying the first texture

Open the file 'Texture2.psd'. Desaturate and adjust the levels so the swipe is black. Then go to Edit>Define brush preset, hit OK. In the main document create a new layer at the bottom, choose a colour of your choice and use the brush you just created. Set the Blending Mode to Multiply.



14 Adding colour

Merge all the layers apart from the Load bar, Shadows, Texture and load. Select the merged layer by Ctrl-clicking on the Layers palette. Create a new layer above the merged layer. Fill the selection with a colour, add a mask and begin to work into the colour with a brush.



11 Merge the layers

Place Pattern3 in the centre of the load bar and as the bottom layer. Continue to build around the frame by duplicating and cutting parts of the frills until you're happy with the amount of coverage around the frame. At this point you can merge the two building layers together.



13 Adding shadows

We're going to add some shadow to each object, this will give the image a small sense of depth. Duplicate each object layer and adjust the levels on the bottom. Duplicate to complete black. Then apply a Gaussian Blur set to 26 with a 40% Opacity on the layer.



15 Grainy texture

Open 'Texture1.jpg' and make it into one big brush or lots of smaller ones. Select the main merged layer and add a mask to it. Select your new brush and start to work some opacity into some areas on that layer. Now would be a good time to tighten the colours that you've used.



ConverseRussia

www.converserussia.ru



TOP TIP



Animated bitmaps

Using manipulated layers, animation is simple to create

There are several areas within the movie that contain elements that react when the mouse rolls over them. The basketball player in the top-left corner releases an interactive ball that bounces around the screen (much like the Redball in Dashboard). The arm swings from the shoulder and is controlled via the reg point. The graphic contains an alpha channel and as the edges remain smooth when animated, it's more than likely that these are PNGs.

It seems so long ago now that the first McDonalds establishment was opened in Moscow and since the end of the Cold War there have been a steady trickle of western products hitting the eastern metaphorical shores.

Converse, the classic basketball trainer that has recently regained popularity thanks to the late Kirt Cobain, can be seen adorning the feet of any fashion conscious teenager and sports fan alike. To this end, the Russian arm of Converse has created a fantastic Flash-based website. It incorporates the history of the brand, while capturing the company's demographic, with the interface's funky design clearly aimed at the youth market.

Although the site is viewed through a Flash movie, it incorporates many Photoshop elements in the form of animated GIFs and many cut out graphics pieced together within a movie symbol. As there are a lot of elements to load, it does take a moment, but don't worry as the cool basketballer preloader will keep you entertained.

This is a very fashionable site, as its look and feel of hand-sketched elements all pieced together is very popular in the present market. The look can be seen in everything from mobile phone adverts, such as the recent Vodafone campaign, print advertising and even game interfaces such as *SSX On Tour*, not to mention other websites out there that are utilising this style to great effect.



Animations

Animated GIFs are everywhere in this interface. Some are interactive and some are set to loop

Layered up

Layered textured graphics are used throughout the interface to create this funky, fashionable look

Design in Photoshop first

Design elements of your site in Photoshop before exporting them to Flash

This entire interface was designed in Photoshop first, then all of the elements isolated and exported (as GIFs, JPGs and PNGs) and rebuilt in Flash, a technique that we at *Web Designer* believe in. The graphics are layered, so that some elements interact while sections are hidden, maintaining a feeling of depth. If the element requires an alpha channel and is not animated, then the PNG format is the best option to use. If you require an animated bitmap with an alpha channel then you could either use an animated GIF, or export the frames individually as PNGs then piece them



together in Flash. Nowadays, either option works, but a GIF does keep the file size down so depending on how much is going on in your movie will determine which option is best.

Scanned artwork

To produce the rough-sketch look of this site, dig out the pen and pencil and get drawing

There are two ways of achieving the sketched artwork effect. The first is with a graphics tablet and drawing straight into Photoshop. Alternatively, it's the more traditional pencil and paper method, drawing out some elements, scanning them into Photoshop and then redrawing using a combination of the Pen Tool and Wand. Keeping the graphic in greyscale will make it easier to isolate areas and achieve good, strong black lines. Use the Levels function to set the white balance and create a good contrast. Once you're happy with the contrast and cleaned



up any problem areas, convert to RGB and start adding colour. Use the Sketch or Roughen filters to add additional textures, but the key is to keep it simple.



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.



Drawn by hand

Hand drawn illustrations are used in abundance to add to the rough effect of the site design

There in a Flash

Flash elements are seamlessly incorporated next to the bitmaps to produce these great animations

Layered textures

Search the internet for images to make up some interesting textures

There are two sets of textures here – material and wallpaper. Both can be achieved by either getting images from the internet (making sure not to infringe upon any copyright laws) or by layering up a few filters and gradient overlays. If you're going to use other people's imagery then make sure that you alter it enough so it doesn't resemble the original. The Texture filter can provide a good and believable cotton feel, but it's the different shades of colour and the imperfections of torn edges and shadows that'll achieve a photorealistic effect. In this case, the imagery is built

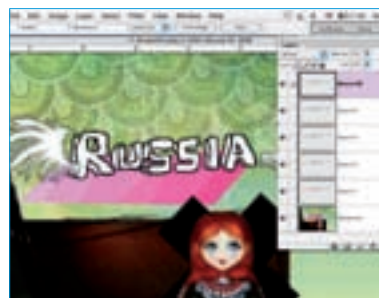


up and layered on top of each other with feathered edges. This is achieved by applying a Layer Mask and using the Brush Tool with a soft edge and drawing in the areas you wish to hide.

STEP BY STEP

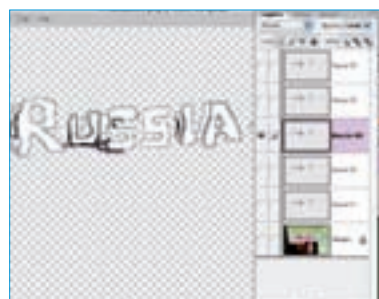
Animated GIFs

Stop motion animation in Flash with GIFs created in Photoshop and ImageReady



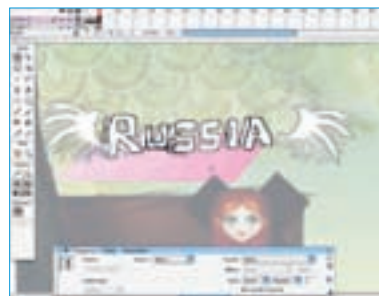
01 Photoshop

All of the headers are animated GIFs designed in Photoshop, created in ImageReady and imported into Flash. The animations are only three different images run over five frames, giving a random feel to the headers and maintaining the style of the interface.



02 ImageReady

Open the graphic in ImageReady with the three different layers. Create five new frames in the timeline and starting with Frame 1 hide all the layers apart from the first. Select Frame 2 and layer 2, select Frame 3 and layer 1 and continue this non-linear approach for the remaining frames.



03 Flash

Export the graphic and switch to Flash. From the menu select File> Import> Import to Library. Create a new layer in the root of the timeline and create a new symbol on this layer. Open the library and drag in your GIF. In the library right-click on the GIF and ensure Allow Smoothing is selected.

The classic trainers

Eye-catching imagery created by illustrating on top of simple photography

The main eye-catching element in this interface is classic Converse trainers at the top of the screen. If you take a closer look at this graphic, you'll notice that it's simply a photograph that has been illustrated on top of. This effect was achieved by cutting out the main part of the trainer, isolating the rubber sole and illustrating the laces. The trainer has a dry brush filter applied to add a painted effect over the top of it and the sole is illustrated in a hand-sketch-style. Ink splatters are added for that extra rough element and detail, where it's lost, is replaced in the photograph in the form



of sketches. To place them in the scene, a shadow is placed under the sole on the textured background, without this they would simply float in mid air.



THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create standards-compliant, CSS web pages with Microsoft Expression

TIME REQUIRED


2 hours

SKILL LEVEL



Setting standards with Microsoft Expression

WE GIVE MICROSOFT'S NEW, STANDARDS-FRIENDLY WEB APPLICATION A TEST RUN, BY CREATING A SIMPLE PAGE LAYOUT AND BRINGING IT TO LIFE WITH SOME EYE-CATCHING CSS STYLING

 **SIT A BUNCH** of internet professionals down to discuss the day's most important topics in web design and you can be sure conversation would come around to the issues of accessibility and standards-compliance. Mention Microsoft's FrontPage (the software giant's much-reviled attempt to integrate web development into its Office suite) and the teeth-grashing would be heard for miles around. With its clunky code, FrontPage was for many the antithesis to standards-based authoring. Step forwards then Expression Web. Billing

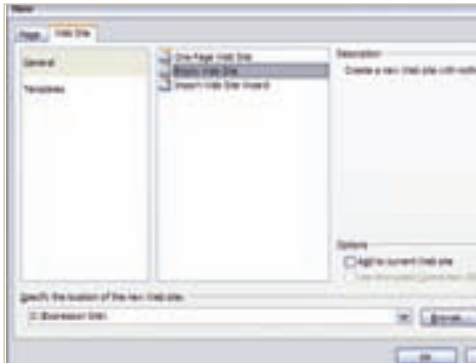
itself as a professional design tool, which promises to create 'standards-based CSS and XHTML-compliant websites', Expression Web looks to be everything a humble standards-ist could wish for. The package also boasts extensive support for Microsoft ASP.NET and provides an easy way to integrate XML data, but that's a topic for another day. We'll be focusing on its core strengths, throwing together the simplest of pages and leveraging Expression Web's HTML abilities to create a stylish, striking and standards-friendly design.



YOUR EXPERT

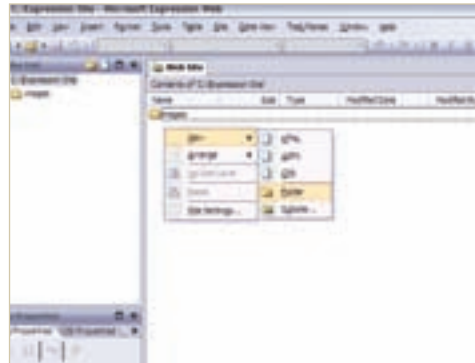
Ian Davenport has years of professional website design under his belt and is passionate about CSS, over enthusiastic about web standards, and just a little too obsessive about accessibility. He makes use of all this on a daily basis for www.wordsun.co.uk.

Setting standards with Microsoft Expression



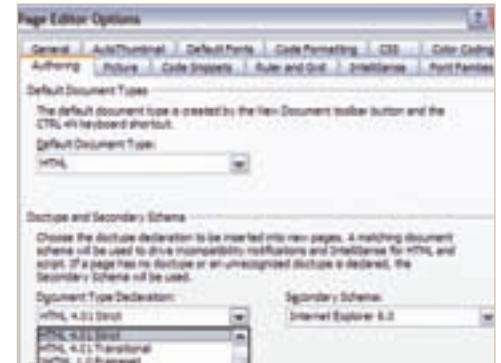
01 Setting up the site

We'll begin by creating an empty site from the File menu. Once you've specified the location of the site, Expression Web will set up the folder. Traces of FrontPage's legacy can be seen, as it adds hidden metadata to the site to track changes. These can be disabled from the Site Settings.



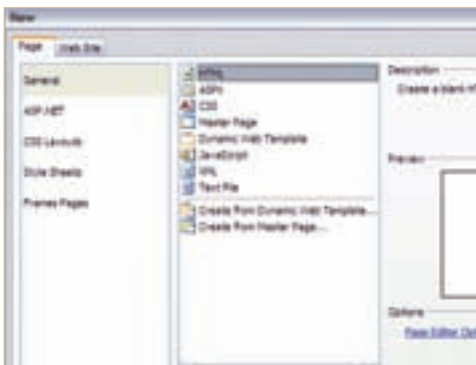
02 Adding the essentials

We may only be creating a single page here, but there's no excuse for a messy site structure. Right-click in the central site window and create a couple of folders for the stylesheet we'll be creating and any images we add to the site.



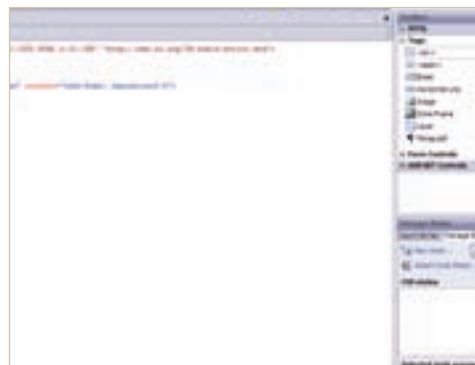
03 Changing the DOCTYPE

As with most modern web applications, new pages are created with an XHTML Transitional document type by default. That's nowhere near strict enough for us though. So we're going to change this to HTML 4.01 Strict using the Page Editor Options, under the Tools menu.



