

**31**  
PAGES OF  
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web



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Dw DREAMWEAVER Fl FLASH Ps PHOTOSHOP

ISSUE 139

web

## HTML VS FLASH

Add dynamic effects to your web pages with a special guide to MooTools

## THE NAME GAME

How to pick the right URL for maximising dotcom success

## HOW TO:

Get started with SWX for Flash and code an uploader application with Flex

Add Silverlight content to your latest site projects

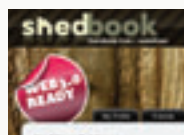
Design reusable 'boilerplate' page templates with CSS

Direct and film video blogs with Adobe Visual Communicator 3

on the CD  
**FIREWORKS FX PACK!**  
FREE JUNO EXTENSION FOR CREATING GREAT PATTERNS  
page 112

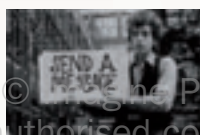
# Heaven @ Hell

Is next-gen design really worth compromising our online security?



### ULTIMATE WEB 2.0 DESIGN

The definitive Photoshop guide to creating the most popular and iconic online graphics



### LOOKING BEHIND BOB

Get the Behind the Scenes story on how Dylan went viral with the Ten4 creative design team





# Welcome



**B**eing two-faced is never a nice trait. This month, we're exposing both the beautiful and uglier mugs of Web 2.0, with a feature and tutorial double-header...

OKAY, WE'RE AS guilty as the next magazine for shamelessly championing the Web 2.0 movement as some kind of glorious revolution. We wax lyrical about how online content being 'less passive' and 'more engaging for users', which can only yield an exciting new dawn. The phrase 'next-gen' frequently makes an appearance across our covers, and you'd be hard-pressed not to find a reference to Adobe AIR in the last four or five issues... guilty as charged, Your Honour.

But it isn't all toothy smiles, jazz hands and the sweet smell of flowers when it comes to the crunch – Web 2.0 could be a wolf in sheep's clothing. Our lead feature this month plays devil's advocate and tries to address the problem of security that more complex internet content inevitably brings with it. Adrian Bridgwater investigates whether our keenness to get carried away with the new wave of web design has hindered an ability to question its wider implications. With emphasis on AIR's abandonment of a browser sandbox to provide potentially limitless resource access to our desktops, we ask whether genuine concern for our welfare is being acted on. As the demand for Web 2.0 applications gets greater from site-makers, are the developers upping their game to reflect the requirements that these

new dotcom systems bring with them? It's a far cry from the days when site testing meant making sure the links work, that's for sure.

However, to balance out the doom and gloom, we also indulge the prettier face of Web 2.0 in our raft of practical tutorials. Photoshop fans will rejoice in our most comprehensive practical guide to designing attractive page graphics – so get ready for gradients, sugary colours, rounded corners, reflections and the rest.

Of course, for those who are more 'old skool', we have the normal combination of Flash and Dreamweaver walkthroughs to follow, including highlights spanning MooTools, Zoomify projects and using SWX!

**Mark Billen**  
EDITOR

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Billen'.

## Editor's picks

Web Designer 139 keeps the great content coming with all this extra lot too...



**24-26**

We go Behind the Scenes on Ten4's work for the recent Bob Dylan-messaging viral campaign



**28-30**

A special look at how naming your domain can have a serious impact on genuine site success



**80-83**

Geoff Blake puts you in the picture on how to use the Zoomify imaging technique



# gallery

## THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP

### DIESEL ONLINE STORE

<http://store.diesel.com/>

Designed by: Diesel creative team, Neve Digitale, DVEIN

Online stores from the bigger clothing brands very rarely get it wrong; their online campaigns receive the same level of tender loving care as the more traditional forms of advertising. The current version of Diesel's online store is certainly one of the best that we have seen of late and showcases its collections with typical street-smart design, while utilising high-quality photography with faultless navigation, which is a breeze to use. So if you are into your Diesel-wear, then this website will make your shopping an absolute doddle.

*Diesel uses its strong branding from the off to market its new Liquid Space Style Lounge to users. Check out the new range, and go to the Diesel store when ready to purchase*

*Take some time out and peruse the personal ads. Diesel's nifty Denim Dating section is an interactive experience that will distract even the most fervent shopper*





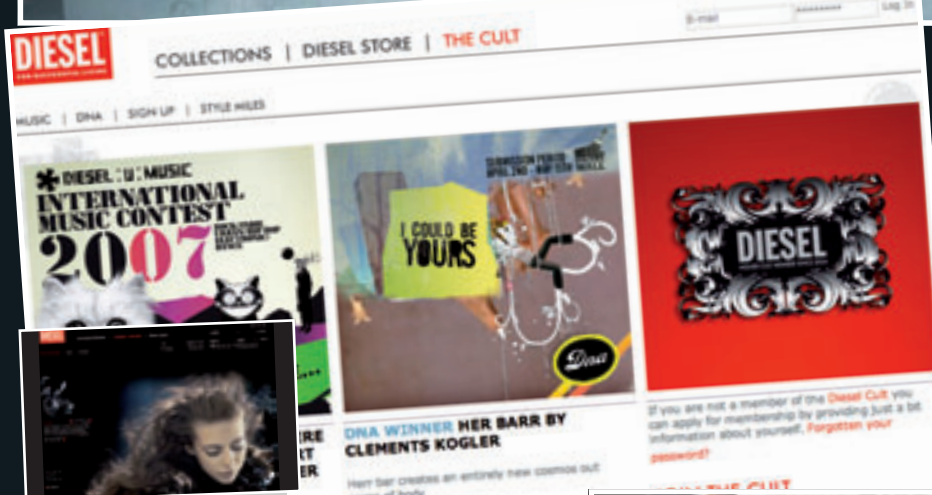
**ANOTHER MONTH** and we have yet another collection of digital inspiration for you to feast your eyes upon. This month we have a range of sites that take you from the slick to the abstract, with plenty of fun to be had along the way. Sit back, enjoy, and tell us what you think!

**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)



Set in the year 2775, the Accessories page offers a unique experience for the site visitor, displaying 'retro' items from the autumn/winter 2007 collection in holographic form

The store enables you to filter the items by size and colour to get to the ideal item for you as quickly as possible



## Site Highlight

The Style Lounge is its real showpiece, using motion fashion photography with submerged models for an immersive experience. A touch of class.

The Cult is Diesel's membership area, where there's news on the latest music and design, as well as the opportunity to join its loyalty scheme

Diesel's Denim Dating section makes good use of zoom technology, enabling the visitor to scroll around the ads with just a jerk of their mouse



# gallery

THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP

## FU DESIGN

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

**Designed by: Chu Keng Fu**

Welcome to the inspirational and award-winning website of Chu Keng Fu, a highly creative and multi-talented illustrator and interactive designer based in Taiwan. This website is very playful and serves primarily as Fu's portfolio displaying his highly original style and fun personality to the global audience. But the site has plenty of interactive elements made available to its users to separate itself from the portfolio websites currently doing the rounds. Visit to find out more about Fu and what he has been up to.

*Rather than passively viewing Fu's work, you are encouraged to interact with them. For example, you have to drag his work across to move on to the next piece*

*As a member to his website, you can play around and draw on the blackboard like many others have done before*





Navigation around this website is lots of fun. In his profile page you can use a magnifying glass to navigate to your project of choice



## Site Highlight

The ability to make your very own Fu Robot is probably the best thing about the website, as it enables the user to step up their interactions with Fu's work, making the overall experience much more memorable.





# gallery

## THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP



There are five main elements of the Pro-Safe system that naturally divides the website's pages, these being Incident avoidance, Collision preparation, Movement of impact, Damage limitation and Ultimate protection



### Site Highlight

Away from the CGI experience that takes centre stage, the stand-out element probably has to be the search facility. It enables you to pinpoint specific safety features in the current Mercedes Benz range.



