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PAGES OF  
EXPERT TUTORIALS

web



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# designer™

Dw DREAMWEAVER Fl FLASH Ps PHOTOSHOP

ISSUE 137

## The web will never be the same again...

# AIR

Fw

Dw

Fl

Ai

Ps

Fx

### WEB 2.0 TOP 20 REVEALED

Which golden URL will be crowned next-gen's number one newbie?

### HOW TO

Code interfaces with **AS3** • Build a video chat client **Flash Media Server 2** • Discover rapid prototyping abilities in **Fireworks CS3** • Create great blog themes with **WordPress** • Climb the **Google** rankings



#### MP3 PLAYER SKINNING

Design a frontend for a Flash audio player with this special workshop in Photoshop



#### DREAMWEAVER IN ORBIT

Take the first steps to building standalone AIR applications within Dreamweaver CS3!



on the CD  
**DESIGNER  
RESOURCES**  
BUMPER BOXED ART  
GIVEAWAY - FREE!  
Page 112

### HOSTING IN HARMONY

Why and how reseller accounts help deliver the total package to clients



# Welcome



**T**hankfully, my memory of where I was when the web design world changed completely will be vivid; I was lucky enough to have a front-row seat!

READERS OF LAST month's special report from the Adobe headquarters will be envious enough by our trip to San Francisco, but it was seriously significant in the broader context. As editor of *Web Designer*, I was obviously aware of the work the Californian company was doing on RIA-related projects, but seeing them in action from the guys that understood the potential left a lasting impression on me.

Personally, the experience had that spooky sense of historic significance that could represent a pivotal moment beyond the barriers of just online design, but also a tinge of irony about the way things have gone. All the talk was of AIR (Adobe's Integrated Runtime) facilitating cross-platform application building outside the browser; it was very good too. But hadn't we all been striving to put traditionally desktop-bound programs onto the web? Now the two have merged so much that we might not be able to spot the boundaries ever again – a good or a bad thing, it's pretty huge.

So now you can design and build Mac OS or Windows programs with Fireworks, Flex, Flash, CSS, HTML, JavaScript and the rest, perhaps a name change for your favourite magazine wouldn't seem too churlish – if it was on the agenda. No, we're just keen

to herald this new dawn with the kind of tutorials that can help you get a handle on exactly why AIR isn't just a load of hot... erm, oxygen?

We start this month with Simon Bisson's landmark look at using a new extension for packaging AIR applications within Dreamweaver CS3, but that doesn't start and end the cutting-edge theme, no sir. Rapid interface prototyping in Fireworks CS3 makes a debut, while walkthroughs in AS3 GUI coding and video chatting are big Flash hitters. We get handy with the WordPress blogging capabilities, and also get a lesson in Google optimisation from new SEO author Ben Norman.

Where were you when you picked up *Web Designer* 137, eh? Go out there and make history happen folks!

**Mark Billen**  
EDITOR

## Editor's picks

*Web Designer* 137 swaggers into town with a gang of great content such as...



**22-23**

Apple's latest iWeb suite gets an overview. It may be entry-level but it shouldn't be ignored!



**26-29**

The 20 greatest Web 2.0 sites are identified in our next-generation chart rundown



**90-91**

Why reseller server packages are great for client and host in Dave Howell's eCommerce feature

# gallery

## THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP

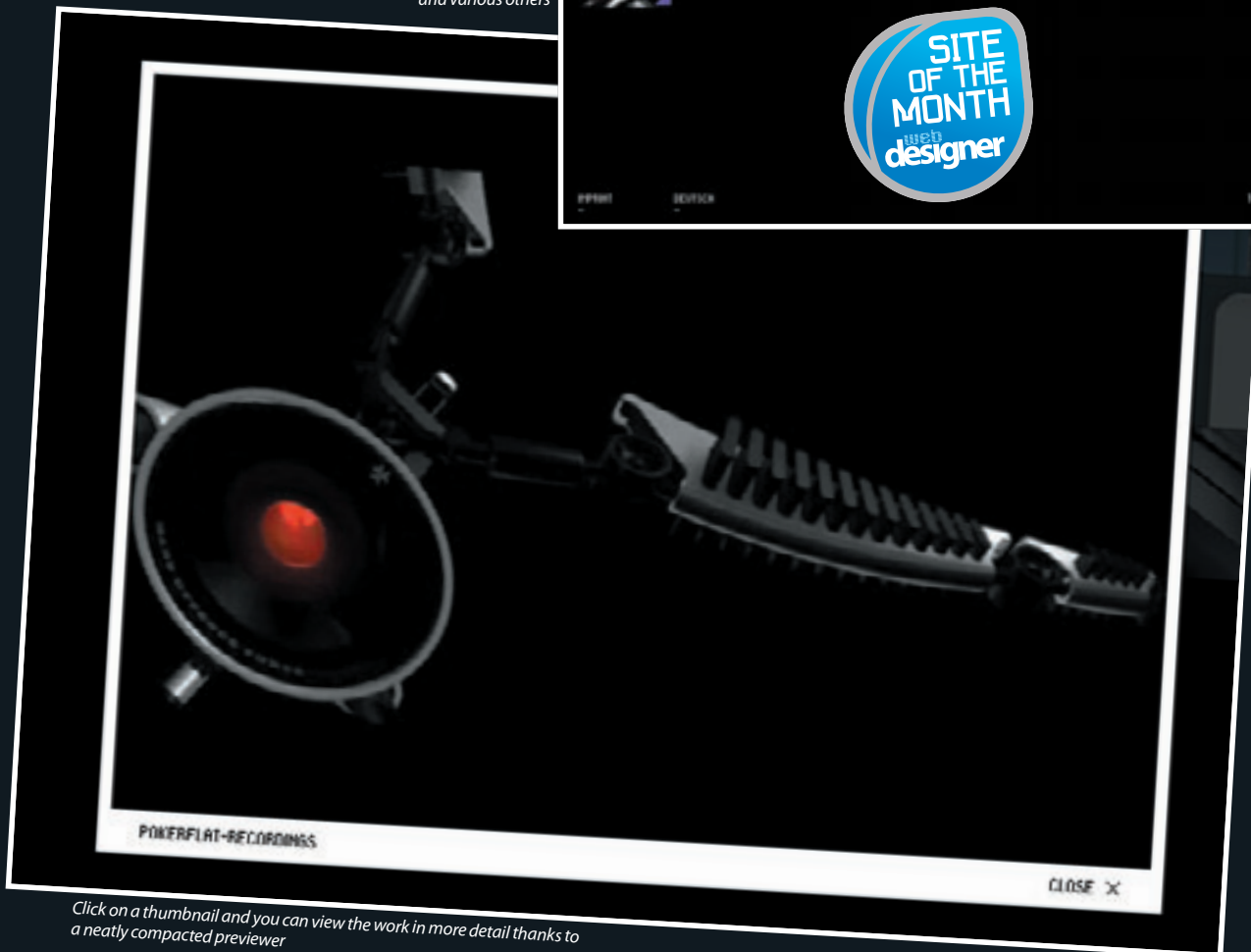
### TILT DESIGN STUDIO

[www.tilt-design-studio.com](http://www.tilt-design-studio.com)

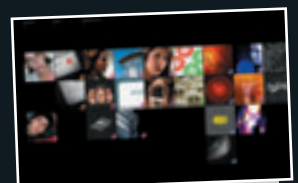
**Designed by: Tilt Design Studio**

Tilt Design Studio is a young and small multi-disciplinary design studio that works mainly in the fields of web, print and motion design, and its website showcases its body of work via a simple yet effective layout of clickable thumbnail images. The site contains downloads and video showreels, with a perfectly executed colour-coded interface separating all its design disciplines, adding up to easy navigation. Its basic goal is to create something that makes things special and that makes people smile – well, it has certainly managed that!

*Each thumbnail is colour-coded, including its rollover animation, to separate between print, web, motion, full dome, chronological and various others*



*Click on a thumbnail and you can view the work in more detail thanks to a neatly compacted previewer*



### Site Highlight

Click on one of the bug icons in the top right and you will initiate a retro-style wall breaker game, using the portfolio thumbnails as the blocks, which is a really nice touch to say the least.

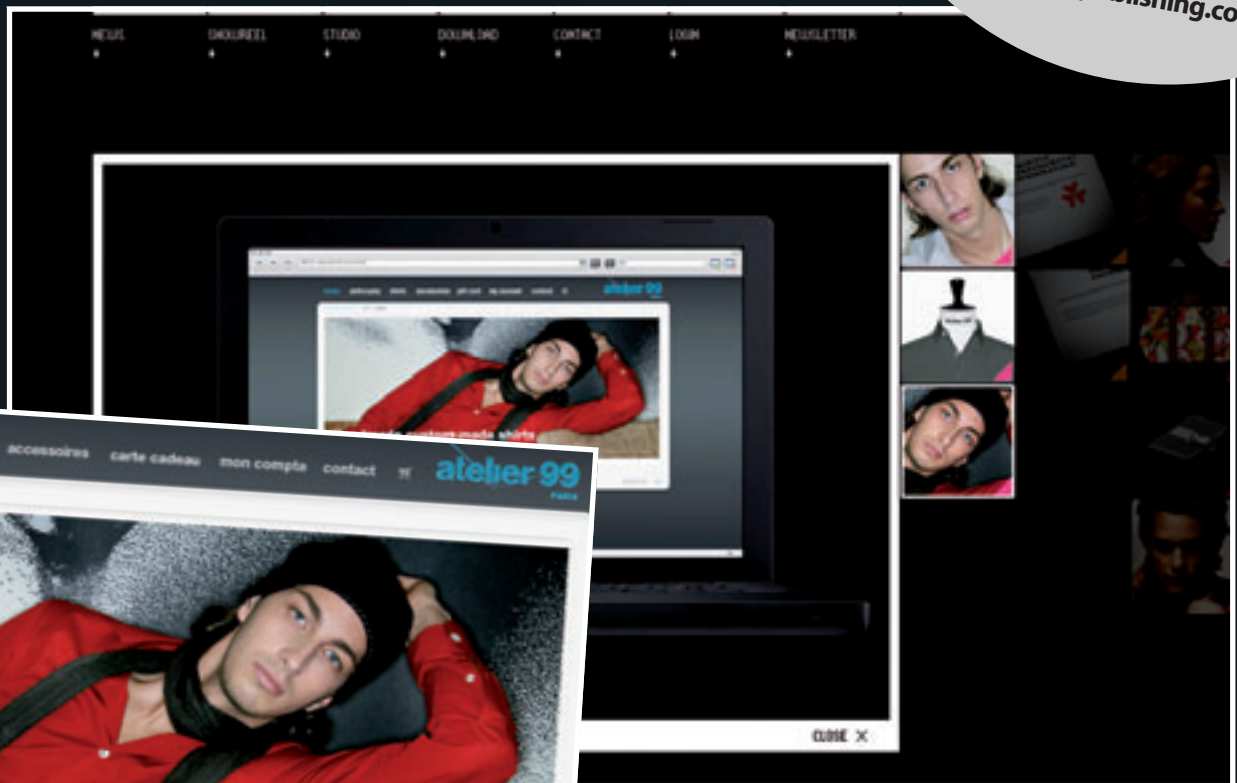




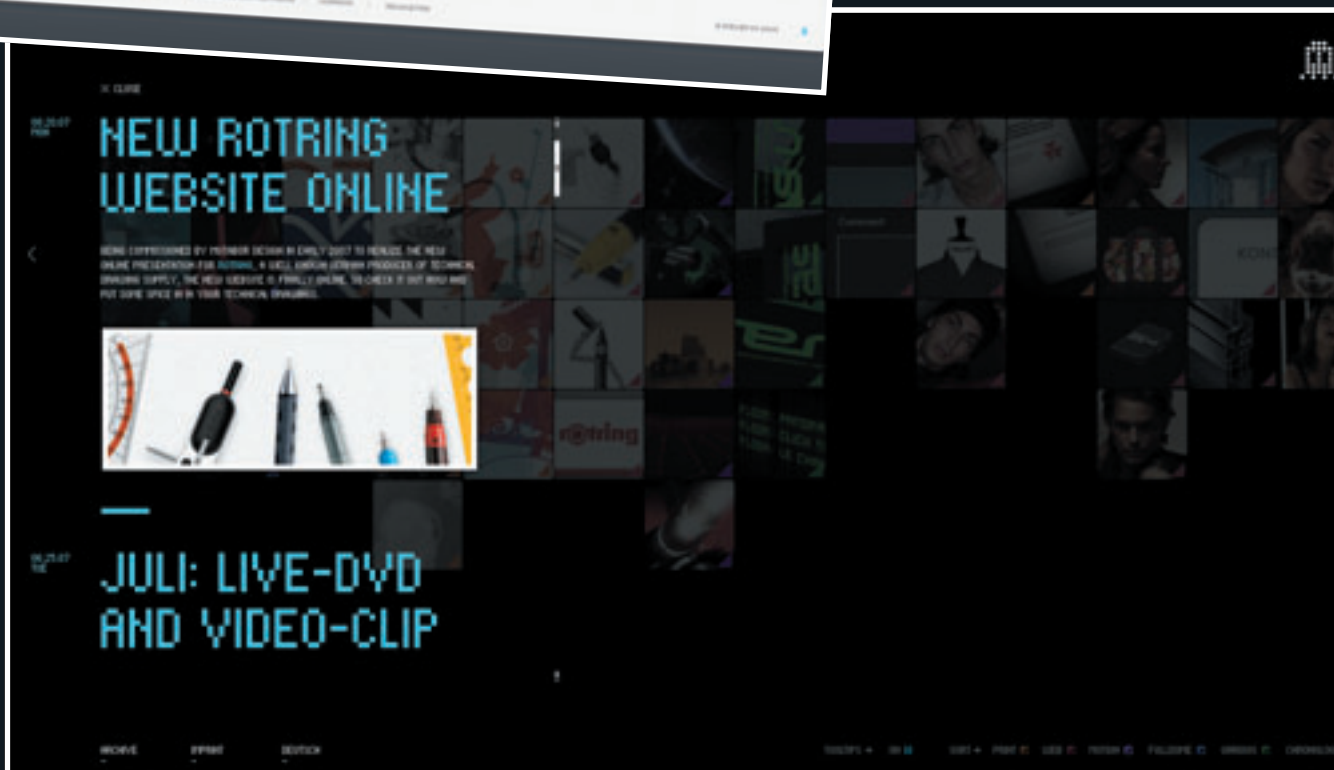
**THE WEB DESIGNER** candy shop is open for business again to inspire and get you talking with a gallery of some of the sweetest websites currently blessing the internet with their presence. So go grab a coffee, flick off your shoes, lean back and get clicking

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

You can easily link to the sites that the company has created



When you find something that you'd like to see in more detail, simply click on the thumbnail for more information



Once accessing various information, the rollover state blurs and reveals a clean stroller while fading the background

## CHECKLAND KINDLEYSIDES

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

**Designed by: Checkland Kindleysides**

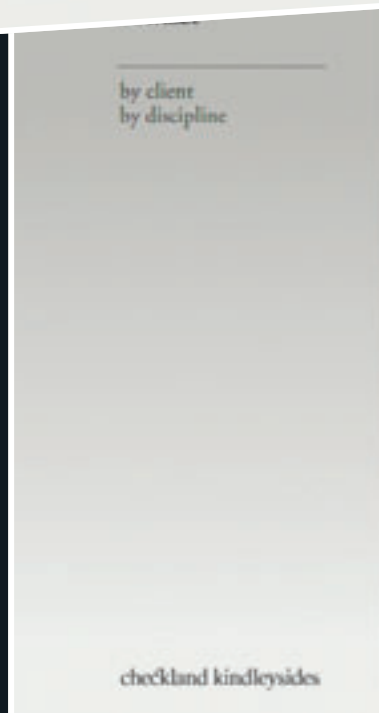
As simple as it looks at first glance, this recently launched site is truly one of those sites to sit back, share and enjoy. Checkland Kindleysides is a experienced creative studio based in Leicestershire and its award-winning online presence showcases a fantastically peaceful brand without any pretence at all, using a progressive Flash interface at its core. The content navigation does its job with absolutely no fuss, as you are taken from page to page while enjoying some well-executed animation.



The site mixes photography with its other visual elements within its Meet The Team pages, giving you the chance to see the people behind the company in a unique way

The simplicity of this site is a joy to behold, with no clutter so your focus remains on the different animations

Its portfolio is laid out without fuss in a centred previewer, with four images showcasing the team's mix of skills



The Portfolio section is a must-visit for checking out previous projects. You can even send a link to a friend direct to the project page



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## Site Highlight

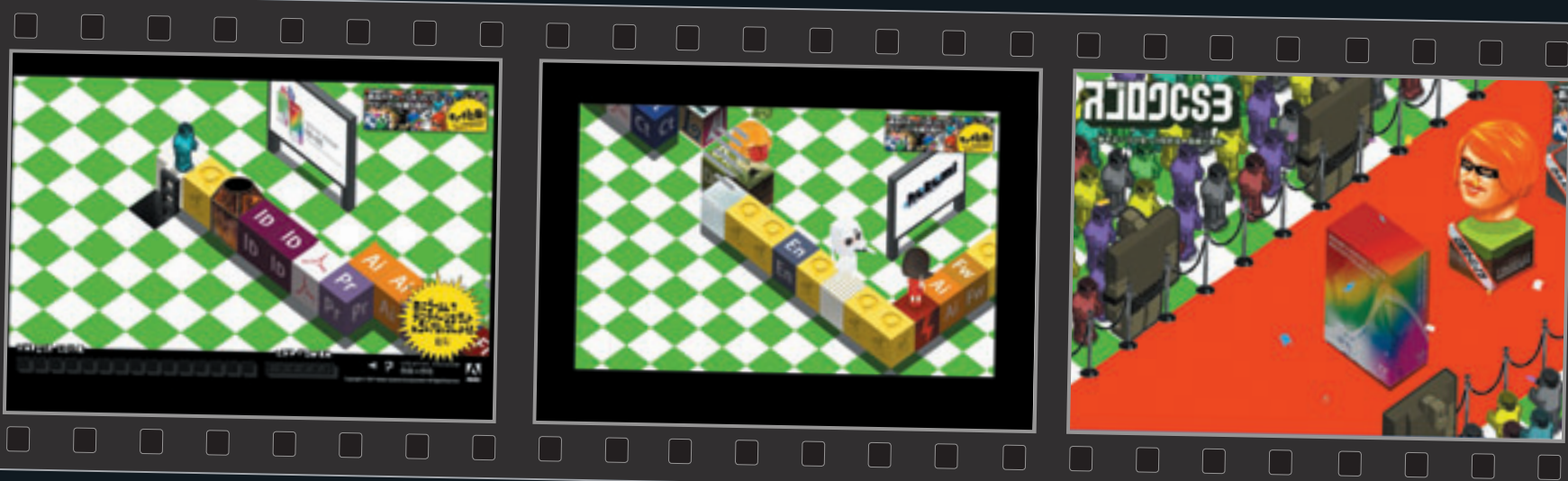
The transitional animations between pages of cut-out paper stencils is special. Carefully crafted and fluid, it sits to the right of the page and is the star of the show.





# gallery

## THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



### ADOBE SUGOROCK

<http://sugorock.net/>

**Designed by:** Various

Sugorock is a Japanese microsite and microgame for Adobe's Creative Suite 3 and, as you will no doubt find out for yourselves, is lots of fun. The site was developed with contributions from varied and numerous lists of renowned names of studios and designers currently representing the recent Japanese art scene. The microgame focuses on a boardgame-style interface, centred on aligned cubes all branded to different packages from Adobe, with your progression naturally determined by rolls of the dice. Check it out and see if you can tear yourself away – we couldn't, and frankly why should you even bother!

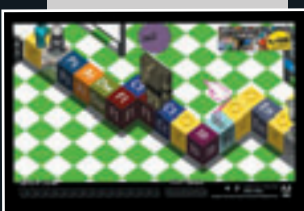
*The website oozes typical Japanese design styles all together in one place. With so many designers in collaboration, this could have backfired*

*As your little avatar does his best to beat the enemy, you'll collect artist blocks and CS3 power-up cubes*



### Site Highlight

Fusing all the different elements together from different sources to build a fun, visually exciting and fully functional game must have been a complicated task, but one that has had great results nonetheless.







The site has floating interactive windows, which you can drag around the screen for easier access

You will see the slickness of many elements on the site. One such element is the rollover animations

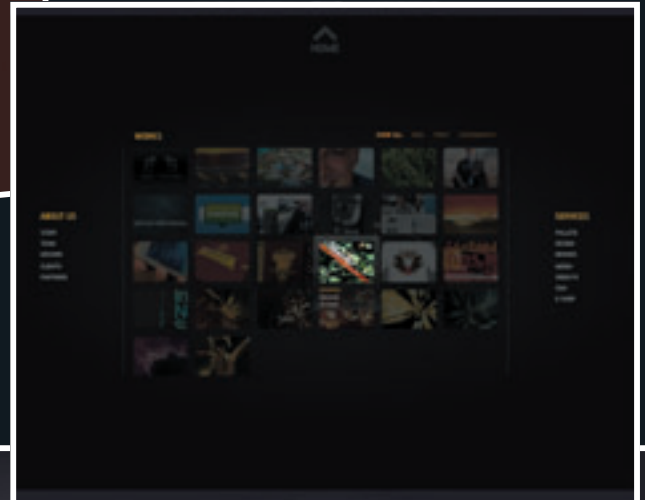
## SATURIZED STUDIO

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

**Designed by: Saturized Studio**

For a lesson on some highly skilled navigation building, as well as the perfect way to showcase your body of talents, you wouldn't go far wrong by following the example set by Saturized Studio, a young, forward-thinking interactive agency from Serbia. Displaying its catalogue of creative talents, it is responsible for creating a range of unique, cutting-edge work across the multi-discipline areas of print and web. The website's foundation is its navigation layer that calls all the elements together, depending on the user's desired path through the site. Clearly this is a group of interactive designers that love their work.

The site uses panels when displaying and in its portfolio, which is consistent throughout the website

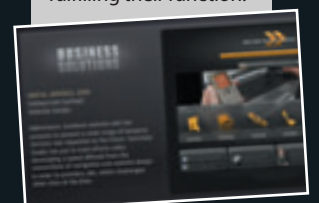


The portfolio of work is as visually appealing as the website itself, with a body of work that complements the studio



## Site Highlight

We feel that the slick and beautiful navigational elements that back up this site is its strongest feature, but we love nothing more than interfaces that entertain as much as fulfilling their function.



# gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP

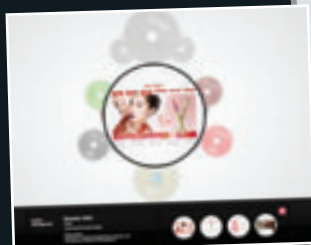
## AI INTERACTIVE

[www.a-i.tw/root.html?lang=en#pos=1](http://www.a-i.tw/root.html?lang=en#pos=1)

**Designed by: AI Interactive**

This award-winning website centres around a unique and innovative interface of flying discs for its main navigation, which in turn brings the user its portfolio of work with an enjoyable experience. AI Interactive is a studio creating high-quality web-based projects that focus on creating high-end interactive internet solutions, with an established client base of well-known brands to boot. If you find that the flying discs leaves you a bit dizzy, then you have the option to navigate via buttons located at the centre at the top and bottom of the page.

Use the quick navigation system that's provided at the top of the screen for a breezier time when surfing the site



## Site Highlight

The playful nature of the spinning discs, each representing a project of work, is a lot of fun and grants the studio with a strong identity that is easy to remember.



After selecting a project to view, a large fish-eye lens is revealed at the centre of the page. Roll it and it will magnify slightly



A fun and unique way to showcase your portfolio but can leave you dizzy at times, nevertheless the creativity in doing so is a stand-out moment







# bulletin

## HOT NEWS FROM THE WEB DESIGN WORLD



### CURRENT FAVOURITES

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

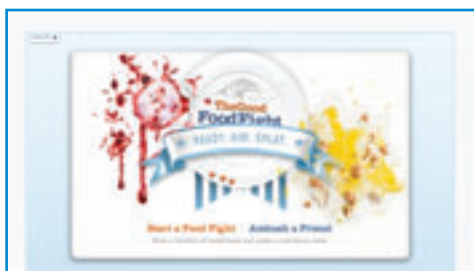


### Halo 3: Believe

[www.halo3.com/believe](http://www.halo3.com/believe)

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

Incredible 3D scale model with many interactive elements makes this one of the best sites of 2007.



### The Good Food Fight

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

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

Totally original idea that allows users to have a food fight online.



### Burn - can you take the heat?

[www.burnenergy.dk](http://www.burnenergy.dk)

Designed by: [www.emerge.dk](http://www.emerge.dk)

Answer five questions and see a sizzling dance. Better than the BBC's Dance XI!

# HORIZON

## INTERACTIVE AWARDS

Recognizing Excellence In Interactive Media Production<sup>SM</sup>



The coveted Horizon award for interactive media



Cartoon Network were amongst the victors during Horizon 2007



This Adidas effort for basketball star Pete Maravich won for eCommerce

ANNUAL COMPETITION CALLS FOR ENTRIES FROM THE WORLD OF INTERACTIVE MEDIA, WITH 2008 RESULTS ANNOUNCED IN APRIL

**THE SEVENTH ANNUAL** call for the Horizon Interactive Awards has been announced.

Launched in 2002, the international competition aims to recognise outstanding achievement in the field of interactive media, and showcases the best blend between artistry and technical execution, regardless of company size. Work judged includes websites, CD-ROMS, DVDs, Flash animations, videos, kiosks, online ads and videogames.

"By keeping our focus exclusively on interactive media, the awards are able to highlight the most outstanding solutions in the industry," comments founder Mike Sauce. "The competition really gives developers a unique opportunity to be recognised for their accomplishments on a world stage, thereby adding value to their work and strengthening their relationships with their clients." This is a sentiment

echoed by previous winners, such as the Elastic Wit Studios of Sydney, Australia. As co-founder and owner Ron Fortune comments, "The Horizon Awards programme was appealing to us, not only because of the judging criteria, but also the underlying philosophy – they get interactive media and interactive producers. We have won awards for the last two years now and as recognition for creativity and user experience, they are the best endorsement we could receive that we are doing something right."

Last year's competition was the largest to date, seeing nearly 1000 entries from over 24 countries around the world. If you fancy taking part this year, you have until 31 January next year (the winners are announced in April). See [www.horizoninteractiveawards.com](http://www.horizoninteractiveawards.com) for information on how to enter and also check out the 2007 winners.



# Awards roundup special



## Party for the people

BEST OF BRITISH DESIGN CELEBRATED AT LONDON VENUE

**TOP UK DIGITAL** design talent has been revealed in London. The newly refurbished Royal Festival Hall played host to the Y Design Award Winners' Party, part of the London Design Festival, running until 25 September.

Now in its second year, the Y Design Awards recognise the best creative talent in the UK's digital space. Winners of such categories as Best Interactive Design and Best Online Campaign were chosen from more than 420 submissions by a panel of industry judges. Organiser Dan Sutherland, CEO of sponsors Carrenza, was pleased with what he saw. "What has really impressed me this year is the sheer diversity of entries – many of which have a very real impact on society as seen in the ethical, not-for-profit and community categories," he comments. "This year we saw twice as many entries from double the number of agencies – and what is unique about the Y Design Awards is that it

allows the UK's emerging talent to showcase their work alongside the more established agencies. Next year, digital design will be a major focus of the London Design Festival with a dedicated day of interactive events and exhibitions running alongside the Y Design Awards." John Allwright, product manager of fellow sponsors Microsoft Expression, was also impressed. "The standard of these winning entries is exceptional, once again affirming the UK's position at the cutting-edge of digital design. The winners are all uncompromising in the quest to realise their creative vision, overcoming technical challenges in the process."

All category winners have been entered into the People's Choice Award, where they can be voted for on the Y Design Awards website. Voting closes 2 November, with the overall winner announced 5 November at the YDA People's Choice Party, held on Brighton Pier.



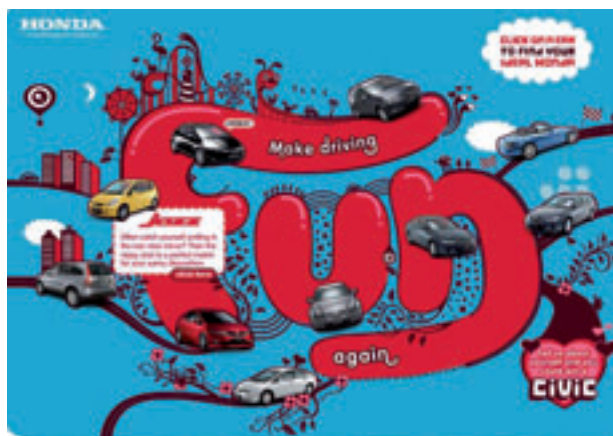
The winners of the Y Design Awards came together at an exclusive party

## Awards get judged FWA

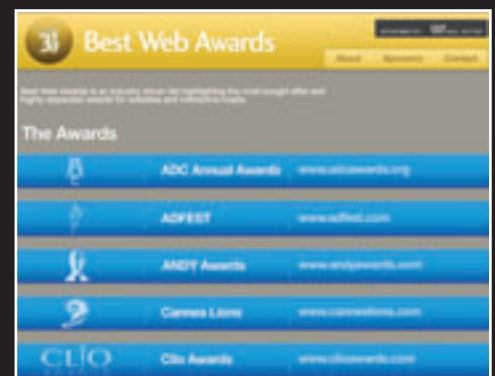
INDUSTRY-DRIVEN AWARDS LIST GOES ONLINE THANKS TO FWA

**IF THE PREVIOUS** stories have whet your appetite for accolades, a new site could help you find just what you're looking for. The newly launched Best Web Awards is a useful list of the most popular and respected awards for websites and interactive media.

The site has been compiled with the help of over 100 acclaimed agencies. The Favourite Website Awards (FWA) used its large network of contacts to help set up and launch the Best site, each agency providing a selection of what they consider to be their most influential and important awards. Those nominated were then put forward into a central pool, where those that received more than 20 recommendations made it onto the Best site.



Internet campaigns, such as Honda's 'Make driving fun again' for its new Civic, are extremely effective and deserve to be celebrated accordingly. Glue London also celebrated a double win for their viral Impossible Story and the Get the Message application for the Royal Navy



## Facebook calls for developers

SOCIAL SITE OFFERS CASH INCENTIVES FOR APPLICATION DEVELOPERS

**THE FOUNDER OF** Facebook has offered up to \$250,000 (£125,000) to firms and individuals to create 'innovative and disruptive programs' for the site.

Around 4,000 small programs already exist on the social networking site, including digital 'gifts', games and music. These applications can be added to a user's profile, and have proven to be exceptionally popular in the four months since outside developers were allowed to write them.

With 41 million users currently using the site, founder Mark Zuckerberg hopes that the new fbFund scheme will increase Facebook's growth even further. "Any application developer can submit their application and a little business proposal to us," he comments. "If we think the project is good, we will give a grant for somewhere between \$25,000 to \$250,000." The only restriction is that companies must not have taken any venture capital money previously. Any firm that wins money from the scheme will not have to give up equity to the fund. Instead, it asks that it is given first chance to invest in any successful company that sprouts as a result. "This is a grant to help these companies get off the ground," says Zuckerberg.

facebook



Facebook is willing to share its wealth with promising developers

## NEWS In brief



### A METAPLACE FOR ALL

Metaplace, a free tool that allows anyone to create a virtual world has been launched. The web-based program lets users create their own virtual spaces from simple building blocks, which can then be embedded within a web page or Facebook profile.



### SUITABLY REFRESHED

Refreshed Media, a Bournemouth-based digital marketing agency, has picked up an award in the prestigious WebAward competition. The agency won the Home Building Standard of Excellence Award for Redrow Homes' 'luxurious' 'Celestia' development in Cardiff Bay, with a website that was considered to be of the highest standard for the industry.



### SILVERLIGHT RELEASED!

Microsoft has released Silverlight 1.0, a cross-browser, cross-platform plug-in for delivering richer user experiences on the web. The company will also work with Novell Inc. to deliver Silverlight support for Linux (Moonlight), based on the project started on [mono-project.com](http://mono-project.com).



Creative Buzz achieves a consistent look and feel, while Irvine's band has been heavily promoted on the web

## Rockin' all over the web

CRAZY CREATIVE DIRECTOR MAKES BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

**THE CREATIVE DIRECTOR** of London-based web design agency Chameleon Net, Daryl Irvine, has taken time off from his day job to release a new album with his band. Promoted heavily within the web community, Beautiful by crazy6 ([www.crazy6.com](http://www.crazy6.com)) is now available from over 40 online retailers, including iTunes.

Irvine's musical creativity can be seen in Chameleon Net's innovative web design, as managing director, Vicky Reeves, comments. "Chameleon Net has expanded consistently over the last nine years. At this point in our growth, we identified the necessity of bringing in someone who could lead our creative team and continue to develop Chameleon's design proposition to

its clients. Daryl brought with him a vision for the team, which has already had a noticeable impact. He inspires with his can-do attitude, sense of fun and, of course, his passion for creativity – whether it involves Photoshop or an electric guitar."

For a taste of the design excellence that Irvine has brought to Chameleon Net since his arrival in March 2006, visit the design section of [www.chameleonnet.co.uk/web-design.aspx](http://www.chameleonnet.co.uk/web-design.aspx).

Meanwhile, another web design agency has been quite literally causing a buzz online. Creative Buzz has just launched a new website, with an exciting new portfolio that aims to create a new identity for a variety of clients. Take a look for yourself at [www.creativebuzz.com](http://www.creativebuzz.com).





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

We take a look at what's making us hot under the collar this month in the wonderful world of gadgetry and design

1



**1 The Crumpler Gimp laptop sleeve**  
From £22.99  
[www.intro2020.co.uk](http://www.intro2020.co.uk)

We're always looking for new and funky ways to protect our precious hardware, and they don't come much funkier than the Crumpler range at Intro2020. The Gimp laptop sleeve from this collection is a favourite of ours – and that's not just because of the name! In a choice of colours, the Gimp is available in five sizes, accommodating 12-inch models like the Apple iBook, up to 17 inches, perfect for a MacBook Pro. The sleeve is made from super-stretchy neoprene, so will stretch to fit other sizes too. Featuring a strong, special anti-scratch zip, your laptop will be safe tucked up inside the Gimp. The stylish way to keep your laptop away from harm and look professional at the same time.

**2 Belkin Clip-on USB Hub**  
\$29.99 (approximately £15)  
<http://belkin.com>

With the amount of media on the go at any one time, it can get mighty complicated with loads of wires trailing around your desk. That's why we love this nifty little USB hub from Belkin. It clips onto a desk, lamp, chair leg or even round a bundle of wires – therefore tidying up, without adding to the clutter. The neat little hub has room for four high-speed USB 2.0 ports, adding to the variety of media devices that can be connected at a time. It's compatible with Mac (OS 9 and OS X) and PC (Windows 98, 2000, ME, XP and Vista) systems and comes in a choice of colours: Silver, Chocolate Brown or Blue. An ingenious take on a common computing peripheral for the same price as a standard hub.

**3 Wacom Wireless Pen Tablet**  
£170  
[www.wacom-europe.com](http://www.wacom-europe.com)

If you haven't yet discovered the advantages of working with a tablet, then we would recommend getting your hands on one of these Wireless Pen Tablets from tablet guru Wacom. A tablet speeds up your digital workflow and gives you more control over your creations. This wireless tablet offers up an A5 display with 2,000dpi resolution, which makes it perfectly portable. The fact that it's wireless adds to its ease of use on the move, with the integrated rechargeable lithium-ion battery offering up to 25 hours of power. The battery-free pen features 512 levels of pressure sensitivity for maximum control – making it the perfect input device for drawing, designing and editing. The sleek casing looks pretty good too!

2



3





4



#### 4 Cube World

From £17.95

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

Enter the weird and wonderful land of Cube World. In case you haven't already caught onto this latest craze, let us explain. Each cube contains a wacky little character with its own personality, set of tricks and games. Leave them alone and they're perfectly content getting on with their own (pixelated) lives, but roll the cube or push a button and the motion-sensitive little guys will interact with you! You can connect up to 16 cubes together to create a complete world, or just have separate little beings scattered across your desk. Perhaps it's a little bit random, but we love them all the same. And we can think of no better way to pass a little bit of downtime. Available in a choice of colours, mix and match to your heart's content.

#### 5 Contemporary Graphic Design

£24.99

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

Edited by Charlotte and Peter Fiell, this book is comprised of a collection of works from 100 of today's most exciting graphic designers. The art comes in many shapes and forms, from adverts to posters, websites to packaging, and ranges from telling strong political messages to light-hearted vibes. Artists featured include the likes of Jonathan Barnbrook and Peter Saville. The book is being hailed as "absolutely essential to anyone interested in the power of images" and we're actually inclined to agree. Its purpose is not to dictate, but rather to inspire and show fellow artists the kind of work that is happening today. Don't mistake this as simply a coffee-table book though, as it will keep you coming back for more.