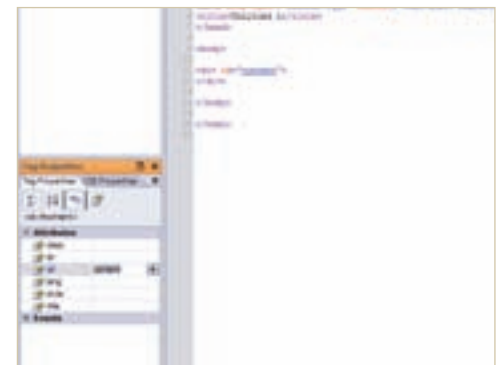
04 Creating our index page

Expression Web offers a selection of predefined pages, but where's the fun in that? Instead, insert a new blank HTML page from the File menu and save it as 'index.htm'. The new page will open in the central window. Tabs at the bottom allow us to easily switch views.



05 Blocking things out

When creating a page in CSS, it helps to think of your content as distinct blocks. We can use the Div tags to outline these blocks, and give each a unique 'ID' to identify it on the page. Double-click on the <div> tag in the Toolbox palette to insert an empty tag into the document.



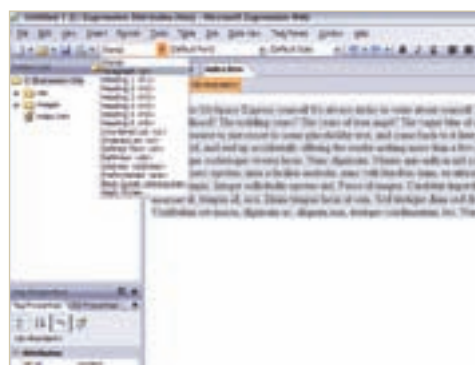
06 Adding an ID

With the page in Code view, click anywhere in the new Div to select it. The Tag Properties palette towards the bottom left of the screen allows us to assign an ID to the tag. Give the tag the name 'content'. You'll see this echoed in the code view when you click out of the palette.



07 The tricky bit

Anyone can make a web page look good. The difficult part is making it interesting to read! Keeping in Code view, see what you can come up with within the "content" block. Jot a few link ideas down, a headline for the page and a few paragraphs of your most gripping prose.



08 Making sense of the text

Switch to Design view and you'll find your musings displayed as an unreadable block of text. We'll soon sort that out. Click on the <div#content> tab at the top of the viewport to highlight the content within and select Paragraph <p> from the first of the drop-down menus.



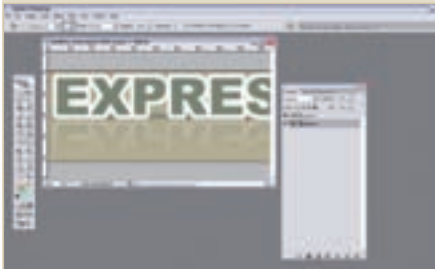
09 Laying out the page

Now Expression Web knows we're dealing with paragraphs, we can work through our text and give it a little more space to breathe. At this point we should also go ahead and apply an H1 style to our page headline and make a bulleted (un-ordered) list from our link titles.

TECHNIQUE

Stunning <H1> tags

Accessible, search engine-friendly
<H1> tags are good but they're not the prettiest of beasts. CSS to the rescue!



01 A graphical headline

In Photoshop make a headline, maybe with a reflection or Drop Shadow. Disable the Background layer. Save for Web as a PNG-24 with transparency. (The now defunct IE6 has difficulty displaying transparencies, but we'll gloss over that for now!)



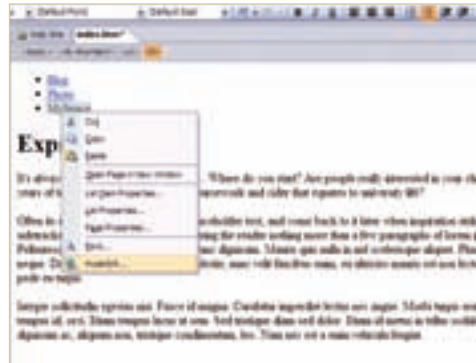
02 Styling the <H1>

Add another New Style. This time select H1, make sure we're in the existing stylesheet and set display: block, width/height to match the PNG, padding: 0, and margin: 5, 0, 0 and 20 to bring it in from the edge of the page.



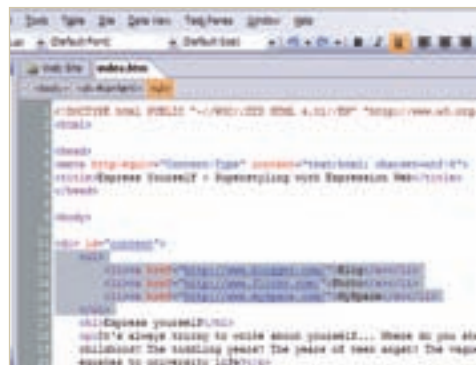
03 Hiding the text

Insert the PNG as a background image, positioned top and left and with no-repeat. Now simply set the text-indent to -2000px. The text is now positioned well outside of our graphical H1 box, but browsers without CSS support will see a plain tag.



10 Adding the links

Links can be added to the text either via the icon on the upper toolbar or from the right-click menu. Anyone who has attempted to add links within Microsoft's Office suite will be familiar with the Insert Hyperlink box that springs up – another throwback to its FrontPage heritage.



12 Wrapping a few things up

So far we've only defined the one block of content on the page. We'll need to identify a few more before we can start styling things properly. Select the entire contents of the tag, right-click on <div> tag in the Toolbox, select Wrap, to give our navigation a Div of its own.



14 It's the new style

Click New Style in the Apply Styles palette, and select 'body' from the first drop-down menu to apply some global document styles. Set margins and padding each to 0px, set the font family to Arial, Helvetica with a size of 75% and a warm grey colour.



11 Pure and simple

Back to Code view now to see how things are looking. If we were a search engine we'd be rubbing our spidery hands with glee – navigation at the start of the page, clearly indicated headings, no confusing tables. Doesn't half look boring though! Time to break out the CSS.



13 And a few more

Give our navigation Div the Class "links" in the Tag Properties. Then wrap the entire contents of our "content" block in another Div, this time with the ID "wrapper". Things may not look any different in the Design view, but these nested containers are the key to our CSS layout.



15 The page background

Create a 10 x 600px high gradient, from white to a warm grey, note the darkest colour. Save this as a JPG in the Site Images folder, then browse to it in the background-image box. Set the repeat to 'repeat-x' (horizontally) and the background-color to the gradient's darkest tone.

IN DETAIL

A MIME a day keeps the DOCTYPE away

You've produced valid HTML and CSS, you've followed the standards to the letter, yet things still don't look as they should. Maybe you should visit your DOCTYPE for a check-up

THE DOCTYPE is key to ensuring your meticulously coded pages render as you'd hoped and is at the very heart of standards-based page authoring. It tells standards-compliant browsers which form of HTML you're using and how they should go about interpreting it.

DOCTYPES take one of two forms: HTML ("//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01//EN") or XHTML ("//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.1//EN"), with each providing a Strict and a Transitional flavour. When combined with the text/html MIME type, this determines the layout mode the browser will use to display the page (usually Quirks or Standards mode.) Different browsers implement different quirks, making predicting layout issues a minefield. Standards mode, rather obviously, is preferred for a solid, standards-compliant page.

Choosing the DOCTYPE can be confusing. XHTML is the newer language, leading many developers to assume this is better. Both Expression Web and Dreamweaver default to generating pages with the text/html MIME type and the following declaration:

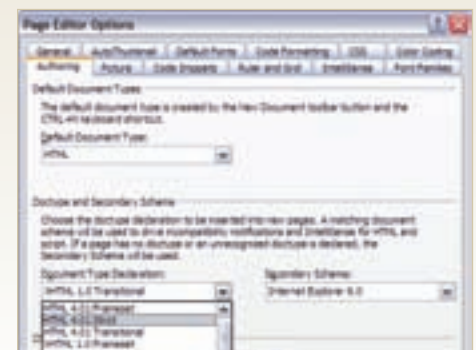
```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
```

The first issue is however, we have the inclusion of the Transitional – a declaration really only intended for the transition of older pages into the world of semantic code. Second, we have the rather more fundamental issue of the nature of XHTML. Essentially XML masquerading as HTML, unless the page is served with the MIME type "application/xhtml+xml" the browser simply views the contents as HTML, ignoring all the XHTML-specific formatting. The problem is then, Internet Explorer doesn't support that MIME type

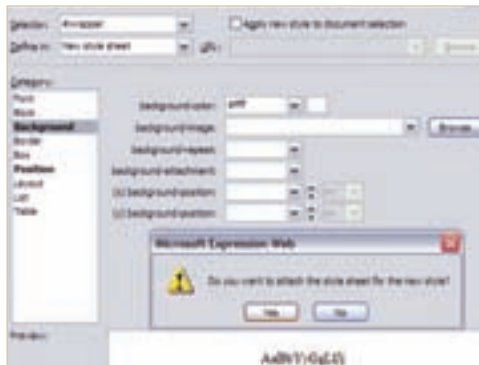
In essence, unless there's a specific requirement for XHTML, we're better off sticking to Strict HTML 4.01 – at least until all browsers are capable of treating XHTML as intended.



By default, Expression Web creates pages with an XHTML Transitional document type, with a MIME type of text/html

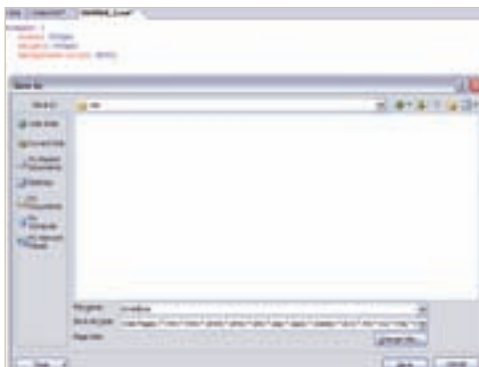


The Document Type Declaration of a page can be modified from the Page Editor options, under the Tools menu



16 Constraining the content

Add another New Style, this time entering #wrapper in the Selector to target our outermost Div. Add a width of 805px and a height of 540px, a background colour of #fff. Change the Define in drop-down menu to 'New style sheet'. Approve the message displayed when you click OK.



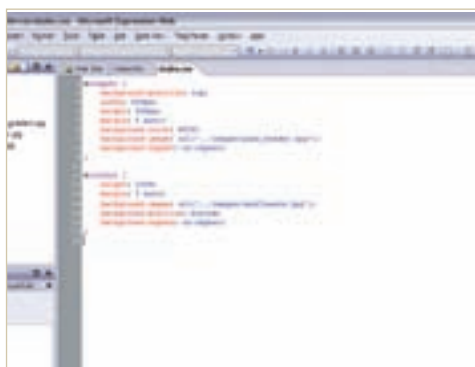
17 Modify the CSS stylesheet

Click on 'Untitled_1.css' and save in the CSS folder as 'styles.css'. The index page will update itself. Locate the #wrapper in the CSS file and add 'margin: 0 auto;'. When two values are used, the first applies to the top/bottom of the element and the second to the left/right.



18 Adding a background

Return to the index page, select Apply Styles on the right, click Modify Style from the menu alongside our #wrapper. Create a header image with the same width as our wrapper, save in the Images folder. Add as the background image with a Position of 'top' and Repeat of 'no-repeat'.



19 Edit the CSS directly

After a while, you may find it easier to dive straight into the CSS and edit it directly. Try inserting a new style for our #content Div, with a height of 100%, margins as per our wrapper, and a footer image for the page, this time with a position set to 'bottom'.



20 Tidying the paragraphs up

Time for another new style, this time select the <p> tag. Set a width of 500px, margins of 0, 0, 15 and 20px to bring the paragraphs up the page and clear of the left, a font-size of 1em and a line-height of 1.3em. We're using relative font sizes to ensure accessibility.

Tutorial ::

Folder list

Expression Web's Explorer-style folder list makes it easy to keep track of your site's files

Super-style your text

Enhance HTML tags and create custom classes to define your content from the Styles palette

Customise lists

CSS separates presentation from content. These lists just look like plain HTML to non-CSS browsers



Keep tabs on your tags

The Tag Properties menu allows you to see the finer details of your page at a glance



21 Reposition the navigation

Remember we wrapped our navigation in a Div with the class "links"? We'll set a style for this class, creating a fixed-width block, floated to the right with plenty of clearance. Insert the following in the CSS file: Links { width: 220px; display: block; float: right; margin: 105px 20px 0px 0px; }



22 Assigning classes to our list

We can do better than bulleted lists. Classes can be applied to most items, so pretty much everything can be restyled! Select each in turn and give each a unique class. Create a new style for each class, with a basic setting of 'list-style-type: none;' and 'list-style-position: outside;'



23 Styling the links

Give each one a block display-type, increase the font-size and load in a suitable icon graphic as a background image, aligned to the left and with no-repeat. Use Modify Style to adjust padding and margins to ensure the text doesn't overlap the image. Bulleted lists, taken to the next level!





THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

All the files you will need are on the accompanying CD

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

To complete an example page based purely on CSS layouts

TIME REQUIRED

30 mins +

SKILL LEVEL



Build your first CSS site from the ground up PART 3

IN THE FINAL PART OF OUR THREE-PART SERIES, STEVE JENKINS REVEALS ALL YOU NEED TO COMPLETE YOUR CSS-BASED SITE

IN THE PREVIOUS parts of this tutorial we concentrated on the planning and creation of the basic structure. With all the major building blocks now in position, this tutorial reveals more of the methods needed to populate the page. Many of the techniques used still retain the same procedures as if creating a table-based site. Inserting an image and adding text remains unchanged. However, the big difference is in positioning, plus the addition of padding, margins

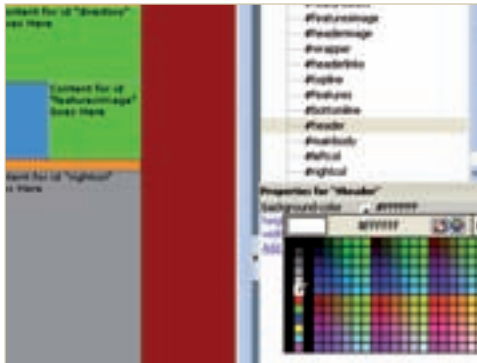
and, of course, font styling. The beauty of using a more universal language is that it brings together a host of distinct advantages. Cross-browser problems are virtually eliminated and a well-designed site can be updated with the modification of a single style sheet. Over these three parts, we aimed to bring together the building blocks needed for the creation of a CSS site. We haven't covered every possible CSS tag and type, but we hope we've set you up for the adventures to come.



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.

Build your first CSS site from the ground up



01 Happy header

To complete the look of the header tag, first delete the text 'Content for id "header" Goes Here'. Now head to the CSS panel and select #header from CSS Styles to view the Properties. Now click the background color property to open the Color palette and select white.



02 Top line

Now save the page and head to the File menu. Select Preview in Browser to get a look at the page in its present state. Next, head back to the document and delete the text 'Content for id "topline" Goes Here'. Select the new line colour, hex code '#999999'.



03 The bottom line

To complement the #topline, the #bottomline is going to be given the same treatment. First delete the appropriate text and then change the background color property to the same hex value. Now select #features, delete the text and change the background color to white and save.



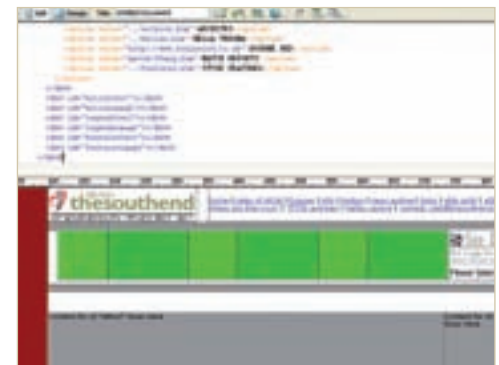
04 Features content

Now it's time to start adding the content for each of the Div tags that lie within #features. First, the text for each of the elements needs to be deleted. Working from the right, select #directory from CSS Styles and change the background color to white.



05 Insert image

The #directory tag is going to contain an image and a drop list. First, click inside the tag. If you're having difficulty locating the tag, switch to the Code or Split view. Now head to the Insert menu and locate the image to be placed inside the tag.



06 Add a list

Now select the newly inserted image, press the right arrow and head to the Insert menu. Select Form>List/Menu and add to the tag. You may notice that it doesn't fit perfectly just yet. Don't worry, this will be adjusted later on to ensure perfect placement.



07 Time for text

Now click the next tag along to help identify and select the matching tag from CSS Styles. Change the background color to white and enter the text that's to appear in the tag. This will use the body tag option, but a class will be applied later in the tutorial.



08 Complementary image

The next tag in the sequence is to contain an image to complement the text. Again select the tag from CSS Styles and change the background color to white. Now click inside the tag and go to the Insert menu and select the appropriate image to add.



09 Correct content

The next set of tags is to receive the same treatment as in the previous two steps. First the background color for both tags needs to be changed to white. The first tag (working from the right) needs to contain the text, while the next tag will contain the desired image.

TECHNIQUE

Adding image borders in CSS

Here we show you how to add a border to an image using Dreamweaver and CSS



01 Add a border

The easiest way to add a border in Dreamweaver is to select the image and head to the Properties window. In the Border field, add a pixel size, eg, 1. This will then add a 1px black border to all sides of the image.



02 New CSS

To customise a border beyond the size, a new CSS class needs to be created. Click the New CSS Rule icon to open the related window. Make sure that the Class Selector Type is selected and give the class a name, eg 'bordered' and press OK.



03 Colour choice

Select the Border category to reveal Style. This gives more than just a solid line. Width allows you to choose its size, while Color allows you to choose a colour. Now press OK and choose an image and apply the class from the Properties window.



10 Full set

To complete the line up follow the previous steps to change the background colour and add text and images. Once the process is complete make sure the page is saved. Now head to the File menu and select Preview in Browser to see how things are shaping up.



12 More padding please

Repeat the previous step and apply padding to all the images within the #features tag. The same padding can be applied to all the remaining tags that contain the accompanying text. However, this is not essential but will help to space out the design, if desired.



14 Adjust the height

With the features, image and content complete and in place, you'll notice that there is a gap between this tag and the mainbody tag. This is due to the #header tag having a pixel-specific height. Select #header and adjust the height to get the right placement.



11 Pad it out

At present the images, text and lines are all converging, giving the page little space. To rectify this double-click the image tag in CSS Styles to open the CSS Rule definition window. Now select the Box category and add 2 pixels to the padding and apply to all sides.



13 Top margin

Now save the page and preview in the browser, here you see that the new padding has placed the images over the #bottomline. The tag needs to be adjusted to fit. Double-click the tag in CSS Styles and head to Box and apply a 4px margin to the top only.



15 To the main body

The #mainbody tag is set to contain a range of text that is to be formatted in several different styles. First, the tag itself needs to be modified. Select #mainbody from CSS Styles and change the background colour to white, delete the 'Content for id "mainbody" Goes Here' text and save.

Build your first CSS site from the ground up



16 To the left

Now head to the #leftcol and delete the 'Content for id "leftcol" Goes Here' text. Now add the text that is to appear in the tag. This will again be dictated by the font formatting in the body tag. This will be modified when a specific class is created for the job.



17 Left column refinement

The #leftcol tag at present doesn't contain any padding. Double-click #leftcol and select the Box category and add 2px padding to all sides of the tag and press Apply. This will increase the width of the tag and displace #rightcol. Adjust the width, eg, minus 6 pixels, to fit.



18 To the right

The right column is now going to be populated with a selection of images and text. First delete the 'Content for id "rightcol" Goes Here' text. Now head to the Insert menu to add an image and then any relevant text. Repeat this process until all images and text are in place.



19 Fit the text

Now preview the page. The text in our example has overlapped the other tags. This is because all the tags have been given a pixel-specific height. To compensate, select #mainbody and adjust the height so that the text in both columns is within the confines of the tag.



20 The perfect footer

Delete the text 'Content for id "footer" Goes Here' and 'Content for id "wrapper" Goes Here'. Now head to CSS Styles and select #footer. Change the background colour to white and save. Preview the page to see that the footer fits perfectly to the bottom of the browser window.



21 Image divider

The footer is to contain an image that will act as a divider between the mainbody and footer, plus a collection of links and text. For this we're going to use a 1x1 pixel image and stretch across the footer. Head to Insert and add the image. Now adjust the width to 100% and save the page.



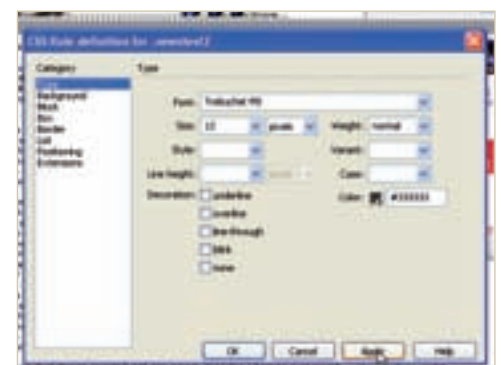
22 Finish the footer

To complete the #footer tag, add any links and text as shown before in previous steps. The text is currently aligned to the left. To centre the text, simply select the Align Center button from the Properties window. Now adjust the height of the tag to fit the text.



23 Define classes

All the text at present is defined by the style in the body tag. To format the text a number of classes will need to be created. First click the New CSS Rule icon in CSS Styles. Now select the Selector Type: Class and give it a name, ie, 'newstext'. Select Define in: This document only. Press OK.



24 Rule definition

The previous step will open the CSS Rule definition window. The default category is Type, which contains the elements to create the Font class. Select the Font, Size, Style, Weight and Color for the class and press Apply. Repeat this step until you have all the classes needed.



25 Apply classes

To give the page a whole new look, the previously created classes need to be applied to the appropriate text. Select the text to be formatted and head to the Properties window and select the correct class from the Style drop-down list. Repeat this process for all the text.



26 Text adjustments

Now head to the File menu and select Preview in Browser from the menu. This'll tell you exactly how the page will render when viewed on the web. Note that the text under Hellas Verona has overlapped the containing tag. One or two words will need to be removed to make it fit.



27 Previewing

Previewing the page reveals a few adjustments that are needed. The Previous Reports drop-down list is right on top of the image underneath. This is easily rectified by adding a break after the drop-down list. Select the image, press the right arrow and hit the Shift and Enter button.

IN DETAIL

Add a 3D effect background

Make good use of a single image and the background image command to create the illusion of a central 3D column

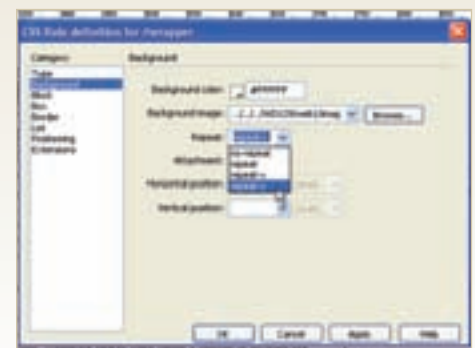
OUR THREE-PART tutorial has introduced a number of standard CSS elements that are essential for building a page. Here we're going to introduce the process of adding a shadow to either side of the page to give it a 3D effect. The object of the exercise is to expand the wrapper tag to accommodate the relevant image. For this exercise the background image command and one of its accompanying properties is to be used.

At present, all the Div tags are contained within a centrally aligned tag named 'wrapper'. This in turn holds a further set of tags, which make up the layout of the site. The header, mainbody and footer are currently set to a width of 100%, which ensures that they expand to the whole width of the containing tag, wrapper. This has a set width of 800 pixels, essentially making the other tags we mentioned 800 pixels. To add the shadow image, the header, mainbody and footer tag need to have their width reset to 800 pixels. Head to the CSS panel, select each tag and change the width to 800 pixels and save. Now each tag needs to be centred ready for when the wrapper tag is given its new width. Select the relevant tag from CSS Styles and double-click. Select the Box category and set the right and left margins to Auto and press Apply. Repeat for all the tags. Now select wrapper and give it its new width. Ideally this should be between 820 and 840 pixels.

Now an image needs to be created that is 840 pixels wide plus a minimal height, eg, 10 pixels. The reason for this being that the background image is set to be repeated. Now select the wrapper tag in CSS Styles and double-click to open the CSS Rule definition window. Select the Background category and click the Browse button next to Background image and locate the appropriate image. To finish up, select repeat-y from the Repeat drop-down list. Press Apply and OK to complete.



To centrally align a Div tag simply select Auto for the left and right margins



To ensure that the background image fills the page top to bottom, use the repeat-y command



28 Adjust again

In step 14 the height of the #header tag was adjusted to fit, however, this now needs adjusting again. Head to CSS Styles and select #header, adjust the height, eg, minus 10px and save the page. Now preview to view and adjust again if needed.



29 Final adjustments

The final adjustment is the #mainbody tag, which needs adjusting again due to the new text style. Select the tag from CSS Styles. Adjust the height, save and preview, repeat if necessary. Now the page is complete and ready to help build the rest of the site.





THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

Tutorial files:
Full version software

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Find your way around our free cover mount software

TIME REQUIRED


30 minutes

SKILL LEVEL



An introduction to EROL4 Startup Edition

TO COMPLEMENT OUR SOFTWARE GIVEAWAY, WE'VE PROVIDED AN OVERVIEW TO GET YOU ACQUAINTED WITH ITS FEATURES

 **GETTING YOUR BUSINESS** online has never been more essential than in today's climate and in actual fact, it has never been more accessible. You may be under the illusion that setting up an eBay store is about as easy as trying to forge a functional shop front without expert knowledge, but actually there are far more achievable solutions. One of the undisputed market leaders is EROL, due largely to its commitment to delivering impressive and flexible results without demanding

too much technical skill from its users. A highly intuitive editing environment enables you to produce fully functional sites that can not only be integrated into Dreamweaver but also expanded and published in a whole number of different ways. To celebrate the release of the fourth version, we're lucky enough to have the full Startup Edition spearheading a bumper CD this month, so over the next few pages we thought it would be an idea to see exactly what it can do!