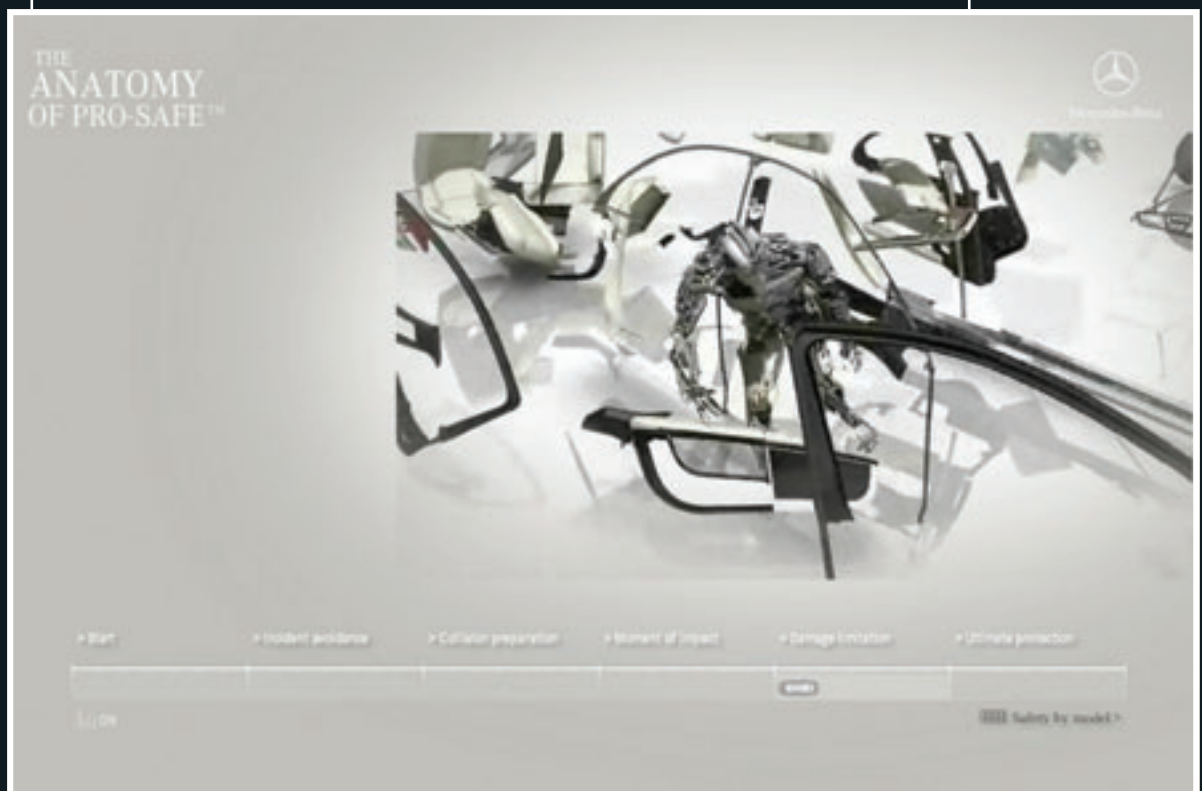
### MERCEDES BENZ PRO-SAFE

<http://safe.mercedes-benz.co.uk/home.php>

**Designed by: Agency Republic**

No doubt the quality that is associated with the name Mercedes Benz was always going to have us glaring at the screen in anticipation of what was to come from navigating to this website. Designed with real care and attention, using clean visual elements, the site presents Mercedes Benz's Pro-Safe system using state-of-the-art CGI that likens the system to the human body's own self-defence mechanism. The website succeeds in presenting a fascinating insight into the technology in an exciting and entertaining fashion.

*Each scene flows smoothly and seamlessly between one another, educating you in the process*





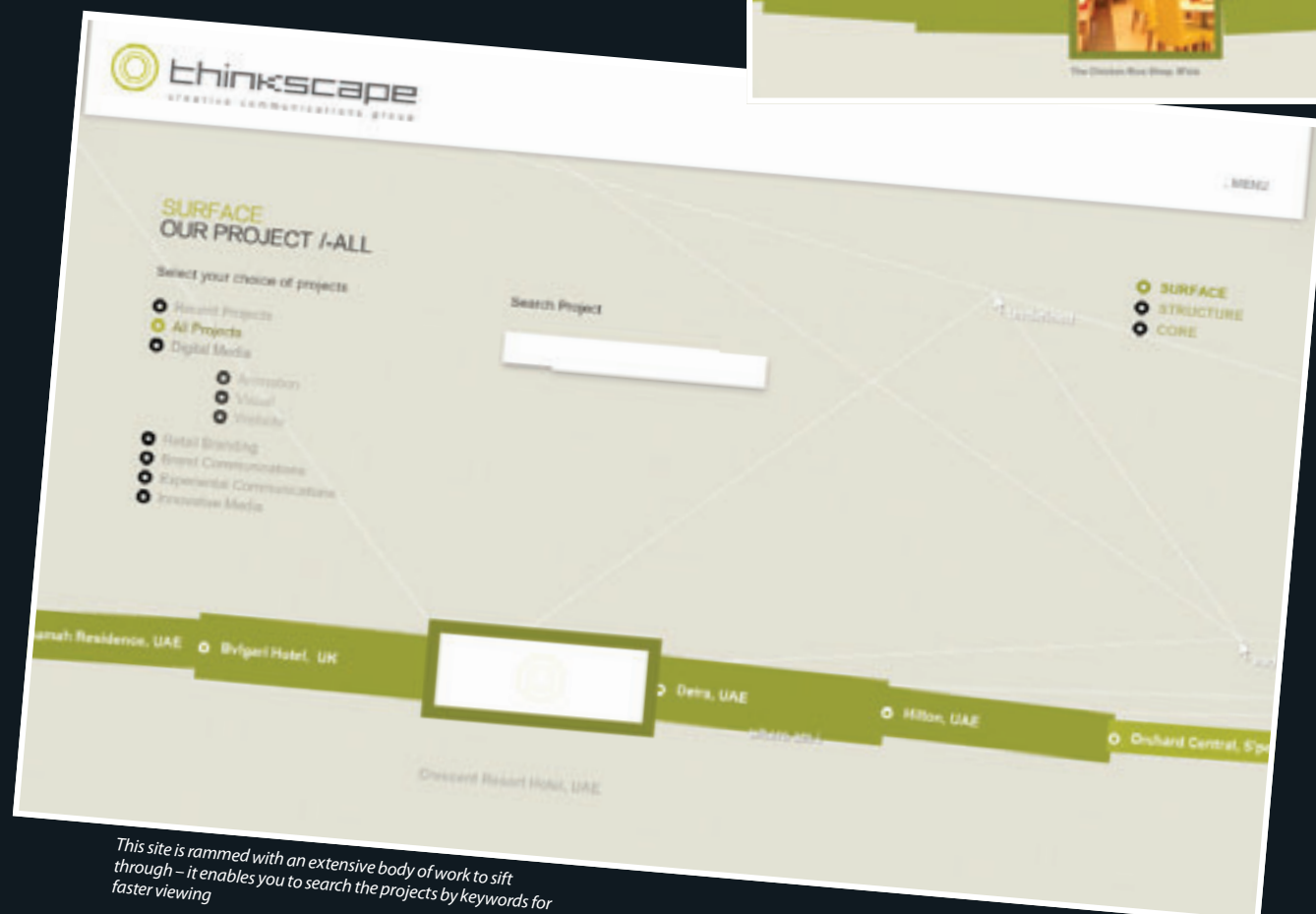
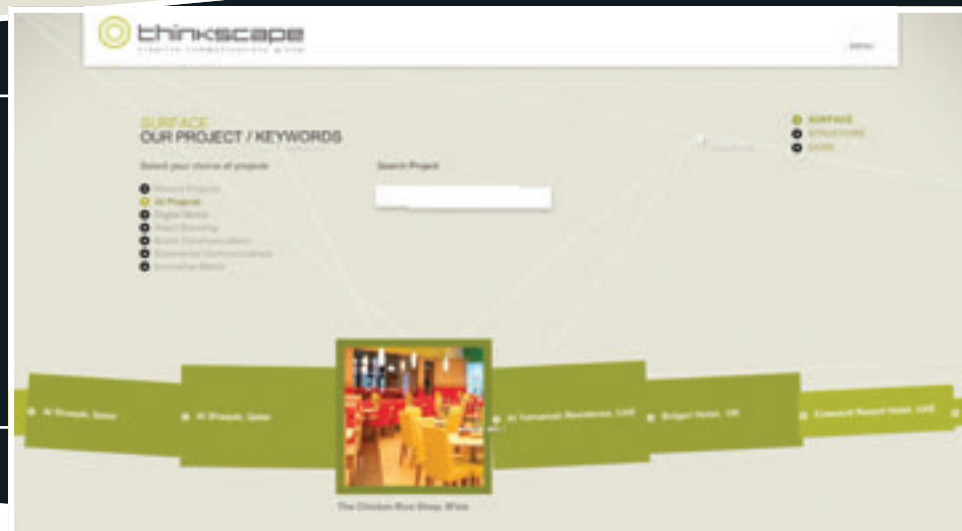
Make your choice from this deep-thinking agency while being entertained by the other visitors to the website, whose cursors dance behind the main navigation

Thinkscape's portfolio has a long reach, covering markets such as digital media and retail branding, as well as experimental works and innovative media

## THINKSCAPE

[www.thinkscape.com.my](http://www.thinkscape.com.my)  
Designed by: Thinkscape

Websites for clients is one thing, but what are the creative houses doing? We thought we'd share with you one of our favourite recent websites, which is a great example of having fun with a medium while keeping a website's core intact. Thinkscape, as the name suggests, is an ideas-based creative studio responsible for developing some of the best digital communication out there. The site is innovative yet functional, but also takes a refreshing and unpretentious approach when compared to its competitors.



This site is rammed with an extensive body of work to sift through – it enables you to search the projects by keywords for faster viewing



## Site Highlight

What will strike you on your visit to this site is the innovative navigation, which teases while dancing comfortably across the centre of your page.





# gallery

## THE CREAM OF THE WEB CROP

### EXPRESSO

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

**Designed by: Stephen Birchmore**

Based in London, Espresso is an interior design consultancy with a modern twist on furniture for kitchens, bedrooms and living areas for the UK and South Africa. Its website complements its talents with a typically precise and immaculate design style. The page space is naturally used to maximise the impact of the collection of work, while the navigation is both practical and as hard-edged as the kitchen worktops themselves. This is a prime example of a perfectly executed site.