#### 6 GM3200 Laser Mouse

£29.99

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

When you're at your workstation for hours on end, you need to ensure all your kit is the comfiest it can be, with your mouse being no exception. The GM3200 Laser Mouse from Saitek features a great ergonomic design with adjustable weights that can be tailored to each user. Not only that, but this is the world's first 3,200dpi laser mouse, which benefits gamers enormously as its sensitivity matches the latest game environments. The mouse has six programmable buttons, so you can choose what does what and how. As well as all of that, its sleek design and special lighting effects make it look pretty funky too! It's guaranteed for two years as well, which means you can rest easy whether working or playing.

5



6



# Message board

Give us your point of view on breaking topics or just talk amongst yourselves on our forum!

**SPEAK OUT**  
[www.webdesignermag.co.uk/forum](http://www.webdesignermag.co.uk/forum)

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

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

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

The mails and emails continue to flood in, so here's our chance to reply to those burning issues highest on your agenda...

## A plea for help

Hello,

My name is Amir Lodge from Manchester. I am 17 years of age and currently in my first year at college because I took a year out for some reason. But now I am there, and I'm taking a BTEC Media diploma for three years. I have always wanted to become a web designer but it seems no one is able to help me. I want to know what further education I need and which equipment will help me to start up. So I looked in my magazine rack and found my *Web Designer* magazines, but I could not find anything that I understood that can help me start out. Can you help me as my college can't, and my parents can't, so please can you? Web designing is a dying breed in Manchester – I have to catch six buses a day to get to college and the course only does web authoring on two days of my college timetable. Thank you for reading.

*Amir Lodge*

There's never been a better time for getting into web design, Amir, so you're right to be so enthusiastic. Employers are keen to cash in on the Web 2.0 boom, so we doubt very much that web design is a dying art anywhere – especially Manchester! However, definitive college courses are still tough to come by and it might be that you should be looking ahead to university schemes and what you'll need to get on those later on. Leeds University is a hotbed for developing design talent and we featured it pretty heavily in our Creative Careers issue 131. See if you can back-order a copy if you don't already own it, and good luck!

## Book recommendation

Hi *Web Designer*,

In issue 133's Message board, you featured a reader who wanted to know how to make templates for Joomla!.

As a user of Joomla!, I thought I would email to let you know that Packt Publishing have released a book entitled *Joomla! Template Design*, which I have found very useful.

Thanks for a great mag and keep up the good work.

*Michael (via email)*

Cheers for sharing that with us Michael, and given the fact that Joomla! is seemingly very popular at the moment, it is no surprise that there are books on it floating around. Given the amount of reader feedback we've had, you can expect to see some tutorials on it in forthcoming issues – so stay right here!

## Fireworks fanatic

*Web Designer*, why oh why don't you ever cover tutorials on Fireworks? Surely it's now a valuable part of the CS3 family!

*Phil Robinson*

Oh okay then Phil – turn to page 60 for a look at RIA prototyping!

## MAIL OF THE MONTH

### Code confusion

Hi there,

First of all, I love the magazine! But, in some of the tutorials, as in the latest issue and the PHP CAPTCHA tutorial, having the images out of sequence with the copy, as well as screenshots that are only partially seen, really don't help the 'flow' of a tutorial.

Having worked in publishing for a few years, I understand the design issues that an artist may face and trying to fit images in can be sometimes frustrating. However, to see figures eight, ten and twelve as a header graphic, and then only see a snippet of what the screen is and not really relate, is simply confusing.

Check out the figure from step eight with the actual text of the same step. The code is nowhere near what is shown in the image.

Maybe that was just a mis-identification on the image, but in step five it says to put a certain line at the top of the file. Then, in figures eight and ten which show the top of the file, this line is absent...

I'm not really bitching, it's just that screenshots should be used to enhance comprehension instead of used to take up space, more like the tutorial on CSS.

Just a note, again, I do really appreciate the magazine!

*Kelly Johnson (via email)*

Well, we appreciate your readership Kelly and also your very nice letter. From your description, we think we realise which part of the particular tutorial you are referring to, but we'd accept the general point about very code-heavy exercises often being tougher to follow occasionally. At the forefront of our design decisions in terms of the magazine layout is always the ability for readers to easily make their way through potentially complicated content – whatever their ability level. More recently, we've given a fair amount of thought to the way we present code steps and have been keen to replace tough-to-read screengrabs with the actual syntax listings, which is a universally welcomed move. Any shots you'll then find around those should be illustrating interface work or visual feedback from the code at run time, and not generally trusted for copying code. On a design level, we've had to flow the text through the pages rather than stick to the rigid step structure of old and have chosen to pick out the most significant screengrabs at the head of each page. We'd therefore recommend that those tutorials with project files on the CD should be followed with the final code open, so you can refer to the structure that way if in any doubt. Rest assured that we continue to work towards more efficient and exciting ways to present the content in *Web Designer*, so expect to see significant style changes perhaps in the new year...







# iWEB '08

IT MIGHT NOT BE THE MOST POWERFUL OF WEB DESIGN APPLICATIONS, BUT APPLE'S iWEB CERTAINLY PACKS A PUNCH FOR A BUNDLED PIECE OF SOFTWARE

In 2006, Apple released a new application called iWeb. Now in its second generation, it resides within Apple's iLife suite of creative applications, which continues to improve with each passing year.

First launched in 2004, the software set that includes photo management, web design and media-editing tools, comes preloaded on new Macintosh computers and has recently seen a confusing upgrade from iLife '06 to iLife '08 – skipping an '07 version entirely. Available as a

number of professional templates included with iWeb allowed users to upload quality web design work with a minimum of fuss.

## SIMPLE SITES

The process of building an iWeb site is simple. Launch the application, select a theme and a page template, then use the available tools to adjust the design and add your own media using simple drag-and-drop techniques. Almost every element of an iWeb page can be manipulated, from text

page, iWeb has a template for all, with each type available in a variety of different themes, offering everything from professional-looking business tones through to colourful, childlike simplicity.

## AHEAD OF THE GAME

As with most pieces of commercial software, it's never long before the user base begins clamouring for additional features to bolster the original release, and that was the case with iLife '06. Due to the delay between iWeb '06 and '08, indie developers even began putting together crude add-on applications and plug-ins to help users include elements such as embedded video and advertising on their pages, content previously unobtainable to users of the application.

Fortunately, Apple has closely monitored the feedback on iWeb and put right a number of the shortcomings of the original version in the '08 release, which we will now look at in more detail.

## WEB WIDGETS

Putting applications like iWeb Enhancer out of work while simultaneously pleasing the iWeb fraternity, Web Widgets allow for live page

## "iWeb impressed many with its 'what you see is what you get' drag-and-drop interface"

standalone product at £55 (\$79), it has seen a new wave of computer users publishing their creative projects online.

iWeb impressed many with its 'what you see is what you get' drag-and-drop web design interface that offered beginners the chance to put together competent, professional-looking websites in a matter of minutes. Coupled with Apple's .Mac hosting and online storage service, a

boxes and fonts through to drop shadows and slick reflection effects. Masking tools allow users to fit images to a design with ease and a simple 'back and forward' system lets you layer elements on a page.

Once the design stage is complete, publishing is a breeze, with a single click of the Publish button all that's required to unleash a site onto the web. Whether it's a photo gallery, blog site or podcast

## ADD A GOOGLE MAP TO AN iWEB SITE

Make the most of Google Maps on your site in three easy steps



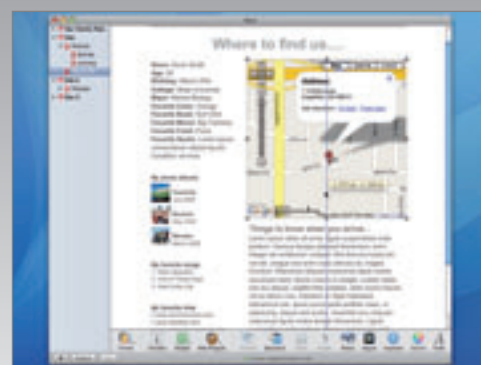
### 01 Widget wonder

Open up your site in iWeb and from the navigation pane on the left of the interface, select the page you wish to add a map to. Now head to the Web Widgets button and select the Google Map option from the drop-down menu that appears.



### 02 Address to impress

A floating pane will now appear above your page into which you can type or paste the location you want displayed on the Google Map. Now hit the Apply button to load the map on your page, displaying the location you have chosen.



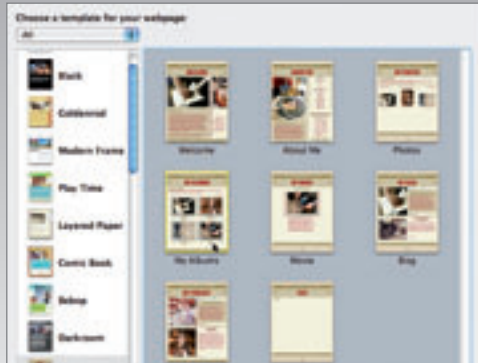
### 03 Going live

A live Google Map will now be displayed in iWeb with all the standard navigation features available. To fit the map into the design of your site, drag the box to your desired location, then use the handles to resize the map as you wish.



# QUICKLY SHARE MULTIPLE PHOTO LIBRARIES ON AN iWEB SITE

Take the hassle out of uploading image collections with iWeb's My Albums feature



## 01 Pick the page

From the iWeb theme chooser, pick a theme you like and then scroll to the My Albums page for that theme. Click the choose button to open the page. Once opened, a blank iWeb page will load ready for you to begin importing your photos and movies to.



## 02 Title and tweak

Using the simple text boxes, you can quickly fill in any information you want visitors to your site to see by clicking and typing. You can also add and delete elements on the page by clicking to select, and then manipulating them as you wish.



## 03 Less of a drag

If it's not already open, click the Media button to reveal the Media pane. From here you can drag photo albums onto your iWeb page to create new galleries. An index page is created, as well as individual gallery pages which can be played as slideshows when live.

## "iWeb looks set to go from strength to strength and keep up with the emerging web trends with each

elements like YouTube video, tickers and news feeds to be piped directly to your iWeb site where they remain live. The act of simply pasting code into a text box in iWeb and clicking Apply means the messy business of ensuring elements fit and display correctly is done away with. Almost any content that can be embedded can be used on an iWeb page, and the Live Preview feature means you can see the finished product as it will display when published to iron out any potential pitfalls. Once published, a Web Widget will constantly update as its source does for a richer experience for your site's viewers.

### GOOGLE GAINS

Apple's partnership with Google, seemingly enhanced by the launch of the iPhone, continues with new Google Map and Google AdSense support in iWeb '08. As with Web Widgets, the process of adding a Google Map is as simple as typing your requirements into a floating window and positioning the map on your site. The same controls found on Google's online map pages are also present on the embedded maps, offering site visitors a choice of views, easy zoom controls and precise directions. For a more commercial approach, iWeb users can now add Google AdSense advertising to their site and can sign up to the service from within iWeb. Once a subscription is set, AdSense offers a variety of advertising styles from skyscrapers to banners that show targeted advertising specific to a site's content once published.

### MY ALBUMS

The most common use for iWeb is the publishing of photo and video galleries for those who want a more personal touch than YouTube and Flickr for their online content. With the new My Albums feature, iWeb provides a long-awaited, simple way to index media on stylish pages with rollover animations, and an easy way for visitors to navigate to specific collections of pictures and video. It embraces the Web 2.0 phenomenon by allowing visitors to make comments on photos which are visible to all, starting dialogue that other visitors can contribute to. As with most iWeb features, adding and removing galleries on a My Albums page is performed using drag-and-drop from the iWeb media pane.

### THEME SWITCHING

With even more professionally designed themes added in iWeb '08, another feature overlooked in iWeb '06 has been brought to the software, called Theme Switching. With so many choices on offer, it becomes difficult to decide on an iWeb theme by looking at the default layout alone. Theme Switching avoids the pain of having to rebuild a page from scratch after altering the template by providing an easy way to jump between themes on the fly without having to start over again.

### YOUR NAME HERE

Personal domain names are also new to iWeb, banishing the complex URLs of the past. The non-memorable, link-only format for published

site addresses has, to the great relief of die-hard iWebbers, been assigned to the history books with any .com, .co.uk or .net title now allowed.

### A TOOL FOR THE MASSES

iWeb is, without doubt, a consumer application, but at its heart lies a serious tool and, for the price and ease of use, one that certainly shouldn't be sniffed at. As with many Apple products, the core technology and advanced functionality is neatly wrapped in an interface simple enough for a child to master. Simplicity and speed are the keys to iWeb's success and, in a world of ever more complex technology standards, it's a refreshing take on the simple home page creation alternatives. With both commercial and next-generation bases covered in the form of advertising and media embedding, iWeb looks set to go from strength to strength and keep up with the emerging web trends with each incarnation.



iWeb allows you to delve into minute details, from adjusting the site's appearance to providing users with subscription-based features

Top 20

# Web 2.0 sites

Everybody knows the usual suspects in the world of Web 2.0 but what about the underdogs, the pretenders and the up-and-comers? Here's our pick of the top 20 Web 2.0 sites you might never have even heard of... Who will be crowned next-gen's newbie number 1?

**N**obody really knows what Web 2.0 means. The term, thrown around as casually as the addition of the letter e to the beginning of words in the early Nineties, is often applied to sites like Facebook without any one definition.

Some see it as the use of the internet as a platform, shunning desktop applications for a completely online experience. Others maintain that the development

in user interaction and community on a site is a sign of Web 2.0 standards. Both are certainly true when it comes to such luminaries as Wikipedia and Flickr and, of course, you can't even think about Web 2.0 without picturing the gleaming red-and-white logo of YouTube. We know all about these sites, we know what they do and we know why they're deemed the poster children of the Web 2.0 generation. But what about the others?

If, for the sake of argument, Web 2.0 is merely an idea in people's heads about what the next generation of websites should look like and offer, where are the pretenders to the throne? Over the next few pages, we're going to run down the 20 best upcoming, unsung and unknown Web 2.0 sites to give you a feel for the amount of quality there is to be found online outside of the big guns of the Web 2.0 buzz.

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## PHOZI

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

designed by: [www.razorcom.com](http://www.razorcom.com)

Taking a cue from the Japanese craze of Purikura (photo-booth photography), Phozi looks to exploit the trend further by providing a brilliantly interactive site for users to add and edit photo-booth images. Pictures can be taken using a webcam, uploaded from a computer or sent from a mobile device and, once uploaded to the site, can be manipulated in a number of ways. Frames, stamps and themes can be applied to pictures as well as custom drawings using a number of styled Pen tools. Once complete, the modified pictures can then be shared online using a widget from [www.widgetbox.com](http://www.widgetbox.com) for use on sites like MySpace and Facebook, as well as blogs from Blogger and TypePad.



## GROOVESHARK

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

designed by: Escape Media Group Inc

Aiming to nuke and rebuild the music download landscape, Grooveshark is a bold venture into the world of legal P2P music with a distinct Web 2.0 twist. The community aspect of the service means that those sharing music they have purchased actually get a cut when another user buys the song, hence the slogan 'everybody gets paid'. Encouraging users and labels to get involved, the aim is to reward everyone for simply appreciating music. Users can listen to tracks in their entirety and choose to download them for a reasonable fee from the attractive [www.grooveshark.com](http://www.grooveshark.com) site. Still in beta but certainly worth a look.



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## SPORT SNIPE

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

designed by: Sportsnipe.com

Unlike many a 'dedicated' sports site, [www.sportsnipe.com](http://www.sportsnipe.com) offers a wide variety of international sports coverage by collating feeds from hundreds of live sources on the web. Encompassing latest scores, news and video, the site is a Mecca for sports fans who want all of their team news in one easy-to-manage huddle. We were distressed not to see any coverage of the Rugby World Cup but, being a beta version of the site, we expect things to pick up at Sportsnipe.com. Drag-and-drop is a key element to the main page, allowing users to position information from outlets like ESPN and FOXSports in any order they wish, and via embedded code and thanks to a Widget option, the site can be displayed on web pages.



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## TUBECAST.TV

[www.tubecast.tv](http://www.tubecast.tv)

designed by: milkisevil.com

Born from a hangover apparently, tubecast.tv is for the YouTube generation too lazy to reach for the mouse. Combining traditional television channels with the on-demand nature of sites like YouTube, the site plays a constant feed of web video and allows the user to pause and rewind the action as and when required. A number of channels are available from general interest through to music and comedy, and can be easily controlled using keyboard short-cuts, the mouse or left to run like an average television channel does when you've had one too many the previous night.

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## PODCASTPEOPLE

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

designed by: Taylor Digital Media Inc

For those without the software or the means to get their voice heard on the web, PodcastPeople provides a simple solution – do the lot online. Offering editing, publishing, tracking and sponsorship options, this stylish site allows podcasters and vloggers to quickly make a name for themselves. With everything dealt with online, platforms and preferences are tossed aside in favour of simplicity and effective publicity. With price plans ranging from free to \$30, there's something for everyone, regardless of skill level. Support staff are on hand to help with any issues, making PodcastPeople a great, community-driven example of Web 2.0.

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## gOFFICE

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

designed by: Silveroffice, Inc.

When it comes to creating a rich PDF, most think of Microsoft Office or any of Adobe's creative applications as the best tools for the job. But what if you didn't have any of the required programs available? gOffice looks to solve the problem with a variety of online applications for creating standard office documents without the need for installed software. Offering a simple and clean way to work on letters, spreadsheets and presentations online, the site is even available for

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users of Apple's iPhone. A few quirks can be found when pasting from Microsoft Office applications but, if you are using that, there would be no need for gOffice so it shouldn't cause many issues.



## FLVIX

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

designed by: FLVIX.com

There are times when you just need to have a copy of an online video on your desktop. Of course, we're talking about legal copies here but regardless of that, the most common problem with web video is that, in order to make it quickly accessible online, it is converted to the Flash Video FLV format. Without the required software and technical know-how, downloading and playing back such a video is a problem, but one that FLVIX can solve. Simply typing in the relevant URL for a video into the FLVIX site will allow for conversion and download of the file in a number of formats.

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## EASYCROPPER

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

designed by: Integral Impressions

Cropping an image is a task that many perform regularly, often on a day-to-day basis, but without an appropriate piece of software the job is, quite frankly, impossible. If you're stuck in a cybercafé or using a mobile device and want to trim down a picture for use as an avatar or to remove unsightly background distractions from a photo, EasyCropper is the online tool of choice. Upload an image, type in your required dimensions, drag the picture into place and you're ready to crop. Once cropped, the image can be downloaded and is ready to use. Stupendously simple but remarkably effective.

13

## LIVEMOCHA

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

designed by: LiveMocha

As more and more people emigrate to new locations across the globe, the need for Livemocha increases. Even without mass transit from country to country, many people need to learn a language and Livemocha is one of the most exciting new ways to do just that. Offering online lessons that run in accordance to the student's schedule, those using the service benefit from an online community that is looking to attain the same goals and learn a tongue other than the one native to them. Officially launched at this year's DEMOfall in San Diego, Livemocha is already building a solid base of aspiring linguists.

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## BUBBLE GURU

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

designed by: Bubble Guru LLC

You might be able to build the perfect site but you can't ever sit in front of your site's visitors and tell them exactly what you want to get across – until now, that is. Bubble Guru combines web video and interactivity by allowing subscribers to record a video greeting or guide for visitors to their site that appears in a floating bubble above the existing page design. After uploading a video, two tags added to your page are all that's required to start engaging your audience in a hands-on and thoroughly Web 2.0 manner.



11

## EYEJOT

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

designed by: Eyejot, Inc

Taking the concept of email and global communication one step further, Eyejot offers users the chance to send video messages back and forth across the web using their webcam. With no software to be installed, Eyejot can be used from anywhere and on any computer with a video input. Utilising Adobe's Flash Player, the setup procedure quickly finds your video hardware and allows you to begin recording messages right away. The service is free and acts in the same way as a web-based email service with an Inbox as well as Sent and Deleted items. For family use, business communication or simply staying in touch with friends, Eyejot is an easy and fun way to converse online.



10

## SIZEASY

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

designed by: humblefrog

Online shopping is without a doubt one of the revolutions of the century but it does have its drawbacks. Aside from a fear of fraud, e-shopping also lacks the tactile nature of traditional product-picking where a customer can handle an item to feel its weight and size and even compare it to their existing items or other products in store. This is particularly true of digital devices like cameras, hard drives and mobile phones where compact design is of the essence. Sizeasy compares the dimensions you input to the site with preset items and also displays a 3D, front, side and top view at actual size. Not the best for sizing up your next vehicular purchase perhaps, but is nonetheless still a useful online tool.



9

## RETROLAND

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

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

designed by: Retroland.com

Nostalgia is all over the TV and web these days so it's no surprise that a social networking site dedicated to memories of the past has sprung up in the form of Retroland. Beautifully designed, the site allows registered users to upload classic images and movies on diverse topics from Pac-Man to Play-Doh. The site also features a Retropedia which archives forgotten cult gems in the same way as Wikipedia, with members posting information as well as discussing the good old days on the forum. Users can rate submissions to the site using a Gold Star system to increase an item's popularity.



8

## MUSIGY

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

designed by: Musigy.com

Two students, two guitars, beer and Radiohead. That's how Musigy got started. Stan Vonog and Nick Surin, both enrolled at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, needed a way to jam together after graduation. In creating Musigy, they have built a remarkable platform for music creation and collaboration, regardless of geographical location. An internet connection, webcam and an instrument is all that's required to use the service which is hooking up musicians worldwide and recently saw its own festival spawned with jazz stars performing together from locations thousands of miles apart. If only the Gallagher brothers had access to this technology, the famous Oasis spats of the past could have been avoided!



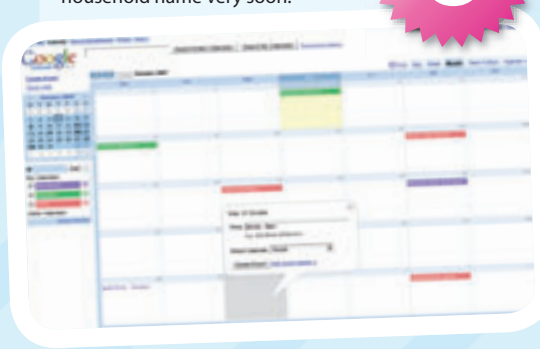
7

## GOOGLE DOCS

<http://docs.google.com>

designed by: Google

The Google Docs' suite of online applications is likely to become the forerunner in online document creation as with most Google launches. Still in beta form, the tools available closely ape those of desktop software including word processing, spreadsheet and calendar functions that allow for online collaboration in real-time with multiple users working on the same project. Working alongside Google Mail, the ability to share documents and work anywhere is handy for professionals and consumers on the move. Not yet available for Apple's Safari browser but widely used, Google Docs will likely be a household name very soon.



6

## KULER

<http://kuler.adobe.com>

designed by: Adobe Labs

Built with Flash and ActionScript 3.0, Adobe Labs' web-based kuler is all about matching and experimenting with colour. With a strong community base, it provides the platform for enthusiasts and professionals to create custom colour themes for use with anything from websites to decoration. Users of Adobe Creative Suite 3 can now access the kuler community from within Illustrator too. The main kuler page offers the latest and most popular colour combinations and there are RSS feeds available that can also be accessed using an Apple Dashboard widget so you're never out of touch with the ever-changing colour of colour.

5



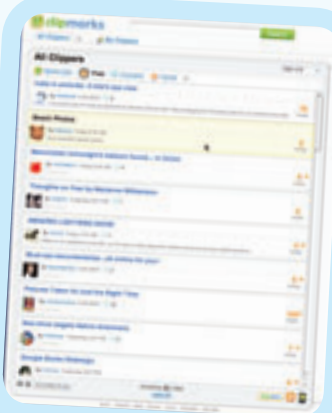
## CLIPMARKS

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

designed by: Clipmarks

It's easy to show friends an interesting article in the paper by simply pointing to it, but the web doesn't offer that simplicity. Clipmarks looks to banish the traditional method of sharing online information (an email along the lines of "check out the quote in this article, halfway down the page, next to the advert for Viagra") by providing surfers the chance to 'clip' specific elements of a website and share them on the Clipmarks site or via email and blogs. Clipmarks.com is an exciting community with new clips added every day that nail down particular areas of interest in text, picture or even in video.

4



## PICNIK

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

designed by: Picnik, Inc.

One of the major chores of archiving and sharing a library of photos is the process of editing and enhancing them before you even get to the upload stage. Picnik has a solution to this mundane task, and that's to edit your pictures after uploading them, using a variety of tools for healing underexposure issues, red-eye and more. If you have photos on Flickr or Facebook among others, you can even open and edit them from there via the attractive Picnik site. Edited photos can also be emailed directly from the site. Wave goodbye to your old photo-editing software and let Picnik take control.

3



## BUZZWORD

<http://preview.getbuzzword.com>

designed by: Buzzword.com

We were so impressed with Buzzword that we wrote this copy using it. Offering all of the features of a desktop word-processing application but purely online, it's easy to forget you're working within your browser. With the sumptuously designed Buzzword, you can open, edit and save rich text documents as you would in Word and even add pictures, tables, lists and comments to your work – it even checks your spelling as you type. The incredible site is currently at a preview stage but once it's finalized, will surely become the standard for web-based word processing putting Google Docs' Typing tool to shame. Simply brilliant. Pasting this text back into Word, we realised how dull Microsoft's word processor is...

2



## JUMPCUT

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

designed by: Yahoo! Inc

Web 2.0 is all about 'community' and with Jumpcut, the true definition of the word is spelled out in a fun and creative way. An online editor for uploading and tweaking movies and photos, Jumpcut goes one step beyond the standard and offers a sea of fellow users all posting their creations, which can then be 'grabbed' and used in your own projects. Remixing is a popular trend on the site with members reworking previously posted videos to their liking, adding elements and releasing the outcome back into the community space. Acquired by Yahoo! in 2006, this is a site that's set to go from strength to strength.

1







Users can create ad-supported sites for free, or pay varying fees to host a site with no branding and/or no advertisements

## Terapad is at the forefront of online publishing, offering site hosting and monitoring to those deemed too minor by some web design agencies at minimal cost

From personal blogs to professional shops, Terapad is unique in its ability to offer the tools and modules to build websites used in either a personal or a corporate setting. It offers users the chance to build their own self-branded sites at a very low cost, meeting all the requirements of small businesses, such as the inclusion of all the latest Web 2.0 interactive features.

**ST:** Stephan Tual, technical director

**JD1:** Joshua Davidson, marketing manager

**JD2:** Justin Dean, managing director



**WD:** Can you explain what Terapad is and why the web community should take notice of it?

**ST:** "If you're a web designer or a web design agency, and you find yourself turning away enough customers who want a dynamic site but

## "Terapad represents a shift in how designers approach website development"

can't stomach the inherent development costs to cause you concern, then you're in need of assistance from Terapad.

Terapad allows you to generate a site in seconds, with all the features your client needs. You skin the site using CSS to give it a unique look and feel, and it's live. We host it, monitor it 24/7 and upgrade it bi-monthly. It costs next to nothing to release a Terapad site (0-\$50/month), and you're free to choose your fee for your clients.

Terapad genuinely represents a shift in how designers approach website development, as until now, only corporate businesses could afford to build and maintain sites with all the latest Web 2.0 features integrated."

**WD:** SiteJourney created the product, but briefly, what was the story of its origin and how has the team behind it come together?

**ST:** The concept for Terapad came to me when I realised every web design agency I had ever worked for was turning away customers who had the need for dynamic features such as shopping carts, content management systems, forums, etc, but couldn't necessarily afford the bespoke development costs.

So in 2004, I started work on what was to become the software platform powering the initial websites of the SiteJourney clients. These were sold at the time by Justin Dean, our managing director. Instead of producing customised websites on a per-client basis, we decided to leverage a centralised platform that could run multiple websites and encompass the emerging philosophy of Web 2.0.

We launched a public beta at the end of 2006 and went live 1 January 2007. Since then, we have had more than 8,000 website owners and designers signing up for our platform.

**WD:** Reading about the product, it's clear that Terapad has been built to take advantage of the Web 2.0 boom. In that case, what is so Web 2.0 about it?

**JD1:** "Terapad offers many of the features that have become associated with Web 2.0 – such as blogs, forums, widget support, etc – right out of the box. In addition to this, it easily integrates with hundreds of other Web 2.0 services provided by third parties. This means a designer can very quickly launch a site containing as many features as an expensive bespoke application. Terapad is a constantly evolving web development tool, regularly updated with the latest technology.

We listen actively to all of our users, and as they require new features for their website, our team develops them. The new features are then placed on our users' control panels and can be added to the sites by simply selecting them. This process

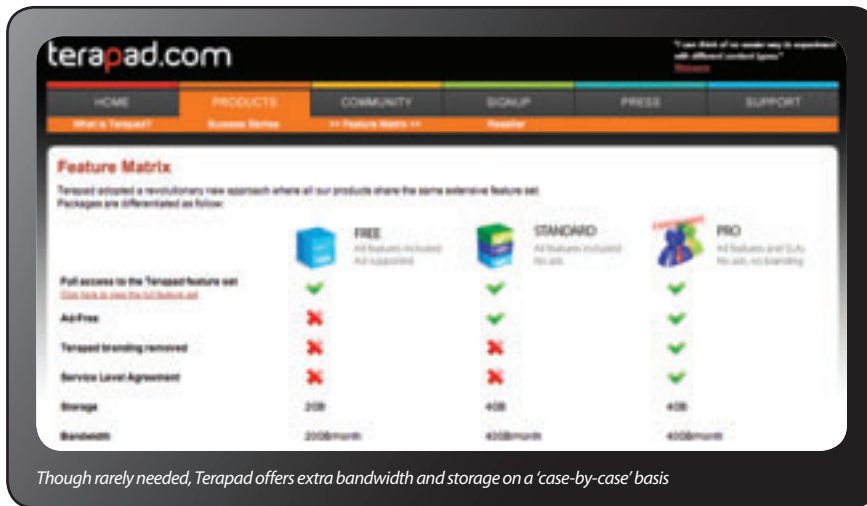
ensures that Terapad users form a very strong community. This is something we try to nurture through our community pages."

**WD:** What kind of user audience are you targeting with this product, and does it have the kind of flexibility and transparency that more technical people will naturally demand, or is it just for web design newbies?

**JD1:** "Terapad was created for web designers of all levels: our strategy is to aim for '100 per cent flexible content combined with a 100 per cent flexible look and feel'.

All content on a Terapad site is generated via eight core modules which can be enabled or disabled at will. For example, you could disable everything but the Shop module and have an online boutique far more powerful than an eBay page. Or you could only leave the Career Tools





## “Terapad has been dictated entirely by our users from day one”

enabled and build a job board in minutes. Or you could create a combination of both and add the Blog module to drive traffic to the site. Thanks to this flexibility, there are no two identical Terapad sites.

As for the design aspect, the Terapad engine outputs pure HTML, and all the visual elements are handled via CSS, over which the designer has complete control. It's a concept similar to what you might find on [csszengarden.com](http://csszengarden.com), but with a powerful CMS in the back-end to boot.”

**WD: Are there any particular user case studies that have achieved some impressive results with the Terapad tool that people can hear about and perhaps see?**

**JD1:** “There are hundreds of individual and small business success stories we've been told about since Terapad was released. The ones I'm the most proud of are the designers who tell us how Terapad has changed their approach to web development and increased their revenue dramatically. Three years ago, they struggled to make any margin on application development

because of the inherent high costs and long development times. Now they can leverage the proven CMS that comes with Terapad, 'skin' something in a matter of hours and deliver a fully dynamic site in record time to their clients. How much they charge is up to them, but I've heard of small agencies making handsome profits with that strategy.

Another success story that comes to mind is the London Cutty Sark ([www.cuttysark.org.uk](http://www.cuttysark.org.uk)). On the day of the fire, their site was receiving more than 100,000 visitors per hour as it became the front page of CNN, Fox, BBC News, Google News, The Guardian and SkyNews. During that time, we continued to run the 8,000 other Terapad sites with an average of 30ms response time per page. The staff at the Cutty Sark quickly leveraged the site's popularity and provided updated news via their site, and within 24 hours had raised over £30,000 via their Terapad shop.

There are more success stories detailed on our website, and interested parties can browse our community pages to see how the thousands of others Terapad users are using our platform.”

**WD: Flash and ColdFusion underpin the product, so what was the story behind the Adobe-only development route – what did it allow you to achieve with Terapad that you couldn't get with anything else?**

**ST:** “Terapad needed to be scalable, because we support thousands of sites and dozens of thousands of visitors simultaneously. It also had to be easily updated, because that's at the core of our strategy (each site should have access to the latest technology so users never have to buy another website again). Choosing Adobe ColdFusion was a no-brainer as it provides the scalability, cost-effectiveness and speed of development we needed.

With more than 300 unique features, the Terapad project would have needed many more developers and been significantly more expensive to build if written in another language. We found ColdFusion to be a reliable, stable and scalable platform that also supports frequent changes. As for Flash, we use it on our own site to provide all the animation requirements for our marketing materials, and we found it to be very effective.”

**WD: How do the varying price points dictate what the users get in terms of features and capabilities? Is hosting included?**

**JD2:** “We have three price points: Free, Standard (\$14.15 / month) and Pro (\$49.15 / month). All packages includes hosting, while users can use their own domains and share more than 300 features, distributed across nine modules. Also included is complete website CMS, a PayPal-ready shop, discussion forums, image galleries, CSS layout control, an event calendar, professional blogging tools with post-scheduling, RSS feeds and advanced recruitment tools. Because all modules can be enabled or disabled, you have complete control over the type of site you create with Terapad, regardless of the package you select.

The Free version of Terapad features subtle Google ads and our logo. Standard only features our logo, and Pro has neither, but adds basic SLAs and has double the storage and bandwidth. In a nutshell, what package you select depends on how much or how little you



Terapad hosts the London Cutty Sark's website, efficiently dealing with an increased flow of traffic after news broke of a damaging fire



The kind of sites that Terapad helps generate are so simple to set up, and yet look so professional once published onto the internet



Terapad.com has an active community, part of which includes an Image Wall that users upload to and share, with hundreds of images



Choose the initial design of your site from over 18 different and varied templates



Help and advice is available for those who want to use their website to trade and set up an online shop

## "Some trends that people attribute to Web 2.0 are here to stay"

want the Terapad branding to be visible. With Pro, there is no hint of our software being used on your website.

Of course, all packages include 24/7 email support, zero-maintenance hosting, 24/7 server and performance monitoring. We update the feature set bi-monthly so your site always uses the latest technology. Terapad truly is the last website you'll ever need!"

### WD: What kind of feedback have you had from your current user base?

**JD2:** "The entire Terapad feature set has been dictated by our users from day one. We have a very active community of Terapad enthusiasts that regularly email us suggestions as to how we could improve our product. Even the reseller version of our products has been shaped by our beta testers. Needless to say, our users are over the moon to be able to directly influence the development of the platform. In fact, I invite your readers to contact us at [labs@terapad.com](mailto:labs@terapad.com) if they would like to participate in the launch of our future products.

We have also been very positively received by the IT press. CNET and PCMag gave us great reviews, and so did thought leaders such as Seth Godin, Steve Rubel and Emily Chang. You can check out our reviews at [www.terapad.com/press](http://www.terapad.com/press)."

### WD: As a general point, are you confident that the Web 2.0 trend will remain relevant for some time yet and that it won't just be another online bubble that inevitably bursts?

**ST:** "I believe some trends that people attribute to Web 2.0 – niche publishing, user-generated content – are here to stay. But I think maybe a question that is very relevant to your readers would be, 'how will Web 2.0 have affected the web development industry in five years time?'

Will small businesses run by the MySpace generation still be willing to pay £5K to £10K in development costs for an online brochure or even an online shop? Will they find it normal to

have to call a web designer and pay an hourly rate just to update contact information? After dealing with hosted services in every part of their lives (banking, entertainment, CRM and even backups), will they be willing to deal with the inherent complexity of self-hosted solutions that require technical staff to operate?

The answer to all these questions is a categorical 'no', of course, and that's why I believe Terapad is ideally positioned for the changes that will take place in the coming years."

### WD: Do you have any grand plans for extending or enhancing Terapad in future revisions or are there any other hot product projects in store for SiteJourney you can let us in on?

**JD2:** "Terapad is currently our only product and focus – we have hundreds of new, user-suggested features in the pipeline to keep ourselves busy with.

One of the next features that stands out is the Terapad shopping channel. Terapad shops are already much more than just online boutiques because they allow the sellers to connect directly with their audience through the blogs or forum modules. By providing a Terapad shopping hub, we'll empower the sellers with the centralised marketplace they need to bring the mass-market attention to their products or services. And unlike eBay, Terapad won't be taking a commission on every sale. We even have a similar concept for Careers coming up.

Of specific interest to your readers will be our Reseller package. We are currently working with design agencies around the world who are beta-testing our reseller program. This will launch later this year, and will provide resellers with features such as high margins on user subscriptions, lead generation, white-labelled back ends, monitoring and management tools and profiles of each reseller with their private template library within the main Terapad site. If any of your readers are interested in the beta program, we'd love to hear from them."