An introduction to EROL4 Startup Edition



01 Template picking

A good place to start is the template library to pick a theme for your store. Each preloaded theme is displayed in a window when you open the library, and can be enlarged to get a more detailed preview. Hit the Apply button to choose the template and implement the changes.



02 Index page

Next on the My Store tree is Store Templates, where key decisions are made. First up is the Index page where you may choose to introduce your site with a custom 'Index.htm' page or append a default template to the front. You can also choose to go straight into the store.



03 Basket format

Here you can choose how to display the shopping basket. The library has a few suggested configurations for this, which give certain attributes such as running price totals, shipment fees, tax and the number of items held. These can then be edited once you've pressed the Apply button.



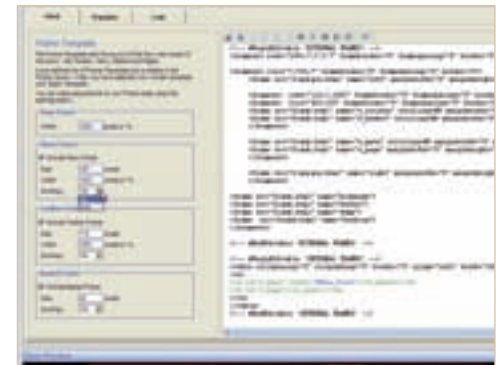
04 Checking it out

All of the details and input fields that are provided during check-out can be tweaked using the Properties and Code windows in the Build Manager pane. By switching to the Checkout Library, as listed in the My Store frame, you can again pick standard configurations.



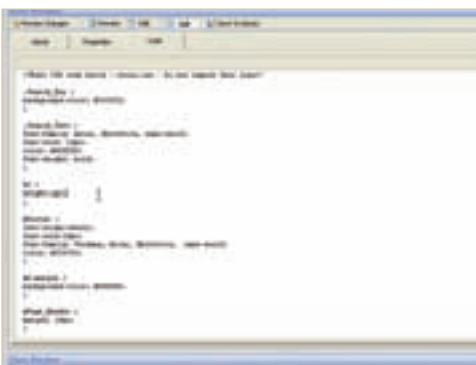
05 Site mapping

EROL4 does a lot for effective navigation. The Site Map option lets you create a straightforward site map page that allows your customers to jump quickly between areas of your shop. Opt for a very simple list of links, or go for a menu that has descriptions and example product images.



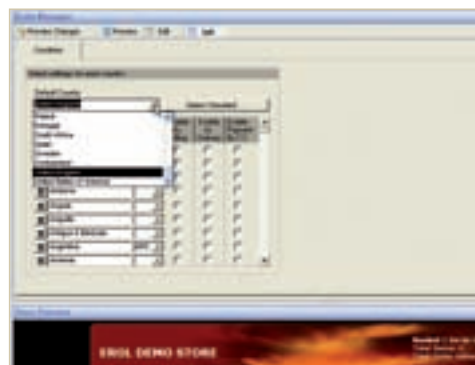
06 Frame fun

The option for setting the frames that your store pages use is pivotal when it comes to setting up the general default layout. Here the library of frame styles gives you colour-coded previews of the way the frames sit against each other.



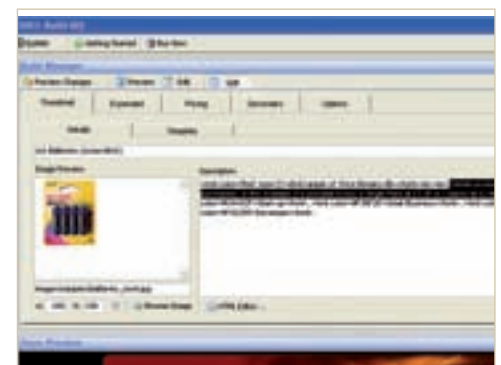
07 Style sheets

EROL uses CSS to style the pages, listed in one external file, named 'store.css'. They can have their classes edited directly by selecting the CSS option in the My Store list and altering the code within the Build Manager panel. You can also open this file in your own editor to make changes.



08 Store options

This section of items within the My Store panel has all sorts of parameters and properties. Most of these are data-centred options for things like the drop-down box options for selecting country of origin. Options can be removed or added, with relevant codes attached.



09 Product pages

The Store Pages list lets you flick through the pages in your store and add items to existing pages or generate whole new ones. Select the green, blue or red icons in the Items on Page panel to add products that you can then edit using the input fields within the Build Manager panel.

Tutorial

EROL4'S NEW FEATURES



DESIGN & BUILD INTERFACE & HTML EDITOR

EROL now has a two-pronged workspace that combines panels relating to the Build Manager with a customisable WYSIWYG editing window situated to the right. Users of Dreamweaver or similar visual web-editing applications will be familiar with this configuration and therefore facilitates a far more intuitive experience for users of every level. A pop-up mode is provided for twin monitor setups, while a classic EROL mode allows users familiar with previous versions to regress the overall workspace.

FRESH DESIGNER THEMES

Those looking to get a stylish look for their EROL projects can look forward to a batch of 16 brand new professionally designed templates. All are fully customisable via the new interface and can be previewed via the themes library before selecting them. As time goes on, EROL users may well be able to download even more new templates from www.erol.co.uk and get even more choice over the kind of store they can produce.

RELATED PRODUCTS

Many modern shopping sites allow powerful targeted marketing options by suggesting related products to buyers. EROL now enables store owners to introduce this functionality and actually suggest associated products or product types to the customer when they're browsing and purchasing goods.

NAVIGATION AND PRODUCTIVITY PLACEHOLDERS

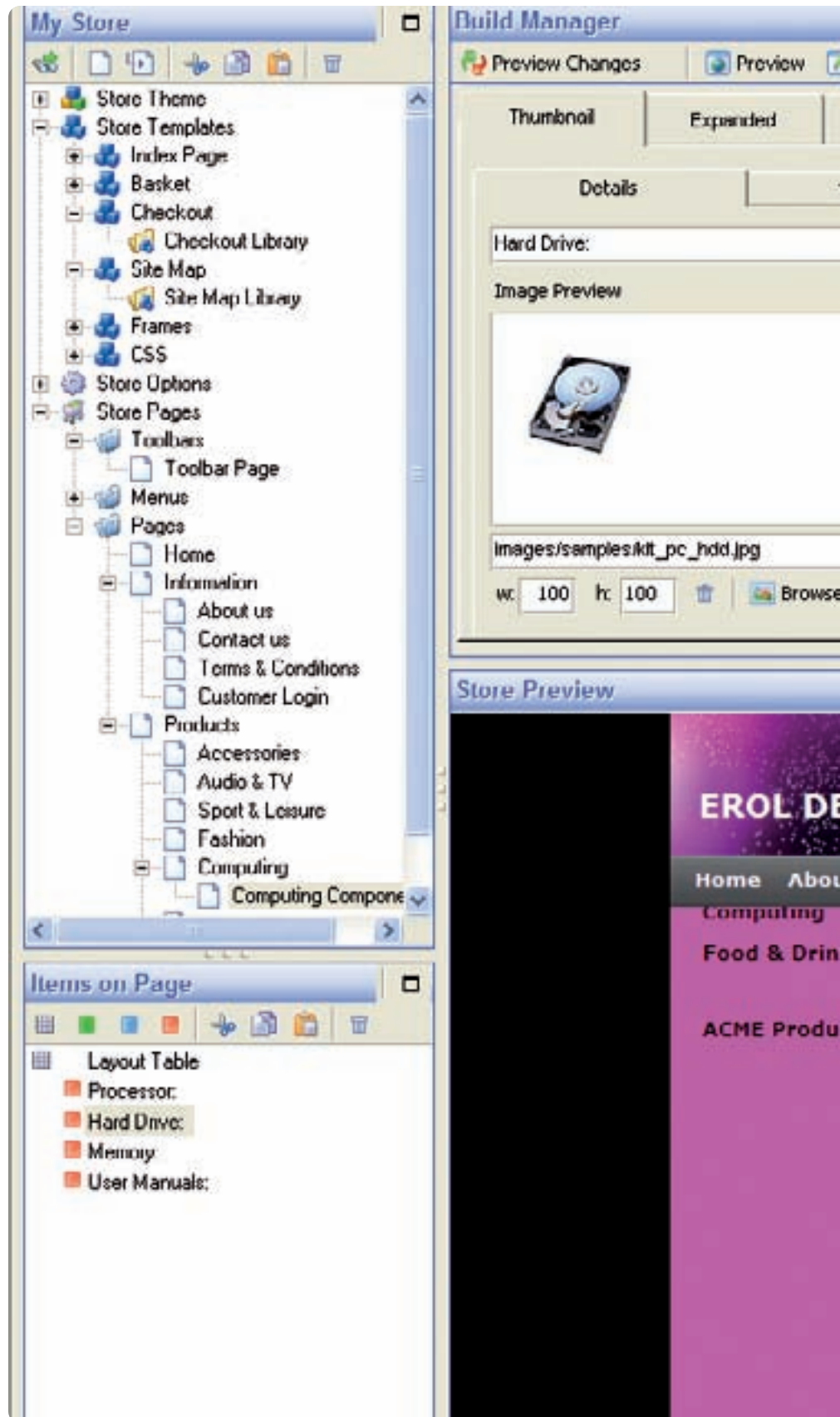
Improve the customer experience by using breadcrumb-trail navigation and show a page history of visited pages. EROL4 also allows you to increase productivity by automatically adding the page name into each page. Placeholders can now be used to swap a product image depending on the customer's selection, facilitating multiple product views and enabling a far richer experience for buyers.

IMPROVED PAYMENT OPTIONS

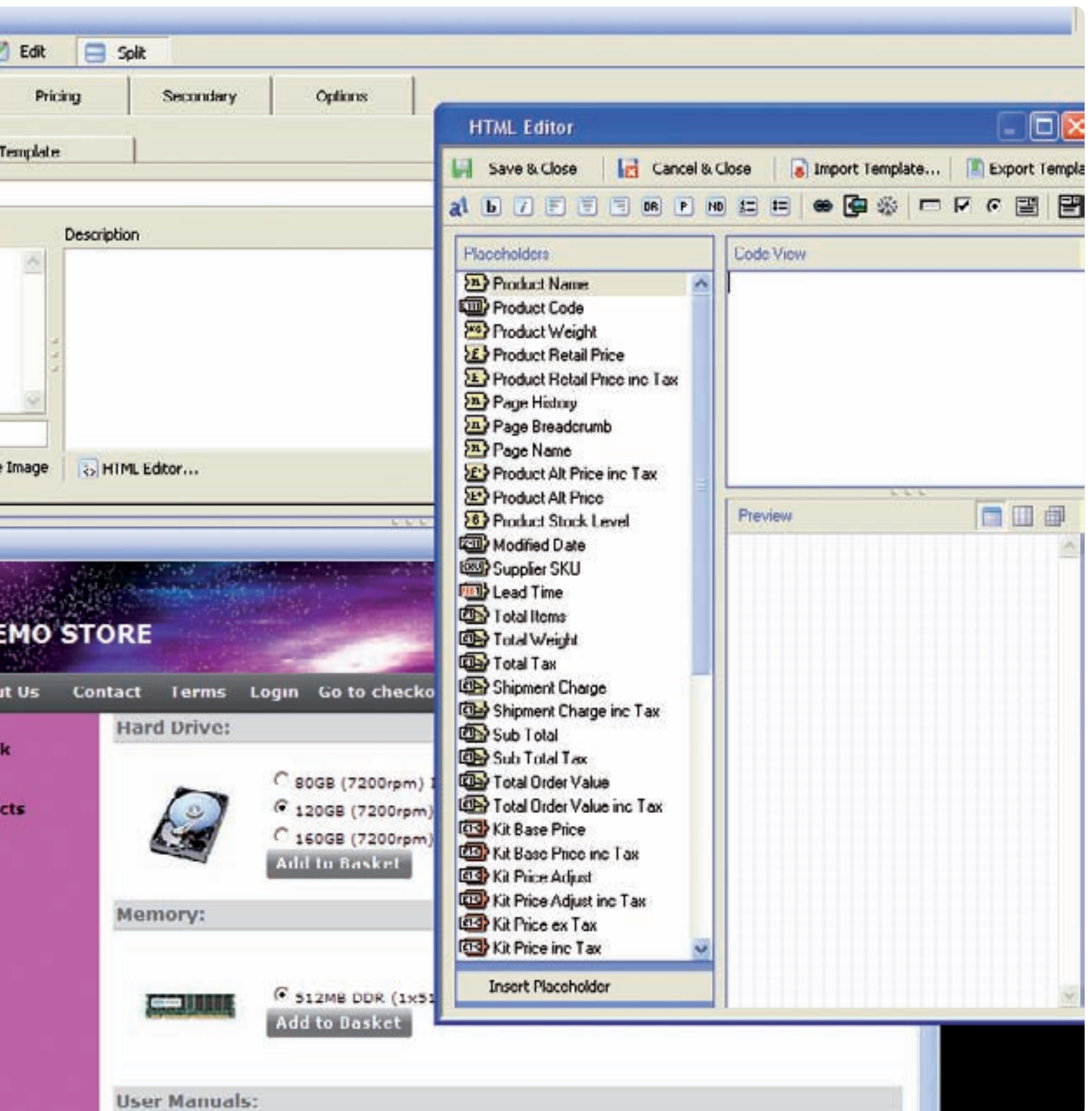
A huge part of any online store is the reception of transactions. The last thing a merchant wants is to lead customers to a sale, only to give them unnecessarily restricted options for handing over their cash! EROL now allows you to create multiple online-payment service providers at the Checkout, so your customers can decide themselves how they would like to pay for their goods. Newly added PSPs include HSBC eSecure payments and MetaCharge.