Use the quick navigation to scroll through all the excellent and grand designs in its portfolio

### Site Highlight

Apart from the site's immaculate style of the overall design, the use of the menu systems on the site is a nice touch. Its sheer simplicity, yet practical presence, enables the website to remain gorgeous throughout.



It really is a case of 'let our work do the talking', as the designs on display dominate the page and all text is kept to an absolute minimum



Every transition and animation has been crafted with the overall brand image in mind, gushing 'quality' and keeping everything as subtle as possible





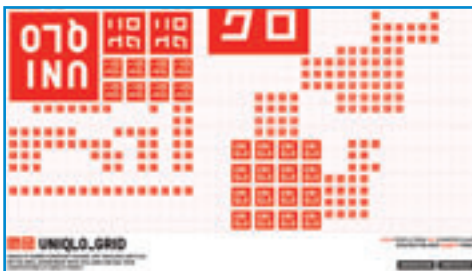
# bulletin

## 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



### UNIQLO\_GRID

[www.uniqlo.com/grid/](http://www.uniqlo.com/grid/)

Designed by: [www.tha.jp](http://www.tha.jp)

Use your mouse to do crazy stuff with the UNIQLO logo at the same time as others.



### Firstborn

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

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

A slick, polished and highly useable showcase for an agency with 10 years in the biz.



### Volkswagen Drive In

[www.volkswagendrivein.nl](http://www.volkswagendrivein.nl)

Designed by: [www.achtung.nl](http://www.achtung.nl)  
Addictive! Simply match the tunes to the correct decade. It's in Dutch but easy to understand.

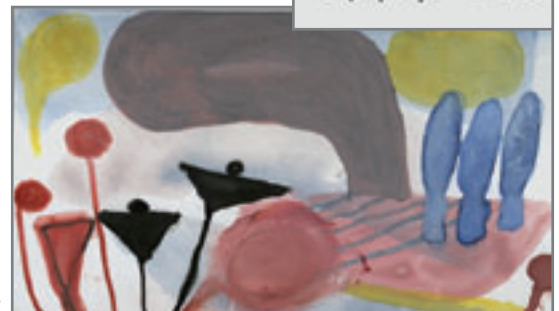


The event allows students from around the country to display their work alongside those of celebrities'

Buyers don't know which artist created their postcard until the transaction is complete



The public are able to peruse the postcards, with profits going to the Fine Art Student Award Fund



## The secret's out at latest RCA show

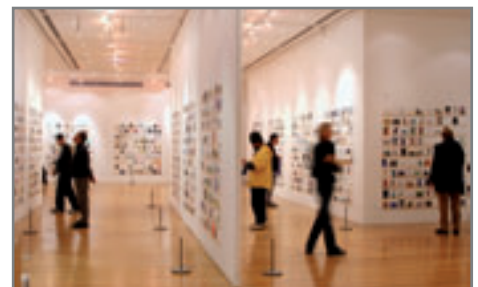
### PUBLIC PICK A POSTCARD THAT COULD FETCH A FORTUNE

**THE RCA SECRET**, one of the most popular events at the Royal College of Art and an established date on the British art calendar, took place in London last month.

Since its inception in 1994, this unique annual exhibition allows the work of unknown art students to be displayed alongside the likes of famous creatives Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin, David Bailey and Sir Paul McCartney. Such works are all up for grabs for the general public, but the artist's identity is not revealed until the work has been bought.

After being exhibited for a week in the RCA galleries and online, the postcard-sized artworks were put on sale to the public at the end of November for a standard price of £40. For the sale, each postcard (consisting of around 2,500) is exhibited completely anonymously with a number; once bought, the artist's signature is revealed on the back. Famous figures submitting their mini

masterpieces this year included Yoko Ono, film director Mike Leigh, designer Sir Paul Smith and legendary guitarist John Squire. This year also saw a raffle introduced to be among the first 50 people to enter the sale, after concerns over the amount of buyers queuing in the cold in previous years.



Not just a gimmick, it's a unique opportunity for talented art students to get known and raise money for the RCA

# Adobe has designs on creative talent

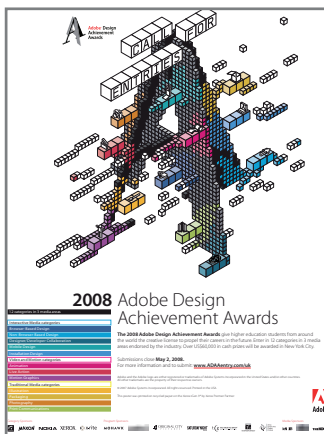
DESIGN ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS CALL FOR 2008 ENTRIES ACROSS NUMEROUS CATEGORIES

**THE CALL FOR** entries for Adobe's eighth annual Design Achievement Awards has been announced, honouring talent within the realms of Interactive Media, Motion Media and Traditional Media.

"The annual awards celebrate emerging talent and innovative thinking from students all over the world," comments Ann Lewnes, senior vice-president of corporate marketing at Adobe. "It is truly inspiring to see how this event dissolves boundaries between cultures and unleashes great talents through the convergence of technology and creative arts."

Several new categories have been added within the three key media areas, to reflect the growth in the interactive design field and the importance of the integration between design and development. Categories in Interactive Media include non-browser and browser-based design, designer/developer collaboration, installation design and mobile design.

Students from top higher-education institutions in over 30 countries are invited to submit projects through the Adobe Achievement Awards website. Visitors to the site can also access ADAA Live!, which is a captivating interactive website that shows the participants submitting their projects in real-time. Submissions will be judged in May, and the lucky finalists will be invited to New York where they will win cash and software prizes.



The competition is judged by ten top industry professionals

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www.imagineshop.co.uk

**iCreate ip**  
The creative magazine for Mac users

# Google's Android to hit mobile market

SEARCH ENGINE BUILDS A SOFTWARE 'STACK' FOR MOBILE HANDSETS

**SEARCH ENGINE GIANT** Google has announced that it's developing a free mobile phone software package. Android, as the so-called 'software stack' has been named, is designed to bring a PC-quality browser experience to the mobile user.

The Linux-based mobile software stack includes an operating system, HTML web browser, middleware and applications, designed to make web experiences much easier on a handset. It will enable Google to optimise cutting-edge applications such as Google Maps and Gmail on web-enabled mobile devices, reaching a far wider audience.

A total of 34 companies have formed an Open Handset Alliance with Android, meaning that they will promote the software by including it in some of their phones. These companies include Samsung, Motorola, LG and T-Mobile. "This partnership will help unleash the potential of mobile technology for billions of users around the world," comments Eric Schmidt, Google's chief executive.

Although most mobile web experiences are still hampered by the limitations of the browser and screen resolution of the handset, recently released web-enabled devices such as the iPhone could pose a threat to the popularity of Google's operating system. The extent to which this will affect Android's success will be revealed in the second half of 2008, when the software is expected to appear on handsets.

Google



Apple may prove to be a thorn in Google's side, with its web-enabled iPhone already aiming at giving the user a browser experience



## Safari gets wilder

NEW MAC OS X BROWSER IS UPDATED

**APPLE FANS WILL KNOW** that the latest version of OS X, named Leopard, has finally been released to an expectant audience. It boasts a supposed array of over 300 brand new features, including significant updates to many of the 'built-in' desktop programs that ship alongside. One of these is of course Safari, the default Mac browser, which is now in its third iteration. Having successfully survived a beta rollout earlier this year, the client builds on its extremely minimal and elegant interface to offer some pretty innovative highlights. The most eye-catching is the ability to draw around portions of a loaded site and actually clip page sections for viewing within dashboard. This means you can create live widgets for displaying your favourite blogs, newscasts, or whatever with just a few simple clicks - not bad eh? Safari has also now succumb to tabbed browsing, whilst also claiming to be up to two times as fast as the other leading browsers. It also ups the security stakes by offering more robust layers of encryption for data transmission, automatic form filling, and a special cache clearing option for safer public browsing.



The third version of Safari has a wealth of security features and a rather clever little web widget maker

## Magus and BSI to set some standards for the rest

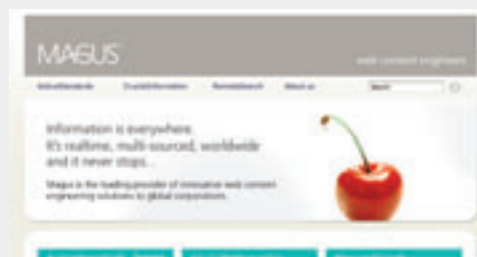
PAS 124 WILL ENSURE SITES ARE MEASURING UP

**BSI BRITISH STANDARDS** has been commissioned by web compliance expert Magnus Ltd to develop a publicly available specification (PAS 124) for web standards. Web standards govern the effectiveness, function and appearance of a website, and include brand, legal, accessibility, search engine optimisation (SEO), usability and technical standards.