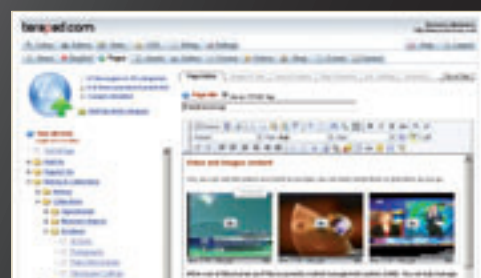
## Terapad in action

Creating a fully featured client site in four easy steps



### 01 Get started

First, sign up for a site at [www.terapad.com](http://www.terapad.com), or use their beta Reseller tools. Choose the Site Name, the Site Address and the initial features and design of your site. You can change the details completely at a later stage.



### 02 Choose your content

Simply add any content type using one of the nine modules (discussion forums, PayPal-ready shop, CMS, image gallery, CSS layout control, event calendar, blogging tools, RSS feed, advanced recruitment tools) provided.



### 03 Customise your site

Change any of your site settings, search-engine information, integration with third party tools, etc. There are plenty of tabs to make it easier to navigate within the site while making changes.



### 04 Ready to launch

Once you have customised the site to your heart's content, making it truly unique, then you're all done! Your client's site is live, easily updateable and you don't have to worry about maintenance.





When Photoshop and Flash unite, sparks fly

# Perfect partners

Motion-graphic artists have never had it better since Flagship products Photoshop and Flash joined forces. But how has this fusion improved creative prospects? Adam Smith finds out

**A**dam and Eve, Romeo and Juliet, Bonnie and Clyde, Laurel and Hardy. Now here's the question: what do all these couples have in common? Well, they just work so darn well together. With a little lateral thinking, it's a dead cert you'll soon be chalking up Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Flash to that list.

Back in December 2005, two leading software manufacturers, Adobe and Macromedia, merged. At the time it was a surprising acquisition, however, the benefits of the merge were soon recognised and with the release of the CS3 suite, users have been offered an explicit synergy between the two different applications.

Not surprisingly these days, Photoshop and Flash are being coupled to create some of the industry's most adventurous and compelling design productions, such as web-based application, interactive elements and primarily animation. Photoshop allows users to craft and create the necessary sophisticated still imagery and artwork by offering an extensive amount of creative control through its ever-evolving imaging science, filters and editing options. These can then be complemented by Flash's ability to import your creations, bringing your still images together in numerous ways, incorporating them into interactive content.

A new feature in the CS3 suite allows you to import native PSD files. Flash can now preserve many attributes applied within Photoshop and import

them into Flash layers, individual keyframes or a flattened image. These elements can then be used to create an animation sequence in Flash, exporting it as a QuickTime video. These files can then even be imported into Photoshop for further editing. Creatives using the two software packages to develop their artistic visions have never had it so good in terms of user ability and professional recognition. This contributing factor is an integral part of the software's overall popularity with contemporary interactive artists, a fact undoubtedly endorsed by one of the motion-graphic industry's leading lights, award-winning artist David Newton.

## ANIMATED IMPROVEMENTS

After graduating, Newton soon rented out a slice of the web, establishing his very own design boutique Paper Raincoat in 1999 ([www.paperraincoat.com](http://www.paperraincoat.com)). Ever since, he has produced interactive and motion material such as websites and animations, as well as more traditional illustrative projects, for a variety of large and small clients in New York, Los Angeles and Boston. Firmly familiarised with the digital medium, Newton is no stranger to using Flash and Photoshop in unison. "You'd be hard pressed to create websites without them," advises Newton. "Both programs offer a significant amount of functionality in a straightforward interface. Having worked with these programs for years and become comfortable with the interface, they just get things done and

leave me with happy clients." Newton's latest major project is a great example of the potential of this method producing an online music lounge, [www.h-lounge.com](http://www.h-lounge.com), for MIT start-up Harmony Line Inc. "I used Photoshop to create the initial layouts, draw rockstar-style avatars for users and create all images used in the site itself. We later used Flash to create a robust music player that could dynamically load music from a database, display, play and rate music uploaded by the user." This use of Photoshop as an assemblage tool is common practice. Newton puts this down to one imperative principle – Photoshop's ability to easily mimic a variety of styles instead of pushing a preset style, "It has all the capabilities to create collage, typographic designs, brush-heavy illustrations or clean vector/comic-styled art."

After completing the creative groundwork in Photoshop, many turn to Flash in the need of developing an interactive applet that goes well beyond the abilities of simple script. Or, even more impressively, when a client has a need for eye-catching animation to really spice up what seems a static website. But the merger between the software packages offers far more than just on a superficial level. It has also improved functionality, foremost on a basic level. Newton explains that even these smallest of developments have had an affirmative affect on his working process. "The unification of the interface has sped up my workflow considerably. Keyboard shortcuts that have been used in Photoshop for years, such as holding space to pan





**WIND:** Established in 1999, David Newton's design boutique Paper Raincoat ([www.paperraincoat.com](http://www.paperraincoat.com)) has created illustrations, CD covers, T-shirts, websites and animations for clients large and small worldwide

## “CREATIVES USING THE TWO PACKAGES TO DEVELOP THEIR ARTISTIC VISIONS HAVE NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD”

around or Alt to pick a colour, are now right where I expect them in Flash.” He goes on to add, “Adobe has a good sense of the design community. I’ve found most features that get added were directly requested by the community.”

Adobe has intuitively reformed Flash’s interface, making it comparable to other Adobe programs in the CS3 range. These reforms, including the same range of tabbed palettes and also the borrowing of a few of Adobe Illustrator’s drawing tools to help out when creating graphics for animation, have been a real hit with motion artists. Another big name that endorses this new found compatibility is James Farr, proud creator of Xombie, the highly successful web-animated series.

### EXPANSIVE IDEAS

Working with Flash since version 2 in the late Nineties, when it was still deemed a novelty, Farr has come to appreciate the changes and evolution of the potential provided by using both packages. “Photoshop and Flash, especially in concert, allow almost anyone to get their ideas in motion and distributed for the world to see,” explains Farr. “We don’t all have studio funding right out of the gate and Flash, in particular, has become an exceedingly effective way of getting your work noticed and your concepts validated by a worldwide audience.” And in such a competitive worldwide market, the utility and velocity of this compatibility is a real godsend to producers such as Farr. “Most of my animations feature pretty complex designs or backgrounds, stuff that tends to bog down any processor attempting to render it. On

those occasions, I use Photoshop to convert the more complex vector designs into compressed Bitmap files, which relieve a lot of processor and frame-rate issues.” In light of such evidence it becomes apparent that Flash, so often regarded as more of a programming tool than a piece of creative software compatible for consumer designers, has opened up its potential. In doing so, it has become far more accessible to clientele experienced in the usage of creative software such as Photoshop and not just application-development tools.

This creative liberation, credited to the expansion of the software’s capacity, has unsurprisingly amplified recognition within the artistic community as artists and art enthusiasts consistently strive to push boundaries and augment recognition of this working platform. A good example is the Torino



**HANA:** There’s over 100 million mobile users in Japan. Mao Sakaguchi explains, “My idea is, why shouldn’t a monitor be a canvas if there’s such a chance made available for artists?”



### ProFile: James Farr/Xombie

James Farr has been a Flash animator as far back as the late Nineties, familiarising with Flash version 2. “My first impression was that I could make cartoons with it that anyone could easily download and watch. I’ve been experimenting with that idea ever since.” And this experimentation in question has certainly paid off, as Farr created the highly regarded and successful animation Xombie. “Probably the project I’m most proud of thus far,” explains Farr. “A property that began life as an animated Flash series, which was freely available on the web. The ability to cheaply produce and distribute the episodes myself enabled me to quickly grow my audience from a few thousand to over 13 million.”

Xombie tells a tale of the trials and tribulations of Dirge, a zombie with a conscience fighting to resist his new-found urges, struggling to protect humankind from the undead and the nebulous forces behind the zombie plague. This successful series has created a booming franchise, producing spin-off graphic novels, T-shirts and other apparel, and now a follow-on comic series, Xombie: Reanimated. But Farr is always ready to acknowledge the role that the advancements and use of digital software has played in his creative production. “Photoshop and Flash, especially in concert, allow almost anyone to get their ideas in motion, and distributed for the world to see. We don’t all have studio funding right out of the gate and Flash, in particular, has become an exceedingly effective way of getting your work noticed and your concepts validated by a worldwide audience.”







**NIM'S JOURNEY:** Feature-film project, *Nim's Journey* ([www.nimsjourney.com](http://www.nimsjourney.com)) is still in pre-production, with Schubert consistently evaluating the story, planning the characters and creating environments

**H35787:** Schubert's other project is the short movie *H35787*, about a robot that's escaping her planet's war. "This trailer is done in Flash and Photoshop. No 3D elements at all have been used; it's all 2D animation within Flash," he says

animation or artwork that will ultimately animate on a web page." So with many functions now at a digital artist's disposal, it was surely only a matter of time until these creative individuals started to think 'big' about their projects and none more so than Swedish Flash animator, Ola Schubert.

Having won both film festival and popular internet awards on such sites as Newgrounds, Schubert has expanded his horizons, producing a Flash feature film *Nim's Journey*, which has been in production since 2004. "Things have developed quite a lot and rapidly. Computers and specific software have given us the possibility to create motion graphics without using a huge budget and lots of manpower," says Schubert. So how does incorporating Photoshop aid him in such a time-extensive project? "First of all the use of pixel images does help the processor a great deal. With pixel graphics you can create a more diverse image with more colours and shades than with vector graphics and, in this way, add more depth to the image. I have also developed a technique using bitmap textures within an animation to make it look more 3D. The reason for doing this is to keep the weight of the file down even if you make complex-looking animations." Regarding layer importation, Schubert added, "It's speeding up the process as I don't have to export every layer by itself. Let's say I'm creating a background image containing seven layers describing seven different depths, foregrounds and backgrounds, within the same Photoshop document. Now I only need to export one document, not seven documents, as was the case before."

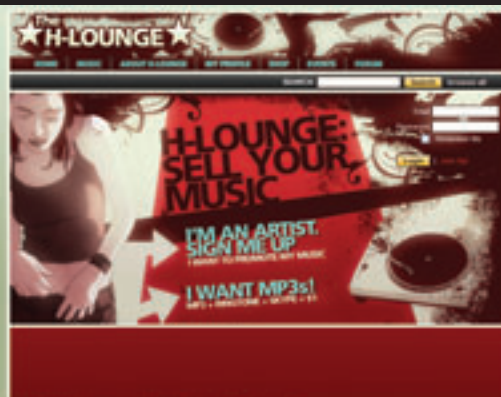
## NEW HORIZONS

So with the combination of both Photoshop and Flash CS3, an implicit practical and attractive workflow is capable and it's this factor that's influencing new trends with users way out east, perhaps soon to affect Western shores. This new-found tolerance and credence in the mobile phone industry can be credited to devices like Adobe Flash Lite and Adobe

Flash Festival ([www.flashfestival.it](http://www.flashfestival.it)), an annual Italian event already beyond its sixth edition. Flourishing from its humble beginnings in 2001, where only Italian moviemaker's submissions were acknowledged, now entrants hail from far and wide across the globe. Their objective is to set free web-restricted animation, publicly screening content and thus promoting the artistic dimension of the language of Flash. Another is the Flashforward Conference and Film Festival ([www.flashforwardconference.com](http://www.flashforwardconference.com)). It's one of the longest running and largest Adobe Flash-user conferences in the world. The event offers inspiration and education from industry experts all over the world specialising in all things Flash, from Photoshop integration to animation, video and audio, plus much more.

Lynda Weinman who co-founded the conference in 1999 and founded [Lynda.com](http://Lynda.com) in 1995 (an online training resource for Flash and Photoshop artists) offered her own view on the pragmatic nature of this precedent-leading software. "With Adobe's purchase of Macromedia in 2005, one of the hopes among customers of both companies was that there would be better integration between their two flagship products. With the release of Photoshop CS3, that hope has been realised." She went on to add, "For the first time, Flash directly imports PSD files while preserving layers, their names, layer nesting, blending modes, layer effects and live text layers. You can even export layered Photoshop files in the FLV (Flash Video) format, meaning each layer can be set to include a frame of

**H-LOUNGE WEB PAGE DESIGN:** "Flash excels at web animation and small applets. I turn to Flash when a client needs a small interactive applet that goes beyond the abilities of simple scripts, or when they need some eye-catching animation to spice up a static site," says Newton





## Case study: FlashForward Film Festival

The FlashForward Film Festival is the longest running and largest Adobe Flash user conference. Co-Founded by Lynda Weinman in 1999, this event has gone from strength to strength, now entering its eighth year. FlashForward 2007 Boston offers a three-day event including education, best practices and inspirational case studies served up by the world's leading Flash designers and developers. These professionals specialise in everything Flash-related, from the obvious Photoshop integration to animation, video, interactive design, database integration, games, data visualisation, mashups, audio, plus integration with Flex, AIR (formerly Apollo) and JavaScript/AJAX.

Each year, the FlashForward Film Festival honours the best Flash work on the web. The Festival culminates in a live awards ceremony, held during the FlashForward 2007 Boston conference. Finalists' work is showcased at the ceremony, resulting in 15 professionally judged winners and the People's Choice award, determined by a public online vote. Winners receive the prestigious Big Rubber Arrow representing the best in state-of-the-art Flash design and development for the web, from around the world and within the Flash community. Also present is a Flash-related Expo Hall offering great opportunities for the entire Flash community to network and share knowledge. There's plenty of time to decide if you wish to participate, as the show runs from the 19-21 September at the Boston Marriot Copley Place. For more information, visit [www.FlashForwardconference.com](http://www.FlashForwardconference.com).



**SHIBUYA + TSB: ZEBRA:** Sakaguchi hopes that Japan's youth will find Gengei's cool designs inspirational. "It may change her life right away or ten years later, but I believe it will change the art culture in Japan"

**“FLASH HAS BECOME AN EXCEEDINGLY EFFECTIVE WAY OF GETTING YOUR WORK NOTICED”**

Device Central CS3, which have seen explosive adoption from developers in Japan and throughout Asia. The mature Flash-authoring environments and enhanced rendering engine of such devices drives this growth. Flash Lite is essentially Flash technology specifically developed for the mobile platform and electronic consumer devices.

With its delivery of rich content, browsing and rich user interface, coupled with Device Central availability, users are now able to develop, design and test in an engaging environment. Consequently, the mobile phone has developed into a new media for designers, illustrators and animators all using related packages. Artists can now occupy this tiny space, personalise animated wallpapers, screensavers and even redesign the menu.

What with over 100 million mobile users in Japan and everyone looking at a monitor at least 30 times a day, Mao Sakaguchi founded the project Gengei, an adventurous art mission setting out

to provide “more output for the artists in Japan, hoping that Japanese people get closer to art in their lifestyles.” Without the mentioned technological advancements of the CS3 packages in question, Sakaguchi explains, “this art site can’t be realised. Never with Adobe Flash our project would have never happened. In Japan the new merged company Adobe kept having many conferences for the digital-minded public, teaching and introducing the Flash player and so on. It gave higher attention to the digital market and more Flash professionals came out producing Flash sites and increasing market size.” And when asked how this project can expand Sakaguchi explains, “Photoshop is truly necessary for the artists who only have actual paints, or even for photographers. I hope Photoshop files can be saved in a much smaller size, then our capability of showing Flash art will increase more.”

This innovative niche that has found its way into such a productive consumer market seems to underline the true essence of what Adobe's software compatibility is all about. That it can bring an extra creative essence to artwork produced, evolving creative development for all artistic genres. The function of mobile Flash content manages to avoid itself being used as merely a platform to drive marketing and sell content, but it has also served to educate modern-day digital creatives throughout Asia. It has allowed them to

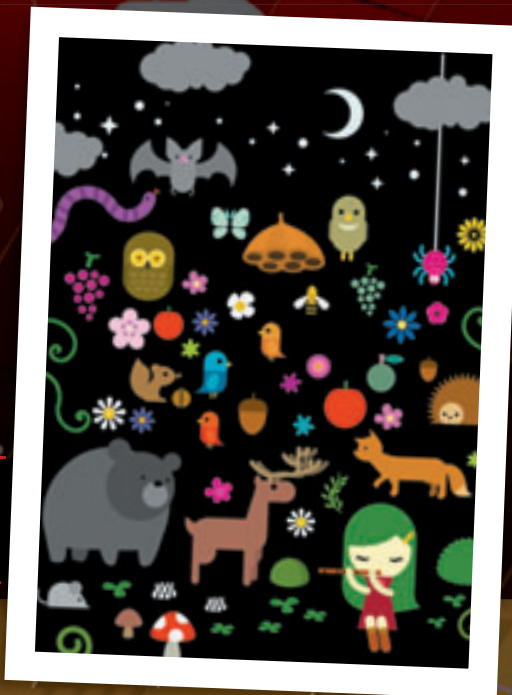
realise their professional potential and 'change the art culture in Japan.' In a rapidly moving market, it can be challenging to serve consumer needs. Be it web design or animation, game design or interactive content catering for the enthusiastic masses – speed and efficiency are crucial in both planning and production stages.

It has become apparent that the alliance of Adobe Flash and Adobe Photoshop provides users with a required and superior degree of creative control, defining a new and contemporary creative era among digital artists.

**DIRGE:** "Xombie has made the leap to toys, comics, games and soon a motion picture – due in part to Flash and Photoshop being such accessible tools," says Farr



**BAKU:** Baku design is just one of many creators using related softwares to promote awareness of their potential and endorse the cell phones engaging environment





### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
Find all you need on the CD

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create a interface using ActionScript to slide content onto the screen

#### TIME REQUIRED


1 hour

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Create a sliding interface using ActionScript 3.0

START LEARNING THE BASICS OF SITE NAVIGATION AND CONTROL USING ACTIONSCRIPT 3.0 AND FLASH CS3

 **TO SHOW JUST** how easy it is to get going with the new version of ActionScript, we will create a simple sliding interface that will slide content in from the right-hand side of the screen. When new content is requested, we'll throw the old content off to the left, ready to bring new content in again.

We'll also connect up to external content such as text from an XML file and some images that have their names stored with the relevant content in the XML file. In the past, using

ActionScript 1.0 and 2.0, XML content required knowing about child and first child nodes. Now all you have to do is simply refer to the name of the node in the XML file to get access to the content.

All of this functionality will be packaged up neatly in a design similar to contemporary Web 2.0 sites, so there are plenty of graphical tips in this tutorial for creating simple, well-designed site content.

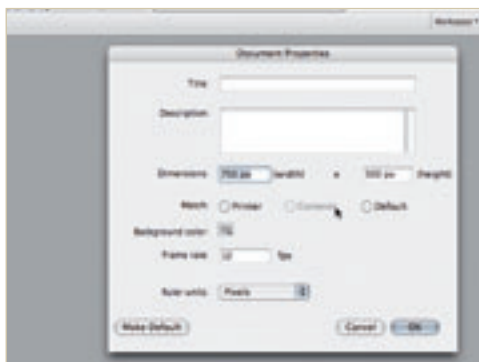




## YOUR EXPERT

**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 sliding interface using ActionScript 3.0



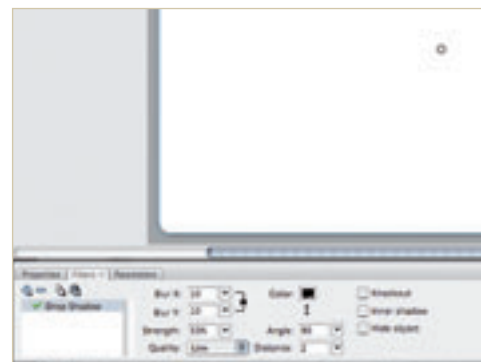
## 01 Starting the project

From the cover CD, drag the tutorial folder onto your hard drive and open the file called Start.fla in Flash CS3. Click the Size button in the Properties palette and change the width to 750 pixels and height to 500 pixels, with a mid grey background colour.



## 02 Add a rectangle

From the toolbar, select the Rectangle Primitive tool and draw a white rectangle. In the Properties palette, change the dimensions of the rectangle to 720 by 470 pixels, positioned at 15 pixels on both the x and y axis. Then add a corner radius of 20 pixels with a two pixel white stroke.



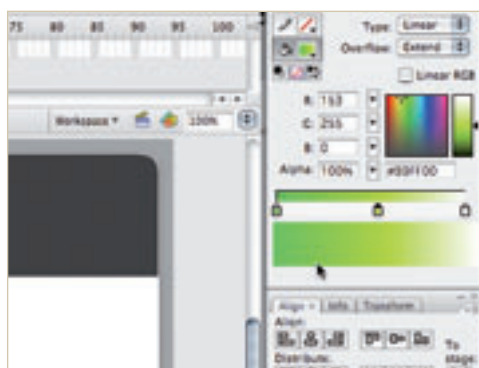
## 03 Convert to Symbol

Select the rectangle and choose Modify>Convert to Symbol. Make this a Movie Clip and name it 'back'. Click on the Filters tab in the Properties palette. Add a Drop Shadow of ten pixels blurred with 50 per cent Opacity, with an angle of 90 degrees and a distance of two pixels.



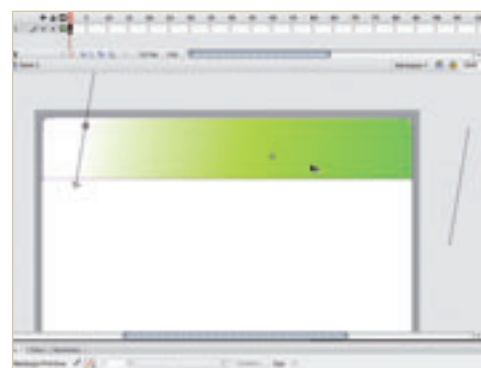
## 04 Starting the header

Add another Rectangle Primitive to create the header along the top. Use any fill colour except white and no stroke. This time make it 720 pixels wide by 120 pixels high. Position at 15 pixels on both the x and y axis. Add a 20 pixel corner radius to adjust the top corners as shown.



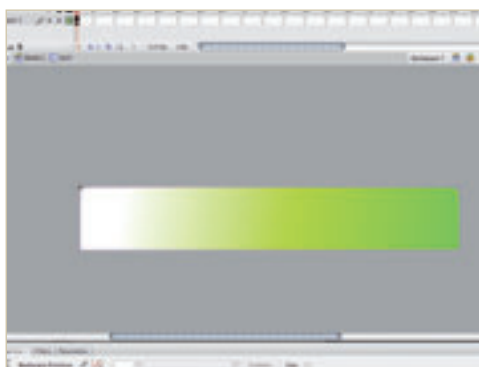
## 05 Create the gradient

Select the fill colour and in the Mixer, change the fill style to Linear. Add a #2BD53C green to the left-hand colour. Select just past halfway to the right to add a new colour box. Add a #99FF00 yellow and leave the right-hand colour white. Use the Paint Bucket tool to add to the rectangle.



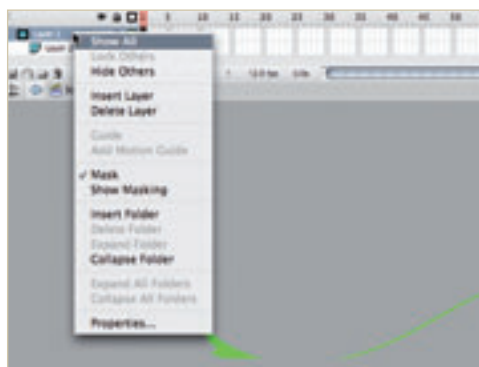
## 06 Apply the gradient

Click on the rectangle with the Paint Bucket tool, then change to the Fill Transform tool, which may be hidden under the Transform tool in the toolbar. Rotate the gradient as shown in the screenshot above and adjust the central position of the gradient also.



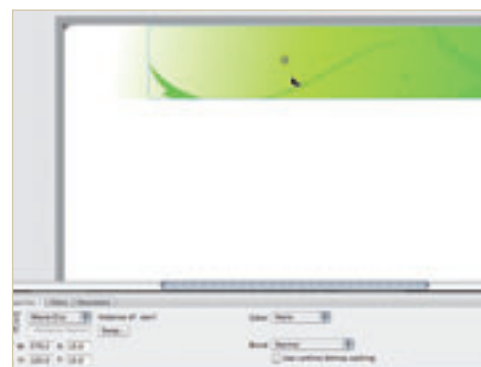
## 07 Copy the shape

With the Move tool selected, click on the gradient rectangle and press Ctrl+C to copy the shape. Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new symbol and make this a Movie Clip symbol, naming it 'swirl'. Click OK and paste in the shape that you copied. Position the shape at 0 pixels on the x and y axis.



## 08 Position the graphic

Add a new layer and drag in the symbol 'swirl' from the library. Position it as shown above. Now drag Layer 2 below Layer 1. Select and right-click Layer. A drop-down menu will appear, so select Mask from the options to allow you to see only the swirl inside the shape of Layer 1.



## 09 Add to the main stage

Return back to Scene 1 by clicking the 'Scene 1' icon under the timeline. Drag the symbol swirl from the library to the stage and again position this at 15 pixels on both the x and y axis in the Properties palette. Now we will add a highlight to this header.



## TECHNIQUE

### Loading content at run time

There is now a new way to load content such as other SWFs and images into your Flash file at run time

```
var loader:URLLoader = new
URLLoader();
var request:URLRequest = new
URLRequest("one.xml");
loader.addEventListener(Event.
COMPLETE, onComplete);
loader.load(request);
```

#### 01 Set up the loader

To load any content into Flash, you must first set up a variable as a URLLoader, followed by another variable which will hold the URL that you want to add. It is loaded in using the command to load into the URLLoader, the URLRequest.

```
loader.addEventListener(Event.
COMPLETE, onComplete);
function onComplete(event:Event):
void{
    //place code in here to handle
    what happens to loaded content
}
```

#### 02 When fully loaded

You will need to specify what happens when the content is loaded. In the case of XML, you will need to pass the nodes to the text fields. A listener is added which connects to the function shown above, which then deals with the loaded data.

```
var myLoader:Loader = new Loader();
mover_mc.image_
mc.addChild(myLoader);
var url:URLRequest = new
URLRequest('image.jpg');
myLoader.load(url);
```

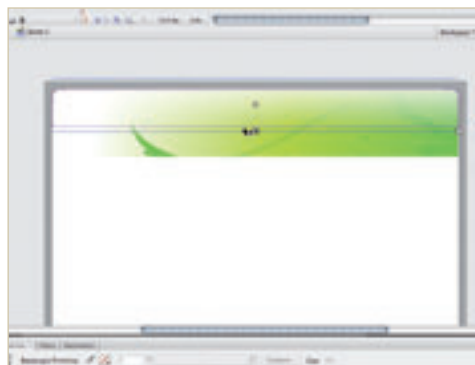
#### 03 Load an image

Here, a slightly different variable is used to load an image – a Loader. This is added as a child to mover\_mc.image\_mc so it will load into that Movie Clip. The image to load is image.jpg and again the load command will invoke the actual loading process.



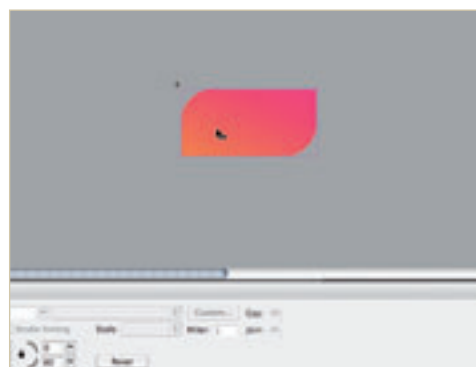
#### 10 Highlight rectangle

Draw a new rectangle using the Rectangle Primitive tool. Make the width 730 pixels and the height 65 pixels. Position it 15 pixels in on both the x and y axis and add a 20 pixel corner radius to the top two corners. It can be any colour for the fill but remove the stroke as it isn't needed.



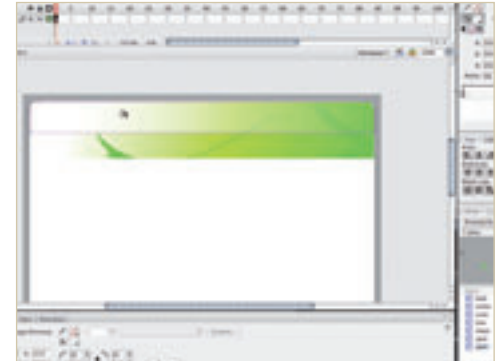
#### 12 Transform the gradient

Using the Fill Transform tool, again rotate the gradient as shown. The gradient should extend slightly outside of the top and bottom of the shape as shown by the blue lines in the screenshot. This is so that the bottom edge of the shape is visible and doesn't just fade out.



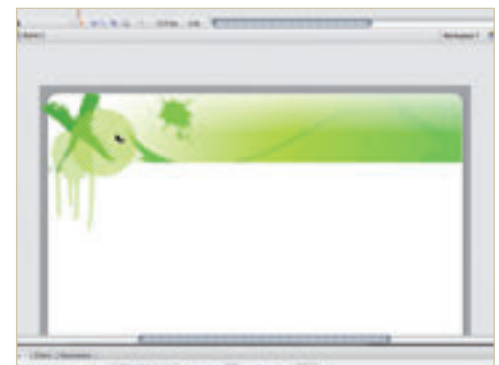
#### 14 Create the badge

Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new symbol. Name this 'badge' and make it a Movie Clip, then click OK. Use the Rectangle Primitive tool to add a new rectangle, 195 pixels wide by 105 pixels high. Give the top, left and bottom-right corners a 60 pixel radius. Then add a gradient as the fill as before.



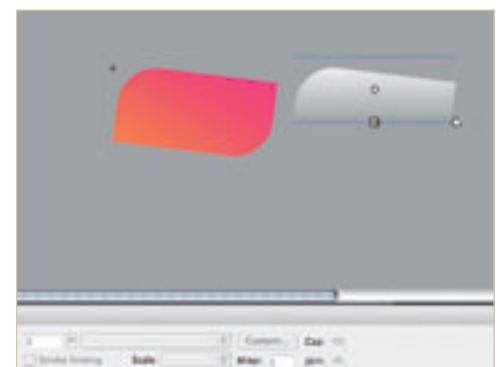
#### 11 Transparent gradient

Change the fill type to Linear. Make the left-hand colour white. Remove the centre colour by clicking on the square and dragging down. Select the right-hand colour square and make this white, then change the Alpha value to 0 per cent. Apply this to the rectangle with the Paint Bucket tool.



#### 13 Add library graphics

From the library, add the 'splat' and 'drip' symbols. Use the Transform palette to increase the latter's size to 180 per cent. Add the symbol 'cross' and increase the size to 160 per cent. Finally, add the 'circles' symbol and scale up to 180 per cent and position each of the elements as above.



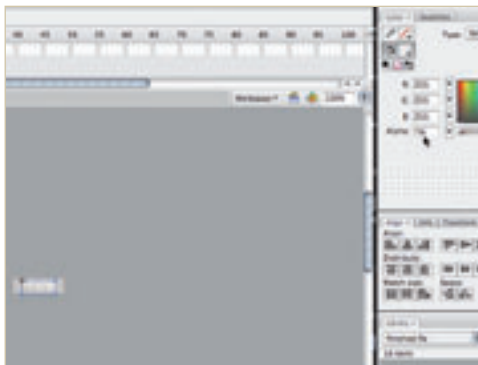
#### 15 Add the highlight

Use the Transform palette to rotate the badge seven degrees. Copy and paste the badge and move it to the side. Press Ctrl+B to break this apart. Select the bottom half of the shape by dragging a selection over it and hit delete. Add a white to transparent gradient as in step 12.



## 16 Add to the stage

Group the highlight shape by pressing Ctrl+G. Position this over the badge and return to Scene 1. Drag the badge symbol to the stage and add the text as shown. Select the badge and add a Drop Shadow filter to the symbol as shown in the Properties palette in the screenshot above.



## 17 Create a button

Press Ctrl+F8 to create a new symbol. Make it a Movie Clip, named 'home'. Press OK and add the text 'home'. Draw a rectangle around this and remove the stroke. Make the fill colour white with one per cent Alpha value. In Scene 1, add this to the stage, with it the instance name 'home\_mc'.



## 18 Repeat again

Now repeat step 17 for buttons 'about', 'gallery' and 'contact'. Add to the stage and give them the instance names 'about\_mc', 'gallery\_mc' and 'contact\_mc' respectively. Create a new Movie Clip symbol called 'empty'. Click OK but don't add anything to the Movie Clip.

## IN DETAIL

### Navigating through XML

Like many changes that have been implemented in AS 3.0, XML access has changed so much for the better. Here we examine the differences between the versions and the ease of using AS 3.0

**XML IS INCREDIBLY** useful for storing information outside of the Flash file, particularly site content. Changes to text can be made quickly and easily without the need to republish SWFs.

Accessing XML through AS 2.0 was confusing. There were nodes and child nodes to traverse in order to get access to content in the node value. The following code is an example of traversing to the first node of content in the XML file:

```
myHeading_txt.text = this.firstChild.  
childNodes[0].childNodes[0].firstChild.  
nodeValue;
```

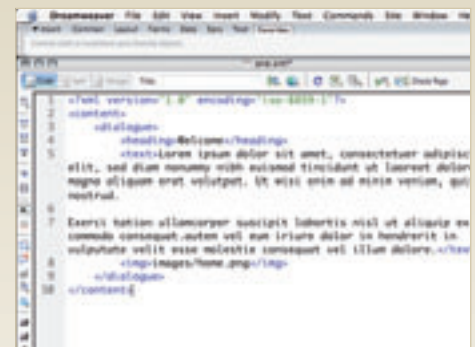
If we examine the XML file, we will see that there are actually node names. Wouldn't it just be easier if we could get access to the content residing in those names?

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="iso-8859-1"?>  
<content>  
  <dialogue>  
    <heading>Welcome</heading>  
    <text>Lorem ipsum dolor etc, etc
```

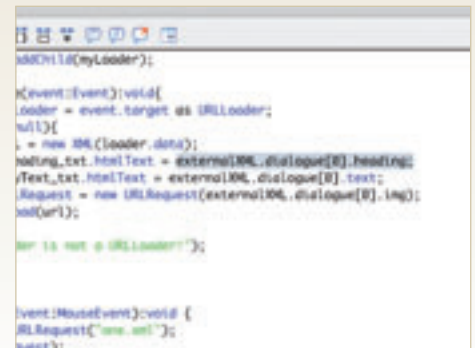
In the XML file above, you can see that it would be much easier if the nodes such as <heading> and <text> could be tapped into. This is exactly what ActionScript 3.0 attempts to solve. Take a look at the access to the heading node:

```
myHeading_txt.text = externalXML.  
dialogue[0].heading;
```

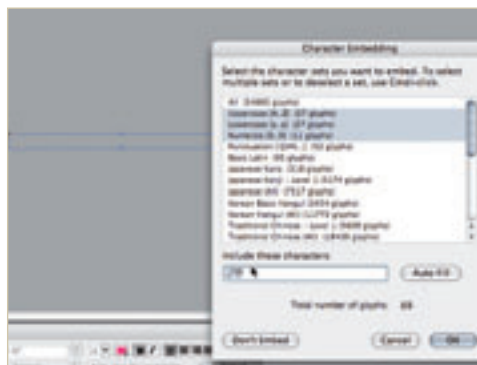
Once you have addressed the XML object named 'externalXML', just access the first dialogue node (as there could be more than one and computers count from zero). Finally, access the heading node that is passed into the text field on the stage with the instance name of 'myHeading\_txt'. If you compare AS 2.0's access to child nodes to AS 3.0's



XML files provide easy ways to separate content from design with Flash. Here you can see a simple XML document. naming the nodes to get access, the latter is much easier.

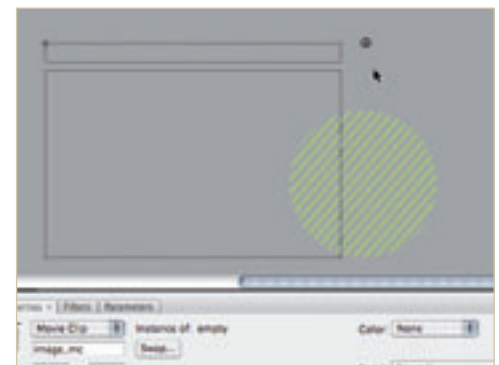


Traversing the XML file in AS 3.0 is much easier than in AS 2.0 as the code simply refers to the node names



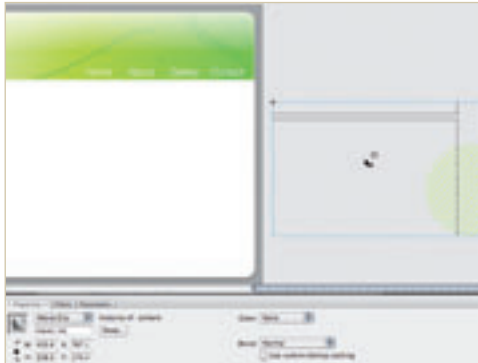
## 19 Create a Movie Clip

Press Ctrl+F8 to create another Movie Clip, then name this 'content'. Use the Text tool to add a Dynamic Text field as shown. Name this instance 'heading\_txt'. Make the font pink and embed the glyphs as shown. Add another text field below this with the instance name of 'myText\_txt'.



## 20 Add more text

Ensure that the new text field is set to Multiline with grey text at 12 pixels. From the library, add the circles symbol. Change the Alpha value to 30 per cent. Send this to the back so it is behind the text. Now add the empty symbol and position as shown, naming the instance 'image\_mc'.



## 21 Add to the stage

Return to Scene 1 and from the library, drag the content symbol to the stage. Name the instance 'mover\_mc' and position at 765 pixels on the x axis and 238 pixels on the y axis. Deselect everything and add Content to the Document class in the Properties palette.

## 24 The init() function

The function Content, which is named from our base class, calls the init() function, so called because this initialises our code. The Movie Clip 'mover\_mc' is added as a child to this code. The buttons are stored in variable references so we can address them easily in the code.