SNIPPETS AND STORE MANAGER

Improve customer experience – a big bonus for any store – by using Snippets to display product options as checkboxes, radio buttons or drop-down menus and create your own re-usable Snippets using the Snippet Editor. The Store Manager options allow users to manage multiple instances or installations of EROL, check for updates and automatically download new features as they're made available.



An introduction to EROL4 Startup Edition



Tutorial

Orders
Hitting this button opens up a database table that contains and archives the orders to your online store

Build Manager
More specific edits can be made here. The panel can switch to a Code view so HTML can be altered directly

My Store
This panel provides a hierarchical structure to the whole EROL building process

Store Preview
Here is the main graphical view that provides visual feedback on the page edits as they happen

Items on Page
The graphical elements featured are itemised in this panel, so you can quickly make edits to the properties

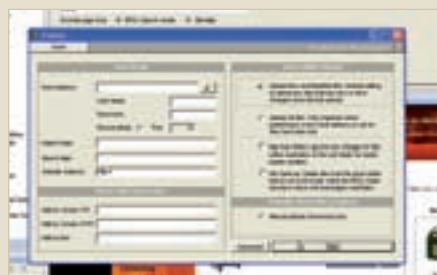
TECHNIQUE: Important extras to look out for

Those final aspects of EROL4 you'll need to know about to get your eCommerce project up and running in no time, whilst also having an eye on future maintenance...



01 Keeping Order

An integrated Order Manager is very useful. This window allows you to track transactions, keep tabs on stock levels and effectively run your business. At first it looks like an empty spreadsheet, but soon it will be full of data you'll need to process!



02 Publishing wizard

Once your store is ready, simply hit the Publish button found at the top of the workspace. A step-by-step wizard will talk you through the process of delivering your store to a web space, while a Publish Manager has a host of advanced options.



03 Browser preview

By heading up to the View item in the main File menu you can choose to view the live or offline versions of your store as it's being built within your default internet browser. An Include Other Browsers option lets you choose which client to use.

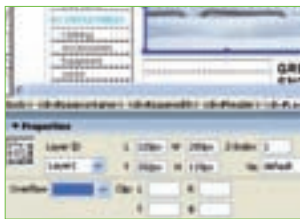


Tech Support :: Dreamweaver

Snow+Rock www.snowandrock.com



TOP TIP



Take control of your layers

A layer can be manoeuvred and resized using the appropriate handles or the options in the Properties palette. Plus, Properties offers an additional option in the shape of Overflow. This essentially decides whether or not excess content is viewed or hidden. The 'default' option is visible and this doesn't clip content it renders outside the element. 'Hidden' clips the content and hides the excess, while 'scroll' adds a scrollbar.

On the surface, Snow+Rock is just another online supplier of skiwear and sportswear.

However, delve deeper into the site and it soon becomes apparent that the site is much more than just a pretty face. The opening page brings into play its wide product base and wealth of suppliers. Perfectly placed in the top-left section of the site is a long list of brands, easily accessed by the standard drop-down list. This is accompanied by a search field that cuts down search time significantly with just two clicks.

Further pointers are provided by the use of menus, which all contain a collection of sub-menus that filter down to the appropriate destination. The page makes good use of its image placement, drawing users to particular content while also providing links to the chosen subject.

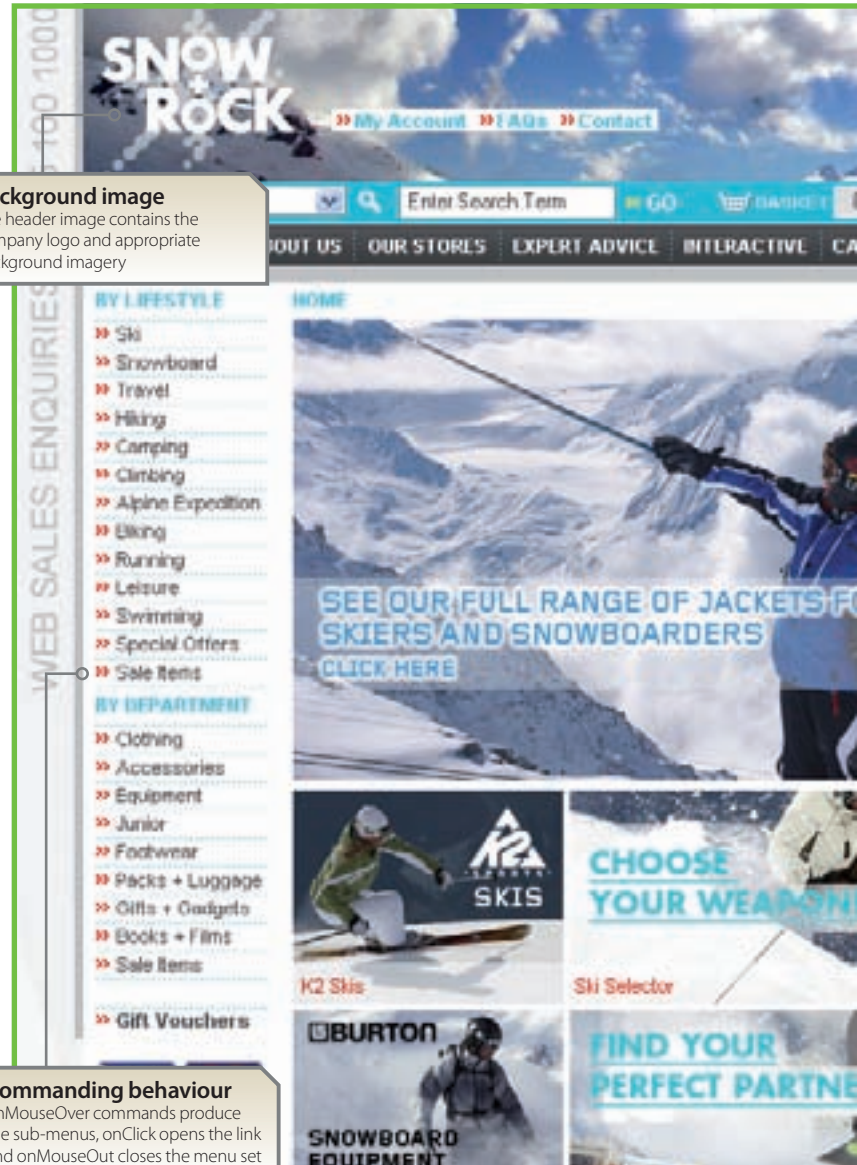
At first glance the site belies its well-worked underlying structure. The overall appearance with its straight-line design could have easily been achieved with the use of tables. However, comprehensive use of Div tags and CSS makes Snow+Rock exactly what it is. The main structure of the site is based on the use of several Div tags, which act like tables in positioning content. Further Div tags take control of the main elements of the page, ie, the header, but custom classes are also put to good use. Read on to find out how these tags are used to form the basis of the site...

Background image

The header image contains the company logo and appropriate background imagery

Commanding behaviour

onMouseOver commands produce the sub-menus, onClick opens the link and onMouseOut closes the menu set



Becoming backgrounds

Point the background property in the right direction with the help of URL

The Snow+Rock homepage boasts a collection of images to give the opener its appeal. The header section uses a background image to allow for text to be placed over the top. Inserting a background image is a straightforward procedure in Dreamweaver. Head to the Modify menu and select Page Properties before locating Background image under the Appearance category. Hit the Browse button, locate the image and press OK. This will add the image to the background of the page. To add an image to a certain element however, a little more work is involved. When using

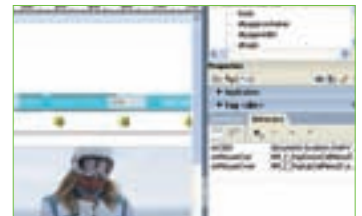


a Div tag a background image will be added via the CSS. This is determined in the Background category of the CSS Rule definition window. Adding 'url' after the background tag ensures that the page picks up the image from the location on the server.

Mouse behaviour

Use behaviours and Div tags to create fly-out menus

The menus placed to the left side of the page, By Lifestyle and By Department, both use the same structure to reach their destination. Each time the mouse cursor is placed over a category a fly-out menu appears until the desired destination is reached. This is achieved by the use of behaviours in the shape of onMouseOver, onMouseOut and onClick. Each of the menu elements is assigned its own Div tag and the code within the tag determines the outcome. To add a behaviour within a Div tag, head to Window>Behaviors to open the related panel. Under the Behaviors



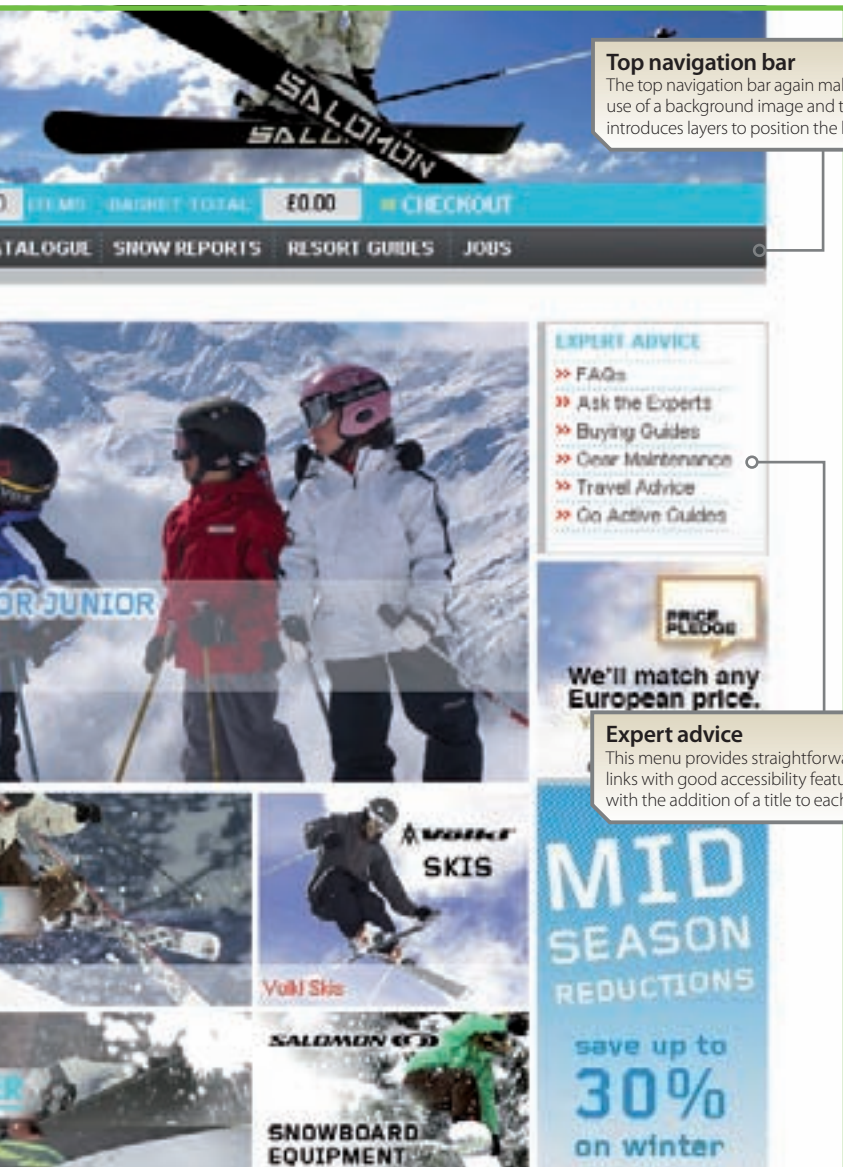
tab click the first field, top left, which is empty and select a behaviour, ie, onMouseOver, from the drop-down list that appears. Then add the appropriate code to get the pop-up menu to appear. To add another behaviour simply repeat the process.