Research from Magnus reveals that although websites are the key communication vehicle for a company's success, many of the world's leading organisations don't have formal brand and technical standards defined to govern their websites. This underachievement can ultimately damage a brand. As Magnus CEO Simon Lande comments, "The average global corporation spends millions of pounds on its global web presence, then does little to protect its investment. If you don't effectively manage your website to the same stringent standards you would apply to other offline communication, you will not benefit fully from your brand online. You may even significantly damage it. Everyone understands this in principle, but few are doing anything about it in practice. The perceived complexity of managing and enforcing standards, in a dynamic and fast changing medium like the internet, can seem like an overwhelming challenge. But it doesn't have to be difficult." Mike Low, director of BSI British Standards commented, "BSI British Standards is delighted

to be working with Magus on this important first step towards a framework for best practice in web standards. The PAS will enable organisations and their suppliers to better understand the need for web standards and consequently provide more structured web solutions."

The final PAS, which will provide a clear framework to help organisations apply standards effectively, will be publicly available in early 2008.



BSI Director Mike Low is delighted at the prospect of working with Magus



## NEWS in brief



### ANSWER LIFE'S QUESTIONS

Have a burning question you need answered? Why not check out VideoJug.com. The world's most popular site for factual video content hosts over 30,000 professionally produced videos, covering all manner of topics from how to stop internet pop-ups to how to avoid a trapped arm when cuddling in bed!



### KEW GIVES YOU MOORE

The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew has launched a mini-site to present a full guide to works within its new exhibition, *Moore at Kew*. The site includes detailed profiles that bring sculptures to life. Visit [www.kew.org/henry-moore](http://www.kew.org/henry-moore).



### THE WORLD ON THE WEB

Travel site WorldReviewer.com offers a new way of exploring the world for the armchair traveller. Travel experts and travellers offer a unique insight of the world's most inspiring experiences. With virtual tours and links to buy local products, this is well worth a look if you're considering a holiday.



# 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)

As Christmas fast approaches, we unveil another haul of desirable creative products for helping you work, rest and play!



**1** BlackBox Bluetooth Speaker  
£99.99  
[www.gear4.com](http://www.gear4.com)

As big fans of wireless products and listening to music, we were immediately drawn to this sleek-looking device. Plus, it has a front LED display that makes it look like KITT – the talking car from legendary 80s TV series *Knight Rider*. What it actually does, however, is allow you to hook up various generations of the iPod to its twin 24W speakers via a companion Bluetooth dongle, while a firmware upgrade even lets you send sounds from your mobile phone. A supplied remote control ensures you can keep a suitable distance from the unit, although a set of touch-screen controls and glossy black finish keeps design synergy with your lovely new iPhone. A miniature version is also available for around £50 if you require better portability.

**2** Buffalo TurboUSB 120GB portable hard drive  
£54.99  
[www.buffalo-technology.com](http://www.buffalo-technology.com)

Let's start with a rhetorical question: how on earth do they make these insanely big hard drives so small? This Buffalo 120GB effort is just one of the latest slimline and compact external drives that dwarfs the storage of most recent desktop machines – and don't get us started on the iPod classic! But anyway, this pocket-sized shock-resistant unit is compatible with both Mac and PC, requiring no additional setup to contend with. Extra backup and encryption software is supplied, plus a secondary DC USB power cable should you need it. The transfer speeds are a rapid 34.9 MB/s and you also have the option of buying the smaller 80GB or larger 160GB capacity drives in the same range.

**3** The Essential Guide To CSS And HTML Web Design  
£23.99  
[www.friendsofed.com](http://www.friendsofed.com)

CSS may seem pretty daunting on the face of it, but any designer who has got acquainted with it will know that it's actually pretty simple. This title hopes to short-cut your experience with style sheets to masterful proportions, with an extremely detailed breakdown of the major concepts. There's guidance on creating boilerplate templates, DOCTYPE declarations, and whole chapters dedicated to producing great results with text, images and layouts. Web standards is always at the heart of author Craig Grannell's writing, which is something to be praised, although it's a shame that the book's own presentation is quite dry. For goodness sakes, CSS is all about sexy design – so let's celebrate it!





4



#### 4 Guitar Hero 3 (PS3, Xbox 360)

£64.99

[www.guitarherogame.com/gh3](http://www.guitarherogame.com/gh3)

For anyone who hasn't sampled the euphoric gaming experience that is *Guitar Hero*, what on earth are you doing with your time? RedOctane and Activision's best-selling series has taken audiences by storm and this *Legends Of Rock* edition boasts the best track list to grace any of the games so far. It even has boss battles with axe virtuosos Slash and Tom Morello to hone your shredding skills against, plus a wireless Les Paul-style guitar controller. The Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 versions obviously offer the greatest experiences, especially in high definition, although you'll need to spend heavy on extra controllers if you want to enjoy the hilarious multi-player modes. It might not compare to the real thing, but we love it all the same.

#### 5 LG KU990 Viewty mobile phone

£349.99

<http://uk.lge.com>

At nearly £100 more than iPhone, you may think that this swanky new handset from LG could have a fight on its hands to win customers this Christmas. Luckily, it has a few festive charms packed up its sleeves that will get any fervent Apple-haters excited, including a powerful five-megapixel camera. Interaction is similarly handled by an accurate 240 x 400 touch-screen display, which is easily big enough to preview any snaps or videos, though still attracts its fair share of pesky fingerprints. The modest internal memory is a shame, however, and you won't get the same level of entertainment or application-support as you would with Apple's baby. Still, you could always buy an iPod touch as well, eh?

#### 6 Dell XPS M1330 laptop

From £649

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

The laptop market has gone into overdrive recently, so manufacturers are having to be as inventive as possible to sway consumers their way. Dell is the latest to provide a novelty edge that plays on Apple's success in the stylish stakes, with this colourful and sleek XPS model. It's tough to believe that the 1.79kg, three centimetres-thick device actually houses two Intel Core 2 Duo processors, up to 4GB of memory and a choice of the most cutting-edge graphics cards. Windows Vista is of course pre-installed, and the UltraSharp 13.3-inch widescreen display boasts a pretty seductive paint job in Crimson Red or Tuxedo Black. A special MicroSatin finish provides a classy and distinctive touch that just begs to be held or gawped at on the train.

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)

There's clearly been some burning issues biting at a few of our readers this month, so here's our chance to hear and respond

## Three-dimensional design

Hi team,

Thanks for the MAX 2007 show report last issue – I was actually lucky enough to attend and the pictures brought back memories of a very cool event. Something you touched on in Adrian Bridgwater's show diary was a technology known as Papervision, used for adding 3D to Flash. I went to the Carlos Ulloa session and was really impressed – particularly by the examples he has on his site. However, I'm keen to find out how to use this technique in my own projects and I'm at a bit of a loss as to how to make the leap from 2D to 3D – couldn't swing us a tutorial on it could you guys?

*Tim (via email)*

We're glad you liked our look at MAX Tim, and hopefully it was fun for all the readers who couldn't be there to catch a glimpse of the event. The Papervision session from Carlos was indeed a highlight for us, and like Aral Balkan's SWX talk, we were inspired to plan tutorials based on both as soon as possible. You can obviously read about the former on page 40 this month, but you'll have to wait until next time to get going with Papervision 3D. We've got a bit of a 3D special up our sleeve in fact, with exercises in Flash and Photoshop to get stuck in to, so make sure you keep with us for what promises to be a memorable issue!

## Stickler for standards

Dear Web Designer,

The internet should be applauded for being one of the first truly open platforms, right? But it's also become a big business commodity and an essential information lifeline – also right? Where else would you find something so important left so devoid of properly governed standards or 'rules' for good, effective design. Those that exist are, quite frankly, optional at best, and aren't even endorsed universally by the commercial software vendors that should take some responsibility. Web 2.0 was a decent chance to issue some kind of agreed code to develop by, especially as we now have devices like iPhone joining the party and offering new ways to surf unwieldy content. How can we gauge where we are going if we can't get the basics right?

*Phillip Porteus (via email)*

That's a passionate and well-articulated view Phil, and you're right. Because the web hasn't ever really been 'owned' by one body (sorry Google!), it has evolved more organically and in a haphazard fashion. We think it's done amazingly well in that respect, but part of that means that policing it with standards doesn't really come off as well as we'd like. Software vendors and web developers must shoulder some blame for not adhering to the 'rules' that do exist, but it's not the easiest task when things remain so confusing. As new web-enabled platforms emerge and online applications develop, standards will become more vital.

## MAIL OF THE MONTH

### Mashup the magazine

Hey Web Designer,

Before I get started, don't get me wrong, I'm a long-term fan of your publication, but something is bothering me. I thought that part of this whole Web 2.0 explosion was the idea of mixing tools and technologies up – or 'mashing' as it's known. You guys have certainly done tutorials recently that extol the virtues of such a concept, yet the way that the magazine is structured still goes against that idea. In the modern climate, which 'well-rounded' and versatile web developer uses just Dreamweaver, Flash or Photoshop in isolation? Particularly with the integration enhancements with CS3, we're able to cross applications over more and more – so why not reflect that? I think essentially it's time for the magazine to change with the times and have a bit of a rethink about how it works – what do you reckon?