```
public function Content() {
    init();
}

private function init():
void {
    moveContent =
mover_mc;
addChild(moveContent);
    b1 = home_mc;
    b2 = about_mc;
    b3 = gallery_mc;
    b4 = contact_mc;
```

## 27 Check the position

The checkPos function checks the position of mover\_mc and adjusts a Boolean variable. This is called from the button code, declared below. When the button is pressed, it loads the relevant XML, checking the content's position.

```
public function checkPos() {
    if (movedIn==false) {
        newX=180;
        movedIn=true;
    } else {
        newX=-500;
    }
}

function clickOne(Event:MouseEvent):void {
    request = new URLRequest("one.xml");
    loader.load(request);
    checkPos();
}
```

## 22 Add ActionScript

As a pop-up message appears, just click OK. Now go to File>New and create a new ActionScript file. Save this as 'Content' in the same folder as your FLA file. Now add the code shown below, which imports the relevant classes and defines our main Content class.

```
package {
    import flash.display.*;
    import flash.events.*;
    import flash.ui.Keyboard;
    import flash.net.URLLoader;
    import flash.net.URLRequest;

    public class Content extends
MovieClip {
```

## 25 Adding the listeners

The Event Listeners check for various events, whereas the buttons call the relevant function. The move\_mc clip is assigned the moveX function, performed every frame.

```
moveContent.addEventListener(Event.ENTER_
FRAME, moveX);
b1.addEventListener(MouseEvent.CLICK,
clickOne);
    b2.addEventListener(MouseEvent
ent.CLICK, clickTwo);
    b3.addEventListener(MouseEvent
ent.CLICK, clickThree);
    b4.addEventListener(MouseEvent
ent.CLICK, clickFour);
    loader.
addEventListener(Event.COMPLETE, onComplete);
loader.load(request);
mover_mc.image_mc.addChild(myLoader);
}
```

## 28 Finish the button code

The code below is the button code for the remaining three buttons. They each load in different XML files.

```
function clickTwo(Event:MouseEvent):void {
    request = new URLRequest("two.xml");
    loader.load(request);
    checkPos();
}

function clickThree(Event:MouseEvent):void {
    request = new URLRequest("three.xml");
    loader.load(request);
    checkPos();
}

function clickFour(Event:MouseEvent):void {
    request = new URLRequest("four.
xml");
    loader.load(request);
    checkPos();
}
```

## 23 Setting up the code

Add the below code to the ActionScript file. The first five lines declare the variables looking after our Movie Clips. Variables are then declared to slide content. The position is handled in newX and the speed of movement in Xspeed.

```
private var moveContent:MovieClip;
private var b1:MovieClip;
private var b2:MovieClip;
private var b3:MovieClip;
private var b4:MovieClip;
private var newX:Number = 180;
private var Xspeed:Number = 0;
private var movedIn:Boolean = true;
private var externalXML:XML;
private var loader:URLLoader = new
URLLoader();
private var request:URLRequest = new
URLRequest("one.xml");
private var myLoader:Loader = new Loader();
```

## 26 Slide the content

Here the function is declared for moveX. This will move the Movie Clip mover\_mc across the stage. It checks the position of the Movie Clip and if it slides off the screen to -450 pixels, it resets the Movie Clip back over to the right of the screen, ready to slide in.

```
public function moveX(event:Event):void {
    Xspeed = ((mover_mc.x-newX)/
2+Xspeed)/2.5;
    mover_mc.x -= Xspeed;
    if (mover_mc.x<-450) {
        mover_mc.x=600;
        newX=180;
    }
}
```

## 29 When it's loaded

This function tells the XML what to do. Save this file and return to the Flash file. Press Ctrl+Enter to test your project.

```
public function onComplete(event:Event):void
{
    var loader:URLLoader = event.target as
URLLoader;
    if (loader != null) {
        externalXML = new XML(loader.data);
        mover_mc.heading_txt.htmlText = externalXML.
dialogue[0].heading;
        mover_mc.myText_txt.htmlText = externalXML.
dialogue[0].text;
        var url:URLRequest = new
URLRequest(externalXML.dialogue[0].img);
        myLoader.load(url);
    } else {
        trace("loader is not a URLLoader!");
    }
}
```







### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
All files found on the CD

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Use Flash CS3 and Flash Media Server to create a live video chat application

#### TIME REQUIRED


2 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Use Flash Media Server and CS3 for video chat

UNDERSTAND THE BASICS OF FLASH MEDIA SERVER AND LEARN HOW TO BUILD A LIVE FLASH APPLICATION USING ACTIONSCRIPT 3 CLASSES

 **VIDEO IS THE** big daddy of online activity, with live broadcasting constantly growing in popularity. Adobe Flash Media Server (FMS) is a major key player in enabling streaming media and with the recent announcement of Flash Media Server 3, many eagerly anticipate the list of new features and capabilities it will provide, eg, live streaming to Flash Lite 3-powered mobile phones and support for the new file formats accepted by Adobe Flash Player 9, eg, MP4 and MOV.

We are going to build a simple one-to-one video-chat application with Flash Media Server 2, available to download as a free developer edition. We will construct methods to control access to the application that will provide a gentle introduction to server-side ActionScript. Client-side, we will use the latest ActionScript 3 with absolutely no code on the timeline, breaking into the world of classes and object-orientated programming.

## 01 Document structure

It is crucial that the application's server-side document structure is organised for all Flash Server projects to function. Applications are created in the server's Applications directory, located in Windows via C:\Program Files\Macromedia>Flash Media Server>Applications. Create two folders named 'vidChat', one in C:\My Documents and the second in the Applications directory.

## 02 Create files

Start Flash CS3 and select File>New>Flash File (ActionScript 3.0) and name it 'avchat fla'. Create a new ActionScript File and name it 'VideoChat.as'. Save these to C:\My Documents>vidChat. Select File>New>ActionScript Communication File and name it 'main.asc', saving it to the vidChat folder within the Applications directory.

## 03 Document settings

Next, open up the document properties for the avchat fla file. From here, set the Size to 730 x 300, the Frame rate to 15fps and then enter the VideoChat.as file as the Document class. Next, select File>Import To Library and from the CD, import the tutorial image file called playas\_skin.jpg.

## 04 Add skins

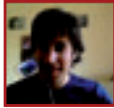
Create three new layers named 'text', 'skins' and 'bg', then select the latter. Create a rectangle, with a width of 730, a height of 300, a colour of #610A10, and finally set the x and y to 0. Open the Library, and drag the playas\_skin onto the Skins layer. Set its x and y positioning to 0. Drag another copy onto the stage, with x positioned at 370 and y at 0.

## 05 Create text

Click the text layer and select the Text tool. Choose Dynamic Text and draw a text field, set to a width of 186, a height of 19, the x variable to 86, and the y variable set to 266. Now set the font to Verdana in a size 12, the colour to #FFFFFF and give it an instance name of 'local\_id'. Then repeat, changing x to 458 and the instance name to 'remote\_id'.

## 06 VideoChat class

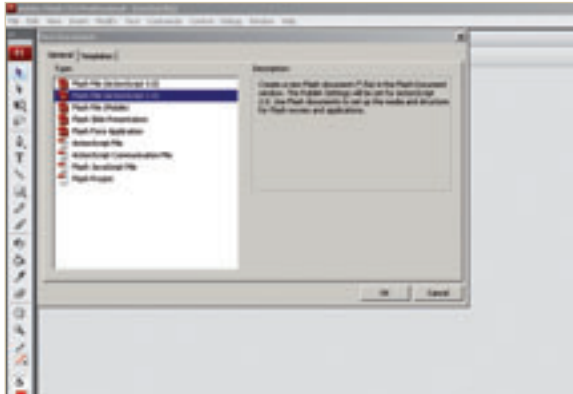
In VideoChat.as, type the code, starting on the opposite page. We are extending Sprite as this will be the container for our video objects. We will import relevant classes as we do not want to have to type the full paths each time we reference a method. Call an init method to keep initialisation logic out of the constructor.



## YOUR EXPERT

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# Use Flash Media Server and CS3 for video chat

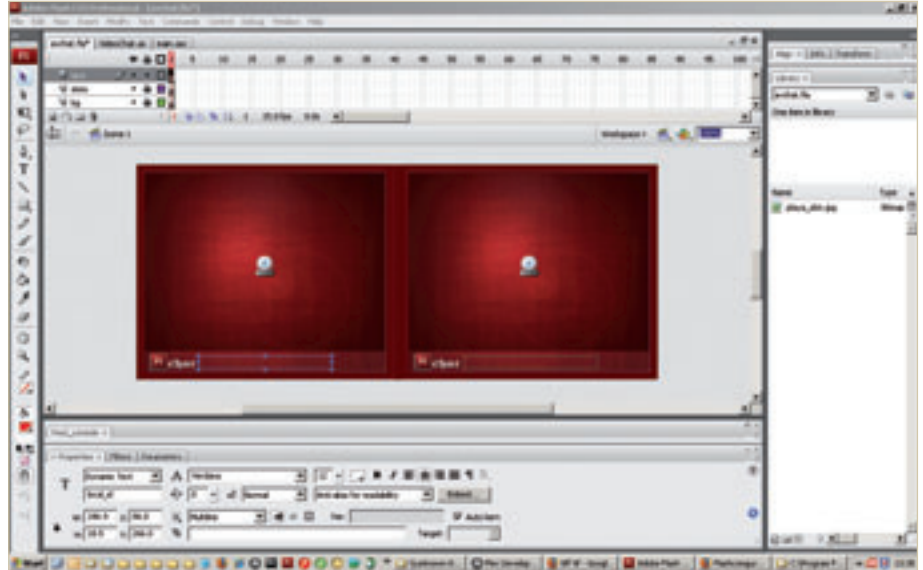


## Step 02

Start Flash CS3 and select File>New>Flash File (ActionScript 3.0) and name it 'avchat fla'

## Step 05

Draw a text field, set to a width of 186, a height of 19, the x variable to 86, and the y variable set to 266



```
package
{
    // IMPORTS
    import flash.media.*; // Video,
    Microphone & Camera classes
    import flash.net.NetConnection;
    import flash.net.NetStream;
    import flash.net.ObjectEncoding;
    import flash.events.NetStatusEvent;
    import flash.events.Event;
    import flash.display.Sprite;
    import flash.text.TextField;

    /* Class extends Sprite which will
    be the Video Object Container*/
    public class VideoChat extends
    Sprite
    {
        /* URL to the Flash Media Server folder for
        this app contained
        * within the applications directory*/
        // ON SAME COMPUTER private static const
        RTMP:String = "rtmp://vidChat/";
        // LAN
        private static const RTMP:
        String = "rtmp://192.168.1.67/vidChat/";
        /* Local variable for the
        NetConnection */
        private var nc:NetConnection;
        /* Local variables for the in and
        out NetStreams*/
        private var out_ns:NetStream;
        private var in_ns:NetStream;
        /* Camera & Microphone class supply content
        to Video*/
        private var microphone:Microphone;
        private var camera:Camera;
        /* Video Class - Display Objects
        for local and remote video*/
```

```
        private var local_video:Video;
        private var remote_video:Video;
        /* Class constructor, same name as
        Class ** IMPORTANT**/
        public function VideoChat()
        {
            /* On initialisation of class call
            the init() method below */
            init();
        }
    }
}
```

## 07 RTMP connection

Add a section after your form fields for the Captcha image to be displayed on the page by simply including:

```
private static const RTMP:String =
"rtmp://192.168.1.67/vidChat/";
```

## 08 Create NetConnection

Create a new NetConnection instance named 'nc'. It's important to set the Action Messaging Format to 0 by changing the object-encoding for the net connection. Set the NetConnection client to our class, enabling server-side script calls to methods within this class. Add a NET\_STATUS event listener. Finally connect to the RTMP URL.

```
private function init():void
{
    /* Create a new NetConnection */
    nc = new NetConnection();
    /*
    * Flash CS3 automatically sets the
    Action Messaging Format
    * (AMF) to 3, FMS uses 0 so
    change the object encoding
```

```
    * for the NetConnection instance
    */
    nc.objectEncoding = ObjectEncoding.AMF0;
    /* Specify the NetConnection client as 'this'
    so methods within
    * this class can be called by the server
    side main.asc file */
    nc.client = this;
    /* Add an event listener to the
    NetConnection */
    nc.addEventListener( NetStatusEvent.NET_
    STATUS, netStatusHandler );
    /* Connect to the specified rtmp URL
    declared at the start of the class */
    nc.connect( RTMP );
}
```

## 09 NetStatusEvent handler

You are listening out for the net status of our connection and expect to be told if we were successful or not. Below is a simple switch statement analysing the code received from the NetStatusEvent. If the NetConnection connected successfully, then run our next method buildComponents. Feel free to add further case statements.

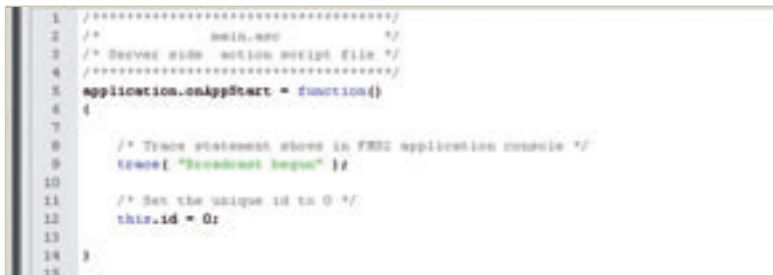
```
private function netStatusHandler( event:
NetStatusEvent ):void
{
    switch( event.info.code )
    {
        /*
        * If the event.info.code string equals
        * NetConnection.Connect.Success run
        buildComponents() */
        case "NetConnection.Connect.Success":
        buildComponents();
        break;
    }
}
```





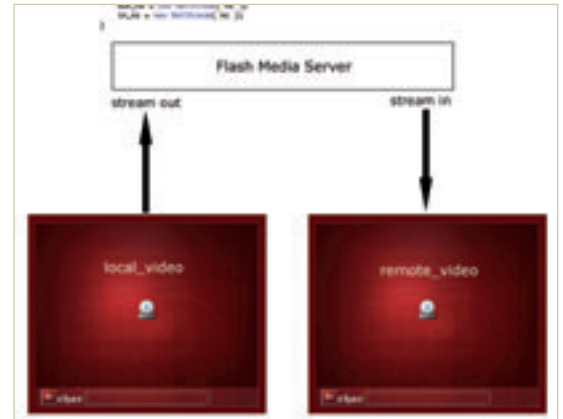
## Step 10

The `getCamera` and `getMicrophone` class methods access the computer's webcam and microphone



## Step 12

A new `NetStream` object will transfer data out of the `local_video` and into the connecting client's `remote_video`



## Step 19

When the `NetConnection` instance is created, it runs a trace to display that the broadcast has begun

## 10 Build the components

The `getCamera` and `getMicrophone` class methods can access the computer's webcam and microphone. Adjust each instance's settings for optimum speed and quality. Create two new video objects and add them to the display.

```
private function buildComponents():void
{
    camera = Camera.getCamera();
    camera.setQuality( 0, 85 );
    camera.setMode( 320, 240, 15 );
    camera.setKeyFrameInterval( 15 );
    microphone = Microphone.getMicrophone();
    microphone.setUseEchoSuppression( true );
    microphone.rate = 11;
    // Create a new instance of the video object
    local_video = new Video( 320, 240 );
    local_video.x = 20;
    local_video.y = 20;
    /*
    * The Video class is a display
    object and therefore
    * needs to be added to the display list.
    */
    addChild( local_video );
    remote_video = new Video( 320, 240 );
    remote_video.x = 390;
    remote_video.y = 20;
    addChild( remote_video );
    /*
    * Start the camera for the local
    video object
    * and start viewing yourself!
    */
    local_video.attachCamera( camera );
    createNetStream();
}
```

## 11 First video

Let's focus on the end of the method `buildComponents` closer. Attach the camera instance, which is the user's webcam, to the video object instance named 'local\_video'. When you connect successfully to the `NetConnection`, you will be displayed in the left-hand player window.

```
local_video.attachCamera( camera );
createNetStream();
```

## 12 NetStream object

A new `NetStream` object needs assigning names so it can transfer data out of the `local_video` and into the connecting client's `remote_video`. The process involves video taken from your webcam sent out on the `NetStream` object named 'out\_ns', which your connecting client will subscribe to using a unique ID, that we will create next.

## 13 My video

When a connection request is received by the main.asc file, a server-side function determines if this is the first connecting client ('me'). If so, it's simply accepted. When a second client ('you') attempts connection, they are also accepted and the client-side `startMeChat` method is called.

```
if (!$captcha->validate( $random_string )) {
    $errmsg = 'Every CAPTCHA can only be used
    once. The current CAPTCHA has already been
    used. Try again.';
} elseif (!$captcha->verify( $fCaptcha )) {
    $errmsg = 'Please check you have entered
    the CAPTCHA text correctly.';
} elseif ( $fName == '' || $fEmail == '' ) {
    $errmsg = 'Please complete your name and
    email address to submit the form';
}
public function startMeChat( me_id:String,
```

```
you_id:String ):void
{
    /*
    * The main.asc has received a second
    connection request. The clients
    * length would be 1 so the client is
    accepted (so we have 2 clients now).
    * the first connecting client calls this
    method (startMeChat) passing 2 params.
    * an id for me and an id for you.
    */
    /*
    * Now the second video object can be
    created and the reference
    * remote_video is passed to the streamIn
    method constructor.
    */
    //buildComponents();
    // Let you see me
    out_ns.attachCamera( camera );
    // Let you hear me
    out_ns.attachAudio( microphone );
    // Publish me stream with unique id
    out_ns.publish( "unique_"+me_id, "live" );
    // Let me see you
    remote_video.attachNetStream( in_ns );
    // Play you stream
    in_ns.play( "unique_"+you_id );
    /* Place appropriate ID in text
    fields on the Stage */
    local_id.text = "MY ID: "+me_id;
    remote_id.text = "YOU ID: "+you_id;
}
```

## 14 Parameters arrive

The main.asc sends two parameters, unique IDs for both connected clients. Name the first connecting client 'me\_id', then 'you\_id' as the second. These can then be used to

## IN DETAIL: Installation of Flash Media Server on Windows

Due to the fact that Flash Media Server is not available for Mac OS X, we'll run you through the installation steps for the most commonly used platform

1) **DOWNLOAD THE FREE** Developer Edition installer from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com). The only restriction is that you're constrained to a concurrent connection limit of ten.  
2) Double-click the installer and click Next, then read and accept the Licence agreement.  
3) Type a username and password in the Admin set-up dialogue. This will be used in the management console.  
4) Next, in the Port configuration, leave the defaults, which are 1935 for the Main server port and 1111 for the Admin port. To ensure access to users behind firewalls, open Server ports 80 and 443, separating each port by a comma (ie, 1935,80,443). Click Next.  
5) Keep the default Installation directory of C:\Program Files\Macromedia\Flash Media Server2, and click Next.  
6) Choose Start menu options, review your Configuration settings and then click Install.

7) On completion, decide whether you want to view the Readme file, start FMS automatically, or if you want to start FMS manually on boot. It's advised to opt for FMS to remain starting automatically as it may be used regularly, however, if you intend on using it infrequently, check this option and manually start the server.  
8) To check that the server is up and running, check in the Services panel, located in Control Panel>Administrative Tools. Search for the Flash Media Administration Server and Flash Media Server.

For Linux users, take a look at [www.adobe.com/devnet/flashmediaserver/articles/train\\_simple\\_introduction\\_fms2/install\\_linux.html](http://www.adobe.com/devnet/flashmediaserver/articles/train_simple_introduction_fms2/install_linux.html). Fear not, you haven't been left out!

Now let's build a simple ActionScript 2 connection script to test the server. This will prove useful in testing your server and NetConnection if you're running into problems with

the vidChat application. We will connect to the vidChat application you created in the tutorial through C:\Program Files\Macromedia\Flash Media Server2\applications.

Start Flash 8 or CS3 and create a new Flash file for ActionScript 2.0. Save the file in a folder of your choice, then create a layer for actions and a layer for a dynamic text field, with the instance name 'output\_txt'. Type the following script in the actions layer:

```
var RTMP:String = "rtmp://vidChat/";
var nc:NetConnection = new NetConnection();
nc.onStatus = function( event:Object )
{
    output_txt.text = event.code;
}
nc.connect( RTMP );
```

identify the streams uniquely for publishing and playing purposes. Note the function is declared public to allow access to the method from outside the class.

```
public function startMeChat( me_id:String,
you_id:String ):void
```

## 15 Out stream

The out stream from your video needs your camera and microphone so you can be heard, so use the code below to attach these to out\_ns. Then call the Publish method on the out\_ns that takes two parameters, a string to identify the stream and a string to identify publishing the stream.

```
// Let you see me
out_ns.attachCamera( camera );
// Let you hear me
out_ns.attachAudio( microphone );
// Publish me stream with unique id
out_ns.publish( "unique_"+me_id, "live" );
```

## 16 View you

Using the video class attachNetStream, attach in\_ns to your video object on the right side of the application, with the instance name 'remote\_video'. So you can be seen, call the Play method on the in\_ns and play the stream with the 'you' unique ID passed as the only parameter.

```
// Let me see you
remote_video.attachNetStream( in_ns );
// Play you stream
in_ns.play( "unique_"+you_id );
```

## 17 Update text

Here, simply pass the ID values to the relevant text fields on the stage. This is to help clarify the logic behind the

connection process and passing of the unique IDs. They can be deleted in your application if you so choose. The first client now connecting displays text below the local\_video.

```
local_id.text = "MY ID: "+me_id;
remote_id.text = "YOU ID: "+you_id;
```

## 18 Time for you

The startYouChat method is called by the second connecting client, via the main.asc file. Publish the 'you' unique ID on the out\_ns, and attach the in\_ns to the remote\_video object. Call the Play method on the in\_ns with the 'me' unique stream ID as the required parameter.

```
public function startYouChat( you_id:String,
me_id:String ):void
{
    /*
    * The second connecting client calls this
    method (startYouChat)
    * passing 2 params, an id for you
    and an id for me.
    */
    // Let me see you
    out_ns.attachCamera( camera );
    // Let me hear you
    out_ns.attachAudio( microphone );
    // Publish you stream with unique id
    out_ns.publish( "unique_"+you_id, "live" );
    // Let you see me
    remote_video.attachNetStream( in_ns );
    // Play me stream
    in_ns.play( "unique_"+me_id );
    /* Place appropriate ID in text fields on the
    Stage */
    remote_id.text = "MY ID: "+me_id;
    local_id.text = "YOU ID: "+you_id;
```

## 19 Server side

In the main.asc file, there are three defined methods. The first is when the NetConnection instance is created and it runs a trace to display that the broadcast has begun, setting a locally scoped variable ID to 0. This will rise each time a client connects to the application.

```
application.onAppStart = function()
{
    /* Trace statement shows in FMS2 application
    console */
    trace( "Broadcast begun" );
    /* Set the unique id to 0 */
    this.id = 0;
}
```

## 20 Client for connection

The first arrival has fired NetConnection.Connect client-side, and that initiates application.onConnect server-side. Increase the id variable and assign a unique ID to the client object. The 'If' statement determines the application. clients' length; if 0, then this is the first client connecting.

```
application.onConnect = function( client )
{
    /* Increase the unique id by 1 */
    this.id++;
    /* Assign the id to the client object */
    client.id = this.id;
    /*
    * application.clients is a custom object with
    only
    * one value 'length' which is read like an
    array.
    * If the length is 0, this is the first
    client to
```

## TECHNIQUE: The Flash Media Server management console

Here we will look at the FMS Management Console and use it to perform traces and monitor our application



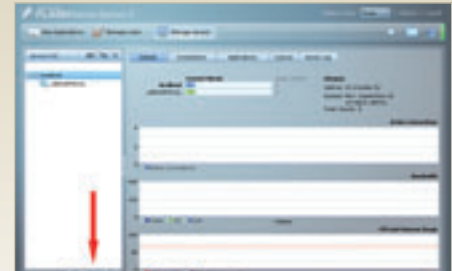
### 01 Locate console

To locate your console, follow All Programs>Macromedia>Flash Media Server 2, or the FMS installation directory. To view the Flash CS3 development environment copy, navigate in Flash to Window>Other Panels>fms2\_console.



### 02 Trace statements

The trace actions we placed in the main.asc file have outputted to the Live Log so we can trace when the application started, the length of the ID application.clients object, when a client attempts connection, and the unique client ID of each connection.



### 03 Restart server

Each change to your server-side code will not be implemented in your application until the server has been restarted. Click Manage Servers, then in the Servers panel, click the Restart Server button at the bottom of the panel as shown above.

```
* request connection to the chat, accept the
client.
*/
if( application.clients.length == 0 )
{
application.acceptConnection( client );
}
/*
* Another client is requesting connection
* and the application.clients.length is now
1 due to one
* existing client already connected. Accept
the second client.
*/
} else if( application.clients.length == 1 )
{
application.acceptConnection( client );
/* Traces which show in FMS2 application
console*/
trace( "client[0]: "+application.clients[0].
id );
trace( "client[1]: "+application.clients[1].
id );
}
/*
* First client, call startMeChat method
client side
* with client id and second client
id.
*/
application.clients[0].call( "startMeChat",
null, application.clients[0].id, application.
clients[1].id );
/*
* Second client, call startYouChat method
client side
* with second id and first client id.
*/
application.clients[1].call( "startYouChat",
null, application.clients[1].id, application.
clients[0].id );
```

### 21 'Me' first

This line determines access to the application, translating to: application instance (application); first client in client's object (clients[0]); call a method client-side (call); name of the method (startMeChat); expect a result from client (null); parameter ('me' unique client id); parameter ('you' unique client id). A client object is passed as a parameter.

```
application.clients[0].call( "startMeChat",
null, application.clients[0].id, application.
clients[1].id );
```

### 22 Three's a crowd

Finish this method with a final statement that is called if the application.clients' length is greater than two. Remember this is a one-to-one chat so three is a no-go. An object is created and string is attached stating why we are refusing connection to the application.

```
application.clients[0].call( "startMeChat",
```

### 23 You're leaving?

When a client disconnects, the third and final server-side method is called and simply traces the client object and a string. Traces written in server-side script do not trace to the traditional output window; they output to the Flash Media Server management console. Click View Applications>Live Log to see traces.

```
application.clients[0].call( "startMeChat",
```

### 24 That's me!

Publish the avchat fla, ensuring HTML and Flash are checked in Publish Settings. Plug in your webcam, navigate to the avchat.html file and open it in your

favourite browser. The Flash Player should now prompt you to allow access to your camera and microphone. Allow this, kick back and have a good look at yourself.

### 25 It's good to talk

Open up another browser window and navigate to the same application. Tile the browser windows horizontally so you can view both applications. Accept the prompt for access to your camera and microphone again, and you should now see yourself in all four video screens. The client ID should help you differentiate between clients.

### 26 Deeper look

The first client has been referred to as 'me' and the second connecting client as 'you'. Your out stream goes to the receiver's remote video object for viewing and likewise their out stream is viewed in your remote video window. The stream's unique IDs are referenced on the Publish and Play methods of the NetStream instance.

### 27 Further reading

We have only touched the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Flash Media Server, and through further reading, there's a whole world to explore still. The main guy in this country for Flash Media Server is Stefan Richter, whose site is located at [www.flashcomguru.com](http://www.flashcomguru.com). Here, you can join a mailing list and forum, and get mountains of support from leading technicians worldwide.

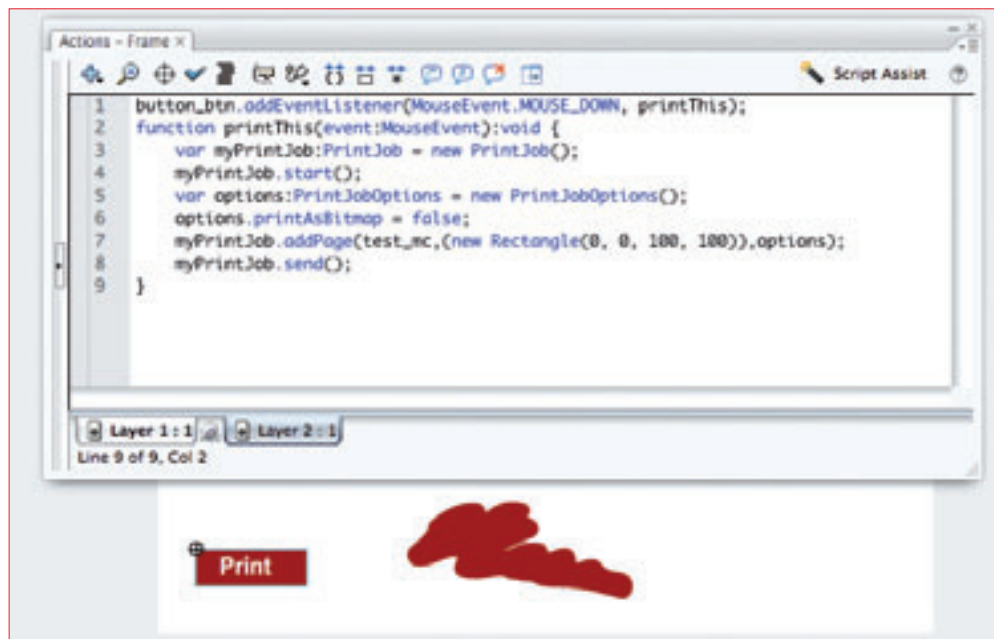






# Tech Support Flash

Relax, take a deep, calm breath and stop kicking your monitor. Mark Shufflebottom takes the stress out of your Flash frustrations with more technical relief



Setting up areas to print in Flash is really easy with this simple piece of AS 3.0 code, which defines what element on the screen to print and the print area

## Q Printing a Flash page

I have been trying to print from Flash using CS3 with Flash Player 9, but seem to be a little confused over the settings. I can't seem to get anything to print on my web page that is in Flash. Is there some special setting that I should be using?

Sophie Anderson

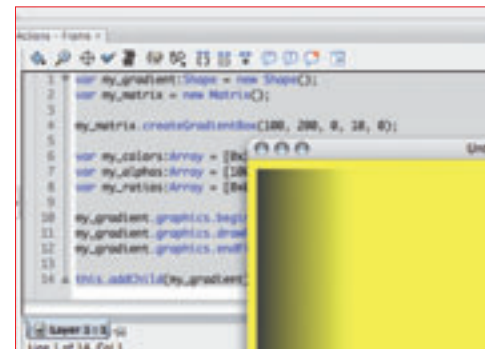
**A** Flash doesn't seem to print with the vast majority of printers or you cannot guarantee exactly what is going to print out, ie which frame. As a result of this, there is specific ActionScript code, which has been around for quite some time, but receives updates with each new release of Flash. This specific code allows you to specify exactly what part of the Flash document you want to print and also allows you to specify how big that printing job actually is.

To get this to work, you will need to create two symbols on the stage. The first is a button with the instance name 'button\_btn'. When this is clicked, it will start the printing. The second symbol should be a Movie Clip with the instance name of 'test\_mc'. This will contain the content that you wish to print.

Create a new layer and add the following code:

```
button_btn.addEventListener(MouseEvent.CLICK, printThis);
function printThis(event:MouseEvent):void {
    var myPrintJob:PrintJob = new PrintJob();
    myPrintJob.start();
    var options:PrintJobOptions = new PrintJobOptions();
    options.printAsBitmap = false;
    myPrintJob.addPage(test_mc, (new Rectangle(0, 0, 100, 100)), options);
    myPrintJob.send();
}
```

The first line of this code just connects the function called 'printThis' to the button and tells Flash to call it when the mouse button is pressed. The second line starts the function that sets up a new print job variable. This is told to start printing, but also to set up some options, in this case the option to print as a bitmap is set to false. Now the line that actually



Dynamic gradients can be created with ActionScript code and can even have transparency added to create fades for graphics underneath

prints the Movie Clip. The addPage command adds the Movie Clip with the name 'test\_mc'. Notice that immediately after this we set up a rectangle. This is to stop the printer doing any unnecessary scaling, which happens on some printers. This rectangle defines the print area of the Movie Clip and so, in this instance, it is starting printing from 0 pixels in on the horizontal axis and 0 pixels down from the vertical axis. This is measured from the registration point of the Movie Clip, which are those small crosshairs on the stage. Now the print area is set to print 100 pixels down and in, so it should print a 100-pixel square. The final line of the code actually sends this all to the printer.

As you can see from this short answer, these are powerful features that allow you to print exact information from Flash.

## Q Dynamic gradient

I have to place a dynamic gradient on the stage that contains transparency on one side of it. This is to place over the top of an image so it appears to fade out as it reaches the edge of the screen. I need to be able to change the height of the gradient so that it matches the different content, hence why I need to add it dynamically. Is any of this possible?

Jamie McCulloch

**A** Dynamic gradients can be created and they are straightforward to set up in code so can be easily changed. Here's the code in AS 3.0 to set up a gradient. All you have to do is create a new layer and add this code, which will create a dark-grey-to-transparent gradient:

```
var my_gradient:Shape = new Shape();
var my_matrix = new Matrix();
```

```
my_matrix.createGradientBox(100, 200, 0, 10, 0);
```

```
var my_colors:Array = [0x333333, 0x333333];
var my_alphas:Array = [100, 0];
var my_ratios:Array = [0x00, 0xFF];
```

```
my_gradient.graphics.beginGradientFill
```

**"SPECIFIC CODE ALLOWS YOU TO SPECIFY WHAT PART OF THE FLASH DOCUMENT YOU WANT TO PRINT"**



## 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.

If technical troubles are giving you a headache, then make sure you visit our forum to share your queries with other readers

## SPEAK OUT

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

## Q&A

## Tech Support

```
fill(GradientType.LINEAR, my_colors,
my_alphas, my_ratios, my_matrix);
my_gradient.graphics.drawRect(10, 10,
100, 200);
my_gradient.graphics.endFill();
```

```
this.addChild(my_gradient);
```

The key area for you to be concerned with here is the third line, which has those numbers in the brackets (100, 200, 0, 10, 0). This specifies the width, the height (which is important to you), the rotation and the direction of the gradient. The next line is important as it contains the colours you are working with, so to get a white-to-transparent gradient, change the array to: `var my_colors:Array = [0xFFFFFFFF, 0xFFFFFFFF];`.

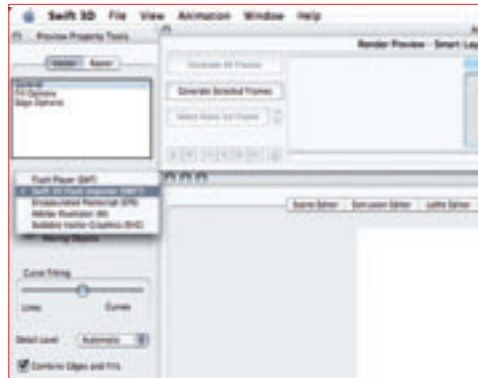
The next line of importance to you is actually how this is positioned on the stage, which is in the line `'my_gradient.graphics.drawRect(10, 10, 100, 200);'`. This starts the gradient ten pixels from the left and ten pixels down from the top-left corner of the stage. It is then drawn 100 pixels across and 200 pixels down. As you can see, this can easily be added dynamically to change dimensions with your other content.



### Swift 3D query

This isn't exactly a Flash question, but it is related! I have recently got Swift 3D and I was wondering what the best settings are for keeping the file size down to the smallest possible for fast loading when in an SWF file? Many thanks in advance for your answer.

Stella Andrews



Export using this setting in Swift 3D to get a reasonably low bandwidth to your 3D vector animation



Exporting from Swift 3D got a whole lot easier when Electric Rain, the maker of Swift, provided a special importer for its own SWFT format. This importer needs to be installed in your Flash application folder. You can download the latest version of this at [www.eraim.com](http://www.eraim.com), which works with Flash CS3. By having this importer installed in Flash, you can use the option to export from Swift using the Swift 3D Flash Importer option. This places objects that don't move on their own layer, so that only objects with animation are redrawn every frame. As such, this cuts down the file size immensely. As with any animation that has new content drawn for each keyframe, sometimes getting a third-party compressor is really useful such as SWF Optimizer for Mac/PC or Optimize for PC. These packages can cut vector files down by around 60 per cent.

## Expert advice

### Two or three?

Do not attempt to load ActionScript 2.0 SWFs into your ActionScript 3.0 SWFs. Flash Player reads the encoding of the first SWF file that is loaded into the player and expects that all other content will also match. So it will therefore try to read any older content as ActionScript 3.0 and that will cause errors. Instead the best procedure to load older AS 2.0 content is to actually navigate to a whole new HTML page. This will invoke the Flash Player to read the encoding of the SWF file every time a new page is loaded and it will therefore adjust the interpretation of script.



You can cause real problems when trying to load both ActionScript 2 and 3 SWFs without the right procedure

## Technique: A question of scale

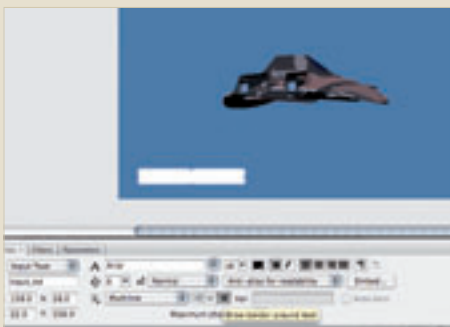


Hi *Web Designer*. I am trying to scale a Movie Clip up and down based on user input into a text field, but I am having quite a lot of difficulty with the ActionScript 3.0 code. I am not sure whether I am tackling the problem correctly, as I get some strange results. Can you help me out?

Adam Scott



The scaling has changed in ActionScript 3.0, with the numbers required to control the scaling now ranging between 0 and 1. It may be that you are typing the wrong values into the input text box. However, we'll spend three steps ensuring that everything is set up properly. You will need a button set up in your library and the Movie Clip that you are trying to scale.



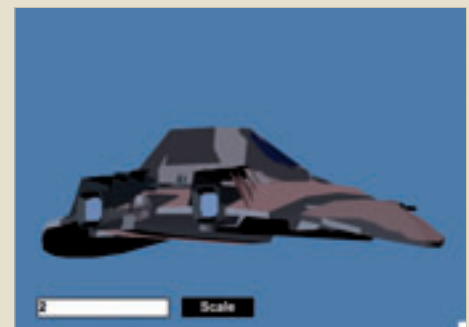
### 01 Add elements to stage

Drag your Movie Clip symbol to the stage and give it the instance name in the Properties palette of 'symbol\_mc'. Now select the Text tool and add an input text field to the stage, giving this the instance name of 'input\_txt'. It is a good idea to turn on the text border.