YOUR EXPERT

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

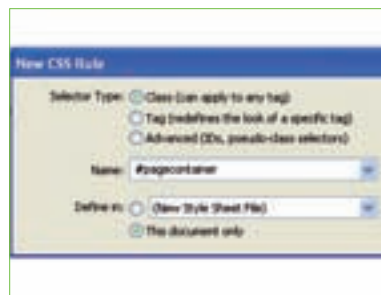
Site doctor Diagnosing the tricks behind dotcom designs



STEP BY STEP

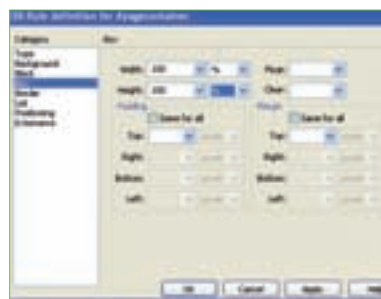
Page building

Create the building blocks for a page with Div tags and CSS



01 Page container

The first step is to create the basic holding containers for elements and content. Head to the Insert menu and select Layout Objects>Div Tag. Click New CSS Rule, select Advanced under Selector Type. Name it, ie, '#pagecontainer'. Define in: 'This document only' and press OK.



02 Define the CSS

Defining the first tag boasts several options depending on the layout. However, for a basic definition head to the Box category and set both the height and width properties to 100%. This will ensure that all the available space can be utilised if desired.



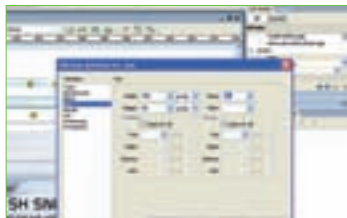
03 Create the page

With the first tag in place, the next step is to create an inner tag that will determine the width and position for any additional tags and content. Follow the previous two steps to create a new tag, but this time select a width and the Relative Type from the Positioning category.

Different class

Div tags aren't always necessary, create a class to position text and images instead

Div tags and CSS are the best of friends, but not every element of a page needs to be assigned a Div tag. CSS also allows users to create their own custom classes, which Snow+Rock has used to position the four image rows on the homepage. The class uses some simple CSS to position and size the image, while the image is inserted into the class using the standard method. To create a similar class in Dreamweaver, head to the CSS panel and click the New CSS Rule icon at the bottom of the panel. Select the Class Selector Type (if not already selected), give it a name and

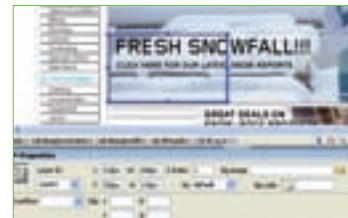


Define in>this document only. In the CSS Rule definition window select the Box category to establish the width and height for the class. To help position the class, select 'left' from the Float: list. Now select Positioning and choose the Type>Relative.

The Search logo

Create perfect positioning with the help of the Absolute Type

The Search logo is a very small element on the homepage. However, it has been assigned its own layer within an already established layer. The Search logo layer is positioned using the Absolute Type, which effectively turns a Div tag into a layer. Using the Absolute Positioning Type means that the logo is placed a defined number of pixels from the top of the layer and to the left. Plus the layer has been defined as the same height and width as the image. To recreate similar positioning with Dreamweaver, head to the Insert menu and select Layout Objects>Layer. The new layer



can then be dragged into position on the page and resized with the handles. To get pinpoint accuracy, the Properties window provides Left and Top positioning, plus Width and Height. When the layer's in position simply add images or text in the standard way.

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The world of online advertising

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ECOMMERCE GALLERY
A cute and fluffy web shop on show

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WEB HOSTINGS
Find the perfect home for your site

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Virtual car selling hits Second Life

MAZDA CONCEPT CAR ARRIVES WITHIN DIGITAL COMMUNITY FOR SPEED-HUNGRY AVATARS TO ENJOY

WITH VIRTUAL online communities continuing to persuade audiences to adopt a digital existence, the undisputed leader has added another feather to its binary cap. Second Life and Mazda have teamed up to launch the car manufacturer's latest concept car, which is the latest embodiment of its exciting new design-ethic termed Nagare. Centred around the expression of motion, energy and beauty, the Mazda marketing team felt that the cutting-edge online world would be the perfect host to get the Hakaze into the marketplace and give as many people as possible the chance

to test drive it. "Last year's concept cars were extremely popular and there were many people who wanted to buy and drive them as soon as possible," says Mazda's global design director. "Of course, with just one concept car this wouldn't be possible, so we've done the next best thing—Mazda has given the three million residents of Second Life the opportunity to drive our latest concept in virtual reality." Check it out by registering at www.secondlife.com and downloading the 30MB viewer required for constant access to Second Life and the exclusive Nagare Island.



The futuristic vehicle awaits driving fans on the virtual island of Nagare



Unleashing products on a virtual public could be a powerful strategy

Hosts who know best

FINDING A HOSTING COMPANY THAT APPRECIATES A DESIGNER'S CREATIVE NEEDS NEEDN'T BE AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK ANY MORE...

HOSTING ISN'T all that sexy by and large, it's not its fault, but the fact is that most web authors consider it a necessary evil. They're just too hip and creative to trouble themselves with shared or dedicated servers, monthly bandwidths, Linux platform and whether they'll receive 24 hours customer support.

That's why it would be hugely advantageous to deal with a hosting company that understands the attitude and needs of creatively charged customers who don't always want to be troubled by the technical details. Well apparently that company is Twoequal.com, which was formed out of the frustration the founders themselves encountered when attempting to secure reliable and great-value hosting services when building their own sites. By offering highly competitive prices, committed customer support and an uncomplicated service, it hopes to entice new businesses and novice designers towards products they will stick with for life.

Total beginners to the hosting market are able to purchase a basic package online and together with the supplied support options supplied, can look forward to having a professional-looking website up and running in no time. Alternatively, through the professional package, any business or organisation can take advantage of the unlimited data and storage capacities that are as

standard. Price-wise it aims to undercut many existing providers by offering full packages on all accounts and web-hosting spaces, starting at £30 per year for 500MB plus £37.50 for 5GB – with all including a free .co.uk domain name. Free upgrades on all full packages including unlimited data transfer are also available to the first 2000 customers. *Web Designer* readers can also enjoy a 10 per cent discount by entering the promotional code 'WD0307' when registering a purchase via www.twoequal.com.



Twoequal are offering value and great service to web designers



Search is now one of the most powerful marketing tools available to any website. With costs now significantly lower, even the smallest businesses can benefit - Dave Howell reports.

Consumers looking for goods and services will invariably use their favourite search engine. Today, search marketing is big business, but has until recently been closed to smaller enterprises because of cost. Google changed all that with their AdWords service, but even here costs can be high to attain a good page position from popular keywords.

With smaller enterprises making up the vast majority of businesses operating in today's UK market, services are now becoming available that give them access to search marketing for the first time. 1&1 Internet for example, has recently launched Yahoo! Search Marketing and AdLINK – a tagged banner-advertising tool. Together they offer a powerful solution for pay-per-click sponsored search specifically designed for smaller budgets that are often refused by large search engines.

Andreas Gauger, CEO 1&1 Internet, says: "We're delighted to have partnered with Yahoo! Search Marketing, the pioneer of paid search, to provide this ground-breaking feature. 1&1 strives to push the boundaries of web hosting and equip the smaller website owner with the best chance of attracting and retaining visitors. Our Search Marketing and Banner Advertising features provide small businesses with effective weapons to conquer the web. Every small business can now afford to run a scalable online-marketing strategy and compete like larger online players".

If you have yet to investigate what search marketing could do for your business, now is the time to act. "Small businesses are certainly more flexible and proactive

in continuing to deliver successful search marketing campaigns if they focus their efforts on integrating their communications," comments Tim Gibbon, founder and director, Elemental (www.elementalcomms.co.uk). "With search marketing and especially search engine optimisation (SEO), it's often the most simple and straightforward steps that drive intelligent campaigns that reap the results that all search-engine worshippers aspire for."

SEARCH MARKET

To the inexperienced or uninformed, at first glance it may seem a simple exercise to set up a search-marketing campaign. However, as Duncan Parry, director of strategy, Steak Media (www.steakmedia.co.uk) describes, search marketing is about more than just purchasing keywords: "Small businesses certainly can take advantage of search marketing, however, the extent to which small businesses can succeed will vary. While the financial barriers to entry to a paid search campaign are fairly low (Yahoo!'s minimum spend is a very reasonable £20 a month, for example), the time and knowledge it takes to successfully create, manage and optimise a campaign – even on a small scale – can be beyond businesses with a limited internal resource. Very often, smaller businesses simply cannot afford to have a member of staff dedicated to just pursuing one avenue of marketing. That said, in some cases, smaller businesses can't afford not to, as the results of paid marketing are highly cost-effective if the

campaign is managed appropriately. But the individual will need appropriate training to make well-informed search marketing decisions."

One area that's seeing rapid growth at the moment is local search marketing. With the introduction of services like Google Maps, businesses are realising that they can target their marketing spend not only at a category of customer, but also a specific area. What was once the province of the paper directory when local goods and services were searched for, is now moving online. "We've only recently started using the local business ads. So far we think they're a great product as they take targeting that one stage further, to customers searching at street level," says Joy Green, online marketing executive, Access Self Storage. "They're perfect for businesses like ours which need to target specific geographical catchment areas and we plan to develop our use of them further in the future."

This is echoed by Marcus Flacks, marketing manager, MWB Business Exchange who says: "Google is such a market leader that we're always keen to test out its new features. With the growth in use of Google Maps and Google Local and the fact that our serviced office and meeting venue business is so location specific, this is an ideal feature for us. With its ability to specifically target actual locations and place them on a map, we think it's a very useful advertising technique."

Whether you optimise your website to be more search-engine friendly and gain a better page rank and therefore more potential click-throughs, or you pay

for your search page location, remember that search marketing is only one component of your marketing mix. Successful businesses attack their marketing on a number of fronts. Clearly define what your campaign is designed to deliver and don't become too myopic with how you implement your marketing strategy. Yes, search marketing is an important factor, but so are other marketing techniques that could complement your search activity.

Adam Croft, interactive account director, Fusion Unlimited who offers an extensive range of online marketing services to its clients that include Staples, Halfords, Seven Seas and Damart, agrees that marketing should be focused on more than one level, commenting: "While the pay-per-click search model is fundamentally sound, there inevitably comes a point at which it's no longer cost-effective. It's common in many sectors for the key players to outbid each other for the top search engine listings, which can leave smaller companies in a difficult position as they rarely have the budget to compete. In these instances, there are other ways of generating leads (such as local search or affiliates) that could offer a better return on investment."

MARKET FOCUS

As eCommerce has developed as a retail channel, so consumers have become savvy to the power that the web has placed in their hands. Price-comparison sites continue to be very popular, but consumers are using the internet to seek out more detailed information about the goods and services they want to buy. A reluctance to use new technology in their purchase decision has been replaced with an understanding of how search can help them obtain the best possible price and service.

"I think media habits are changing tremendously. If you look at regional press for instance, we see this is increasingly moving online," says Russ Cohn, head of business and local markets, Google. "As people use search as the first port of call to find information for goods and services they become more comfortable using multiple channels. I also think people are changing. Once again, all people are also business people if you like and they will use whatever channel they need to find the best information in whatever situation they find themselves in. I don't see a reluctance to use online tools, they'll be used in tandem with more traditional channels like paper directories."

Businesses that believe that they can get away with providing low-quality goods and below-par service are deluded. With thousands of businesses at their fingertips, consumers are looking for only those businesses that provide the highest quality in their goods and services. Ensuring that your business is always presented to potential customers doesn't have to cost the earth as Michael Stebbins, vice president of marketing, ClickTracks (www.clicktracks.com) explains: "Don't waste time on the highly competitive keywords. Start with a trial of a tool like KeywordDiscovery or Wordtracker to learn alternate keywords to test (both Pay-Per-Click and natural search). Then, in your web analytics tool, search the long list of keywords for longer phrases that brought you higher-than-average time on site or higher than average conversion."

Don't forget the impact that social networks are having on how consumers communicate with each other and the affect this now has on the purchasing process.

MARKETING FOR SMALL.COM BUSINESSES

Search marketing used to be an expensive business to get into, especially if you're running a micro enterprise. Well, not anymore. 1&1 Search Marketing (powered by Yahoo! Search Marketing), supplied with all its shared hosting packages from £4.99 a month, enables UK SMEs to run sponsored search-marketing campaigns on major search engines and highly trafficked websites across the Yahoo! Search Marketing network. The solution is easy to use and removes the need to negotiate with vendors or agencies. Using their 1&1 Control Panel, a user submits a list of keywords for their advertisement text and makes an offer for each of the keywords. The position of the user's listing will be ranked according to a number of different factors. Costs only accrue the moment a visitor clicks on an advertised website (pay-per-click).

1&1 Search Marketing provides monthly reports on rankings and bids as well as competitors' keywords. The solution incorporates daily or monthly budgets, with no minimum-term contract and all billing is simply added to the user's 1&1 hosting charges. Customers will also receive an Online Marketing Manual of advice on how to run a successful campaign and an initial £50 Yahoo! Search Marketing voucher.