*Simon Balden (via email)*

Thanks for your letter Simon and it's always nice to get such a well-written and justified letter about the magazine. You are certainly correct that web design and development have changed immensely over the last couple of years, and the types of projects we deliver to you, the readers, have to reflect that. The last time we really re-evaluated how the magazine was structured was when the title migrated across to Imagine, so in that time we've made plenty of notes about the future direction. One of the key areas is the way we present tutorial content and categorise it to make logical sense within the magazine, and we wholeheartedly agree that this must change as soon as possible. We feel that a more project-centred approach, which simply applies the technologies or tools that it requires, makes more sense, rather than being dictated by the use of Dreamweaver, Flash or whatever. Our own colour-coding system for identifying tutorial types has become slightly unwieldy also, particularly when introducing new tools, so we'll be trying hard to find more effective methods of presentation there. But yes, the important thing is that we have a whole host of ideas as to how the magazine can be improved and everyone is invited to pitch in with what they'd like to see!



*Our tutorials could be set for a renovation very soon...*





# BEHIND THE SCENES WITH TEN4 & BOB DYLAN MESSAGING

A phenomenon currently rivalling the traditional email has emerged on the internet, referencing Bob Dylan's iconic *Subterranean Homesick Blues* video, so we decided to quiz Ten4, the team behind the project

Ten4 is a design company that's currently rocking the industry with their innovative ideas. Go and meet the team at [www.ten4design.co.uk](http://www.ten4design.co.uk) – they're only shuffling about anyway! Visit the site and see for yourself.

OM: Owen Matthews, director  
OL: Oliver Lille, programmer

**WD: To kick things off, can you give us a quick history or bit of background about Ten4 and the kind of work you guys get up to?**

**OM:** Ten4 was founded in 2001 by two D&AD award-winning graduates, Liz Walker and David Adcock, who were joined by me two years later. The company got off to a good start when it was hired to provide a full-design service for the Earth From The Air exhibition that ran for a while in the grounds of the Natural History Museum in London before touring various cities throughout the UK. The work included exhibition layout, product design (calendars, diaries and so on), website and other marketing collateral. Ten4 built on the exhibition's success by landing work with, among others, Orange, Fujifilm, The Imagination Gallery and Wacom. Focusing more on digital and online projects as time went by, Ten4 were asked to design a sexy and provocative online magazine, Phamous 69. The site proved a hit among various fashion and lifestyle magazines, and

as a result, Sony BMG invited Ten4 to pitch for Will Young's new website. Since winning that pitch, Ten4 have completed numerous music sites for Sony BMG, Columbia Records, RCA Label Group, Epic, Warner and Universal, winning two BT Digital Music awards in 2006, and a further two in 2007. Remaining a small and tightknit team, Ten4 runs mostly on a staff of five.

**WD: In regards to the Dylan eCard project, how did Ten4 get involved with it and was it a case of pitching ideas to BMG and hoping for the gig?**

**OM:** We had already done some personalised viral projects for John Legend, Good Charlotte and Natasha Bedingfield under RCA and Epic. That included personalised video, uploading photographs to be integrated into a music promo and typing out personal messages that used text-to-speech software. We had also worked closely with Dan Ayers (who was head of digital at Sony BMG during the Will Young project before moving to Columbia Records to head the digital team there) for some time. Dan is a huge Bruce Springsteen fan and knows I am a Bob Dylan fan, so when the project was discussed at Columbia, he contacted us right at the start. Being such a fan myself, it was a real pleasure to be asked to work on the project, and given the previous projects with Sony BMG and Columbia, we didn't have to pitch. Charlie Stanford (senior marketing director at Sony BMG) came up with the initial idea to enable

users to write on the cue cards, but beyond that point there was very little briefing. It was a case of working with him from the off to figure out the structure of the site and functionality of the viral itself.

**WD: How does the eCard promotional site fit into the rest of the digital/online campaign launched to sit alongside the Dylan greatest hits release?**

**OM:** Before we got involved, Columbia wanted to push the Dylan collection online, so [Dylan07.com](http://Dylan07.com) was registered and a simple splash page created. The site grew into the official album site, and now houses a five-page website with links to the Bob Dylan forum and [DylanMessaging.com](http://DylanMessaging.com). The pages on the site include standard information on the album, which details some historical information and explanations of the 18 core songs on the one-CD version (the three-CD version has 51 songs) and a handy guide to which Dylan albums to buy if you haven't already.

Columbia wanted to build a site that shows how important Dylan is to his fans. A gallery of images that fans and celebrities have submitted sit alongside explanations of how that image represents their experience of Bob Dylan. Another section of the site lets users share their feelings on any particular song. The idea was to let users have a chance to share the influence that Dylan has had on them. This all came together to become a very touchy-feely experience, where users and fans were actively encouraged



The campaign was formed to support the Dylan greatest hits release on 1 October 2007



From small things great achievements grow – Ten4 aren't big on staff numbers but they make up for it with monumental talent



You'll find plenty of links to record labels and more Dylan-related sites from the main [www.dylanmessaging.com](http://www.dylanmessaging.com) site

to participate in building the expectation of the release. DylanMessaging.com was created to spread the word of the album, to lift the expectation further and to inject a touch of fun to the whole campaign.

**WD: The site is fairly simplistic in terms of what it has to deliver but still maintains a strong design connection with the album. How much of the look and feel was dictated to Ten4 by the album promoters/client?**

**OM:** The album cover is very bold – just huge black letters spelling out DYLAN on a blood red background with a distressed feel, so there was definitely a ‘look’ already in place – and the whole visual language of the marketing campaign was

**WD: Where did the concept for this novel viral idea come from and was it hard to instigate due to the rights for the original video?**

**OM:** Charlie Stanford at Sony BMG came up with the idea and organised all the rights and copyrights, clearance and so on. They wanted a personalised-video viral campaign, and I suppose the *Subterranean Homesick Blues* video seemed like the perfect vehicle. The only problem we had with rights was some contention about the size and positioning of the D.A. Pennebaker credit (it was originally the opening segment of his film, *Don't Look Back*), so we made it bigger and bolder and added a Click To Buy for the DVD of *Don't Look Back*. The design of the site meant it was fairly easy to



There is a brief explanation of the back story to the clip, information about where it can be seen, different versions etc



Ten4 has established itself as a favourite with many big names, especially in the music industry

## “It was important that the site ought to be respectful of the song itself”

lead by this. The album logo used a specific typeface that was in turn used throughout the campaign. The style also seemed to be reminiscent of posters produced at the Hatch Show Print shop in Nashville, Tennessee (one of the oldest working letterpress print shops in America and very strongly connected to the Nashville country music scene) that we recently visited while working with Warner on another project, so in terms of the layout, we didn't really have to work too hard to find inspiration. In short, the design direction was dictated by the album cover, but it was by no means a chore to expand on the bold black-and-red screen-print feel.

**WD: The undoubted star and focal point of the site is the eCard messaging application. It references a fairly classic sequence of *Subterranean Homesick Blues* and actually adapts the video, so did you ever worry that fans might feel precious about this?**

**OM:** Not really. Being a fan myself, I fully appreciate the high regard people have for Dylan's early career, and there is a slight worry that some fans might find it disrespectful or that it in some way devalues the original song and video, but I think for the most part, people take it in the vein that it was intended.

Dylan has always come under fire for the way he treats his back catalogue, from the way he sings live (Dylan live is very different to Dylan on record) to his corporate deals (he's done ads for Victoria's Secret, partnered with Apple and iTunes for the release of his back catalogue and most recent studio album *Modern Times*, and has released material exclusively through Starbucks), so I don't think this marketing tool will surprise or offend many long-standing Dylan fans too much. It may be a sideways step from the standard ways he's been marketed in the past, but I hope the novelty of the viral and the fun aspect of interacting with a moment in cultural history distracts from any cynical feelings fans might have. I felt it was important that the site surrounding the messaging tool ought to be respectful of the song itself, so the full original video is available to watch and read about.

enlarge sections and move content around without changing the overall impact, so it wasn't really much of a problem.

**WD: How was it implemented in terms of accepting user messages, and then inserting them into unique Flash movies to be sent out?**

**OL:** When a user creates a message, it is passed to PHP and stored in a MySQL database as serialised data. The data is stored with a unique ID that identifies only that message, so when the Flash movie requests the user's message, the data is pulled back from the database and manipulated into XML. The XML is passed by the Flash movie and again split into the ten message chunks. They are then displayed at the intervals of which they are required. I'm sorry to say there isn't a great deal of complex programming involved here. It is all basic stuff and goes to show what you can do with a little Flash, PHP and MySQL know-how!



Let's not forget, the campaign was all about selling records so there's also links to retailers who stock the release



Apparently Mr. Dylan was so taken with the project, he sent virtual card emails to his mates - Sean Penn and Leo DiCaprio!



# BEHIND THE SCENES WITH TEN4 & BOB DYLAN MESSAGING

## “Some say that now they don't want to send emails, just Dylan messages”

**WD: Which parts of the project development are the Ten4 staff proudest of and why?**

**OM:** Some aspects of the design and build were immensely satisfying to complete. I blanked out the cards in over 400 individual frames in Photoshop, and created a typeface based on the idiosyncratic hand-drawn lettering of the original. These were both quite labour-intensive and monotonous tasks, but the end results proved to be worth the effort. Dave had to create the 13 Movie Clips holding the text which all had to be masked in Flash, blurred, skewed and rotated so that they synchronised visually with the video on the layer below. So all in all, it was a real team effort, and built up steadily to become the finished product. The usability of the viral – just entering text in boxes – was also part of its success, but didn't come easily. I think we went through at least two unsatisfactory variations of how to enter the text and see it displayed before we settled on the final result. This meant there were some awkward revisions in the final development stages, but again, the end result was worth all the tweaking. Also, the fact that we were given such an iconic clip to play with was a lot of fun, and made even better by the fact that it was for Bob Dylan.