```
var myScale_txt:Number = 1;
scale_btn.addEventListener(MouseEvent.CLICK, myScale);
function myScale (event:MouseEvent):void{
    myScale_txt = Number(input_txt.text);
    symbol_mc.scaleY = myScale_txt;
    symbol_mc.scaleX = myScale_txt;
```

### 02 Add button and code

Now add the button to the stage and place this next to the input text. Add the instance name of 'scale\_btn'. Create a new layer and select frame 1, then open the ActionScript panel and add the code as shown in the screenshot above.



### 03 Testing the file

Press Ctrl+Enter to test your movie and you will be able to enter a value between 0 and 1 as the scale. Hit the Scale button and this will take effect. Entering a number such as 2 will cause the Movie Clip symbol to double in size on the stage.



Track 06 - album 01



0:14 - 3:16



### THE BRIEF

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

This tutorial will show you how to create a Flash Player skin from scratch

#### TIME REQUIRED


2 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Create your own Flash Player skin from scratch

FLASH SUPPLIES A SELECTION OF DEFAULT MP3 PLAYER SKINS. CREATE YOUR OWN USING ILLUSTRATOR AND PHOTOSHOP

 **WHY USE DEFAULT** Flash MP3 players that you see on every other website? It might not even suit the art direction of your website; most of the time they don't and that's the last thing you want. Break the mould and create your own bespoke MP3 player that fits in perfect harmony with your work and your website. This tutorial will teach you how to create a simple player using simple techniques that

can give you maximum effect, allowing you to stamp your identity through all reaches of your website and the thorough consistency that it deserves.

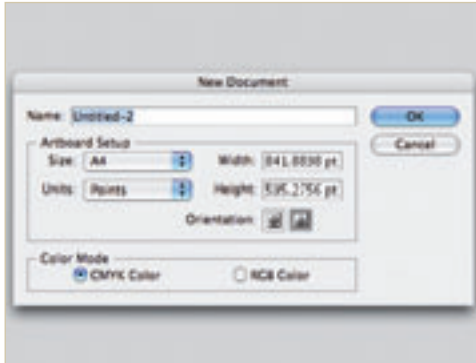
First, you will get the main shapes of the player using easy shape tools in Illustrator. This will give you clean lines and shapes to work from. Then we'll bring it all in to Photoshop and add lots of pixel magic to leave us with a cool, clean player.



## YOUR EXPERT

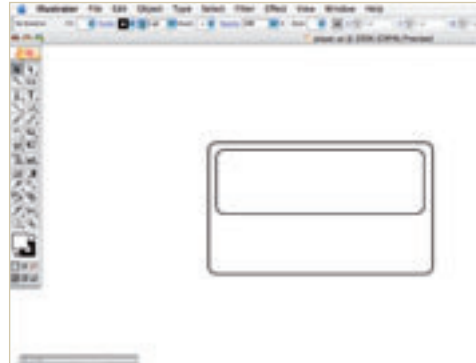
James Kingman has been creative since he was old enough to hold a crayon. Despite only just graduating from the UCCA where he studied Graphic Design, he has already worked with a variety of clients, including AOL and Vauxhall. See [www.jameskingman.com](http://www.jameskingman.com)

# Create your own Flash Player skin from scratch



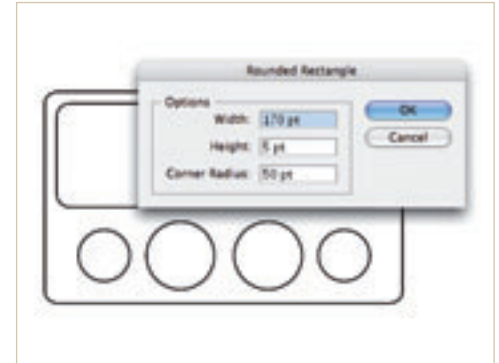
## 01 Setting up Illustrator

First open Illustrator and create a new document set to A4, landscape and CMYK. We are going to construct all the main elements in Illustrator to get the sharp, clean lines of vectors to work on. Later we will bring it all into Photoshop and apply effects to give it a really clean look and feel.



## 02 Rounded Box tool

Select the Rounded Box tool and create a rectangle shape to be the main back for the player. Next, create a new layer and again with the Rounded Box tool, create a smaller rectangle shape. Make sure you leave enough space at the bottom for the rest of the components.



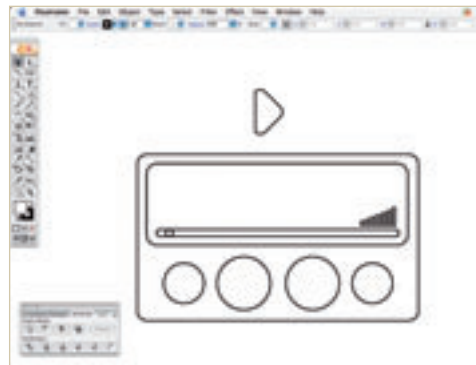
## 03 Buttons

Create a new layer and call it 'buttons'. Select the Ellipse tool and create four circles like in the screenshot. Select the Rounded Box tool again and click anywhere on the screen. In the box, type in the values as Width: 170 pt, Height: 5 pt, Corner Radius: 50 pt. This will be the timeline.



## 04 Indicator and volume bar

Cut the newly created timeline and paste it into a new layer and name it. Next, create another new layer. Create a small circle that fits within the timeline. This will be the time indicator. Create another new layer. Use the Rounded Box tool to make a volume bar like in the screenshot.



## 05 Play graphics

Select the Rounded Box tool and click on the screen so the values box comes up again. This time, enter Width: 25 pt, Height: 25 pt, Corner radius: 5 pt. Rotate the new box 45 degrees and delete one corner. Now join the end points. What you are now left with are the basic graphics.



## 06 Fast-forward and Rewind

Duplicate the triangle and create the Fast-forward button, then reflect it to create the Rewind button. Use the Rounded Box button to create the Stop graphic. For now, that should be all the graphics needed. Next, add some colour to your player, but try to keep the colours simple.



## 07 Enter Photoshop

It's time to bring what we have done in Illustrator into Photoshop. Open Photoshop, create a new A4 document and begin to drag and drop each part of the Illustrator file in so they arrive as separate layers. Arrange all the layers so they are all in the right place.



## 08 Gaussian Blur

Name all the layers and then duplicate the main layer. Then press Ctrl+Cmd+L to adjust the levels and make the new layer lighter. Next, go to Filters>Blur>Gaussian Blur and set the Radius to 24 pixels. Make the new layer a Clipping mask by pressing Ctrl+Cmd+Alt+G.



## 09 Adding effects to buttons

Select a Soft White brush at 30 per cent Opacity. Lay a line across the top and bottom of all the graphics but add a new layer on top. Load-select all the graphics by holding Ctrl and clicking on the Layers panel. Do the same but with a Soft Black brush and load-select the buttons.

## TECHNIQUE

### Final touches

Final touches can be difficult in the latter stages of your work, while subtle additions can make a big impact



#### 01 Shine

Repeat as in the last step, but add shine to the screen. This will give it a nice finish. Next, create a layer underneath the Buttons layer and select a Soft White brush on a low Opacity and add a white glow beneath the buttons.



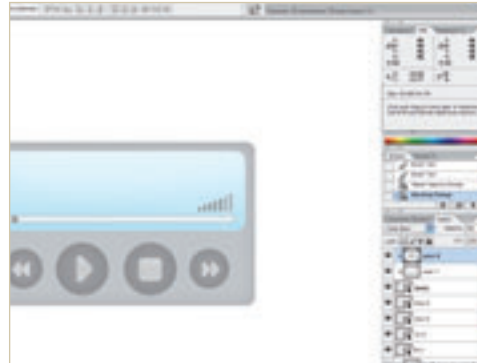
#### 02 Soft, blurred stroke

Load-select the screen and give it a white fill. Load-select it again and go to Select>Modify>Contract. Select four pixels and delete the main mass of the white. Give it a very subtle Gaussian Blur of about four pixels.



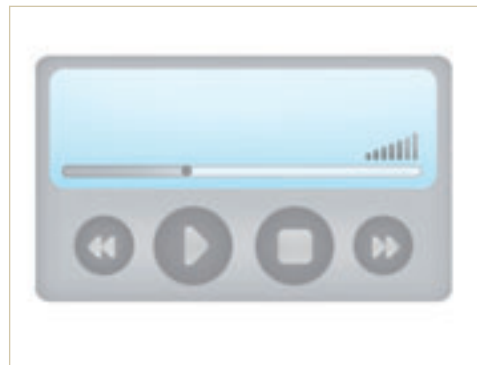
#### 03 Final touches

To put the final touches on this player, we have adjusted the curves to bring out more of a contrast in the player. We have also dropped the saturation so the blue isn't so bright. We also added a Gaussian Blur at the very back.



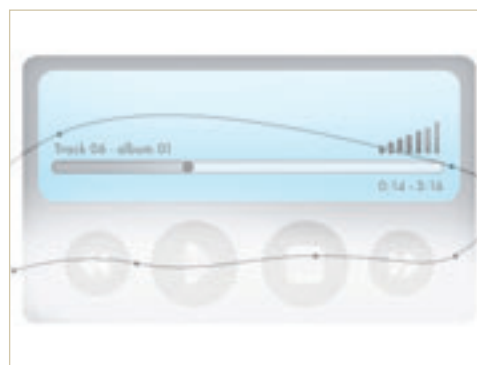
#### 10 Adding effect to the screen

Create two layers above the screen layer. Make them both clipping masks. With one selected, select a Soft White brush (B), give it a light Opacity and create a gradient. Do the same with the other layer but with a black brush, rising from the opposite side, and a Color Burn blending mode.



#### 12 Adding shading

Create a new layer above the main layer at the bottom, and apply a Soft White Wipe across the middle of the base. This just gives an extra gleam where the buttons are. Also add another layer to the timeline and add some shade up to where the indicator point is.



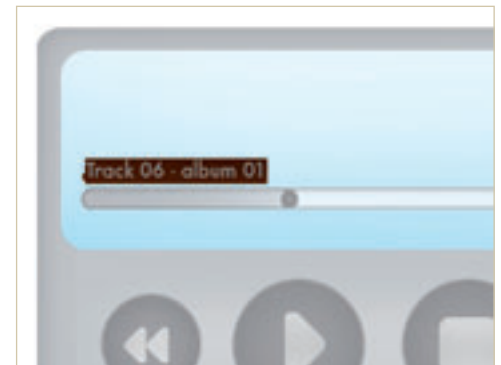
#### 14 Adding some shine

We are going to add some shine to our music player. Create a new layer at the top of the deck. Select a Soft White brush and cover over the buttons. Select the Pen tool and draw a line across the middle. Don't be afraid to have it bend.



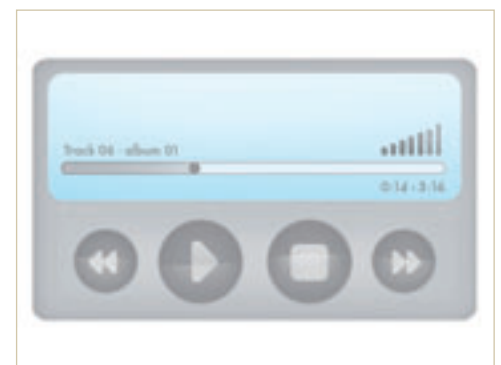
#### 11 Add depth to the graphics

Duplicate the volume layer and the indicator. Adjust the levels so your duplicates are darker, then add a mask to them. Again select a Soft brush and work a gradient into your new layers. This will add a bit of depth to your graphics. If it seems too harsh, drop the layer's Opacity.



#### 13 Fonts

Have a look at what fonts will go well with what you are doing. Try a combination of different fonts and ways that they can be assembled on the screen. We have moved everything up slightly to make way for the track time and we have also placed the track name on the left.

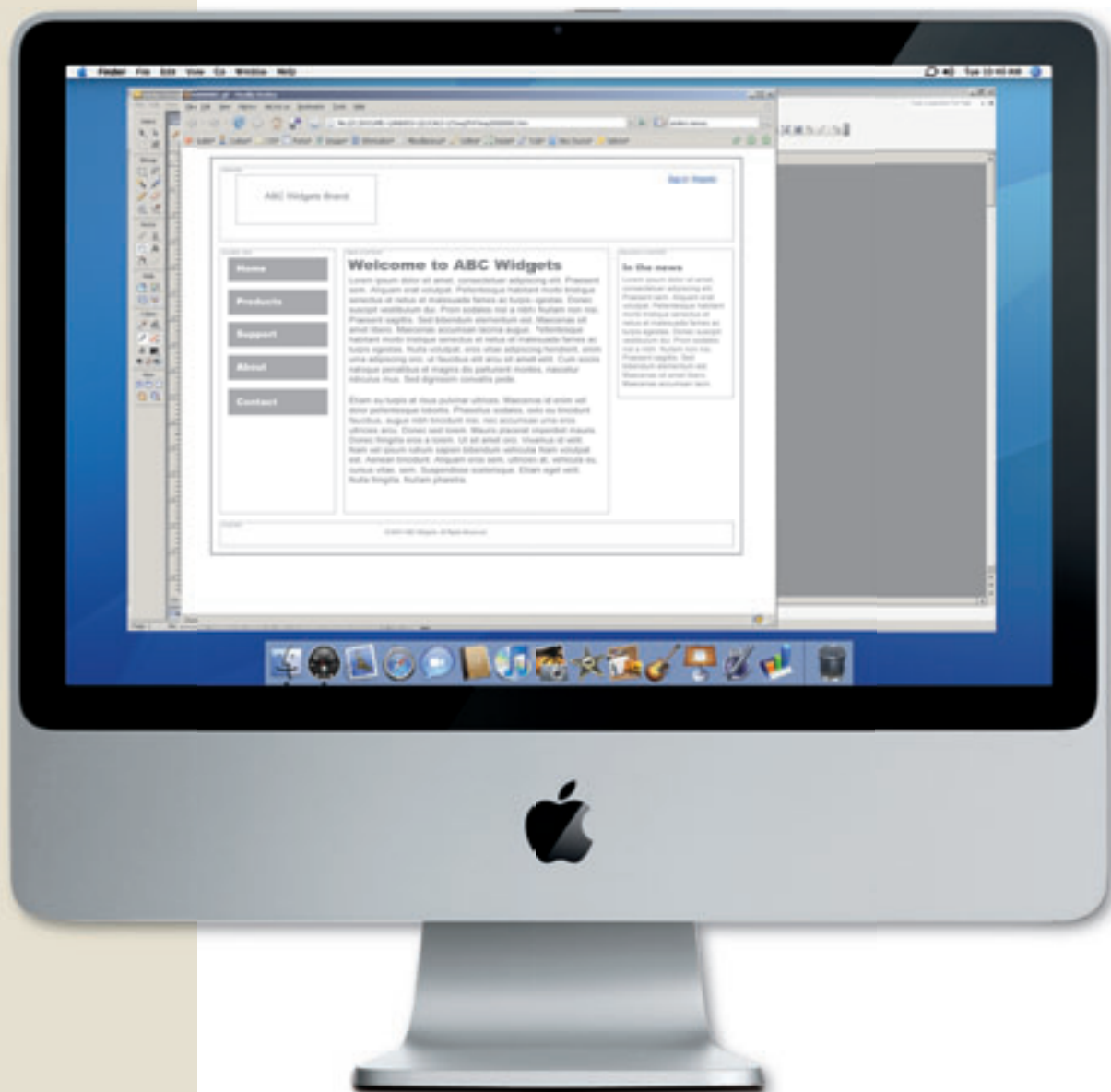


#### 15 Yet more shine

Hit Ctrl+Cmd+Enter, then delete the selection. Load-select all the buttons and inverse the selection. This should allow you to delete what is not within the buttons. Apply a mask to the Shine layer and begin to work into the white until it looks like the screen grab.







### THE BRIEF

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Learn to produce rapid prototypes with Fireworks CS3

#### TIME REQUIRED

1 hour

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Rapid RIA prototyping with Fireworks CS3

NEW FEATURES IN FIREWORKS CS3 MAKE IT A GREAT CHOICE FOR RAPIDLY CREATING SIMPLE PROTOTYPES FOR YOUR WEB APPLICATIONS

■ **IN THIS TUTORIAL**, we'll start by setting up the Fireworks environment for prototyping, including producing a prototyping template file, as well as creating elements likely to be reused in a prototype. We'll also explore new features, including the Common Library, Nine-slice scaling, rich symbols and Master Pages. Last but not least, we'll review how best to export files into clickable HTML. While it may appear that we're not getting to the actual prototype until the very end

of the tutorial, keep in mind that the next time you produce a prototype, you'll be able to skip everything except for the last few steps of this tutorial.

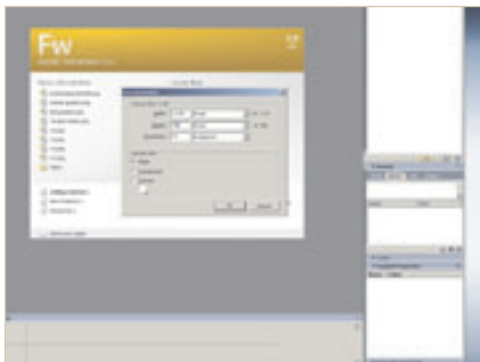
If you don't already have a copy of Fireworks CS3, you can download a free trial from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com). Additionally, to complete the template portion of the tutorial, you'll need to download a template extension, found at the Adobe Fireworks Exchange. Gain access to it from the Fireworks Help menu.



## YOUR EXPERT

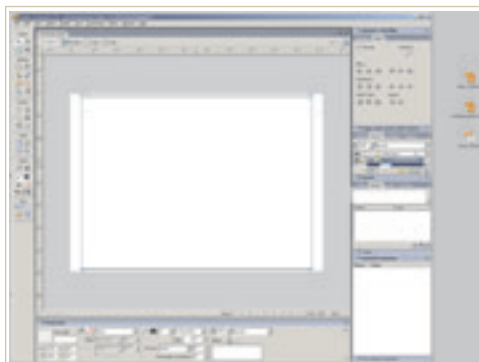
**Anders Ramsay** has over ten years experience designing large-scale websites, working with clients including AOL, FOXNews and Viacom. A senior interaction designer at Funny Garbage, a design agency in New York, find out more about Anders at [www.andersramsay.com](http://www.andersramsay.com).

# Rapid RIA prototyping with Fireworks CS3



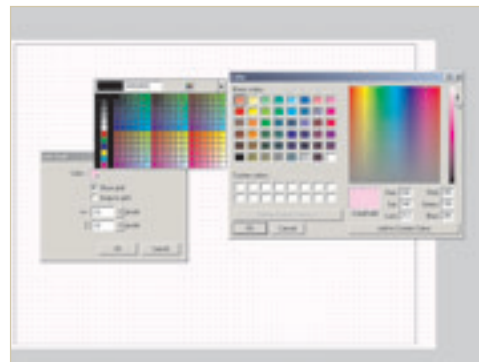
## 01 Create a new document

Start by creating a new document with the width set to 1,124px, height set to 788px and the Resolution set to 72 pixels per inch. Set the Canvas Color to White. The size of the canvas is intended to provide some padding when the prototype is viewed in a browser.



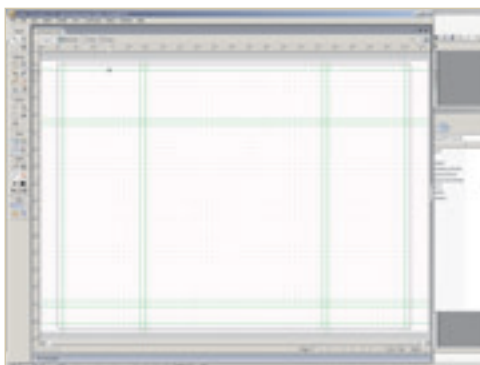
## 02 Add a page frame

Select the Rectangle tool and draw a rectangle (or enter values matching the properties shown in the Properties panel below the canvas) to add a page frame. Then select To Canvas in the Align panel and click on the align vertical and align horizontal icons to centre the page frame.



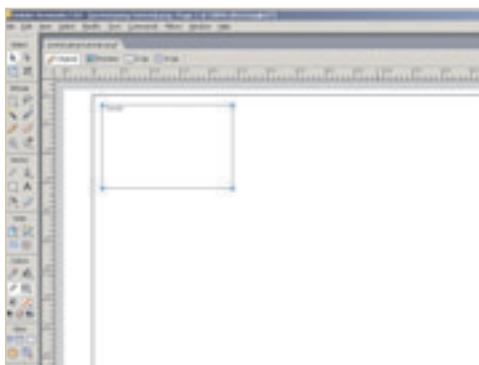
## 03 Align the grid

Optimise the grid by dragging the corner of the ruler so it's flush with the top-left rectangle corner. Open View>Grid>Edit Grid, and update the settings as shown. The 16 x 16 size aligns the grid with the page size, while the desaturated magenta has a good contrast.



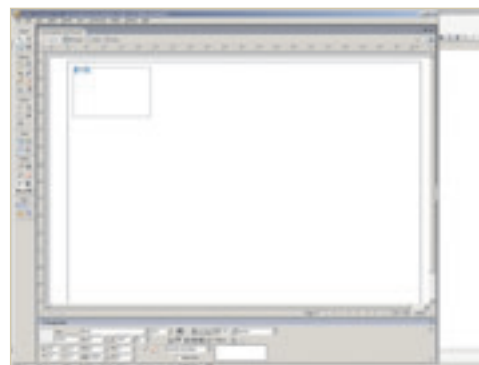
## 04 Add guides to the page

Guides are great for defining page layouts. For this prototype, we're going to go with a standard three-column layout. From the ruler, drag guides onto the page so that you end up with something similar to what you see here.



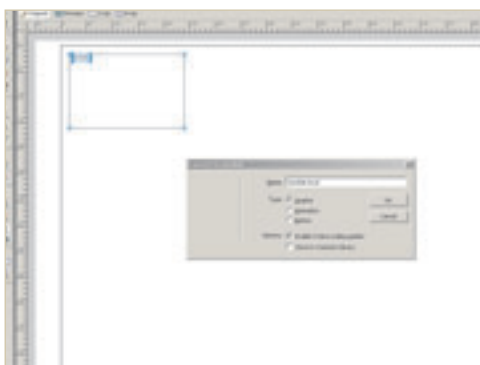
## 05 Create a constructor

We've hidden the guides so that they don't obscure other elements. Next, we're going to add our content modules using rich symbols. We'll start by creating a constructor for our module symbol, by drawing a square and a text box as shown.



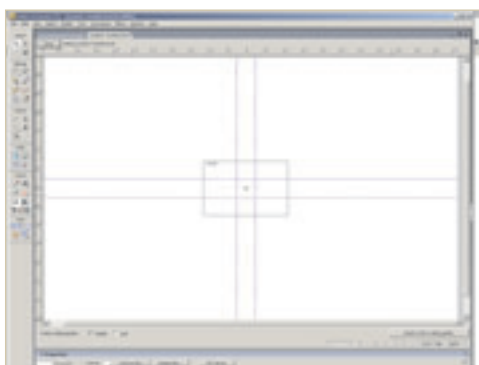
## 06 Name each element

For rich symbols to work, each element that will have a unique attribute in the symbol instance must be named. This can be achieved in the top-left corner of the Properties panel, under Text. We'll name our module property 'name'.



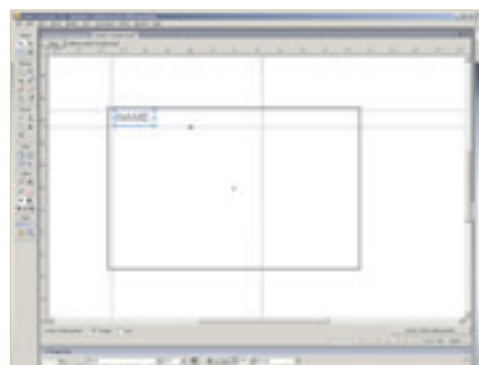
## 07 Convert to a local symbol

Before we create our rich symbol, we need to add some nine-slice scaling, which we can do by creating a local symbol. Select both the frame and the text area, hit the F8 key and make the selections as shown. Clicking OK will create a symbol and add it to the local symbol library.



## 08 Edit the local symbol

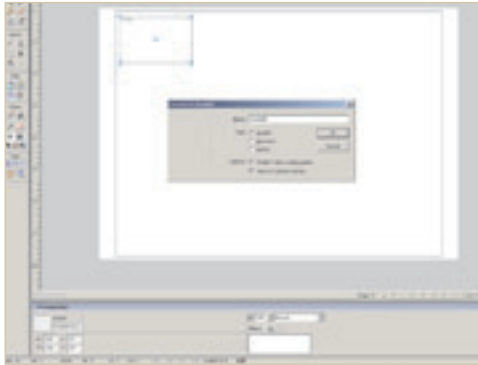
Nine-slice scaling refers to the four dotted lines shown in the Symbol Editor, which make up nine quadrants. Anything within the centre quadrant will not distort when symbol instances are resized, so adjust the dotted lines accordingly so that the text area is unaffected by resizing.



## 09 Optimise the scaling

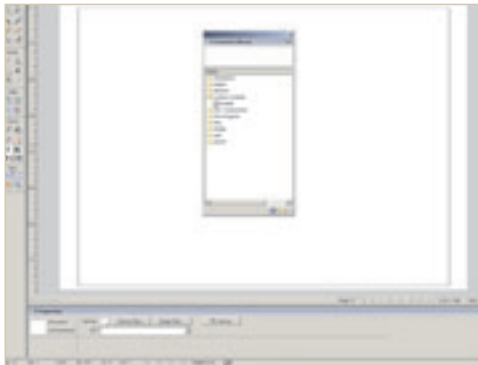
Move the blue dotted lines so that they are outside or on the edges of the text frame but inside the edges of the module, then click Done. Now when instances of this symbol are resized, the text in our 'name' field will not be distorted.





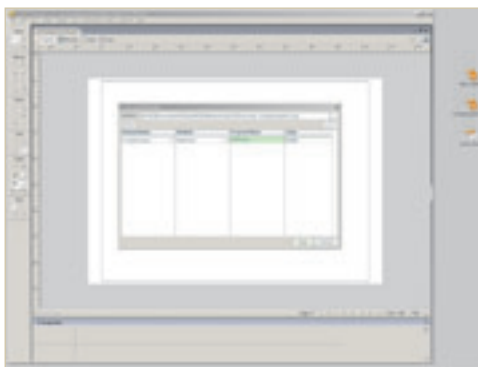
## 10 The Common Library

Rich symbols need to be part of the Common Library, so click on the local module symbol and hit F8. This time, check the Save to Common Library checkbox and click OK. Then, before clicking Save, make sure you are saving it inside the Common Library folder.



## 11 Where did your symbol go?

You'll notice that the symbol has been removed from the canvas. Not to worry! It has simply been moved to the Common Library. To see where it was placed, hit F7 to open the Common Library and double-click on the Custom Symbols folder.



## 12 Apply symbol properties

Next add the ability to modify text in symbol instances using Create Symbol Script in the Commands menu. Browse to locate the symbol you created, click on the plus sign, select name under Element Name, select textChars under Attributes, add 'NAME' as the default text, and Save.

## IN DETAIL

## Working with rich symbols and layers

Two new features in Fireworks CS3 are rich symbols and pages. Here are some tips for handling rich symbol quirks, as well as managing layers across multiple pages

**ONCE YOU'VE STARTED** to create a lot of rich symbols, you'll want some way to keep them organised. While rich symbols must reside within the Common Library, they don't have to reside within the Custom Symbols directory, that's just where Fireworks places them by default.

Consider keeping your rich symbols organised in project-specific folders within the Common Library, and then only placing rich symbols shared across projects in the Custom Symbols folder or creating a shared folder. Keep in mind that you can't place folders within folders in the Common Library – technically you can, but you won't be able to browse them from within Fireworks. Also, when creating rich symbols, keep in mind that they must follow the same naming conventions as JavaScript variables, so avoid blank spaces in your property names.

If you're working on a PC, in order to locate the Common Library when browsing from the Create Symbol Script window, you'll need to set hidden folders to be viewable. You can do this by opening up any window on your desktop, and in the Menu bar, following Tools>Folder Options>View, and then selecting Show Hidden Files and Folders.

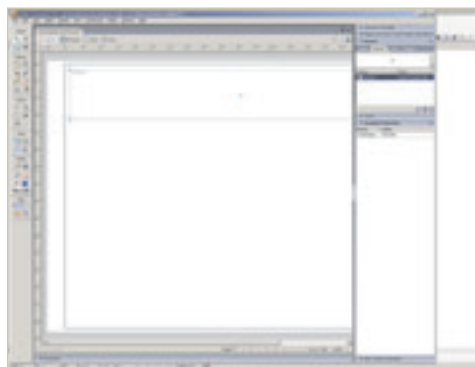
With the addition of multiple pages in Fireworks CS3, layers have become somewhat more complex. After you've started creating a number of pages, you'll find that keeping track of what is what when moving between pages and layers gets a bit hairy. One solution is to create layer folders corresponding to your content areas for each page. (eg, a header folder, a footer folder, etc.) Then, when you are ready to add content to a page, switch to the Layers view for that page first, and then as you add content, make sure it's placed in the appropriate folder. One of the many major benefits of this is that you can much more easily lock, show or hide content that is grouped visually on the page by adjusting the entire folder rather than individual layers.



Here is a Common Library with project-specific folders, such as for the ABC project, containing symbols specific to that project

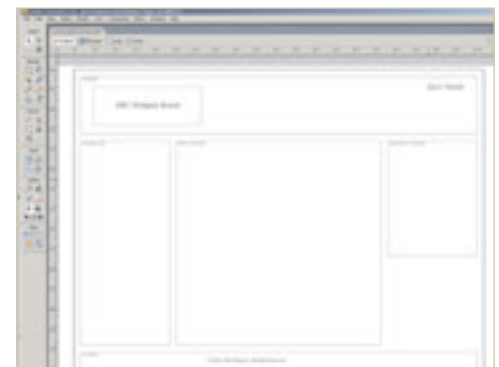


Here's an example of keeping content organised with layers, with all header content placed in a single folder



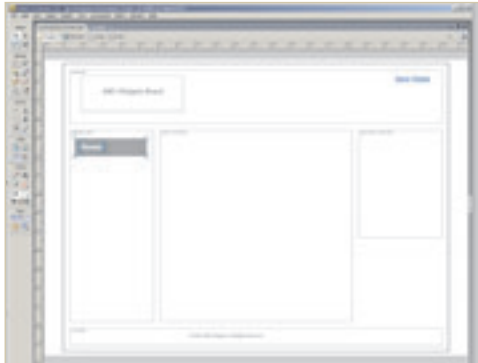
## 13 Insert the module symbol

Now let's put our rich symbol to work. Hit F7 to open up the Common Library, open the Custom Symbols folder, and drag the module symbol onto the canvas. With the symbol selected, open up the Properties panel in the lower right-hand corner and change 'NAME' to 'HEADER'.



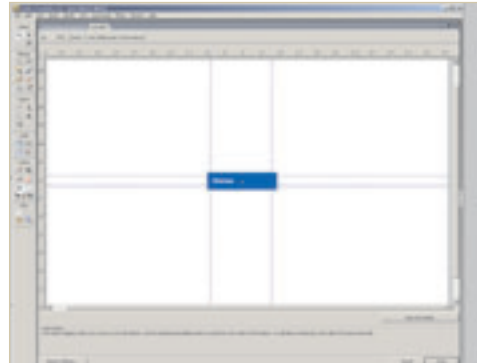
## 14 Add other global modules

Add the remaining modules in the same manner as before, and insert some sample content, as shown above. The next step will be to add navigational buttons. After having created rich symbols, you'll probably find adding buttons a breeze.



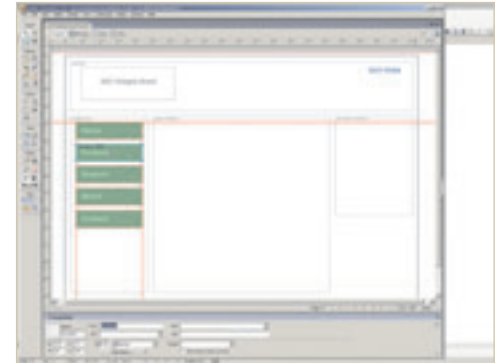
## 15 Draw a navigation element

Start off your global navigation element by drawing the first navigation button, in our case a rectangle, as well as a text area. Select the elements, then hit F8. Next up, select the Button type and check the nine-slice scaling option. Then click OK.



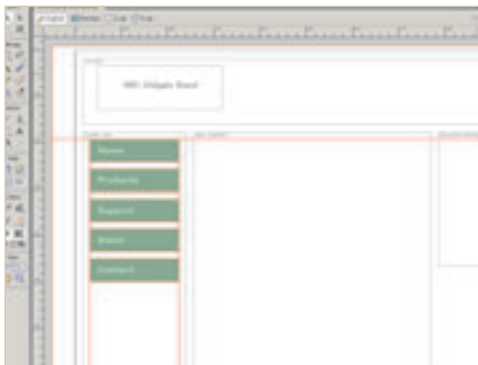
## 16 Turn it into a button

Double-click the symbol, and adjust the nine-slice guides as before. Select Edit>Insert>Hotspot with the rectangle selected to add a navigation link. Click on the Over tab at the top of page, then the Copy Up Graphic button and change the rectangle background to create a hover effect.



## 17 Create a nav bar

Once you've clicked Done from the previous step, you can now drag multiple instances of the button symbol onto the canvas to create a navigational bar. Then simply change the button instance label by editing the Text field in the Properties panel.



## 18 Create the Master Page

We've now added all our global elements and are ready to create the Master Page and the first site page. In the Pages and Layers and Frames panel, click on the Pages tab and then click on the Panel Options button in the top corner and select Set as Master Page.



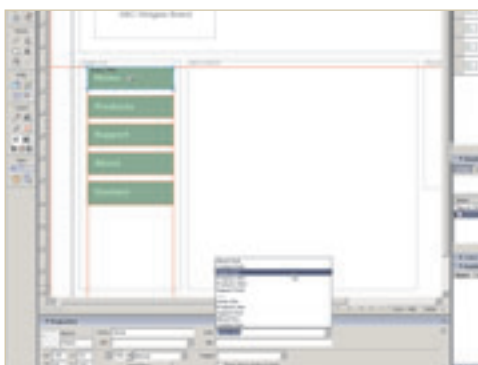
## 19 Add sample page content

Next select New Page. Then add some page content, similar to this example. Of course, if you are following this tutorial while working on your own site then add suitable material. We have just used lorem ipsum as placeholder text.



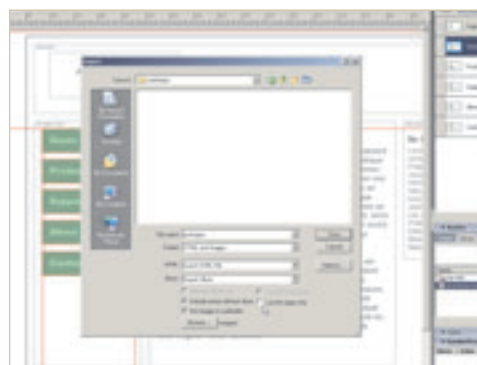
## 20 Add additional site pages

Use the Duplicate Page function in the Panel Options menu to create the additional site pages. Double-click on each page to name it, matching the page names with the navigation button labels, and update the page titles on each page.



## 21 Add navigation links

Go back to the Master Page and apply links by highlighting each hotspot and selecting the page you want it to link to in the Properties menu, as per this example. Copy this method as many times as is necessary to link up the rest of your pages.



## 22 Export your prototype

You're now ready to export your file and turn it into a clickable prototype. Select Export in the File menu and you should see a window similar to this one. Deselect Current Page Only and select Put Images In Subfolder, and click on Save.



## 23 View the prototype

Open the file Home.html to view your prototype in a browser, and click on the global navigation links to go to the various pages. If everything works as it should, you can share your prototype in the same way as you might share a collection of HTML files, for example, posting them online.

## Ajax Load

www.ajaxload.info



### TOP TIP



#### A strong palette

One of the most striking things about this and a lot of other Web 2.0 sites is their strong, simple palette selections for different sections of the site. This is something that we should consider early in the design process, so that our selected colours can be integrated into every element of the site. The Ajax Load crew went with the oldest trick in the book, with an RGBY palette – other strong variations you could consider are CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black) or an Warm/Cold scheme. The best way to design your own harmonies is with the Gradient tool.

One of the biggest revolutions to hit web galleries has been the advent of the incredibly versatile Lightbox JavaScript system.

We're huge fans of lightboxes; there is no better way to present imagery on the web without using Flash. We are amazed by the ease of use from a program implementation point of view as well, as we find the necessary tag edits the height of simplicity. The transitions are smooth and easily edited in the accompanying JavaScript, and the support files are wonderfully detailed.

One of the best, yet least appreciated, features of a lightbox is the fact that everything can be customised, from the framing to the buttons. Most of it can be easily taken care of with some simple Photoshop work: load the existing button, add your desired modifications and away you go. The only thing that takes a little more doing is coming up with a good alternative loading; that is where this month's site comes in! You can customise the foreground and background colours, as well as select from a wide variety of loading animations. Enter the desired values and style, and Ajax Load will generate a stylish loading GIF to your exact specifications, free of charge! The site itself is simple and clean, with a few nice Web 2.0 touches that we will now dissect and emulate.

#### Symmetrical bubble

The symmetrical bubble background offers some minimal funk

#### Gradient boxes

Gradient boxes add a subtle yet professional touch



## Gradient boxes

This is a simple trick that can really add a professional feel to your work

Gradient boxes used as they are here are an effective and simple way to add a professional feel to your website. They go the extra step without giving off an over-produced vibe that would detract from the complicity that lies at the heart of the Web 2.0 feel. Simply make a rectangular selection using the Marquee tool in Photoshop. Smooth the selection (Select>Modify>Smooth) by five pixels to get the cool rounded corners feel, then design a gradient fading from a dark red to a lighter, brighter one. Drag it out within your selection and deselect the selection.



Now make another rectangular selection, and lop the left-hand edge off so you have a 90-degree corner on the left side to complete the effect. Simple yet effective!

## Blowing bubbles

Make the most of the background to give your site creative flair

The bubble effect in the background is a nice touch; it breaks up the otherwise quite corporate feel of the website, and reminds people that this site is designed to help creative people do things with a little more flair. The effect itself is straightforward to create, and can be best accomplished using a custom Photoshop Action. Create a composition with a blue background. Make a new layer and create two circles within it, with the lower being slightly smaller than the upper. In the Actions palette, create a new Action, entitled Duplicate & Nudge. With the Action



recording, duplicate the circles layer and nudge it to the right, then merge down. Hit Stop to cease recording. Repeat this a few times and your screen will be filled!





## YOUR EXPERT

**Justin Maller** is a graphic artist from Melbourne, Australia. He is currently working as a full-time freelance graphic artist, while also creatively directing the crew over at [depthcore.com](http://depthcore.com). Check out his personal folio at [superlover.com.au](http://superlover.com.au).

## Site doctor

# Diagnosing the tricks behind dotcom designs



### Shape shadows

Shape shadows will make your decorations pop

### Opaque buttons

Opaque buttons work well with a shadow effect

## STEP BY STEP

### Just fade away...

Using 'fade bars' as menu headers adds intricacy with minimal effort



#### 01 Make your bar

Create a new document with a red background. In a new layer, make a selection of the bar you wish to create. Fill it with white and add a layer mask. Before moving on, duplicate this layer. Hide the duplicate for now; it will come in handy later.



#### 02 Text effects

Drag out a black-to-white gradient horizontally. This will fade your menu bar's opacity from one hundred per cent visible to completely clear. Add whatever text you would like to use in the menu; use the same colour red as the background for the text. Add a shadow to the text if you wish.



#### 03 It's all blurry

To get a more advanced effect, make the duplicate bar from step one visible again. Gaussian blur by three or four pixels. Ctrl-click the Gaussian and nudge the selection down by four pixels. Hit delete to clear. Duplicate this layer and drag it to the bottom of the bar to give a cool neon effect.

## Five o'clock shadow

Add a three-dimensional edge to images on your site

Giving a custom shape a bit of shadow adds depth to it with surprisingly little effort. In a new document, create a new layer, then drag out a shape using the Custom Shape tool. Ctrl-click this layer to get its selection and create a new layer. Fill this layer with black. Deselect and Gaussian blur this layer by ten pixels. Ctrl-click the Gaussian layer and move the selection down four pixels and right four pixels. Hit Delete to clear. Now Ctrl-click the original shape layer. Invert this selection (Shift+Ctrl+I), reselect the Gaussian layer and clear away any blur not contained within the



original shape. This will give the effect of a shadow and you can easily adjust this to make it look right for your shape and the way that you are going to use it in your site's design.

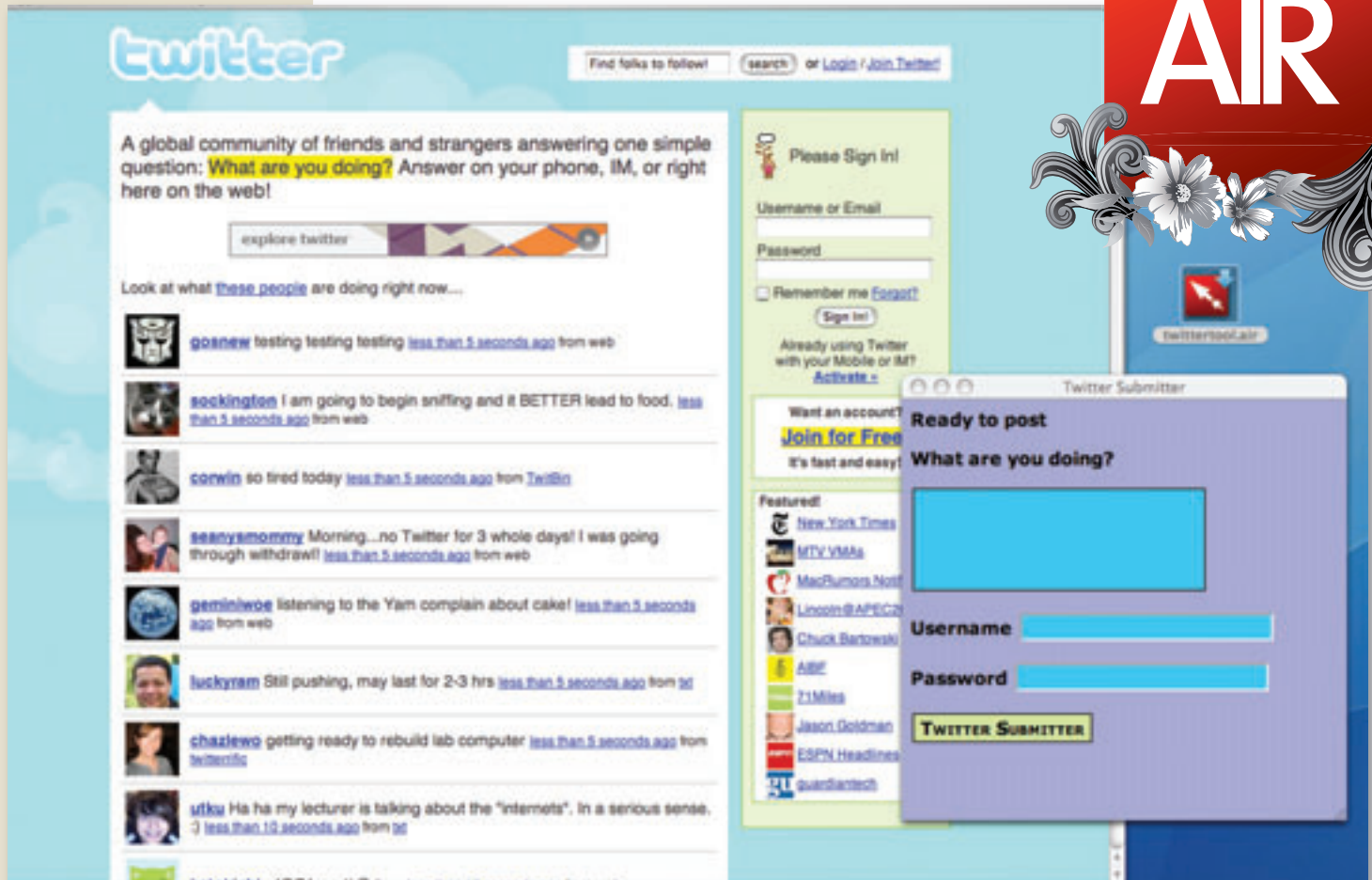
## Opaque effects

A surprisingly simple, yet really effective, technique for a professional finish

There are a variety of techniques that you can use to achieve an opaque effect, but the easiest one by far is to simply apply a layer mask. To practise this technique, create a new document with a yellow background. In a new layer, make a Rectangular Marquee selection of the button you wish to create and fill with white. Add a layer mask to this layer using the relevant button at the bottom of the Layers palette. Hit D to switch your colours back to default black and white, and X to switch them over. Hit G to access the Gradient tool and select a Reflected



Gradient. Draw a line out from the centre of the button to get a perfect, balanced opaque effect. Repeat with a shadow layer for optimum effect.



### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

Tutorial files:  
Twitter.html,  
Twittertool.air

### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Build a Twitter update tool using the AIR extension for Dreamweaver

### TIME REQUIRED


1 hour

### SKILL LEVEL



# Use Dreamweaver to build AIR applications

A NEW PLUG-IN MEANS YOU CAN CREATE AND TEST AJAX-POWERED ADOBE AIR APPLICATIONS WITHOUT LEAVING DREAMWEAVER

 **ADOBE'S AIR IS** its next generation web-application platform, designed to build rich internet applications that don't need to run in a browser. AIR, the Adobe Integrated Runtime, brings together Flash, HTML and JavaScript into one single platform – and throws PDFs into the mix too.

While AIR is still in beta (you can download it from the website), it's already being used to build complex web applications, including a whole new way of working with eBay's web services. A lot of AIR applications have been built

using Adobe's Flex development tool, which uses XML and ActionScript to create Flash applications. Flex isn't the only AIR development tool – Adobe is adding AIR features to its design tools as well, including both Dreamweaver and Flash.

Dreamweaver is a familiar tool for building and testing AJAX applications. With its AIR extension, it's easy to take your existing JavaScript and HTML code and turn them into standalone AIR applications. We'll use it to build a Twitter update tool, taking advantage of Twitter's JSON API.





## YOUR EXPERT

**Simon Bisson** has been working with Adobe's web tools since they rolled out PageMill way back when. He's been writing about AIR for *Web Designer* since the alpha first appeared, building AIR applications in both Flash and HTML/JavaScript.



twittertool.air

# Use Dreamweaver to build AIR applications



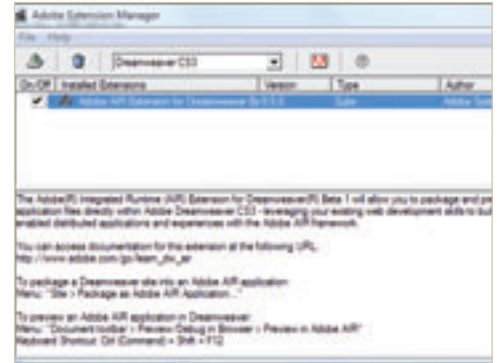
## 01 Adobe Labs

Adobe's Labs website is where you'll find AIR. You'll need to download the AIR run time, and the Dreamweaver plug-in. If you don't have Dreamweaver CS3, you can download a 30-day trial version from <http://www.adobe.com/products/dreamweaver/>.



## 02 Dreamweaver's AIR plug-in

You can find Adobe's beta AIR extension for Dreamweaver CS3 at [http://labs.adobe.com/wiki/index.php/AIR:Dreamweaver\\_CS3\\_Extension](http://labs.adobe.com/wiki/index.php/AIR:Dreamweaver_CS3_Extension), provided in the MXP format. It is a 25MB download, containing the compilers and packaging tools that come with the AIR SDK.



## 03 Installing the AIR plug-in

Once the MXP file has downloaded, double-click the file. This will launch Adobe's Extension Manager, which will handle installing the plug-in, also removing it if you choose not to use it any more. You should find the plug-in listed alongside the rest of your Dreamweaver extensions.



## 04 New commands

The AIR plug-in adds new commands to Dreamweaver's menus. There's a new addition to the Site menu – Package as Adobe AIR Application. This allows you to pull together site pages and turn them into a standalone desktop application to run on Windows, Mac OS X and Linux.



## 05 Twittering away

The Dreamweaver AIR tools allow you to turn any AJAX application into AIR code. There are a lot of Web 2.0 sites out there that allow you to build their features into your applications, and we'll use the Twitter micro-blogging service for our first AJAX AIR application.



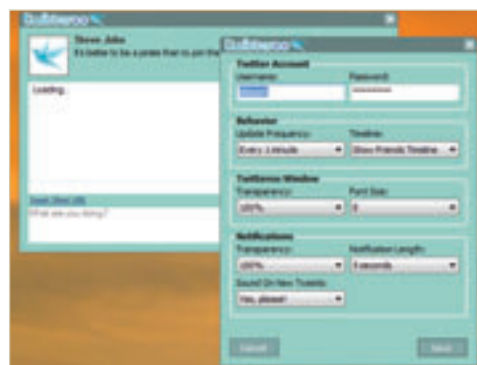
## 06 Web 2.0 API

Like many Web 2.0 services, Twitter has an API. We can use this to send messages to the service and view them from the site's timelines. You can find details of the API on the Google Groups page, <http://groups.google.com/group/twitter-development-talk/web/api-documentation>.



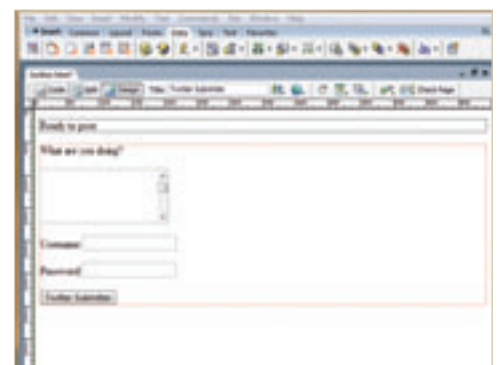
## 07 Setting up Dreamweaver

Building an AIR application in Dreamweaver is like building any other AJAX application. We start by creating a site to hold our code. As we're going to be building a desktop application, all we need is a local site on our development system – there's no need to connect to a remote site.



## 08 Application considerations

If we look at any Twitter application (the fan wiki at <http://twitter.pbwiki.com/> is a good place to find them), it's easy to see that they all have some things in common. They need to be able to take a username and password, authenticate with and deliver updates to the service.



## 09 Laying out the form

We'll keep things relatively simple for this first AJAX AIR application, and we'll concentrate on updating Twitter rather than displaying people's updates or 'tweets'. Create a basic form with three form fields and an update button using Dreamweaver's layout tools.

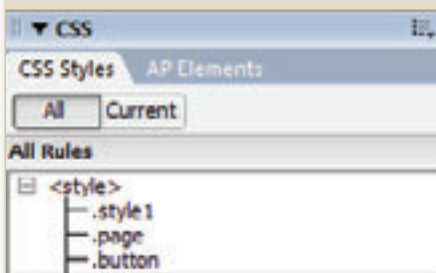




## TECHNIQUE

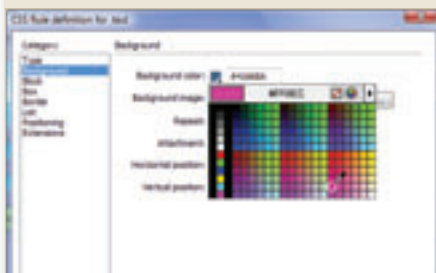
### Building CSS in Dreamweaver

Adobe has improved Dreamweaver CS3's CSS design tools, and we can use these to change the look of our AIR application



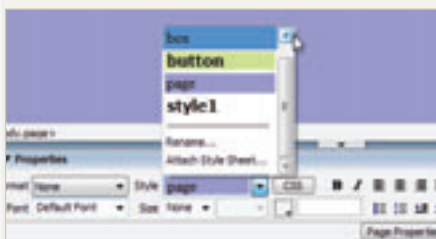
#### 01 CSS design tools

You can create and examine your CSS rules using Dreamweaver CS3's CSS panel. This shows you inline and external styles, and allows you to add new rules. Click on the New CSS Rule icon to create and edit new rules.



#### 02 Designing rules

Dreamweaver CS3's CSS rule designer makes it easy to create CSS rules. Just choose the property you want to set, and pick the value you want from the drop-downs. Various features give an idea of what your rule will look like when applied to your HTML.



#### 03 Applying rules

Applying CSS rules to page elements is easy enough. In the Design view, the Properties panel can be used to select any valid CSS rule, with a drop-down menu to help you pick the right look and feel for the currently selected HTML elements.

### 10 Setting up the form

Switch to Code view and edit your form so that the main form elements are given names and IDs. This is needed to give JavaScript access to the form fields.