Select 1&1 Search Marketing



Simply go to the Marketing Tools section of your 1&1 hosting Control Panel and select '1&1 Search Marketing'. All aspects of the service are controlled from this one panel including all settings with Yahoo! Search Marketing. FAQs and an Online Marketing Manual are also provided here.

Select your reports



Once activated, reports provide bulletins on your rankings and bids and also competitors' keywords. For each keyword, the reports detail bids, total costs, impressions, clicks and click-through-rates. Reports can show the performance per campaign or single keyword on a daily or monthly basis.

Keywords, descriptions, bids



Next insert the desired keywords and provide descriptions – the more keywords and descriptions the better. 1&1 recommends 20 plus keywords. The following bid-page is where you make a bid in pence for each keyword. Once active, you can even see the bids of direct competitors.

Set budgets and activate



You can set your monthly and daily budget limits here. Costs accrue once a visitor clicks on your advertised website (pay-per-click). Limits cannot be exceeded – irrespective of bids and click rates. The campaign goes offline automatically if one of the budget limits is reached.

Technical director at Ambergreen Grant Whiteside says: "With the new Web 2.0 initiatives and Social Media Optimisation now upon us, search has seen brands lose total control of their reputation to the public. Now your brand and products are reviewed by the public on blogs, question and answer channels. Great companies with strong product lines can only but benefit from the opportunities now available to them online. Brands with poor products will suffer at the hands of the public and their competitors."

Search marketing is now open to smaller businesses, but as Elemental's Tim Gibbon concludes, search marketing is not some Holy Grail: "Integration is key, due to how an audience experiences a campaign. Above-the-line and below-the-line approaches need to be carefully measured and connected, so an appreciation of how they work together is essential. We're currently seeing a great return from using traditional and digital communications with News Engine SEO. A new discipline to most (but a service we've been delivering since 2001) that combines PR, online PR and SEO. It's basically writing

for audiences and engines and making a connection with news engines (eg, Google News, MSN News and Yahoo! News), news sites and news portals. Much news has an immediate impact and you can see results within the hour, but if managed correctly can create longevity in online resources for a brand, product, service and/or organisation. The future of successful search is consistent and relevant dialogue and above all – communication."

The future of search marketing will certainly be the integration of this technique with other well-established methods. Local search is becoming massive, as businesses can now use the web to not only reach a global audience, but local customers as well. This has opened a whole new branch of online marketing that was previously rooted in the paper directory or local newspaper channels. If you're new to search marketing tread carefully. Costs that initially seem very reasonable can easily get out of control and don't forget search engine optimisation on your site. Couple this with well-chosen keywords for your paid search marketing and you'll gain a great return on your marketing spend.

What is the future of web hosting?

By Andreas Gauger, CEO 1&1 Internet Ltd.



1&1 INTERNET IS ONE OF THE LEADING HOSTING COMPANIES IN TODAY'S MARKET. SO, WE THOUGHT, WHO BETTER TO TALK US THROUGH THE BUSINESS OF HOSTING, THAN A MAN AT THE FRONT LINE? 1&1'S CEO ANDREAS GAUGER, LETS US IN ON WHERE THOSE IN THE KNOW SEE HOSTING HEADING IN THE FUTURE

A look at a large web host's site, such as www.1and1.co.uk, shows just how far web-hosting services have progressed over the past 15 years. Hosts today offer a vast range of web solutions for every conceivable user. The concept of the web-hosting package has meant that hosting as an entity has changed dramatically over this period.

The changing role of the web host

In the late Eighties, many of the first web hosts were started as experiments and frequently developers rented out space on servers as a way of financing other projects. As the internet grew, web hosts abandoned this experimental nature, as it began to dawn that the internet was big business. Hosting companies began to develop more user-friendly services to accommodate the millions of new users in the shape of small and medium-sized businesses that wanted to cash in on the web-frenzy, as well as IT professionals. Automation of back-end processes such as domain registration, helped to lower prices, speed up the process of getting online and generally make accessibility to the web easier for all. In these early days, it was the role of a web host to provide web space as cheaply and reliably as possible and get businesses up and running live as rapidly as possible.

In recent years, accessibility for all became hot on everyone's agenda and web hosts like 1&1 were challenged with educating new user groups such as SMEs and individuals. They achieved this through mass marketing and a one-stop-shop approach. The DIY website has been no less than a revolution in empowering all levels of user to take to the internet.

Gradually the web-hosting package has developed to now bundle web builders and applications for added functionality and ease of use. Today's web-hosting packages start from only £5 a month and include web content, development tools and sophisticated

online marketing and interactive features. As well as hosting, web hosts are now expected to extend their services much further and most offer solutions for email, eCommerce, communication and collaboration. In 2007, there seems to be no end of reasons why people use web solutions to communicate – with photo galleries, family sites, hobby sites, baby sites, etc, littering the world wide web.

For business users, the ever-increasing importance of the internet now means that the hosting of their website is an essential business service, with the stability, performance and flexibility of hosting, potentially business-critical issues. For professional web developers, the web host delivers more than just a chunk of web space. Hosts today provide advanced tools and applications to make development easier and facilitate the most glittering websites. The latest dedicated server and eCommerce packages benefit from technologies originally designed for enterprise level users.

Where is web hosting heading?

Web hosts such as 1&1 will continue to focus on facilitating the best possible websites. As web users demand more sophisticated sites, hosts will be forced to step up and deliver the technical performance and features necessary to create them. Web 2.0 and 3.0 promise a greater degree of interactivity and the websites of tomorrow are likely to become as personalised as their authors.

For the personal-website owner, we believe that their website is likely to become an interface onto a wider set of personal web services. Web hosts will be at the centre of this change and provide integrated search tools and collaboration software. The web hosting of the future will allow individuals to combine their web presence with their personal communication, personal web services and access to their personal media such as

photos, MP3s and documents. Once such web services are integrated into our lives, and we see this happening in the not too distant future, we'll be able to share and collaborate with each other online with far less restrictions than at present. Personal websites will form our individual gateways to the Digital Age and hosting will be integral.

The role of the web host will certainly change in line with mainstream requirements for hosting or housing data. Hosting services are becoming an increasingly powerful method of storing data, but current offerings such as SharePoint hosting are concerned with the business user. At 1&1 Internet, we believe that the most exciting developments in hosting will be for home users and a key driver will be users' desire to retrieve personal media on the move. The 'hidden hosting' of hard drive data by web hosts will be liberating, as it will enable flexibility and mobility, such as access to a favourite movie file at any time from a hand-held device. Hosts and ISPs will certainly be the best equipped to provide such services, as they already hold the infrastructure such as data centres needed to host data securely, efficiently and cost effectively.

Web hosts will undoubtedly help shape the future of the web. With ubiquitous access and easier interaction, the internet will see wider participation and collaborative platforms will lead to greater collective intelligence. For corporates and eRetailers, both business-level hosting and consumer-level web services will provide an essential link to the public. As online communication becomes more sophisticated, the social and economic value of the web will, without a doubt, continue to increase.

Moving through the 21st century, the internet promises exciting possibilities for communication. As for web hosts, they must keep one step ahead of innovation as they have a vital part to play in keeping all participants connected during the changing climate.

eCommerce gallery

Online shopping provides a rich treasure of bargain-bin prices that you won't find down your high street, it's also a revelation when looking for that unique something

Shopping for your loved ones www.shopspacebox.com

VALENTINES MAY HAVE been and gone for another year, but why should that stop you treating that special someone? Or perhaps you have some serious brownie points to make up? Well don't worry, Shop Spicebox is the perfect site to help you do just that!

Packed with some great features, this award-winning website, designed by Chris Erikson, is easy on the eye with some superb illustrative elements. Such elements enable the site to remove itself from all things clichéd and tasteless when compared to some competitors down the same online high street.

So what is a Spicebox? And no lads, before you ask, it's not a tool for the lady in your life to whip up your favourite curry... it's simply a box of treats specifically packaged for your loved one. The site has plenty to explore with appropriate menu sections for the different people in your life – for him, for her, for tots or for family, with the option to have a nose around the contents of each box. The site's cute and cuddly design matches the feel of its products and is worth a look for the great animations alone, if not for the gifts themselves!



The site is easily navigated with section headings for the different people you care about. Define your search and detailed information about each product is provided



The design of the website is essentially based around the gift boxes themselves and helps the company hold together a really strong brand

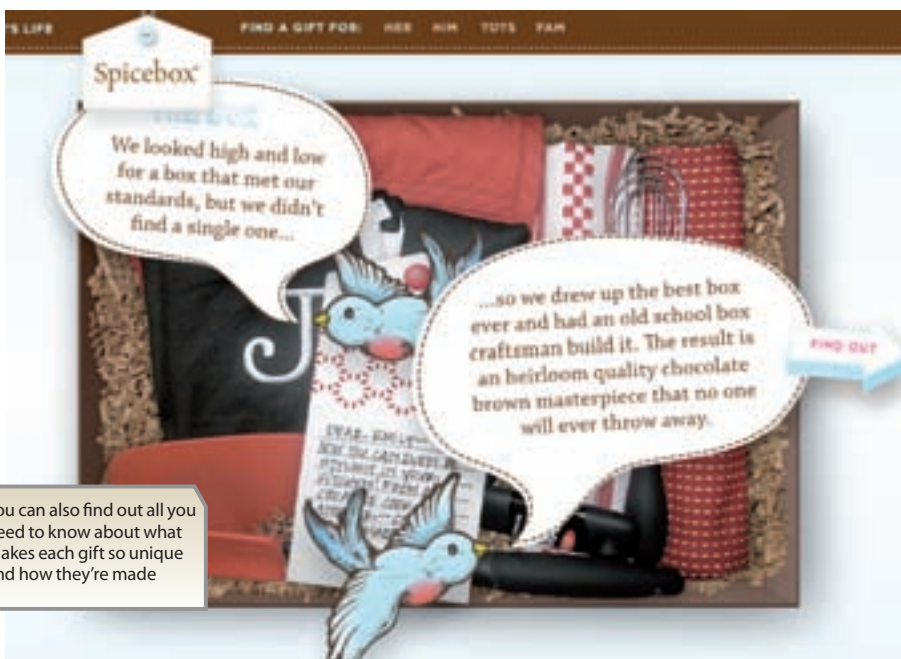
ECOMMERCE GALLERY

“The site is easy to explore with appropriate sections for the different people in your life”



There is something for each loved one and you can explore what's on offer using the menu at the top

Each section drops centrally like a tag where you can view the contents, keeping the main website intact behind



You can also find out all you need to know about what makes each gift so unique and how they're made



In keeping with the rest of the site, your shopping cart bounced into view top right where all is displayed, so you can review your trolley's contents and amend if needed

VERDICT

Shopspacebox.com

The website, like its products, is original and provides a really pleasant shopping experience, largely due to its simplicity of navigation and animations that enable you to unplug your brain while you explore. Add this to the heavy use of imagery and there's no doubt that you'll be back for more.

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 clients will also expect to find it in all honesty, the choice can be slightly bewildering thanks to the sheer amount on offer and the technical jargon used to describe the many deals

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

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

In association with fasthosts.co.uk



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.