**OL:** My particular favourite bit was creating the Stats page and watching those message counts creep up. Slightly egocentric but hey!

**WD: What kind of feedback have you received regarding the site's reception across the web?**

**OM:** Some people email us to say we've made

their day, or made their mother's day! Others just want to let us know how clever they think we are – even other web design companies, which is very flattering indeed. Some people have said that they no longer want to send normal emails, just Dylan messages, but I'm not sure how long that can last. It's had great stats from the launch, with nearly 140,000 messages created with viewings of well-over 1,000,000 since its launch in September, thanks largely to the embed code, which allows users to post messages publicly on their blog.

It's had an amazing response from the press too and has been featured on Brand Republic, Reuters, Creative Review (Pick of the Month – October), the Guardian Guide, The Times Knowledge, Observer Music Monthly, NME, Yahoo! Site of the Day, b3ta.com and more. It was also mentioned on several BBC radio stations.

Unfortunately, we've had no direct feedback from Dylan himself, but apparently his manager was very pleased and I was told that he personally sent it to his 'mates' email list, including Sean Penn, Leonardo DiCaprio and Bono.

**WD: Could you tell us about any ideas or concepts for the project that you either didn't have time to add or just weren't allowed to implement?**

**OM:** The only thing I can think of is that an initial design I submitted contained a Bob Dylan lyric that was particularly relevant to the project: (*Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again*)

“And I would send a message  
To find out if she's talked,  
But the post office has been stolen  
And the mailbox is locked.”

But it was decided that it was extraneous to the site and we wanted to keep it as simple as possible. For something like this to be a success, it has to be very obvious from the first impression what it is, and what to do next, ie, how to use it, so I wasn't too fussed about emitting that particular element if it gave the core information more impact.

Other than that, we pretty much did everything we wanted with the viral and the site, so there wasn't any additional functionality we wanted to include. There was a Facebook application that supported the viral but due to deadlines, we didn't have time to do it ourselves so it went to another company. It would have been nice to retain complete ownership of the whole project, but sometimes that's just not possible.

**WD: On a final note, what's the favourite office Bob Dylan track and if you could send Bob an eCard message, what would it say?**

**OM:** We range from fanatical to indifferent. I actually have every official release, including something like 40 studio albums, five or six live albums and all the official Bootleg Series of rare or unreleased material, totalling something like 50 CDs in all, and some DVDs and books and so on. I've also seen him live four or five times so yes, you could say that I am a fan. Dave and Liz (the other directors of Ten4) have also seen him live twice or more and both own some albums, so they also call themselves proper fans. Ollie wants to hear more stuff and Adam (our designer) thinks he's “alright” but wouldn't go and buy an album. We do listen to Dylan in the office sometimes, but we might take a break from *Subterranean Homesick Blues* for a while – we've heard it rather a lot recently. I do like working to the live album *The Rolling Thunder Revue* (Bootleg Series Vol. 5) and in particular *Tonight, I'll Be Staying Here With You* from disc one.

As to what we'd say in a message to Dylan – I have no idea. I'd love to know what he thinks of DylanMessaging.com and tell him it was a pleasure to work for him, albeit indirectly, but for now I am happy enough just listening to his songs.



The Ten4 team have enjoyed a wealth of prior work on music-related sites including this fabulous comic book inspired effort for comedic band Tenacious D. Make sure you hit their portfolio to check out similar projects...



Who would have thought it? The man himself is an avid reader and wants to tell the world about it! We can dream can't we?







# It's often the first thing visitors see, so why do many web designers overlook the importance of a good URL? Joe Cassels delves into the world of domain names

**T**he impact your website makes on visitors begins before they even reach it. The address or universal resource locator (URL) used to access your site can attract or deter visitors, depending on how easy it is to remember.

Computers on the internet are identified by an IP address; the set of numbers that identifies the PC or network it's attached to uniquely online. The most common standard used is IPv4, which uses addresses made up of four blocks of three-decimal figures, separated by dots, eg, 192.168.0.1. In some cases, this has been superseded by IPv6 due to predictions that we'll soon run out of the earlier form of numerical IP address. An IPv6 address consists of eight blocks of four-hexadecimal characters, separated by colons, eg, 2001:fd8b:85a3:08d3:1219:8a2e:0370:7354 – even less memorable!

IP addresses are absolutely fine for computers to communicate with one another as they clearly identify the location of the machines concerned. However, they're not at all useful for people as they just aren't easy to remember. IT is for this reason why the domain name space was developed. This translates the more familiar domain names like **www.bbc.co.uk** or **www.yahoo.com** to IP addresses. Computers running DNS servers provide the translation. Typically, your internet service provider (ISP) provides you with a DNS server alongside your connection, which is assigned to your computer whenever you go online. Then, when you type **www.mydomain.co.uk** into a web browser or send an email to **mailto:someone@mydomain.co.uk**, the DNS server then translates the address into an IP address that your PC can understand, so that you connect to the computer you require.

## URL-NAMING CONVENTIONS

The domain name system is a hierarchy. The world root is the dot, from which all domains are derived. The letters immediately after the last dot indicate the top-level domain or TLD. This may be generic, such as **.com**, **.org**, **.net** or **.biz**, or it may be country-specific, such as **.uk**. Country-specific top-level domains consist of the two letters that generally relate to the internationally agreed list of country codes. This would suggest that the UK should use **.gb**, but the **.uk** domain had been in use for a number of years and changing all present domain names seemed a needlessly disruptive and confusing task, so **.uk** still remains the country code top-level domain for both Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

There are hundreds of country code top-level domains, but less than 15 generic top-level domains. There is constant debate

about increasing the number of these, but there is a need to keep the number of generic TLDs to a manageable number. This is so that most people have some idea of what the top-level domain means. If the number of codes increases dramatically, it becomes much harder for people to remember what they are.

You'll often find a second-level domain below a top-level domain. The most common second-level domain encountered in Britain is **.co.uk**, but any domain can be divided into a subdomain by placing a dot and a string of letters in front of the domain name. Thus some companies offer domains ending **.uk.com**, which are subdomains of the privately owned domain **uk.com**.

Top-level domains are managed by registries. The registry in charge of the **.uk** domain is Nominet, which you can find at **www.nominet.org.uk**. The registry in charge

**.com**

**.info**

**.name**

**.co.uk**





# http://whats\_in\_a\_name?

of .com and .net generic domains is managed by the US company VeriSign ([www.verisign.com/information-services/naming-services/com-net-registry/index.html](http://www.verisign.com/information-services/naming-services/com-net-registry/index.html)). You don't need to go to the registry to get your domain name registered; any ISP that's accredited by the registry concerned can sell registrations. The prices charged and services offered vary widely, so it pays to shop around.

product or service," she says. "Know what you are buying. Read the small print. Find out what support is available. Buying anything without checking these details is irresponsible."

## IS YOUR URL AVAILABLE?

Most web hosts or ISPs that offer domain-name registration provide a web-based look-up form, which you can use to check if the domain

## SEARCH ENGINES AND URLS

Even if you feel that a memorable domain name isn't important to your business, it's a good idea to consider the impact that a decent URL makes on your position in search rankings. Carefully selected domain names and a sensible URL strategy can help improve a site's search-engine optimisation. The web address is one of the first items that a search-engine spider will crawl



Lesley Cowley is chief executive of Nominet, the internet registry for .uk domain names

## "There are hundreds of country code top-level domains, but less than 15 generic top-level domains"

The chief executive of Nominet, Lesley Cowley, has some advice for people taking their first steps into buying domain names. "Use the same caution that you would when buying any other

name that you're interested in is available. For example, if you wanted to buy a domain from Fasthosts, browse to [www.fasthosts.co.uk/domains](http://www.fasthosts.co.uk/domains). From there, enter the name you would like to use under the Register Your Domain search box and click Check. You'll be shown which domains are available that include the words that you've chosen. The search checks all popular top-level domains and also tries some combinations of common words with your chosen name to give you a choice should your desired name be taken. If you choose to, there is nothing stopping you from going ahead and buying from here.

upon. If your URL includes useful keywords that describe what's on the page, your chances of higher placement are increased.