```
<form name="twitterform">
<p>What are you doing?</p>
<p>
<textarea name="updatetext" cols="30"
rows="5"></textarea>
</p>
<p>
<label>Username
<input type="text" name="uname" id="uname">
</label>
</p>
<p>
<label>Password
<input type="text" name="passwd"
id="passwd">
</label>
</p>
```

### 12 Getting data from the form

In the head block of our HTML document, create a <script> block. We'll use this for our code. Start a new function, add code to extract the form contents and add it to the application variables. We can use the HTML document object model to get the data that has been added to the form.

```
function postMe() {
username=document.twitterform.uname.value;
password=document.twitterform.passwd.value;
text=document.twitterform.updatetext.value;
```

### 14 Creating our content string

As we're using Twitter's JSON API to deliver our updates, we'll need to encode our text in a URI-encoded string. This will replace spaces and punctuation with the appropriate codes. We can use the JavaScript encodeURIComponent function to handle this encoding. Additionally, we need to add a source to the update string, using the name of our AIR application.

```
var content = "source=twitAIR&status=" +
encodeURIComponent(text);
```

### 11 Hooking up onClick

Our application should only need one button. We can use this to fire off our AJAX JavaScript, so all we need to do is add an onClick event to our form button. Make sure you're using a standard button, not a submit button, by setting the input type to 'button'. Connect the onClick event to a JavaScript function that will contain our Twitter update code.

```
<p>
<input type="button" onClick="postMe();"
value="Twitter Submitter">
</p>
</form>
```

### 13 Checking for content

As Twitter is intended to work over SMS, there's a limit to the amount of content that can be sent. We'll make sure that the length of our text string is less than 130 characters (and that it actually contains data!). If there's too much text, our application won't post it to Twitter. Also, AIR supports JavaScript alerts.

```
if (text.length ==0) {
alert("No text!");
return false;
}
if (text.length >=130) {
alert("Too long!");
return false;
}
```

### 15 Starting to post a message

Next we need to call our update function. We can use AJAX techniques to display a status message on the page to show that a message is being posted. As Twitter's API is asynchronous, we also need to include a callback to a timeout function, which watches for Twitter to return a success code. Once the update has been posted, we can show our users that the message is ready to be viewed.

```
showStatus("Posting message");
submitUpdate(updateURL,content,function(istimeout){
if ( xml && (xml.readyState == 4 ||
istimeout == "timeout") ) {
showStatus("Message posted");
}
});
```



# Use Dreamweaver to build AIR applications

## 16 Show status

Our showStatus is very simple. We need to add a div to our HTML named 'status'. Calling the showStatus function with a string object will replace the contents of the div with the contents of the string. We'll use the HTML document object model to set the innerHTML of the div.

```
function showStatus(message) {
document.getElementById('status').innerHTML =
message;
}
```

## 17 Updating Twitter

We can now write the code to post the contents of our message to Twitter. We'll do this using a standard AJAX call to the Twitter API, tying it to an XMLHttpRequest object. Once we've created our AJAX call, we can then connect to the service, opening a call to its JSON API, sending a username and password. We then write the request headers, check to be sure that we're connected and finally send the message we created earlier.

```
function submitUpdate(uri,message,callback){
alert("In Post");
xml=new XMLHttpRequest();
xml.open("POST",uri,true,username,password);
xml.setRequestHeader("If-Modified-Since",
"Sat, 1 Jan 2000 00:00:00 GMT");
xml.setRequestHeader("Content-Type",
"application/x-www-form-urlencoded");
xml.onreadystatechange = callback;
xml.send(message);
}
```

## 18 API URLs

Twitter uses a REST style API, where all the connection points are URLs. To make our application future-proof, we'll define the API URL in our <script> block, setting it to the URL of Twitter's JSON API. If you prefer, you can use the XML API and rewrite the application to work with XML data using E4X or a similar JavaScript XML library.

```
var updateURL="http://twitter.com/statuses/
update.json";
```

## IN DETAIL

## AIRAliases.js – getting more out of AIR

AIR is more than just JavaScript and HTML. It's also a platform with its own features, which you can access from your AJAX application

**IF YOU WANT** to get more out of your HTML/AJAX AIR applications, it's well worth getting to know the ins and outs of the AIRAliases.js JavaScript library. This is a tool that simplifies using AIR-specific commands from your application JavaScript.

You'll find the documentation for the library at <http://livedocs.adobe.com/labs/air/1/jslr/index.html>, where you can read about using the library in your code. Include the library by using the following tag at the start of an application page: <script src="AIRAliases.js" />. Once loaded, you can use it to work with short forms of the AIR commands to access information about your application, as well as interacting with your PC's operating system.

One key set of commands gives you access to AIR's SQLite database. This is a powerful tool, as it lets you store information between sessions. With it, our Twitter application could use a settings page to securely store user's details, so they wouldn't have to verify their identity with Twitter every time they wanted to post an entry.

Another important tool is AIR's Capabilities function. This lets you see details of the hardware that's running your application, so you can tune features for specific hardware. There's no point in offering webcam controls if there's no webcam on the PC that's running your application. You can also see the screen resolution and depth of the host PC, which lets you load appropriate graphics assets to ensure the best possible user experience.

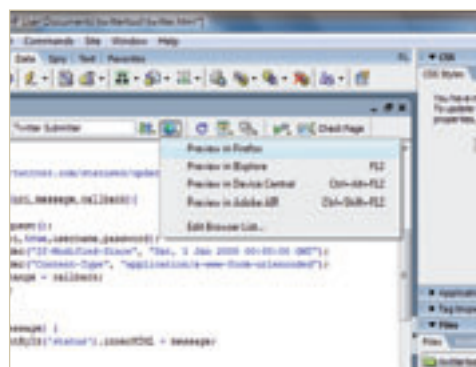
Other commands let you work with AIR's media controls, playing complex sounds. You can also use a richer set of networking tools. These let you connect to XML data sources, and handle encoding objects for transfers. As AIR lets you work with native file systems, there are also a set of file commands that let you write and read data, as well as events that make it easier to handle errors and to make sure that your applications stay in sync with the desktop.



It's worth familiarising yourself with the documentation AIRAliases.js, as it contains tools that can make your life a lot easier

```
var str = uname + ":" + passwd;
str = str.replace(/\n/g, air.File.
lineEnding);
var file = air.File.documentsDirectory.
resolve("TwitterAIR/user.txt");
var fileStream = new air.FileStream();
fileStream.open(file, air.FileMode.
WRITE);
fileStream.writeUTF(str);
fileStream.close();
```

AIR's file handling features can save a username and password to the local file system so your users won't have to enter it every time



## 19 Testing our application

Once we've written our application, it's time to test it. First test it using a web browser. Click on the globe icon in the Dreamweaver page-editor toolbar. This will open up a drop-down that shows the available preview options. Choose your browser, and wait for the application to load.



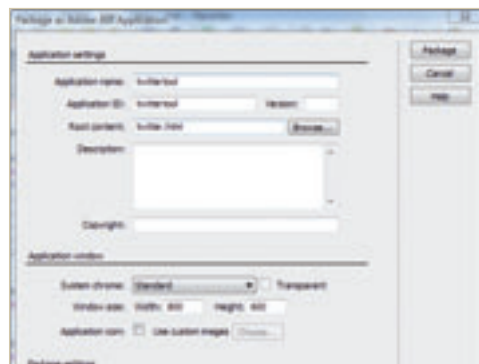
## 20 Running the test

Fill in the form with your test message and your Twitter username and password. The AJAX code should submit your message, then check your Twitter timeline to make sure that the update has been made. If the HTML version of our code is working, we're ready to convert it to AIR.



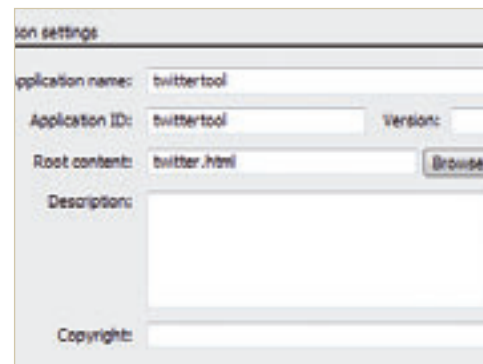
## 21 Test as AIR

Before you publish the AIR application, use Dreamweaver's AIR plug-in to test the code. Select the AIR option from the preview drop-down to launch Dreamweaver's AIR test environment. This isn't the full AIR, and you'll find that it doesn't resize the application correctly.



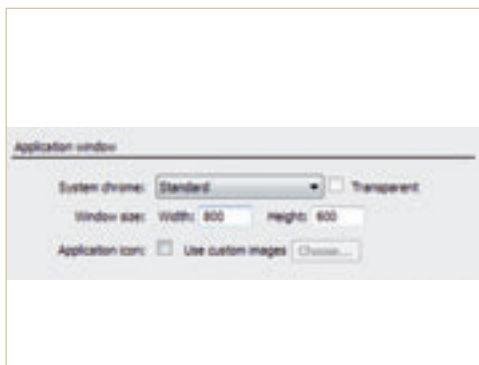
## 22 Build an AIR package

The Dreamweaver AIR extension adds tools to package our HTML and JavaScript into a single AIR executable. While our application is only a single page, complex multi-page applications can be turned into a single installer. From the Site menu, select Package as Adobe AIR Application.



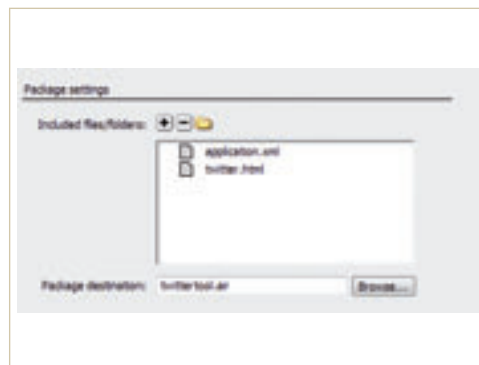
## 23 Application settings

We'll first need to fill out the Application settings section of the dialog. You'll need to give your application a name and an application ID. The root content is the HTML file that AIR loads first – here, the only page in the application. You can also fill out the description and copyright fields.



## 24 Application window

The Application window settings help you define just how your AIR application will look. You can use it to set the system chrome, and even use transparent windows for complex UI effects. It's a good idea to set the window size so your application doesn't have too many scroll bars.



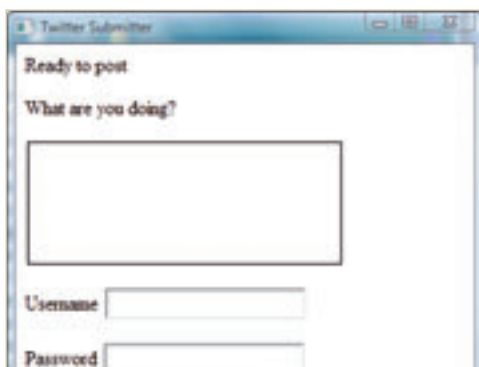
## 25 Choosing the files

Now choose the files to include in your application. The extension builds the required application.xml file automatically. You'll need to use the Package settings section to select the HTML, CSS, JavaScript and image files you're using in your AIR application.



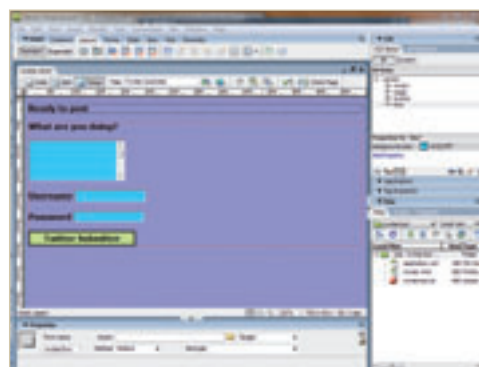
## 26 Run the AIR installer

Run the AIR installer in your application directory. If you've already tried out an earlier version, you'll be given the option of uninstalling, replacing, or even just running it. The installer can use the version number to make sure that you don't replace your code with an older version.



## 27 Test your application

The installer will automatically add the application to your PC or Mac's start menu. Click on the icon to launch it, and fill in the form as before. Your update should appear on Twitter just as before. You can now use Twitter's short-cuts to send messages directly to your friends.



## 28 Adding CSS

Like web applications, AIR uses CSS to change fonts, colours and the look and feel of buttons. The built-in CSS design tools in Dreamweaver CS3 make it easy to quickly apply changes. External CSS files can be packaged in your AIR application along with the HTML AJAX pages.



## 29 Next steps

There's a lot more that can be done with Twitter's API, including displaying the contents of your timelines, as well as integrating Twitter with other web services. Check out advanced AIR Twitter applications like Twinja or Spaz for ideas on what you can do with both AIR and Twitter's API.



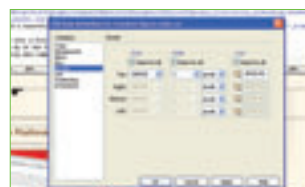


## Spoon Graphics

<http://blog.spoongraphics.co.uk>



### TOP TIP



#### Try a different border style to give it more pizzazz

The common option when adding a border is to use the default option, 'solid'. This works perfectly well for most occasions. However, there is more than one style option available that can give a border a more subtle appearance. Popular and effective choices are the 'dotted' and 'dashed' styles. Try 'double' for a more obvious border or 'inset' to create a 3D effect. Combine these with a width and colour that matches the theme of the page.

**S**poon Graphics is the online presence of Sheffield-based designer Chris Spooner. He is a fully qualified and industry experienced player with skills in design for print, web and multimedia. His undoubted passion, knowledge, flair and technique ensure that he achieves a fine level of quality in his creations.

Spoon Graphics is just one example of his undeniable talent and was originally created as a base for his freelance work. This has helped him to further expand his client base and experience with managing a project from conception to completion. While working for various design studios, examples of his work can be found at [www.nonstopables.org](http://www.nonstopables.org) and [www.connexions.gov.uk](http://www.connexions.gov.uk). Since going solo, Spooner has produced some fine examples of simple but effective design, which can be found via the Portfolio section of the Spoon Graphics site.

The site, as you might expect, is a CSS and Div tag fest, which makes liberal use of well-designed background graphics. The colour scheme adopts a great combination of brown and cream interspersed with black and white. The bold graphics are accompanied by a simple central two-column blog-style layout. This is a simple but effective affair that makes use of repeating elements, ie, image, title and text. These are enhanced with image borders, rollover effects and to a lesser extent the inclusion of Google Ads to complete the lineup.



#### Background bonanzas

A collection of backgrounds are coupled with a complementary background colour

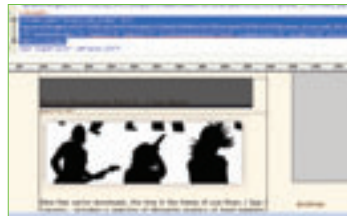
#### Share This

A quick click of the Share This link presents a two-tabbed menu with links to popular social and news sites

## iframe

Add an inline frame to host external HTML, in this case Google Ads

The iframe element is used within the Spoon Graphics site to act as a holder for the Google Ads. The tag can be used to contain content from another HTML document. Essential attributes are included such as the 'src', which indicates where the content currently exists. Other common elements are height, width, margin width, margin height and scrolling. To add the iframe tag in Dreamweaver, head to the Split or Code view, place the cursor in the appropriate position and add the opening and closing tags. To populate a tag, the more usual option is to include a link

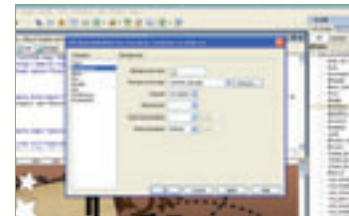


to the source. This is established using the following code, `src=../name.html`, with 'name.html' being replaced by the name of the file. This is placed inside the opening tag, ie, `<iframe src=../newone.html"></iframe>`. Add appropriate height, width and scrolling attributes.

## Big on backgrounds

Determine the position of a background image in Dreamweaver

The background image has become increasingly popular with designers due to its ability to create attractive pages with just a few images. Adding a background in Dreamweaver is a simple process. Head to **Modify>Page Properties**, press **Browse** and locate an image. This will be applied to the body tag, making it effective across the whole of a page. The 'repeat' option determines the behaviour of the image. For example, 'repeat-x' will repeat the image across the page horizontally. The repeat option is ideal for creating backgrounds with very small file sizes.



Controlling a background image within a Div tag or class is a little different. Double-click a tag in the CSS panel to open the Rule Definition window. Select **Background** and the horizontal and vertical position can be determined, as well as repeat and background colour.





## YOUR EXPERT

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

## Site doctor

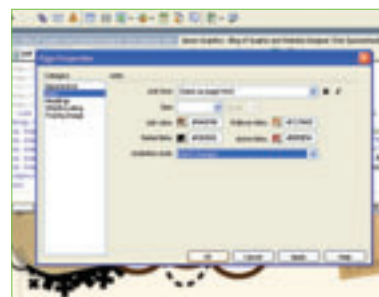
# Diagnosing the tricks behind dotcom designs



## STEP BY STEP

### Individually style up links

Control the link element of a specific tag with pseudo classes and more



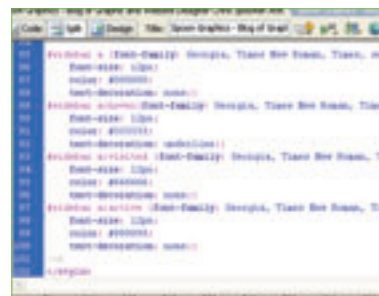
#### 01 Complete control

Link styles, colour, font and behaviour can be decided via the Page Properties. However, this controls all the elements across a whole page or site depending on how style sheets are used. This may prove troublesome when links are placed against different colour backgrounds, effectively causing links to become invisible.



#### 02 All links

To gain greater control of the behaviour of links within a certain tag, the original tag needs to be extended, for example, #sidebar a {font-family: Georgia, Times New Roman, Times, serif; font-size: 12px; color: #000000;}. This will determine the font, colour and size of links in the #sidebar tag.



#### 03 Link behaviours

The behaviour of the tag can be further enhanced with the addition of a: hover a: visited, a: active, ie, #sidebar a: link, a: hover a: visited, a: active. The behaviour for these needs to be determined in the style sheet. The easiest way to add this is by switching to Code view and adding manually.

## Image conscious

Make an image more visible for users and search engines

An image gives a page pomp and personality, but as a static object it has little impact on search engines and accessibility issues. To give an image more accessibility, the first option is to add an Alt tag. Select the image and the corresponding text box can be found in the Properties window. Make sure that you give the image a relevant and descriptive name to make things easier in the future. Alt tags should be applied to all images within a site; this will make a page far more visible to a search engine. Another useful addition to any image is the 'title' tag, which is an aid



to users. The content of the tag, which should again be concise, relevant and descriptive, will appear when the cursor is placed over the image in a browser. Add the code manually, ie, title="Click here to go to the Home page", within the img src tag.

## Using ems

Build in font flexibility to pages using the ems unit

Fonts are an integral and essential part of the web page experience for your users. Commonly, designers use pixels as the measurement for determining the size of a font on-screen. This will ensure that the font size is always as intended. Dreamweaver provides a selection of measurement options, but it is ems that is a popular choice due to its flexibility. The ems unit is essentially resizable, for browsers that support this, and their size is relative to a user's font size preference. For example, if the size of font in the body tag is determined as 100%, all further text is relative to this



point. This can be reduced or increased, ie 90%, to suit a page design as required. Styling text so that is 0.5 ems means that it will always be half the size of the base text. On the opposite scale, 2.0 ems text will always be twice the size of the base text.





### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

Tutorial files:  
N/A

### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create effective links to your website from Google using a selection of tools

### TIME REQUIRED


30 minutes – 1 hour

### SKILL LEVEL



# How to get your website noticed on Google


HERE WE SHOW YOU HOW MASTERING GOOGLE CAN HELP GET VISITORS MOTORING IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR WEBSITE

 **BUILD YOUR WEBSITE** and they will come... but only if it has been set up in such a way that Google will love it. Even the most attractive, user-friendly and dynamic websites in the world might as well be invisible if they are not found in Google.

Google is an internet icon. Its core business is searching and it has evolved into an advertising platform that can provide an abundance of highly converting traffic.

Some businesses have learnt that if their websites appear in the top of the search results of Google, as it's the world's most popular search engine, the relevant traffic they attract from it will be colossal.

We'll be taking a look this month at how creating links to your website through Google is one of the most effective ways to optimise your site and increase relevant traffic.



### YOUR EXPERT

**Ben Norman** is an internet search marketing specialist who has recently published his first book, *Getting Noticed on Google*. Ben also runs search marketing agency Impact Media Ltd, which specialises in organic search engine optimisation and managed pay-per-clicks.

# How to get your website noticed on Google



## 01 Getting started

One of the most common ways to find links is to simply ask Google. Open up [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk). Do a search for your desired keywords, for example 'web designer'. Navigate to the naturally listed top sites to see whether they allow you to submit a link.



## 02 An alternative route

You can be a bit more specific about your links. Open up [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk). Type in your niche, for example 'custom web designer Scotland', and include either '+links' or '+links or +site' at the end of your keywords. Google will look for sites that contain references to each.



## 03 Web CEO: useful tools

If you are optimising websites yourself, a helpful piece of software is Web CEO. Available to download for free, the search engine optimisation (SEO) software offers loads of great features including detailed site-tracking statistics, as well as how to find link partners.



## 04 Download Web CEO

To get your copy of this software, visit [www.webceo.com](http://www.webceo.com). The program also offers a free training programme that you can use to advance your optimisation skills further. As the site states, there is no expiry date and there are no forms to fill out. Once downloaded, set up a new account.



## 05 Setting up Web CEO

To begin, select File and then New Site. In the New Site Wizard, enter your website details and description and then click Next. After double-checking your details on the next screen, click Finish. This now gives you access to all of the tools Web CEO has to offer.



## 06 Find links in Web CEO

Load Web CEO and select Find Link Partners from under the Promote Your Site heading. Select the website from the list provided in Project Selector, or select New Site. Then click OK followed by Configure. Now you'll be able to select which engines you wish to check for links.



## 07 Search engines

Select the Add keywords tab followed by Add. To download keywords used in your site, click 'Get keywords from site'. Your website will appear in the screen then click OK twice. Click Find New Partners and a list of potential linking partners will be produced.



## 08 Requesting links

A large number of websites offer a standard form to you to request a link, whereas others might ask you to email them. When you have found the websites suitable for your site to link to, find the page on which they offer links to other sites.



## 09 Link Request Form

Under Title, enter a specific title relating to your product/service, remembering to include your relevant keywords. You can go into more detail in the Description box; including more keywords will help increase your relevance for Google's natural listings.

make sure that your url is correct before submitting

Description

350 characters remaining on your input limit

Category

Contact Name

Email

We will not spam or distribute your email address

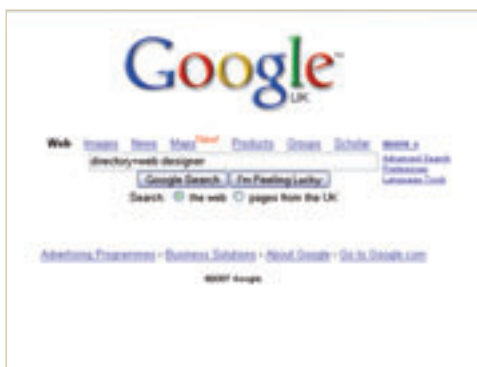
## 10 Keep your email safe

Select a category from the drop-down list that best describes your product/service, then enter your contact name and email address. Ensure that the company displays a statement which states your email address will not be passed on to any third parties who may distribute it.



## 11 Directory linking

Directory linking is a great way to source links to your website. A directory is a website that houses links to other sites and places them in an organised order. This makes it easier for people to find what they are looking for. Ask Google to find directories to submit to for your industry.



## 12 Finding directories

Navigate to the Google search box. Following on with the keyword example that we have been using, you would type 'directory+web designer' into the search box and click Search. This will return a list of directories from which it could be useful to get links.

## IN DETAIL

## What is organic SEO?

This tutorial has offered a small insight into the various search engine optimisation (SEO) tools available to increase relevant traffic to your site, but what is SEO? Ben Norman explains

**BUSINESSES ARE USING** Google more than ever to market their products and services as they realise the abundance of targeted traffic it provides.

SEO is a growing industry with an emerging group of professional marketers who undertake the task on behalf of businesses of all sizes, including my business Impact Media Ltd ([www.impactmedia.co.uk](http://www.impactmedia.co.uk)). We operate a Partner Programme with web design agencies to help with SEO. However, if you have the time, you can undertake simple SEO yourself. My book *Getting Noticed on Google* is a step-by-step guide to the key areas of SEO, which can make a real difference to the standing of your website in Google's natural listings.

Organic SEO is the process of optimising your website to appear higher in the search engine's natural listings. A dictionary definition of 'optimisation' is: 'an act, process or methodology of making something (as a design, system or decision) as fully perfect, functional or effective as possible.' This is exactly what you need to do to your website to give it the prominence in the search engine it deserves. Once optimised, websites will stand a much greater chance of being found by their desired keywords.

There is no charge for appearing in Google's natural search listings, unlike other forms of advertising such as pay-to-click. This makes organic SEO very cost-effective. Choosing organic SEO over pay-to-click will not only save you money, but capture the right traffic. Recent statistics from Google found that searchers were 72 per cent more likely to click on a natural listing than a pay-to-click advert.

Searchers look for relevance in the adverts they click on, in the same way that Google looks for relevance in the websites it shows in its natural listings. This is why a natural search offers a much greater conversion rate as people know that natural listings are more relevant to their searches as they cannot be bought, but earned.



You can distinguish between Google's natural (blue-shaded links) and sponsored listings as Google separates them



To assess your website, Google takes information from your website's code, not from the images we see



## 13 An alternate route

There is also a handy list with many of the directories in it and information on each of them. The directory list is also split into sections for different industries to make it easier to search through. Firstly, navigate to <http://info.vilesencer.com> and click the Excel Download link.



## 14 Save for future reference

Click Save to save the list to your PC so you can refer back to it at a later date. The great benefit with directory linking is that most of them do not require a reciprocal link, so this is a great way of building quality, inward non-reciprocal links to your website.







### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

Tutorial files:  
comments.php,  
functions.php and more

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Developing themes and templates  
for WordPress

#### TIME REQUIRED

3-4 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



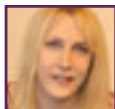
# Getting yourself started with WordPress

HOW TO BUILD EXCITING THEMES AND TEMPLATES IN POPULAR BLOGGING TOOL, WORDPRESS. FIND OUT WHAT ALL THE FUSS IS ABOUT!

**DESPITE BEING ONLY** four years old, WordPress is the largest self-hosted blogging tool in the world. As the popularity of blogs and social networks continues to grow with millions flocking to Bebo, MySpace and Facebook, bloggers are becoming more demanding. Not only do they want facilities for customising the look and feel of their blog sites, they also actively seek tools which can display content in a variety of ways through queries, meta-data and categorisation.

Built with PHP and MySQL, WordPress offers web designers arguably more scope for self-expression than any other blogging tool on the market can. It offers support for up to ten levels of users with a variety of publishing privileges and workflow options available.

In this tutorial, we'll show you how to install WordPress on your server, and build custom themes and templates to suit your needs.



## YOUR EXPERT

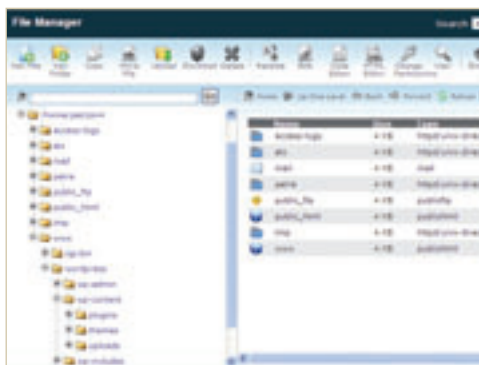
**Petra Jones** is a systems analyst who has worked as a website designer and developer for over ten years, perfectly placing her as an expert for *Web Designer*. Her interests include sound production, podcasting and interactive multimedia sites.

# Getting yourself started with WordPress



## 01 Get blogging

You can create a free blog by signing up at <http://wordpress.com>, but the range of formatting and configuring options are very limited. Instead, go to <http://wordpress.org/download/> and download a zipped-up copy of WordPress 2.2.3 to your PC or laptop.



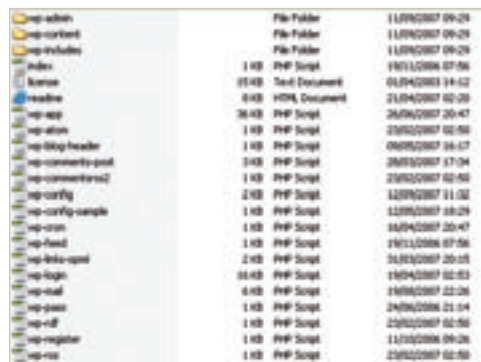
## 04 Setting up

It's really important to have a good FTP client as you now need to upload all 437 WordPress files (around 3MB's worth) to your host server. WordPress recommends free solution FileZilla (<http://filezilla-project.org/>) or a host like AN Hosting, with one-click installation.



## 07 View site

You can take a look at your new blog by clicking the View Site link next to the headline. Your first 'Hello World' post is created by default, along with a sample comment, some basic navigation including an About You page, and space for archive posts, blog categories and meta links.



## 02 Start unzipping!

Unzip all the files and folders to a suitable test area. You'll need somewhere to host your blog site that supports MySQL version 4.0 and PHP version 4.2 or greater. An FTP client is also essential. For a host server that meets these specifications, look at <http://wordpress.org/hosting/>.



## 05 Install

Test your wp-config.php settings are okay by entering <http://yourdomain/yoursubfolder/wp-admin/install.php> in a new browser window. Running Install will give you a login and a random password. Check everything works by logging in to <http://yourdomain/yoursubfolder/wp-admin>.



## 08 Your first post

Click Edit This next to the 'Hello World' post to add basic text to your first blog. Use Visual view for basic formatting, justification, image and link insertion or Code view to use classes or alter the base HTML. WordPress defaults to a justified alignment with ten-pixel letter spacing.

## 03 Configuration

Having found a good place to host your WordPress blog, look in the WordPress root directory for a file named wp-config.sample.php and open this using a simple text editor like Notepad. Replace the MySQL settings with your username, password, database name and local host, then save the file as 'wp-config.php' in the same folder.