NAME AND URL

NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POP3 ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Home (Linux)	0870 850 3305	£59.88	800MB	10GB	300	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Home (MS)	0870 850 3305	£71.88	800MB	10GB	300	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Business (Linux)	0870 850 3305	£107.88	2.5GB	20GB	700	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Business (MS)	0870 850 3305	£119.88	2.5GB	20GB	700	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Professional (Linux)	0870 850 3305	£179.88	6GB	50GB	1,500	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
1&1 (www.oneandone.co.uk)	Professional (MS)	0870 850 3305	£203.88	6GB	50GB	1,500	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123 reg (www.123-reg.co.uk)	Starter	0900 112 2123	£19.08	100MB	1.5GB	15	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123 reg (www.123-reg.co.uk)	Starter Plus	0900 112 2123	£35.88	250MB	3GB	25	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
123-reg (www.123-reg.co.uk)	Starter Pro	0900 112 2123	£47.88	500MB	5GB	35	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	Everyday	0845 166 7456	£100	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	PHP	0845 166 7456	£150	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	JAVA Tomcat	0845 166 7456	£175	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	Coldfusion	0845 166 7456	£250	100MB	2GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4D hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Bronze Package	0845 166 8386	£40	10MB	500MB	2	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Silver Package	0845 166 8386	£64.99	20MB	2GB	10	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Gold Package	0845 166 8386	£79.99	50MB	2GB	50	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
4D hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Titanium Package	0845 166 8386	£149.99	500MB	5GB	500	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4D hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Reseller Package	0845 166 8386	£299.99	1GB	10GB	1,000	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue (www.9netave.uk.net)	Starter	0870 872 6560	£99	50MB	1.5GB	10	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue (www.9netave.uk.net)	Professional	0870 872 6560	£199	100MB	2.5GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9Net Avenue (www.9netave.uk.net)	Corporate	0870 872 6560	£399	500MB	5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AMEN (www.amenworld.com)	WEB NAME+	0870 950 393	£9.73	1GB	10mbps	1	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AMEN (www.amenworld.com)	WEB MAIL	0870 950 393	£28.06	2GB	10mbps	10	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AMEN (www.amenworld.com)	WEB PRO+	0870 950 393	£70.36	5GB	10mbps	1,000	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AMEN (www.amenworld.com)	PRIVATE SERVERS (Windows)	0870 950 393	£84.46	400MB	10mbps	N/A	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
AMEN (www.amenworld.com)	PRIVATE SERVERS (Linux)	0870 950 393	£84.46	1GB	10mbps	N/A	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BeamHost (www.beamhost.co.uk)	Home	0871 277 9827	£59.88	800MB	5GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
BeamHost (www.beamhost.co.uk)	Business	0871 277 9827	£119.88	2GB	2GB	300	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
BeamHost (www.beamhost.co.uk)	Economy	0871 277 9827	£239.88	5GB	80GB	1,000	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd (www.christiantechology.co.uk)	Host Package	0870 742 0530	£55 inc VAT	50MB	1GB	25	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Christian Technology Ltd (www.christiantechology.co.uk)	Pro Package	0870 742 0530	£125 inc VAT	100MB	2GB	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Christian Technology Ltd (www.christiantechology.co.uk)	Base Package	0870 742 0530	£250 inc VAT	250MB	5GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Clara.net (www.clara.net)	Clarahost Lite	0845 355 1000	£29.99 inc VAT	10MB	1GB	10	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clara.net (www.clara.net)	Clarahost Advanced	0845 355 1000	£699	500MB	30GB	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Starter Plan	0845 203 1000	£19.99	400MB	1GB	10	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Entry	0845 203 1000	£109.89	2GB	10GB	30	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS PRO	0845 203 1000	£19.99	5GB	20GB	50	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Business 1	0845 203 1000	£169	5GB	30GB	100	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Windows Reseller 1	0845 203 1000	£39.99	20GB	50GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Windows Reseller 2	0845 203 1000	£59.99	Unlimited	1GB	10	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Linux VDS Entry	0845 203 1000	£39.99	50GB RAID	80GB	Variable	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Windows VDS Entry	0845 203 1000	£46.99	8GB RAID	80GB	Variable	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Linux Entry Dedicated	0845 203 1000	£99.99	80GB RAID	300GB	Variable	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



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 (eliteukservice.net)	Business Kick Start Linux	0871 717 0390	£49	50MB	3GB	20	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukservice.net)	Business Kick Start Windows	0871 717 0390	£75	50MB	3GB	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukservice.net)	Business Standard Linux	0871 717 0390	£99	100MB	3GB	100	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukservice.net)	Windows	0871 717 0390	£125	100MB	3GB	100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukservice.net)	Business Enterprise Linux	0871 717 0390	£199	250MB	5GB	250	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukservice.net)	Business Enterprise Windows	0871 717 0390	£225	250MB	5GB	250	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
EliteUKServe (eliteukservice.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)	Windows Home	0870 888 3600	£43.89	750MB	Unlimited	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Linux Home	0870 888 3600	£43.99	750MB	Unlimited	200	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Windows Developer	0870 888 3600	£87.89	2GB	Unlimited	600	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Linux Developer	0870 888 3600	£87.89	2GB	Unlimited	600	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Windows Business	0870 888 3600	£175.89	5GB	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Linux Business	0870 888 3600	£175.89	5GB	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Reseller	0870 888 3600	£500	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	✓	✓	✓	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	X	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Starter Professional	0845 644 7750	£29.80	2.5GB	10GB	1,000	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Home Professional	0845 644 7750	£89.99	10GB	50GB	10,000	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Business Professional	0845 644 7750	£129.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk)	Reseller Professional	0845 644 7750	£299.99	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk)	Windows 2000 Unlimited Plan	0208 777 8881	£29.50-£499	100-5000MB	2-80GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk)	Resellers Plan	0208 777 8881	£200-800	2GB	30-50GB	Unlimited	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	30-50GB	✓	✓
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	0800 8007 0070	£41.88	1GB	10GB	500	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
STRATO Hosting (www.strato-hosting.co.uk)	STRATO PowerWeb	0800 8007 0070	£58.68	3GB	20GB	1,000	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
STRATO Hosting (www.strato-hosting.co.uk)	STRATO AdvancedWeb	0800 8007 0070	£131.88	4GB	50GB	1,500	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
STRATO Hosting (www.strato-hosting.co.uk)	STRATO EnterpriseWeb	0800 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

Steadytree

www.steadytree.com

Skills: Web and graphic design

Employment status: Design agency

We tend to get a good few URL submissions to the Portfolio these days, which inevitably means we don't get as long as we'd like to investigate their origins more closely. What's more, it could be said that all of the background information we'd like to talk about on these pages should really be available on your digital portfolio because it's pretty likely that employers or clients will want to find this stuff out. For example, we do know that Steadytree is the creative home of an agency started by a 19-year-old guy called Gianluca and that he has been working on print and graphic projects for the past seven years.

But as for the other details, we're left to read between the lines – which is rarely something a less patient audience will indulge! However, it's still early days and there's enough promise here of Gianluca's practical creative talent to hold visitor interest or convince work to come his way. The interface may be stark and minimal but a clever gallery-exhibit design serves up the content nicely and provides an understated platform for the project samples. Ultimately this just underlines his disappointing unwillingness to shout about himself a bit more. Come on Gianluca!



The site of Derelict BMX is an impressive example of Steadytree's web skills

Click this URL and a hand-drawn sketch appears, hit Enter to access the site in full



The main navigation menu is extremely simple in design, but does its job effectively



PUTTING YOUR TALENT in the limelight once again, the Portfolio returns with another pair of talented web-slingers and an attractive showcase of their work. As always, if you feel that you deserve an honorary mention as much as this lot, then check out the blob to the right!

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



Steadytree really excelled itself with this fully Flash-functional interface for funky clothing supplier Esteem Original Clothing. Click Work in Steadytree's portfolio for a sample and a link



The About section is disappointingly short... the site does speak for itself, but there's no harm in a little boast!

If the thumbnails of Steadytree's work leave you wanting more, then click on the link to visit the full site



portfolio

THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING



Tanya's use of colour in her projects is very refreshing and captures well the mood of her clients

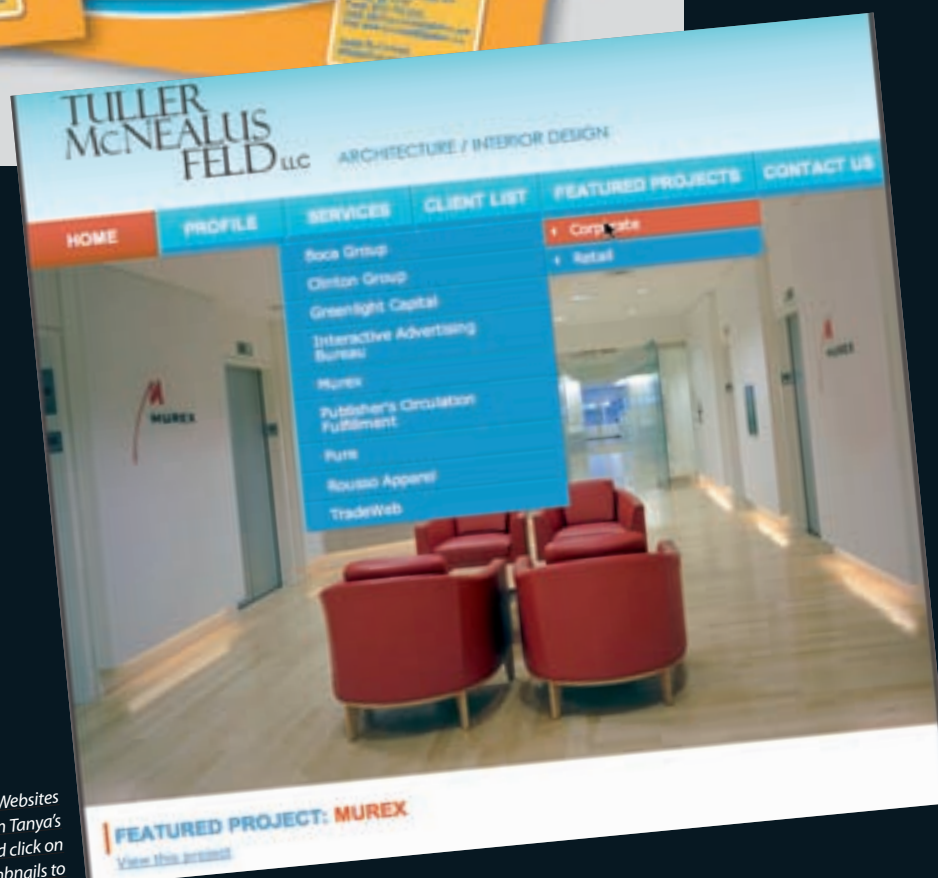
Tanya Merone

www.tanyamerone.com

Skills: Graphic and interface design

Employment status: Freelancer

Every now and then you happen across a portfolio site that strikes the perfect balance between polished style, functional integrity and just damn right niceness. New York-based designer, Tanya Merone's dotcom presence covers all those bases beautifully, with an endearing single-column layout that focuses her considerable creative talent down a single page. There are thumbnails of web projects with links to the live versions, examples of stunning print-based media, illustrative samples, logo designs and even photography. Virtually all the disciplines are covered by this refreshingly enthusiastic freelancer, including XHTML, CSS and PHP, while a commitment to standards-compliance also shows she's a stickler for doing things right. This is an online portfolio to be very proud of indeed.

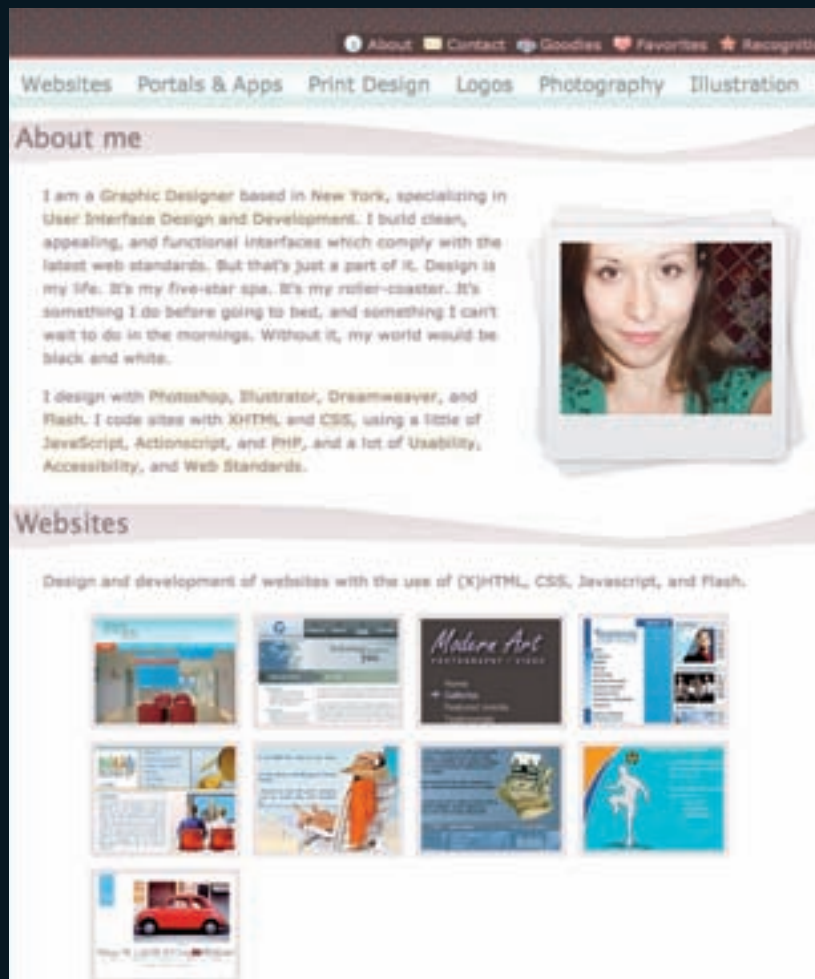


Navigate to the Websites section on Tanya's homepage and click on any of the thumbnails to sample some of her work

This is an interface designed for a travel site. If you want to see more, point your mouse at the link to be directed to the live site



The single column makes navigation simple, while the design is easy on the eye! Beauty and function, bonus!



All work and no play makes Tanya a dull... Just as well then that Tanya makes time for her hobby photography, with some stunning results



Photoshop, CSS and HTML combine to great effect in these Intranet portals. Click on a thumbnail and prepare to be impressed at the range of styles Tanya is capable of