## FOREIGN DOMAINS

Country-based top-level domains are designed to be sold only to residents of the countries that they represent. So if you live in the UK, buying a French domain name ending in .fr isn't possible. However, as each country's top-level domain is managed by a different registry, rules on this issue can vary. In some cases, it may be possible to lease a domain name via a third party registered in the country itself, but if you

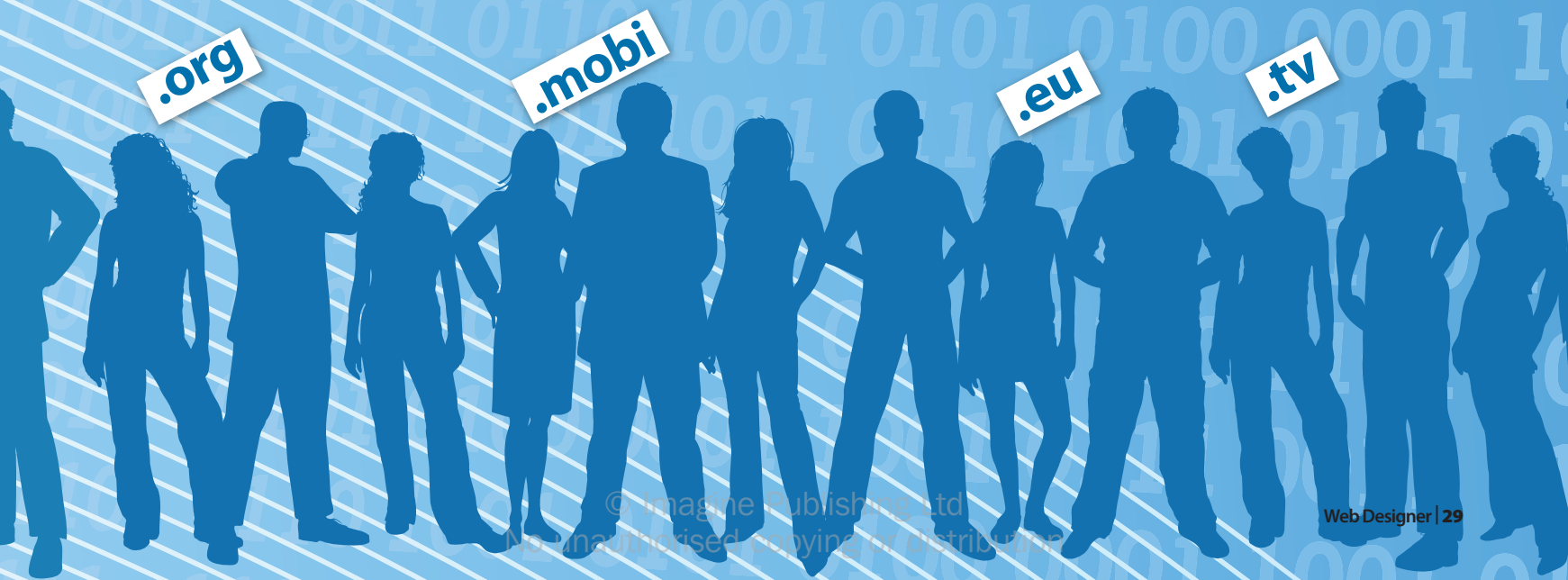
don't have a presence in that country, it goes against the spirit of country-specific top-level domains. The domain name indicates where the website is administered. For international business, using a generic top-level domain and publishing the site in the language of your target audience is probably more important. It's a good idea to consider translating your domain name into different languages to improve search-engine optimisation for foreign language searches.

## BRANDING

Often, those who use the internet as an integral part of their business make the URL part, or all, of the company name. Examples include



There are a whole host of TLD variations, and it's worth taking time considering which represents your site best







If you type in a few keywords, Fasthosts will provide you with a list of suitable domain names available to purchase



Sites that are clear in what they offer from their domain names also often benefit from topping search engines' result lists

It's easy to see which of your requested domain name is available, complete with suggestions and a full price guide

## "Consider translating your domain name into different languages to improve search-engine optimisation for foreign language searches"

price-comparison services like uSwitch.com and Confused.com. Services that help you to find online goods often include the web address as the company name, like Shopping.com. Others that specialise in particular areas use clear URLs that describe the service provided clearly and concisely. It's not at all difficult to guess what you'd go to [www.find-dvd.co.uk](http://www.find-dvd.co.uk) for. This combination of keywords cleverly provides a



Mark Jeffries is CTO of Fasthosts, the UK's number one web host

domain name that's easy to remember, as well as having something that will be placed highly in a search engine.

### CHOOSING A NAME

Selecting a domain name for your business is an important decision. It is definitely worth spending quite some time considering the options available to you. Fasthosts surveyed 615 small businesses throughout September and October 2007 to find out common practices. The survey found that the average business spent between six and 12 hours selecting a domain name and a staggering 41 per cent did so in under an hour. Few asked for a second opinion and only ten per cent considered the long-term effect that its web address could have on its business.

A little more effort spent selecting an effective domain name could pay dividends in the long run, and it's worth bearing a number of points in mind when making the decision. In

most cases, a company's domain name should include the company name or reflect the nature of the business. It's well worth considering different top-level domains. Most businesses only consider .com and .co.uk, but .net, .org or .me.uk could be just as effective. Short and snappy domain names are much easier for people to remember and are less likely to be spelled incorrectly.

It's also important to consider a company domain name as an extension of its brand. Use the same process of consultation that you'd use for other elements of branding like logo design. Be sure to avoid words or phrases that occur in other businesses' trademarks, as this could lead to disputes or even legal action. And definitely get second and third opinions about your proposed domain name.

Many companies consider their domain names to be holding them back, or suspect that a change in domain name would help to improve business. However, concerns about the

cost of making changes often prevents them from taking action. While domain names form part of web addresses and company email addresses, they aren't difficult to change and it's pretty easy to run two or more domain names alongside one another using web and email forwarding. It's never too late to make necessary changes to a registration.

Domain-name selection is often overlooked and yet it has a significant impact on the effectiveness of a website. Mark Jeffries, CTO Fasthosts Internet Ltd, has advice for anyone considering buying a corporate domain. "Businesses should consider all available options before purchasing their primary domain name," he said recently. "A web address is often bought in haste at the start of a business project. Every UK business must recognise the lasting impact that a domain name can have on sales and image, and business owners shouldn't delay making necessary changes".

Jeffries is keen to point out the benefits of considering wider options when it comes to domain suffixes too. "It's often the case today that the best available domains belong to less obvious suffixes, and it is always advisable to seek external opinion on what a domain could suggest about your business".









The darker side of  
next-gen design...







# CAUTION

## How secure is Web 2.0?

It's a term that has been thrown around in the last few years, associated with advancements on the internet. But with Web 2.0 comes worries and wormholes as Adrian Bridgwater investigates...

MUCH HAS BEEN made of the potential security concerns thrown up by rich internet applications, Web 2.0 services and multi-layered mashups that combine data streams from a variety of potentially untrustworthy APIs. Both enthusiasts and evangelists in this space defend these nascent technologies, insisting that most are still very much in beta form. Equally, critics cite the fact that perils such as open access to a user's file system makes these applications inherently dangerous. However, as developers we owe it to ourselves to examine exactly why we should take the Web 2.0 craze with a pinch of salt when it comes to security.

### THE WEB 2.0 WORMHOLE

The emergence of Web 2.0 as a tangible and identifiable entity has not been without teething troubles. Before we ask why, perhaps it's worth defining what we mean by the different tiers of the web's life cycle.

Web 1.0 can be reasonably described as 'stuff'; it's essentially a database. It may contain quite dynamic HTML content, but that content resides in independent silos that can be visited only on an independent basis. Web 2.0 then is 'stuff' connected to other stuff; our wiki-based data silos can now be connected in either tightly or loosely coupled relationships in a



"Critics cite the fact that perils such as open access to a user's file system makes these applications dangerous"





# AIR

"Suddenly we're asking web developers to be security experts in the subject"

Dave Wolf, Vice President of Consulting at Cynergy Systems

collaborative way. Finally (for now, though who knows what the future will bring?), there is Web 3.0. This is 'stuff connected to other stuff that knows stuff about you'. Now our web-based applications have geospatial awareness and a degree of artificial intelligence as they communicate with your device to find out who you are.

So exactly why are we talking about security concerns, you may ask? Well, the fact that these applications potentially have access to a user's file system is a big issue. Typically, when you decide to install a piece of software, it's from a vendor or source that you know and trust to at least some degree. You probably have the box that it came in or at least the magazine that gave it away. Even if you downloaded it from the web, it's more than likely that you went to a particular point on a website where you accepted terms and conditions and got a read.me file or maybe even a PDF manual. Not so in the case of Web 2.0.

#### DUPED DOWN INTO A NEXT-GEN TRAP?

In the Web 2.0 world, just one click can bring forth an application that will perform very intuitively and may also function offline as a rich internet application (RIA). Fine if it's from a source that you know and trust, but it won't stop there, will it? It won't be long before start-up RIA-development shops hope will make them their fortune. As the market swells and our vision blurs, how will we know who we can trust? Has the mashed-up Web 2.0 world of offline online applications opened up a wormhole that will suck us through space and time into a dystopian world of malware and viruses? The sceptics

say it will.

So do the sceptics have a point? Among the most prominent players in this space is Adobe, which has extolled the virtues of the RIA to great length in recent years. The company's vision for AIR (Adobe Integrated Runtime)-driven applications are a case in point, and the Adobe website has the following information explaining the installation process for these applications once they have been engineered:

"The seamless install feature lets you provide a link in a web page that lets the user install an AIR application by simply clicking the link. If the AIR runtime is not installed, the user is given the option to install it. The seamless install feature also lets users install the AIR application without downloading the AIR file to their machine."