```
<?php
// ** MySQL settings ** //
define('DB_NAME', 'putyourdbnamehere'); //
// The name of the database
define('DB_USER', 'usernamehere'); //
// Your MySQL username
define('DB_PASSWORD', 'yourpasswordhere'); //
// ...and password
define('DB_HOST', 'localhost'); // 99%
// chance you won't need to change this value
define('DB_CHARSET', 'utf8');
define('DB_COLLATE', '');
```



## 06 Dashboard

You've reached the Dashboard Administration Panel. If you come across any error message, check your host meets WordPress requirements and double-check the database connection details in wp-config.php. There's a troubleshooter page over at <http://wiki.wordpress.org/>.



## 09 Default theme

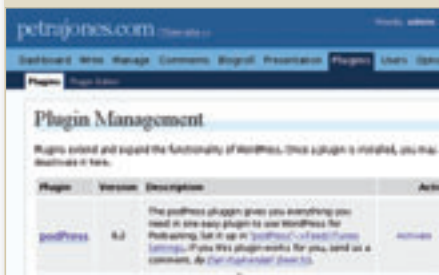
Your new WordPress blog is displayed in the basic blue, black and white colour scheme of WordPress Default 1.6, with one other choice available – the uninspiring, dull grey of the Classic 1.5 theme. But you can find hundreds more choices over at <http://themes.wordpress.net/>.



## TECHNIQUE

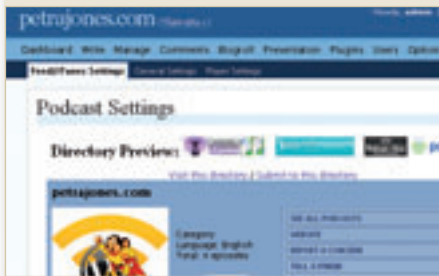
### Adding plug-ins to WordPress

Let us show you how to add additional functionality to WordPress with a plug-in for audio and video



#### 01 Plug-in power

WordPress functionality can be boosted by plug-ins that add additional functionality to your blog such as PodPress, which enables you to add video, music and podcasts to your posts. Download and extract the ZIP file from [www.mightyseek.com/podpress](http://www.mightyseek.com/podpress).



#### 02 Activate PodPress

Upload the PodPress files to the wp-content/plugins folder of your host server. Open the Site Admin Dashboard then select Plugins. Podpress should now be on the list, so click Activate. To alter the PodPress default settings, hit Feeds/iTunes Settings.



#### 03 Add Media Files

You'll notice that PodPress now has its own option on the top menu of the Dashboard. Go to Write, and there is now a new Podcasting section. Select Add Media Files to attach a music or video file.



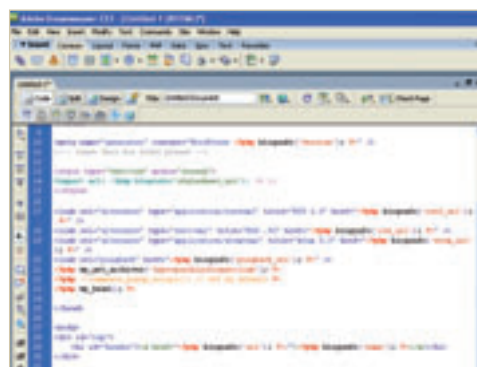
#### 10 Changing theme

Find a theme you like, then download the ZIP file to your PC and extract the contents into a new folder within the wp-content/themes/ directory. Transfer these files to the equivalent folder on your host, then open the WordPress Dashboard and select the new theme under Presentation.

#### 12 Creating templates

A basic WordPress page is made up of four building blocks – header, content, footer and navigation. First let's create a header page named 'header.php'. Enter your page HTML with some PHP as shown to describe your blog's type and character encoding. '<?php bloginfo('name'); ?>' will use the name of your blog as the page title.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"
<?php language_attributes(); ?>
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type"
content="<?php bloginfo('html_type'); ?>";
charset=<?php bloginfo('charset'); ?>" />
<title>
<?php bloginfo('name'); ?><?php wp_title(); ?>
</title>
```



#### 14 Finish your header

Add <body> tags to header.php, then create a container for your header (e.g. #rap positioned at the top left) and enter your h1 header as a link using <a href="<?php bloginfo('url'); ?>"><?php bloginfo('name'); ?></a>. Users can then click your blog headline as a link to take them to the home page. Create an opening content div, then save.



#### 11 WordPress web design

The process to create your own theme from scratch is very similar, except we'll need to create all the PHP template files from scratch. Let's start by creating our own template. A basic theme in WordPress is made up of a folder containing a stylesheet, images and about eight PHP files.

#### 13 Adding style

Next, add the version of WordPress your blog uses and a PHP link to your stylesheet (this will hunt in wp-content/themes/ for your active stylesheet). In addition to including some links to RSS feeds between your head tags, you can also use 'wp\_get\_archives' to call up links to your old posts and display them by month.

```
<meta name="generator" content="WordPress
<?php bloginfo('version'); ?>" />

<style type="text/css" media="screen">
@import url( <?php bloginfo('stylesheet_url');
?> );
</style>

<?php wp_get_archives('type=monthly&format=link'); ?>
```

#### 15 Adding an index

For the second part of your WordPress template, create a new page named 'index.php'. Start by entering <?php get\_header(); ?> to call up the header page you just created. If you're using Dreamweaver to write your code, don't try to preview. All the appropriate theme files need to be created first and uploaded to your host server.

```
<?php get_header(); ?>

<h1 id="subhead">
<?php bloginfo('description'); ?>
<!-- displays your blog description as a subheading -->
</h1>
```

## 16 Content loop

WordPress uses a loop of PHP and HTML tags to display posts and format them. Start your loop by entering the opening and closing PHP tags shown below. We can then use PHP to call up the date, title and content of any blog posts along with associated comments.

```
<!-- opening loop tag -->
<?php if (have_posts()) : while (have_posts()) : the_post(); ?>

<!--display this message if you can't find any matching posts -->
<?php endwhile; else: ?> <p><?php _e('Sorry, no posts matched your criteria.');?></p>

<!-- ending loop tag -->
<?php endif; ?>
```

## 19 Add footer

Immediately after the closing content loop tag `<?php endif; ?>`, enter a new get footer tag `<?php get_footer(); ?>`, then save the index.php. Now create a simple footer.php as shown below. Notice the link to call up a sidebar. This can be placed here or more commonly in the index.php. Now let's build the sidebar.

```
<!-- begin footer -->
<?php get_sidebar(); ?>

<p class="credit">
<cite>Powered by Wordpress</cite>
</p>

<?php wp_footer(); ?>

</body>
</html>
```

## 22 Name that theme

Next upload the comments, comments-popup and functions PHP files located on the CD (those files which include styles and format for comments are easily amended). Now open your style.css, and add details of your new style in comment form as shown below. WordPress will use this information when displaying your theme under Presentation.

```
/*
Theme Name: Petra Autumn
Theme URI: http://www.petrajones.com/wordpress/wp-content/themes/petra
Description: Petra Autumn Theme
Version: 1.0
Author: Petra Jones
*/
```

## 17 Displaying posts

Wrap your posts in a suitably styled div container (e.g. post) then get the date of each post as shown. We've displayed our post titles as a link that loads it in full into a separate page when clicked. Create another class, and use PHP to get the post category (e.g. computing), author and time.

```
<div class="post">
    <?php the_date('','<h2>','</h2>'); ?>
    <h3 class="storytitle"><a href="<?php the_permalink() ?>" rel="bookmark">
    <?php the_title(); ?></a></h3>
    <div class="meta"><?php _e("Filed under:"); ?>
    <?php the_category('') ?> &#8212; <?php the_author() ?> @ <?php the_time() ?>
    <?php edit_post_link(
    ('Edit This')); ?>
</div>
```

## 20 Add sidebar

A typical WordPress sidebar uses nested lists to vertically display associated page navigation, meta-data and blog category information. First create a new file named 'sidebar.php' and save this in wp-content/themes/your-theme-name with the rest of your template files. Create the code below to call up associated blog pages (e.g. 'about') along with blog categories.

```
<div id="menu">
<ul>
<?php /* Widgetized sidebar, if you have the plugin installed. */ if ( !function_exists('dynamic_sidebar') || !dynamic_sidebar() ) : ?>
    <?php wp_list_pages('title_li=' . ('<h4>Pages:</h4>')); ?>
    <?php wp_list_categories('title_li=' . ('<h4>Categories:</h4>')); ?>
</ul>
```

## 18 Finishing off

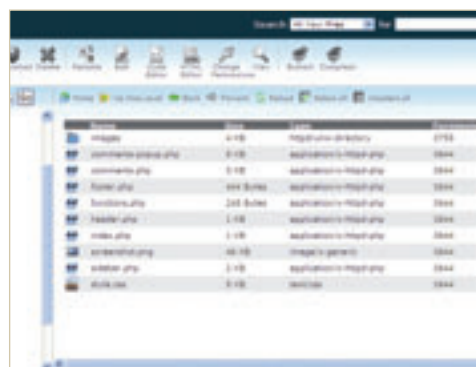
Finish your content loop by creating another class to style the actual post message itself. Use a `<?php the_content ?>` to display the actual content, then create one last class to hold any links and comments. Don't forget to close the #content div you created in the header.php, then call up a comments template.

```
<div class="storycontent">
<?php the_content(__('(more...)')); ?>
</div>
<div class="feedback">
    <?php wp_link_pages(); ?>
    <?php comments_popup_link(__('Comments (0)'), __('Comments (1)'), __('Comments (%d)')); ?>
</div>
</div>
<?php comments_template(); // Get wp-comments.php template ?>
<?php endwhile; else: ?>
```

## 21 Finish sidebar

Use list items as shown below to structure your sidebar's menu. In practice, the individual IDs are rarely used by the WordPress stylesheet, which usually references #sidebar ul li {} instead. Call up your blog archives as shown, along with any meta-data associated with your blog. Save, then upload all four PHP files to your host server.

```
<li id="archives">
    <h4><?php _e('Archives:'); ?></h4>
    <ul>
        <?php wp_get_archives('type=monthly'); ?>
    </ul>
</li>
<li id="meta">
    <h4><?php _e('Meta:'); ?></h4>
```



## 23 Finishing touches

Save style.css then upload it to wp-content/themes/your-theme-name on your host server along with screenshot.png, located on the CD. This is the image associated with your theme. Here, it's important to upload a complete set of theme files. You can always change this at a later date.



## 24 Change presentation

Log into your WordPress Dashboard, then select Presentation and scroll down to Available Themes where your new theme should now be listed. Click on the new theme's link. The page should display 'New Theme Activated'. Click View Site to see your blog's new look.



## 25 Adding images

To add images to your theme, create a subfolder named 'images' inside wp-content/themes/your-theme-name and upload the images you need. Next, use either `<img src="" HTML or background: url() in CSS to insert an image in your header or index template.`



## 26 Change screenshot

Tweak the theme's appearance by editing the PHP file in Dreamweaver or a simple text editor. Upload the amended file and then Ctrl+F5 to refresh the blog's appearance in the browser. To change the screenshot, use Print Screen, then save the image as a 300 x 225px PNG file and upload.



## 27 Adding calendars

The Racing Theme available on your CD also includes a calendar in one of its sidebars, which displays the current date and links to previous posts earlier. You can create a calendar of your own by opening sidebar.php and adding `<?php get_calendar() ?>` where you want it to appear.

## IN DETAIL

## Advanced templates

Want to add more than one sidebar? Looking to build a WordPress template with multiple templates? Look no further...

THE MOST POPULAR WordPress themes out there include a header, footer, and sidebar within the index.php template, but there's no reason to stop there. There is plenty of scope for more complex web designs which have multiple sidebars, templates within templates or anything your imagination can conjure up. The Racing Theme on the CD provides a good example of this. Download the theme files to a new folder named 'Racing' in wp-content/themes on your host server. Then open up index.php in your web or text editor.

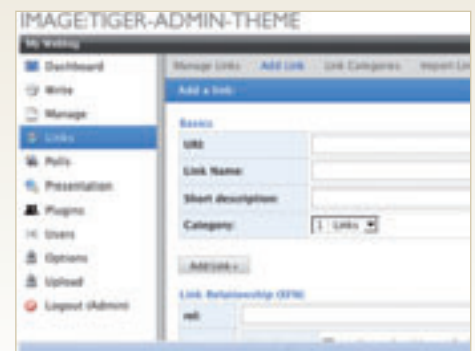
As you can see, the Racing Theme calls up two sidebars using `<?php include(TEMPLATEPATH."/l_sidebar.php");?>` just after the header and `<?php include(TEMPLATEPATH."/r_sidebar.php");?>` just before the footer. Because these file names are not one of WordPress' standard template files (e.g. sidebar.php), you have to use a slightly different way to call up each sidebar, as opposed to the more traditional `<?php get_sidebar();?>`. If you're after a middle column though, all you have to do is call up a third file named m\_sidebar.php.

It's also possible to call up templates within templates. Probably the best examples of this are search panels inside sidebars that sometimes have their own template. Again, the PHP is identical. Open l\_sidebar.php in the Racing Theme and you'll notice that right at the end the script, it includes `<?php include(TEMPLATEPATH."/searchform.php");?>` This calls up a child template which controls the appearance of the query form, along with its buttons and text box.

For those of you who fancy even more of a challenge, why not change the look and feel of the WordPress Admin Panel itself? You can create a theme for this too, and then install it as a WordPress plug-in. Have a look at [http://codex.wordpress.org/Creating\\_Admin\\_Themes](http://codex.wordpress.org/Creating_Admin_Themes) for inspiration and a guide to getting started.



This four-column WordPress theme uses multiple sidebars to display content through PHP



Themes can also be applied to the Administrative Panel or Dashboard of WordPress itself as plug-ins

## 28 Styling calendars

Style your calendar in style.css by referring to #wp-calendar. Treat it the same way as a div ID. In this way, you can style each table cell, the current date (#wp-calendar #today), links (e.g. (#wp-calendar #today a) and caption (#wp-calendar caption). Both the Date and Time format can also be customised. See [http://codex.wordpress.org/Formatting\\_Date\\_and\\_Time](http://codex.wordpress.org/Formatting_Date_and_Time).

```
#wp-calendar td {
line-height:10px;
font-size: 10px;
color:#ffffff;
background-color: #333333;
padding: 0px;
}
```



## 29 Final thoughts

This basic guide to WordPress really just scratches the surface of what PHP can do with the underlying database. Not only do web designers have total control over the way a blog looks, we can also create powerful queries to unlock the potential of blogs as a knowledge repository.





# REVIEWS

We round up a delightful collection of new hardware products that will surely add both style and power to your designer studio...



## Wacom Bamboo

[www.wacom-europe.com](http://www.wacom-europe.com)

**£59.99**

**IGNORING THE STUPID** name, the latest pen tablet from Wacom is actually pretty good. The Bamboo is a versatile and inexpensive pen tablet best suited

to freehand writing, annotating and navigating in computer applications. It can also be used for retouching photos.

A6 wide in size, the Bamboo has an active area of 92 x 147mm (4 x 6 inches). The pen provides 512 pressure levels of sensitivity and has a programmable double side-switch. Wacom's patented cordless and battery-free pen technology offers a natural tool for freehand writing, annotating and navigating.

Unlike high-end tablets designed for graphics professionals, the Bamboo best lends itself to typical applications. For instance, in Microsoft Office you can personalise emails by signing them off with a digital signature and add sketches or doodles. Additionally, by selecting a Pen or Highlighter tool in Microsoft Word, Bamboo can be used to jot notes, create rough sketches or mark up documents, spreadsheets or presentation slides.

Programmable ExpressKeys provide quick access to the most commonly used commands, such as Cut or Paste. Bamboo also has a new design feature in a Touch Ring, that makes zooming in and out and scrolling easier. There is also a blue backlight on the tablet enabling clearer access to frequently used functions. It's so versatile, you may just have found a replacement for your mouse!

**Pros:** Great design and features makes this tablet a viable alternative to a mouse. It also reduces the chances of RSI

**Cons:** The size of it makes detailed drawing a little problematic... and the name could be a little more professional!

**Verdict:**



## Dell XPS 720 H2C Edition

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

**£2749**

**HOLD TIGHT, DELL'S** new computer system is going to blow your socks off! Sporting a 2.44mm-thick aluminium enclosure and packing serious heat, the

XPS 720 H2C is the stuff dreams are made of (speak for yourself! – Ed). Aimed at the gaming fraternity but equally as suitable for multimedia developers, it is built around a variety of premium technologies designed to push modern components to the limit.

With the optional Intel Core 2 Extreme QX6850 quad-core processor, the system offers a massive performance leap over previous generations of single-core processors. There's also the latest 800MHz Corsair Dominator memory modules, factory over-clocked to a whopping 1066MHz.

Let us now focus on an incidental. Dell has expanded the LightFX toolkit, the multi-coloured perimeter lighting. With LightFX you control three light zones (back, front/top, front/bottom), eight intensity levels, and 16 colours, with the capability to create unique lighting scenarios that match specific game activities, such as breathing or heartbeat.

If you've got the cash, you'll want to buy the XPS 720 H2C. The system is extremely fast, provides excellent graphics and allows you to watch the latest Blu-ray HD movies. It's also rock steady – perfect for developers – and thanks to water cooling is whisper-quiet. Best of all, there's plenty of room to upgrade.

**Pros:** Hardcore gamers and technology enthusiasts can't get much better than this cram-packed computer system

**Cons:** Luxury comes at a price so before you buy, ask yourself whether your needs match what you can afford

**Verdict:**





# BenQ FP241WZ

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

**£645**

**THE FP241WZ IS** special. The 24-inch LCD monitor supports 1080p HD and includes a HDMI (High Definition Multimedia Interface) port. This allows you to author and watch video in the highest possible quality on your computer, as well as connect your Blu-ray/HD DVD player and videogames console.

The FP241WZ supports a crystal-clear native resolution of 1920 x 1200 (WUXGA) pixels and features BenQ's exclusive AMA Z (Advanced Motion Accelerator Z) and Senseye technologies. The first LCD monitor to incorporate AMA Z dynamic video-processing technology, BenQ's technology eliminates ghosting and motion blur around the screen edges for a superior viewing experience.

BenQ's Senseye technology does not only allow the FP241WZ to display static images with exquisite clarity, but also ensures video playback of the highest quality. The monitor is able to display more content while delivering crisp, refined images and legible text and ensures no image distortion or cropping occurs.

In addition, the FP241WZ's widescreen design allows you to view two independent A4-size windows simultaneously. Moreover, the embedded PIP (Picture-in-Picture) function lets you play back video from two different sources. It even comes with integrated USB ports for easy connections to various USB peripherals and a height-adjustable stand which swivels, enabling you to spin the screen through 90 degrees.

**Pros:** This monitor has everything you would expect for excellent visual quality, and then some!

**Cons:** The BenQ FP241WZ LCD screen operates better as a computer monitor than as an HDTV screen

**Verdict:**



# GigaWorks T40 speakers

<http://uk.europe.creative.com>

**£99.99**

**SOMETIMES, A GOOD** set of speakers can make a difference to a computer. You could spend hundreds on a 5.1 surround sound system, but the

majority of us just want good quality stereo output for working with multimedia projects or playing music. Plus, most of the time we don't actually have the space to accommodate more than two compact desktop speakers.

Inside each of the T40's satellites, the engineers from Creative have built two high-performance mid-range drivers with woven glass fibre cones for warmth and stability, allied to a dedicated high-end tweeter with a cloth dome for crystal clarity. These components, which have been arranged in MTM (mid-range, tweeter, mid-range) configuration for precision and balance, are augmented by BasXPort technology, which gives strong, dynamic bass in proportion to the high and mid-range output.

For ease of control, the T40 system has front-mounted controls for volume, bass and treble. Its versatile connectivity lets you connect a PC and MP3 player simultaneously and thanks to a standard 3.5mm input jack, the T40s can be hooked up to a videogames console. iPod users can even purchase a separate docking unit from Creative, which comes with a remote control – just drop in the player, scroll through your tracks and enjoy the music. You'll struggle to find anything better for the money!

**Pros:** You'll not get stereo speakers that sound better for the price, and it's all achieved without a subwoofer

**Cons:** Surround sound is obviously unobtainable, and you do just wonder how soon it'll be until something even better comes along...

**Verdict:**







**Killer feature**  
The world's most popular music player now plays video. What more could you ask for?

## Apple iPod Nano (3rd Gen)

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

from **£99**

**NEW PHONES. NEW iMacs.** And now new iPods. Apple is on a mission. The latest revision of the world's most popular digital music player has one

new killer feature – it plays video. That's not all. Its enhanced user interface sports Cover Flow, allowing you to flick through your album covers just like you do your CDs.

The new iPod Nano features a larger and brighter two-inch display, which is not exactly big but still neat for watching TV shows and music videos in the same resolution (320 x 240) as the classic video iPod. The Nano delivers up to 24 hours of audio playback or five hours of video playback on a single charge, and is encased in a beautiful new all-metal design made with anodised aluminium and polished stainless steel. It comes in five new colours – silver, black, blue, green and a RED ([www.joinred.com](http://www.joinred.com)) special edition – should you have a particular preference, and two storage capacities: 4GB (£99) and 8GB (£129).

Instead of a hard disk used in the classic iPod, the now shorter, wider and heavier Nano uses flash memory. This means there are no moving parts (other than the click wheel and hold switch), making it immune to skipping. Flash memory is also quick, so there's no waiting for the player to boot or shutdown. The Nano even comes with a few games: iQuiz, the entertainment trivia game; Vortex, a fast-paced 360 degree brick-bashing game; and Klondike, the popular solitaire card game. Additional games

will be available for Nano later in the year from the iTunes Store, including Sudoku and Tetris from Electronic Arts and Ms. Pac-Man from Namco.

The new Nano is a really cool digital audio player. Its all-metal build quality is awesome, video playback is bright and crisp, and the above-average battery life is perfect for commuting. The built-in games and advanced user interface are also neat. The wider body looks a little odd though, and the smaller scroll wheel won't please those with big fingers. You'll also miss the lack of video output, should you want to connect the player to a big display. Nevertheless, it's a great value gadget if you don't need to carry your whole music collection around with you.

**Pros:** A bigger screen and video playback make the Nano even better than before, as hard as it is to believe!

**Cons:** The wider body looks a little funny and the small scroll wheel can be a bit fiddly. You can put up with this though!

**Verdict:**





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## Adobe buys up Web 2.0 development firm

CALIFORNIAN GIANT SET TO ACQUIRE THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM BEHIND THE IMPRESSIVE BUZZWORD ONLINE WORD-PROCESSING APPLICATION

**ADOBE MAY WELL** be redefining the internet development landscape with its AIR technology, but it seems that the real driving forces for exploiting the tools exist outside its offices. With high-profile projects ongoing alongside agencies such as EffectiveUI (eBay San Dimas), the software giant has been quick to forge links with companies pushing the envelope of what can be built on or offline.

The latest announcement is the complete acquisition of the Massachusetts company Virtual Ubiquity, who are responsible for designing the startlingly impressive Buzzword word-processing tool (<http://preview.getbuzzword.com>). Details of the deal were not fully disclosed at time of press, but Adobe have already said that a November purchase is "not expected to have a material impact" on 2007's revenue and earnings. "For over a decade, Adobe Acrobat software and PDF have been the standard way people share and collaborate on high-value documents across platforms, with perfect fidelity", said David Mendels, senior vice president, Business Productivity Business Unit at Adobe. "At the same time, it is an exciting showcase of the power of Adobe's RIA technology that raises the bar for the quality of experience people should expect in their applications."

Buzzword provides the most comprehensive experience of its kind online with pixel-perfect font rendering, page-layout controls and document-sharing across all browser types. AIR support allows the opportunity to work with both hosted or local documents, and the forthcoming beta version allows developers to create mashups from APIs, so it's sure to be a future flag-waver for RIA potential.



Buzzword is a shining example of Adobe RIA technology being pushed to its limits – perhaps that's why they've bought the company behind it...

## Face stakes

MICROSOFT EYES A SLICE OF THE WEB'S HOTTEST SITE PROPERTY

**THEY MIGHT BE** struggling with Vista problems and playing catch-up in the web development-tooling stakes with Silverlight, but that hasn't stopped rumours that Microsoft is looking to spend big on other projects. This time they are apparently set to go head-to-head with Google to secure a stake in phenomenally successful social networking site Facebook. Reports suggest that figures of over \$300m have been quoted for five per cent of the company, valuing the brand at a staggering \$10bn (£5bn). Facebook director Peter Thiel has already been quoted as saying that "a buyout offer would have to be in excess of such a price." However, the two parties already enjoy an exclusive advertising partnership, which could prove instrumental in any future deal-making.

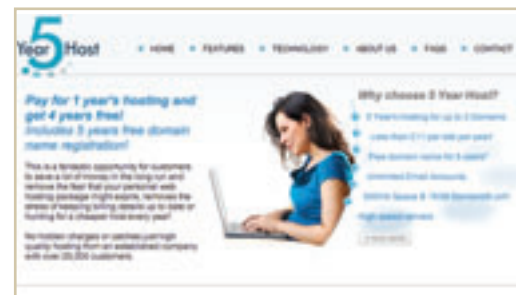


Could Facebook one day be bundled with Windows Vista? Anything could be possible if Microsoft follows up rumours of big investment

## 5 Year Host

NEW PACKAGE FROM EASY INTERNET OFFERS LONGER TERM SOLUTIONS

**ANY SITE OWNERS** who are keen to commit their content to a hosting home will be pleased to learn about a new product from Easy Internet Solutions. The '5 Year Host' service allows customers to predictably purchase five times the traditional yearly subscription for one low price, for up to three individual domains. For a set-up fee of £19.99 and £10 per month (£110), users can expect 500GB bandwidth, 500MB web space, unlimited email and 24/7 technical support. "People today are busier than ever, and one-year hosting deals are not always the best option," said managing director Mark Esho. "By the time you've got your website hosted, it's not long before you have to renew and are checking all the details and paying out again." More at [www.easy-internet.co.uk](http://www.easy-internet.co.uk).



Settle on this longer-hosting package from Easy Internet and you won't have to worry about shopping around for another one for five years







## DESIGNER HOSTING

Increasingly, web design is moving towards a full-service industry that includes site support via a hosted reseller platform. Dave Howell reports

**OVER THE LAST** three years, how web design is delivered to end customers has evolved. Increasingly, clients are looking to the web design community to provide them with a complete and comprehensive package. The hosting component has become central to the design package that has opened up a new and potentially lucrative revenue stream that could make a healthy addition to every designer's bottom line.

Even a quick search of the net for hosting services will reveal a market that is saturated, which has driven prices down. Dedicated server platforms are now affordable by even the smallest enterprise. The market itself continues to grow. It's expected that by 2009, small businesses in the US alone will spend in excess of \$7 billion on web hosting, according to IDC. What this means for the humble web designer is that they can now offer a complete service to their clients to set up their site, but more importantly, can also handle the on-going site maintenance, including the hosting module.

business, rather than just nice to have, new buyers in the market want to talk about a complete solution. Gone are the days when buyers were prepared to buy all the bits from different suppliers and assemble them in the garage. Today's buyer has a set of business objectives that need to be met, and he's not terribly interested in the individual components that are going to solve his problems.

The second is the increasing role online plays in a business's overall operations. This means that the support and operations of the website needs to come from a one-stop shop. If there's a problem with the website, or if enhancements are required, businesses can't afford to be rushing from pillar to post trying to find the answers. One phone call should set the wheels in motion, and the next contact should be the web supplier telling the customer that his issues have been dealt with."

The reseller packages that are now available from a

**"By 2009, small businesses in the US will spend \$7 billion on web hosting"**

### BRANDED HOSTING

As a business opportunity, reselling white-label site hosting as part of your design business makes perfect sense. With several platforms that have been streamlined and simplified as the hosting market itself has matured, this has had a knock-on effect for web designers who can effortlessly add the server component to their design packages with ease. The scalability of today's hosting services is also a great asset to have available when reselling hosting space as part of a design pitch.

Chris Lofts, an independent eCommerce consultant says, "There are two forces at work that are shifting the market in favour of full-service agencies. The first is market maturity. As online becomes essential for

number of hosting services can be sold in their own right. Many web design agencies are simply adding web hosting to their available services as a cross-selling opportunity. This move enables them to lever their existing, often long-standing, customer relationships "Clients like a named point of contact that they can call," said David Foreman, director, Toast Design. "Our offering to clients is the complete package – we are a reseller of sorts, but deal with all client issues directly as our offering is enhanced by providing clients with a full service. If they pay us to design and build a complex site, not offering hosting and email as part of that service can worry them – it's integral to the project."

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

One of the clear advantages of the reseller market for

## Hands-on reselling

Fasthosts' intuitive user accounts means fast set-up and easy maintenance of your reseller sites

### STEP 1

#### Reseller home page



The Fasthosts Reseller home page is a powerful, intuitive reseller control panel that allows you to manage all aspects of your reseller operation from one place.

### STEP 2

#### Graphical website stats



Use the Website Options section to activate a wide range of value-adding website tools and features that you can offer your clients.

### STEP 3

#### Custom branding



The Custom branding section allows web designers to rebrand a wide range of tools and features for their customers such as the SiteBuilder and Webmail.

### STEP 4

#### Bandwidth monitoring



It provides bandwidth-monitoring tools, enabling resellers to set their own limits for a website and charge customers as part of their service if they wish.



# “Look for hosts with the infrastructure to support the sites you’ll be reselling”



The team at UK design agency Toast are just one example who utilise reseller hosting to cater for customer requirements

web designers is that even the micro design business can punch well above their weight. Also, as these smaller businesses tend to service more niche markets than larger design agencies, reseller packages are a superb way of bolstering the niche market you may be working within. If your site designs are within many niche markets, the addition of hosting to your service package can have a massive positive impact on not just your business's profitability, it also enables your business to further develop these niche markets.

Hosting companies have been quick to see how tailoring their services to the requirements of the web design community could vastly improve their hosting business via the reselling channel. They have listened to the reseller community and developed maintenance tools to suit their customers' requirements. It's now completely feasible to offer every service from initial domain registration, through to add-on services like email, site analytics and search engine optimisation – all handled by you via the host's interface.

Mark Jeffries, CTO Fasthosts Internet says, “While in the early years service levels could prove a headache for resellers, today's large white label hosting providers now serve hundreds of thousands of customers. They are equipped with the infrastructure to provide quality products and excellent uptime, connectivity and technical support. The provider handles all the back-end processes and customer control panels but the reseller retains all customer liaisons themselves. Of course, the standard of a reseller's service will be largely dependent on the hosting vendor with whom you partner. Always select a large reputable host with the infrastructure, technical resources and financial stability needed to provide a high-quality service. It is also important to choose a web host partner that has the R&D resource to develop new features and products you can offer your customers in the future.”

## DESIGN MARKET

The web design market has radically changed, particularly over the last three years. Design as an isolated activity is now rare. Clients are looking to include the latest technologies on the sites they commission, but they are also looking to buy completely integrated services. Increasingly, only those

designers and design agencies that can offer the full service package will be able to develop and maintain a sustainable business in the future. For designers, the move to more software as a service platform should be viewed as simply an evolution of their market. The reseller market is not a necessary evil that designers are being forced to add to their businesses; it should be viewed as a business opportunity that should not be missed by any savvy designer or agency.

When choosing a hosting service to partner with, use all the due care you would use when buying any critical service for your business. Look for hosts with a strong track record and the infrastructure to support the sites you'll be reselling. Any problems and your clients will look to you for solutions – not the host. Toast Design's David Foreman said, “The company we buy our space from (Skymarket) are superb in this department. If you're reselling, you need to know that the support is there if an issue arises that you can't resolve. If you don't get a high level of support, issues can't be resolved quickly and you'll lose clients. They will see you as the prime contact, so if your suppliers let you down, it can leave you in a difficult position.”

Fasthosts' Mark Jeffries concluded by saying, “There are very compelling reasons why reseller hosting can be an attractive bet for web designers. Today, a full range of white-label web solutions such as domain names, hosting, email, eCommerce and unlimited broadband packages are offered at low trade prices, ready to be rebranded as your own and sold to your customer base. By combining web design with hosting, designers can increase their revenues and also offer a more complete solution to their clients. There is much scope to develop your own hosting brand in line with your corporate identity. Agencies can thus provide own-branded packages of tailored design, web development and hosting to their niche markets.”

Being able to not only deliver the latest website design, but also hosting and any additional services that your clients require, offers a great commercial advantage over your business's competitors. Full-service web design is fast becoming the norm. Take a look at hosting reselling. It could offer your business a completely new market sector that could deliver a great profit margin for very little cost.

## Hints and tips

Wondering if Fasthosts is for you? Here's why it is one of the leading reseller platforms

### Unlimited websites and web space

The Fasthosts reseller account enables web designers to host as many websites as they need, all set up and managed in a single intuitive control panel. Web designers can host each website on load-balanced Windows or Linux servers in Fasthosts' state-of-the-art UK data centres for maximum uptime and reliability. There are no limits or extra fees for web space usage, so resellers can easily create their own quotas and set their own pricing for their clients.

### Unlimited bandwidth

In addition to unlimited web space, Fasthosts' resellers benefit from unlimited website traffic with no monthly caps or extra fees. Fasthosts provides bandwidth-monitoring tools with automated email alerts, enabling resellers to set their own threshold for each website.

### Custom branding and white-label tools

Resellers can easily brand tools and features such as Webmail, to present a professional corporate identity to their customers. With no mention of Fasthosts, web designers can provide a range of tools and features under their own brand. Resellers can also use their own custom nameservers to create a truly professional image.

### Value-added tools and features

Once the web designer has built a site, the Fasthosts reseller account includes a range of extra features that they can offer their clients. It provides advanced Search Engine Submission and Optimisation tools to maximise website traffic, with an easy-to-use control panel enabling resellers' clients to manage their own SEO.

### Flexible email hosting

In addition to website hosting, Fasthosts resellers can offer a suite of email solutions to their clients. Solutions range from basic POP3 to full Microsoft Exchange with virus and spam protection, free Outlook software, professional webmail and revolutionary real-time 'push' mobile access.

### Reseller hosting API

The unique API (Application Programming Interface) provides an easy and powerful way for Fasthosts' resellers to integrate their control panel functionality directly with their own website or desktop application. Resellers can easily provide their clients with control of their hosting services by building their own online control panels.

### 24/7 UK support

Fasthosts resellers benefit from unparalleled customer support by email and a national-rate helpline, 24 hours a day. Comprehensive online support tools include a huge searchable knowledge base, downloadable guides and reseller community forums. It provides a range of frequently updated RSS feeds, including a white-label status feed, enabling resellers to create their own system status pages as part of their own website.



## Reading the small print – the hidden dangers of the SLA

**James Griffin, product manager –  
Star Technology Services**

**AVOID THE PITFALLS AND HIDDEN GET-OUT CLAUSES THAT SOME HOSTING PROVIDERS SNEAK INTO THEIR SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS BY LOOKING OUT FOR A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT FACTORS**

**IT'S A GIVEN** that your business relies on your clients and similarly, they rely on you. In turn, you rely on your hosting provider to deliver a quality service, exactly as described and with no excuses or get-out clauses. Any downtime suffered by your provider has a direct effect on your clients, your reputation and ultimately your livelihood, which is why the service level agreement is one of the most important elements you should consider when choosing a hosting supplier – even more so than the features and technology.

When you select a hosting partner to work with, you're entrusting them to provide you with a service that you are confident to base your revenue-generating activities on. As such, diligence is required to make sure that the solution fits the purpose. One of the basic rules of anything in life is that if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is, yet with SLAs it's likely that you only find out the limitations when something goes wrong, and your clients are bombarding your mobile, demanding to know why their site is offline.

Many of the SLAs in the market are written by marketing departments to entice new customers and contain a complex number of calculations to guarantee that they are never held accountable for damage to your business. The '100 per cent' SLA is often advertised, but look deeper and you will find that this often refers to the network and internet connectivity only. In many cases, this means that your server itself could be completely offline, but as it has a network cable plugged in and the provider's network is connected to the internet, then your provider can claim to be meeting the 100 per cent SLA.

Another 'ingenious' get-out clause that may be used by some specialist-managed hosting providers is to include a minimum period of contiguous downtime. In practice, that means that you could have a 29 minute outage, followed by a one minute return of service, followed by another 29 minute outage and one minute return, and so on. Unlikely as it is, if you consider this scenario over an entire month, then you could have a month with just over one day of uptime, yet receive no compensation whatsoever!

In the real world, a true 100 per cent SLA is an expensive and complex proposition to achieve, requiring redundancy at every possible level of the solution. This is ultimately beyond the reach, or true requirement, of many small and medium-sized businesses. It is extremely important to match all of the elements in the equation; if you require complete mission-critical hosting, then you should not be shopping for a single-box solution, and should not be engaging a provider who can claim to offer a 100 per cent SLA on this type of product. Ultimately, if you choose wrongly, it will be you who is out of pocket when things go wrong.

So what should you look for in an SLA? The first thing to check is that the SLA covers the solution as a whole, eg, the network, the connectivity, the backup, the server and software. Next, does the number represent the solution you are buying? For example, if you are buying a solution that includes multiple servers with load-balancing, then you should expect a better solution SLA than if you were to buy a single standalone server. Check the scenario for compensation and that the level of payment is proportional to what you are paying. Anyone can offer a 100 per cent SLA on the solution if they are charging £1000 per month, but only have to pay £10 if they breach it. The terms of the SLA should be clear, and the provider should state: 'If your solution is availability less than X, then we will give you Y'. You should also check for any get-out clauses that could leave you exposed to revenue loss without compensation.

Once you have reviewed the SLA, you need to decide if it provides you with a suitable confidence level to deliver products and services to your customers. Ultimately, you should be confident setting your customers' expectations for excellent service, based on a clear, realistic and achievable set of delivery promises. If this is clear from the start, then managing any outage that occurs will be easier and your revenue will be protected.

Always remember that the SLA should be a commitment to deliver a service, and not just marketing collateral.

### Key points

**Five things to look for in the SLA offered by your hosting provider**

1. The terms of the SLA should be clear and the provider should effectively state, 'If your solution is availability less than X, then we will give you Y'.
2. The SLA should cover the solution as a whole, not just network and connectivity.
3. Ensure that the level of guaranteed availability represents the scale of your solution. For example, a load-balanced solution is higher than a single-box solution.
4. Ensure any compensation is relative to the nature of the solution you have purchased.
5. If it looks too good to be true, then it's more than likely that it probably is!

### About Star

Star is the UK's largest independent business-to-business (B2B) internet service provider, with an excess of 12 year's experience serving the UK's small and medium-sized businesses.

The company invented internet-level virus scanning, as well as founding MessageLabs. Star's practical internet-driven communication solutions address key business challenges, and are backed by market-leading security and customer support as standard.

Star is an expert provider of dedicated hosting solutions, and offers a range of packages from a single dedicated server to a fully managed, four server-clustered ecommerce solution, all with high-availability firewalls and full data backup as standard. Information on Star's business-hosting packages can be found at [www.star.net.uk](http://www.star.net.uk).





# eCommerce gallery

Launching your creativity online and getting paid for the pleasure sounds too good to be true, however, at GeniusRocket, that's exactly what they are about

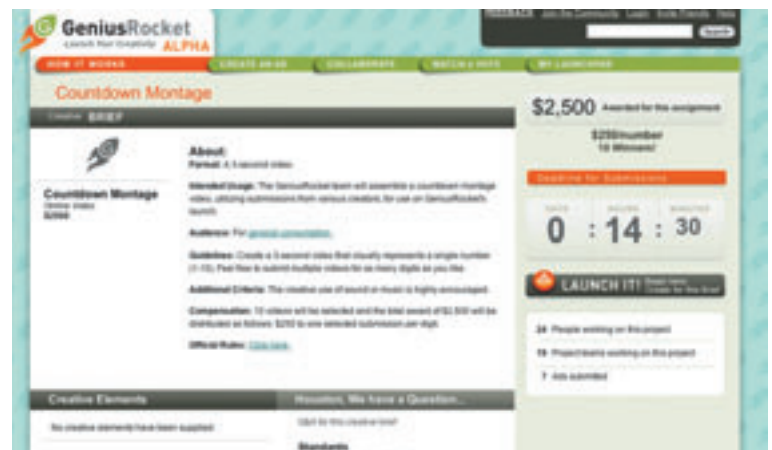
## A change in online advertising

<http://geniusrocket.com>

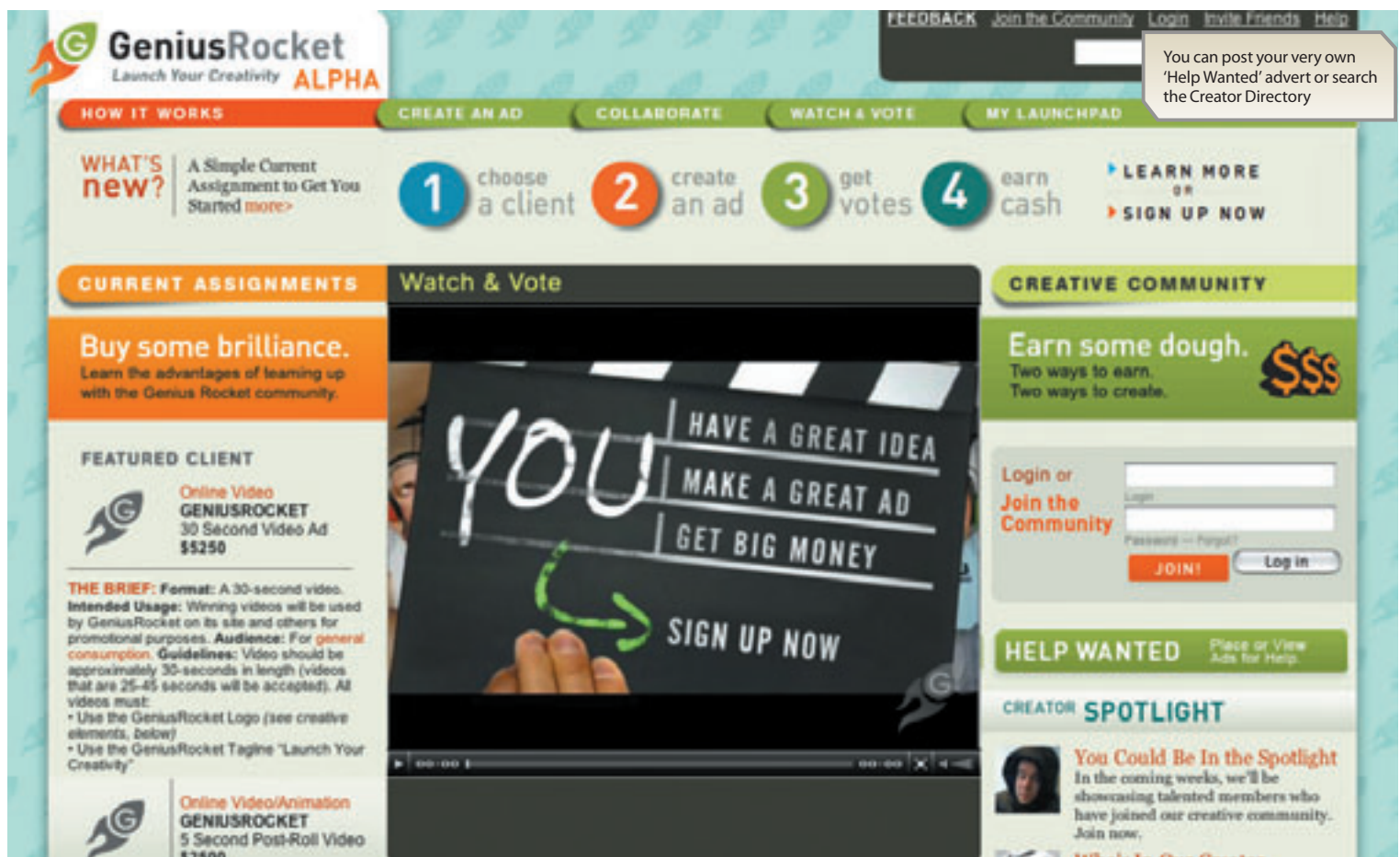
GENIUS ROCKET IS a website that gives users the chance to earn money from creating their very own adverts such as 30-second TV spots, online video promotions, banner ads and widgets. It provides a great place to mingle with like-minded people, while also exposing you to professionals within the creative industries.

The process is relatively simple. You start by creating an account to create your profile and you then look for a project that interests you via the site's Requests for Brilliance. You can collaborate or work by yourself, and once complete, you need to submit your work via the site's My Launchpad option that enables you to generate awareness and to get votes. You can also share your project via other video-sharing websites. You earn money from the advertising client or by winning a community prize with the Rocket Awards.

On the home page, you will find lots of information about live projects and current assignments that display briefs for each project, along with embedded adverts for you to view and vote for.



Advertisers bring their challenges to the website displayed as advertisers' creative briefs, or Requests for Brilliance





“Earn money from the client or by winning a community prize with the Rocket Awards”

**HOW IT WORKS** **CREATE AN AD** **COLLABORATE** **WATCH & VOTE** **MY LAUNCHPAD**

**WHAT'S new?** A Simple Current Assignment to Get You Started [more>](#)

**1** choose a client **2** create an ad **3** get votes **4** earn cash [LEARN MORE](#) [SIGN UP NOW](#)

**CURRENT ASSIGNMENTS** **Watch & Vote** **NEWEST** **HIGHEST RATED** **MOST VIEWED**

**FEATURED CLIENT**

**Online Video**  
**GENIUSROCKET**  
30 Second Video Ad  
\$5250

**THE BRIEF:** Format: A 30-second video.  
**Intended Usage:** Winning videos will be used by GeniusRocket on its site and others for promotional purposes. **Audience:** For general consumption. **Guidelines:** Video should be approximately 30-seconds in length (videos that are 25-45 seconds will be accepted). All videos must:  
• Use the GeniusRocket Logo (see creative elements, below)  
• Use the GeniusRocket Tagline "Launch Your Creativity"

**Online Video/Animation**  
**GENIUSROCKET**  
5 Second Post-Roll Video  
\$2500

**Online Video**  
**GENIUSROCKET**  
Countdown Montage  
\$2500

**Change Advertising Forever**  
ADDED: 08.30.07 BY: GeniusRocket  
4.36 Stars **RATE** ★★★★★

**HAPPENING NOW**

It enables advertisers to select from a pool of talent, often with potentially more creative results

**GeniusRocket**  
Launch Your Creativity **ALPHA**

**HOW IT WORKS** **CREATE AN AD** **COLLABORATE** **WATCH & VOTE** **MY LAUNCHPAD**

**Current Assignments**

All currently active Requests For Brilliance.

Title	Description	Award Amount	Deadline
<b>Countdown Montage</b>	<b>Format:</b> A 3-second video. <b>Intended Usage:</b> The GeniusRocket team will assemble a countdown montage video, utilizing submissions from various creators, for use on GeniusRocket's launch. <b>Audience:</b> For general consumption. <b>Guidelines:</b> Create a 3-second video that visually represents a single number (1-10). Feel free to submit multiple videos for as many digits as you like. <b>Additional Criteria:</b> The creative use of sound or music is highly encouraged.	\$2500	0 DAYS 17 HOURS 31 MINUTES
<b>5 Second Post-Roll Video</b>	<b>Format:</b> A 5-second video/animation. <b>Intended Usage:</b> GeniusRocket creators will be able to attach any of the winning post-roll videos to their videos before uploading them to video and social networking sites. <b>Audience:</b> For general consumption. <b>Guidelines:</b> Video/animation should be 5 seconds in length, with sound. All videos must: • Use the GeniusRocket Logo (see creative elements, below) • Use the GeniusRocket name	\$2500	13 DAYS 17 HOURS 31 MINUTES
<b>Company Background</b>	<b>Company Background:</b> GeniusRocket, an online community of creatives, is looking to revolutionize the way companies promote their brands and images to the world. We believe that	\$2500	13 DAYS

**FEEDBACK** [Join the Community](#) [Login](#) [Invite Friends](#) [Help](#)

Users can promote their ads through online sites such as YouTube, Facebook and MySpace, to attempt to generate more votes

## VERDICT

### GeniusRocket

User-created advertising is certainly an innovative tool for advertisers, as well as creative individuals and teams, and the site provides an excellent pool and wealth of creative talent for all.



# portfolio

## THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING

### Louis DuPree

www.foxviewmultimedia.com

**Skills:** Flash, Photoshop, After Effects and Softimage XSI

**Employment status:** Founder and art director of FoxView Multimedia

Operating out of North Carolina in the US, FoxView Multimedia creates high-quality graphics and custom audio for its many clients within the advertisement and film industries.

"I receive most of my contract work through my site," Louis confirms. "As it's no longer important to be in the same city as your client, we are able to offer services anywhere in the world. I am receiving many emails from potential clients about 3D-graphics work, and because of it, we've had a chance to work on some great promotional games and projects."

As its slick website shows, the firm has got the balance right between simplistic and spectacular, letting its previous accomplishments speak for themselves without overcrowding the page with text.



FoxView Multimedia's website allows visitors to see examples of its work by scrolling the cursor over the thumbnails in the Gallery

In the Gallery section, interested parties can choose to read about the project's background, see an example of the work and hit the relevant links

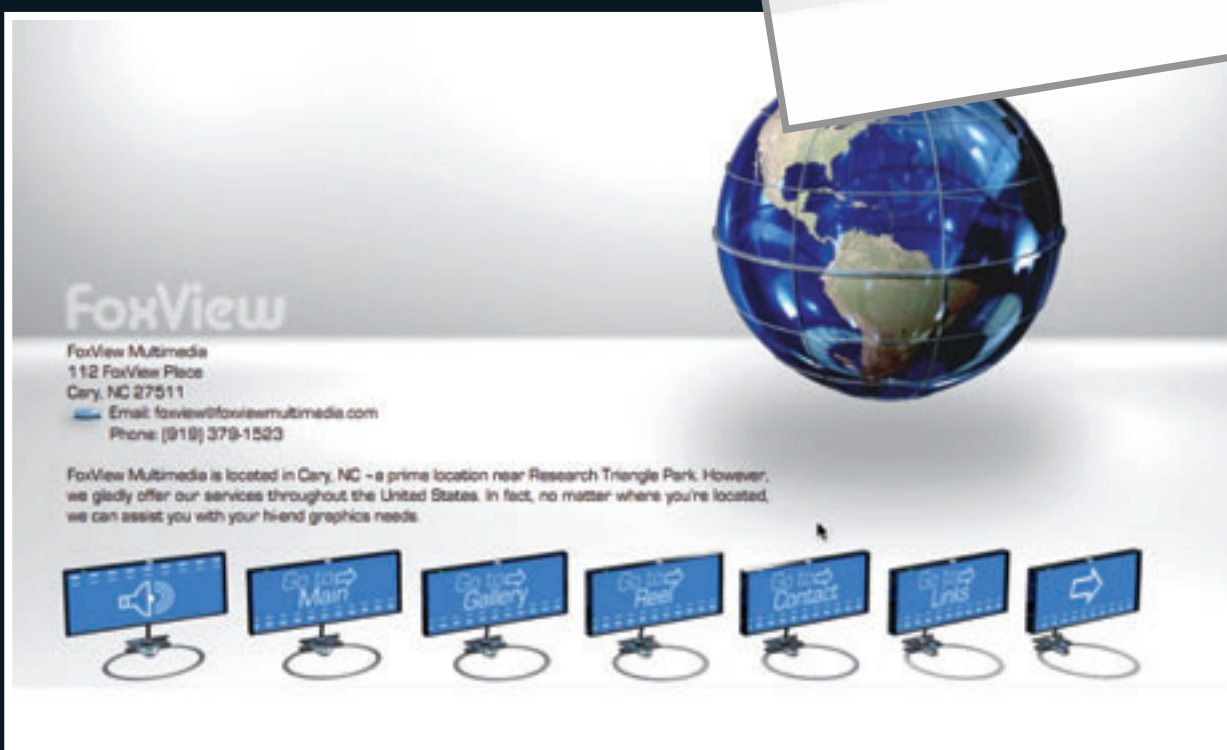


**WITH MORE DIGITAL** designers touting for work on the web than ever before, we've had a tough time picking just two perfect portfolios this month. If you think you can do better, drop us an email and let us see what you've got!

# MAKE IT HAPPEN!

To keep this section going we rely on student or freelance designers to put themselves forward. It's great exposure for your talents and every single one of you will be considered, so drop us a line now at [webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk](mailto:webdesigner@imagine-publishing.co.uk)

To direct visitors around the website, the creator has included TV icons to act as hyperlinks to the relevant pages. This keeps things simple and interactively stimulating



Like many other self-promotion websites, it's a good idea to include a video showcasing the company's previous assignments, thus showing off its capabilities

The designer has perhaps wisely decided to leave the most important page very simple. The Contact Us area hosts only the essential details, thus avoiding confusion



# portfolio

THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING

Crucially, the opening page of the Coat of Creativity website offers a compelling design and also offers visitors the language option of English or Portuguese



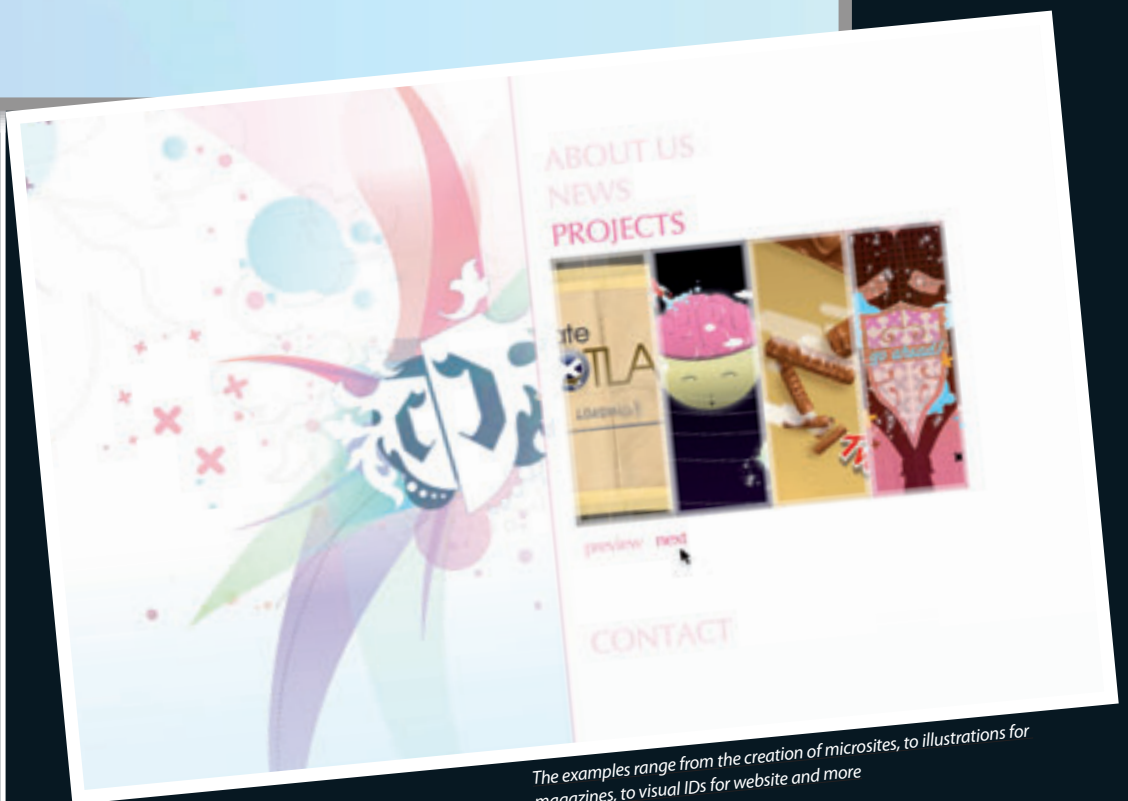
## Marcelo Bruzzesi, Coat of Creativity

[www.the-studio.cc](http://www.the-studio.cc)

**Skills:** Adobe Illustrator, Flash, Photoshop and After Effects

**Employment status:** Digital art director and illustrator

Coat of Creativity is an up-and-coming multi-disciplinary creative studio, full of vivacious energy. Talking to one of its illustrators, it's clear to see the passionate and tenacious ethos the company holds. "Inspiration comes from everything that surrounds us," exclaims Marcelo Bruzzesi, the company's art director. "Coat of Creativity tries to mix as much illustration, photos and motion graphics with each other as possible." To cement this ethic, the founders of organisation christened the company with its very apt name. "We wanted to translate all the pride we have in what we do and the people we work for," Bruzzesi insists.

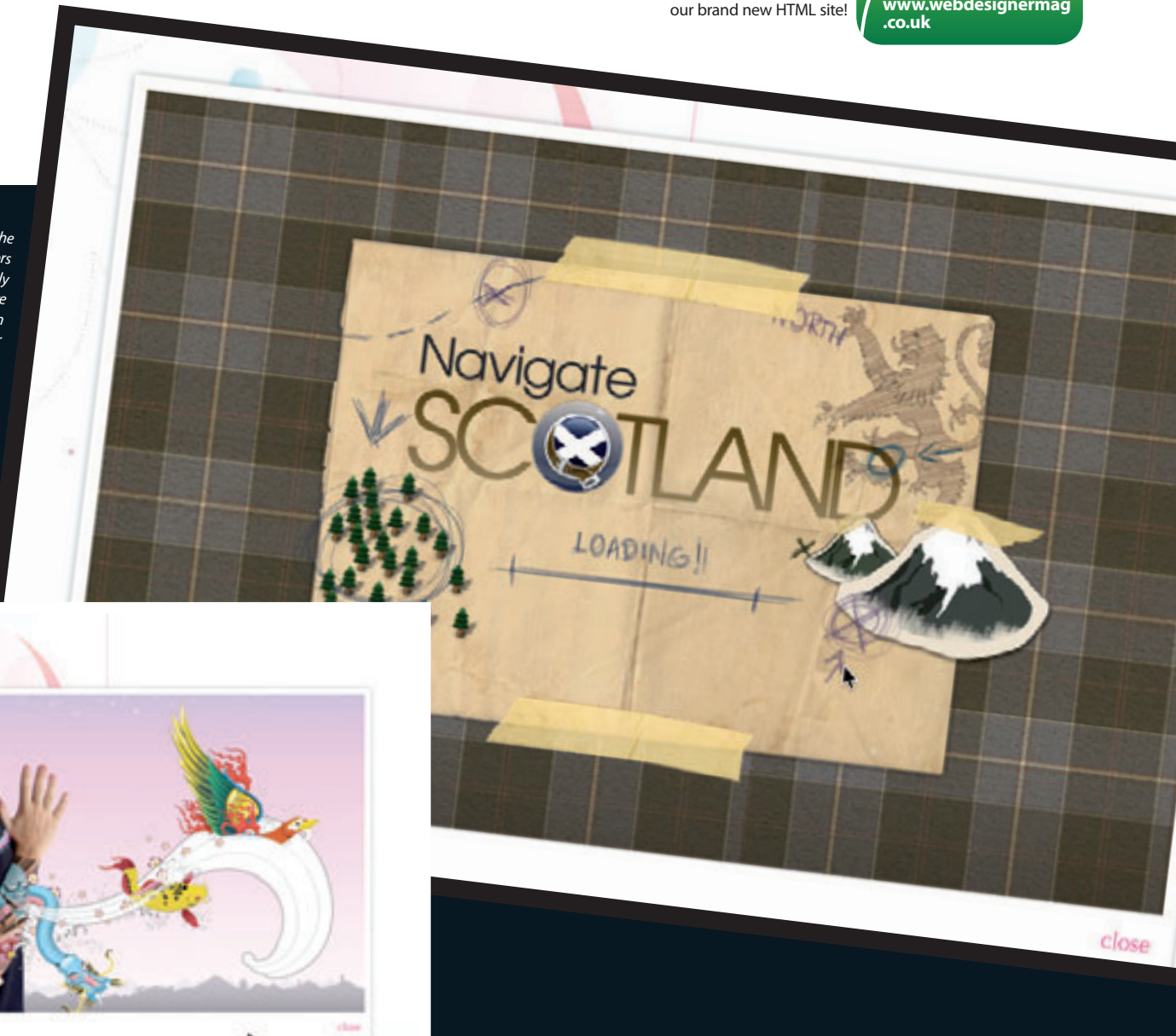


The examples range from the creation of microsities, to illustrations for magazines, to visual IDs for website and more

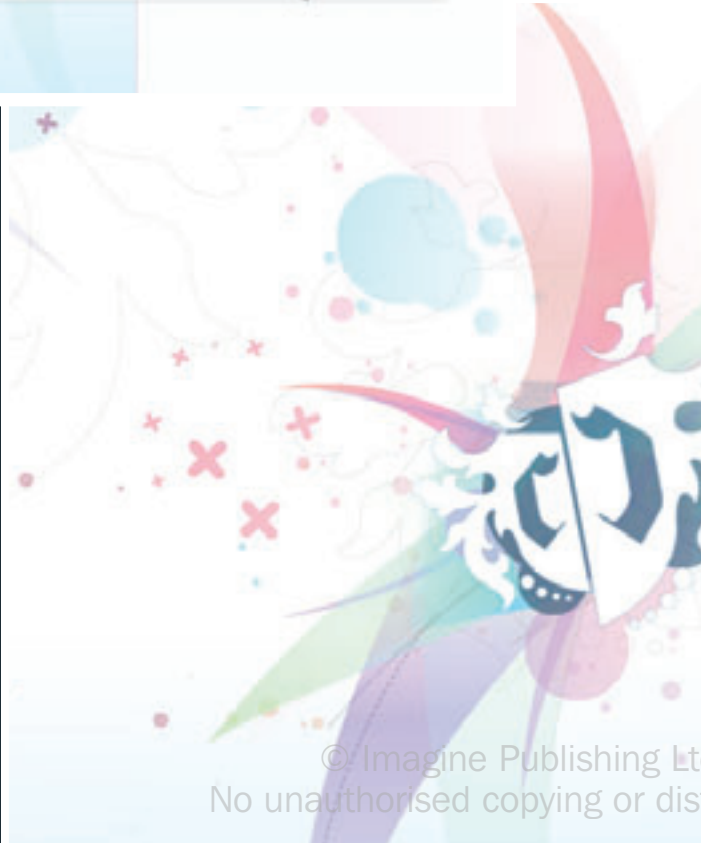
Access more great links to portfolio sites and a whole lot more from our brand new HTML site!

**FIND MORE**  
www.webdesignermag.co.uk

By profiling its best work, the design company will ensure visitors can only be impressed. Currently only a handful of examples are present, but this can often work in the designers' favour



The contact page offers visitors a healthy mix of avenues for communication, including Skype, the ever-more popular internet phone provider



The organisation of the site is very clean, thus navigation is simple. Contained within the folder marked Projects are some of the company's beautiful career highlights

## ABOUT US NEWS PROJECTS CONTACT

Please, feel free to get in touch with us and find out how we can help you develop your ideas. It will be a honor to talk with you.

TELEPHONE BRAZIL +55 11 8489 1631 TELEPHONE SCOTLAND +44 07902636517

SKYPE  
coat.of.creativity

E-MAIL  
contact@the-studio.cc