It is precisely this ease of use that has caused some of the most pertinent concerns. The reason this easy install has the potential to cause anxiety is that with one click, you can bring an entire application into being within your machine. With as little thought as is needed to click a link, even those already stored within your Favourites folder, a potentially malicious collection of bots, viruses and malware could be headed in your direction, hellbent on creating trouble.

In response to these points, Adobe's platform evangelist Andrew Shorten said, "We take the security aspects of both the AIR runtime and the end user very seriously. For the end user, installing an AIR application is similar to installing any OS-native application, and thus we recommend only installing applications from known and trusted sources. AIR provides information about the application, its publisher

and the level of risk to the user during the installation process, enabling the user to make an informed decision about installing the application. Publishers are encouraged to sign their application using a digital certificate, and applications which are not signed will display clear warning information to the user prior to install."

#### YOU OUGHT TO BE CERTIFIED!

Some pundits have put forward the notion that developer certification is the answer, and that if we are able to force the developer fraternity (and sorority – sorry ladies!) into a registered set of approved individuals, then the RIA world will be a safer place to be involved in. This suggestion, while worthwhile in some senses, has little practical chance of getting off the ground. Not only does it work in opposition to the very idea of open-source proliferation, which most companies in this space support, it would ultimately lead to a limitation of Web 2.0 applications – something of a nightmare, that none of them wants to see.

Perhaps a more tangible criticism is the loss of the browser sandbox. This November, Eric Lai of Computerworld reported comments attributed to Ron Schmeltzer, an analyst at ZapThink, "The current generation of spyware, virus and malware detection products have no visibility into running (Adobe) AIR programs. Because of this, there is such a high possibility for malicious AIR applications – which are no longer security-restricted to the browser sandbox and are free to manipulate local machines – to spread into the wild," according to Schmeltzer.

Responding to this, Adobe's Andrew





Robin Hollington, director of consulting for Peapod

"The difference is that AIR applications are permanent and not merely active when viewing a particular page"

Shorten proclaimed, "In relation to the AIR runtime, we have actually provided two separate sandboxes, which we believe protects the end user from the risk of malicious code execution while still allowing web developers to build great desktop experiences. The application sandbox enables access to all the AIR APIs (and hence local system access) but disallows JavaScript functionality that poses a security risk, while the classic sandbox behaves just like the browser sandbox, allowing all web content to be displayed but without access to the underlying operating system."

#### GETTING REAL

So how does it break down in the real world, and what are companies who are implementing AIR applications doing about the central security concerns? "At the moment, users rarely download and install whole new applications - in a corporate environment, this may even be blocked by firewalls and group policies. However, users frequently download and run active content in the form of JavaScript, Java, Flash, ActiveX and so on. The Adobe AIR environment is similar; once AIR is installed, active content can be downloaded and run. The difference is that AIR applications are permanent and not merely active when viewing a particular page," said Robin Hollington, director of consulting for internet and information security company Peapod.

"While this doesn't create any new types of problem, it will awaken old issues. How do you tell whether an AIR application is okay or malicious? Is this

a new arena for the arms race between virus writers and anti-virus vendors? How will the user tell the difference between a banking application from Barclays and one from Phishing4Profit? What was wrong with downloading a picture viewer from BotnetsRUs? If the AIR application interacts across the internet with a server, this is an opportunity for the web developer to be lazy. Web applications cannot rely solely on input validation at the user's end. Client applications (whether AIR or Java) can be subverted or replaced. The application at the web-server end must protect itself and perform its own input validation," added Peapod's Hollington.

#### GEARING UP TO GOOGLE

Looking further afield into the not-so-distant future, also emerging in this space is Google's Gears (still in beta also) an open-source browser extension that, according to Google, "enables web applications to provide offline functionality using the JavaScript APIs to store and serve application resources locally, store data locally in a fully searchable relational database and run asynchronous JavaScript to improve application responsiveness." Google Gears claims to be free of security concerns due to it being, "inherently different, for instance executing in a web browser, so it is therefore subject to the normal security constraints of a browser-based application."

#### TIME FOR TOUGHER TESTING

Despite the fact that testing and debugging processes often share equally unpopular status with many

developers, it seems clear that as these online applications take hold, far more rigorous testing procedures will need to be put in place. Don't be fooled, it's not just initial testing and fault detection either; it's about a total application life cycle approach to testing. If you visit a typical application life cycle management (ALM) vendor's website - Serena or Borland to give you two examples - guess what they are talking about? You got it - ALM for a Web 2.0 world. The wider message that you can infer from this (aside from the fact that they are all clearly using the marketing opportunity to jump on board and get a firm grip on the Web 2.0 bandwagon) is that it's obvious there is a real need for greater management, meticulous modelling and morals when developing for online.

A more moralistic approach to testing and even pre-design-specification planning may sound rather fluffy to you at first. But even vendors well-known for their automated testing tools stress the importance of the human element when thinking about online application security. Does your Web 2.0 application really present a robust proposition for all users - or have you left a trap door open that a hacker could exploit if they wanted to? Dr. Adam Kolawa, CEO of testing-tools company Parasoft Corporation, believes in the power of our own personal grey matter; "As systems evolve and become more complex, developers are more wary about making changes to code. If developers want their code to stand the test of time, development teams need it



"RIA's and the wider world of Web 2.0 applications are blurring the definition of what it means to write source code"



Perforce Software's Dave Robertson

to be reviewed not only automatically, but also with the finest analysis instrument of all – the human brain," insisted Kolawa.

#### HIDDEN HORRORS

Predictably, as it would inevitably, the question of trust arises here. To what degree should users place the sanctity of their precious data in the firing line to an as yet unproven new breed of applications? You might very reasonably answer that users should hold back. Do you want further proof? Suddenly we're asking web developers to be security experts (or at least do something like take a crash course in the subject) and are they going to do this? Ask yourself the question.

"Any RIA, web 2.0 application or mashup will only be as good as the code it's written in. The fact is that some applications being developed and downloaded across the globe are being written using sloppy, substandard code, which can easily be used to a hacker's advantage. The sandbox should act as a barrier between the PC and browser (but that option doesn't always exist now in the Web 2.0 world) so vulnerabilities may now be more quickly exploited," said Richard Millett, chief security officer at IT training-course specialists, Firebrand Training.

"Any code for RIAs must be written to a recognised standard, and the code validated on its return to the server. Without rigorous checking, developers risk opening up a gateway for major security breaches. Additionally, there's a question of trust because of the way in which RIAs work. Unlike a typical web page, it's very difficult to see where information is going to or coming from. Although 99 per cent of applications

could be completely clear of problems, the fact that this information is hidden could leave applications vulnerable to attack," added Millett.

An even more holistic view of the control levels now needed for web-driven applications might suggest that we should think further than sophisticated testing tools and traditional security procedures – and also consider software configuration management (SCM) controls.

"RIAs and the wider world of Web 2.0 applications are blurring the definition of what it means to write source code. With RIAs, developers will now be creating code using tools that produce code in a wide range of binary formats. Given the fact that many people now believe that RIAs are destined to be the next generation's dominant application-development form, companies looking to develop them will need to have an agile SCM system that can cope with them," said Perforce Software's European director of operations, Dave Robertson.

The momentum dragging us towards the internet as the all-powerful portal for all our interactive experiences was surely never envisaged during the web's birth. But as sophisticated as we may already consider ourselves to be today, the journey is not smooth and it will not come with sacrifices, trade-offs and compromises. Put simply, it will pay dividends to be careful.

"At the end of the day, the RIA explosion really is all about people dying to get back to the desktop. People are craving the richness and power we gave up when we went to the web and the apparent safety of the browser's sandbox. That richness and its productivity are addictive and users will

gladly hand over their security worries, if they never even had them, to get to it back," said Dave Wolf, vice president of consulting for Washington DC-based Cynergy Systems.

"You only have to look at the popularity of browser extensions, toolbars, IM clients and such to see that users will jump back to the desktop on a moment's notice when it means richness, productivity and power. The desktop is where users want to be and at the end of the day, they will get themselves there, regardless of the risks," added Wolf.

#### CALCUTTA CALAMITY

As we migrate towards this new breed of applications born out of our desire to adopt web centrality wherever possible, a clear-cut cure for all security solution is very unlikely to emerge overnight. Perhaps for now then we should look for an opportunity to build applications with backwards compatibility to legacy AJAX models, and to those that reduce the risk associated with exposing system APIs to data beyond the developer's control. The potential alternative is a plethora of Web 2.0 applications that, with just a click, could nestle themselves nicely into your machine's ecosystem and set about building internal meltdown.

So where do we go from here with Web 2.0, mashed-up API data streams and RIAs? In short, we need more just a little more control and management please – Adobe's security White Paper puts it quite nicely. "For many developers, RIAs are a fascinating and powerful playground. If code and data are the children playing there, you should at least have the means to make them play nicely."







THE BRIEF

ON THE CD

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

TIME REQUIRED

SKILL LEVEL

Tutorial files:  
SWXFiles.zip


Create a simple Flickr application  
using Flash CS3 and SWX

One hour

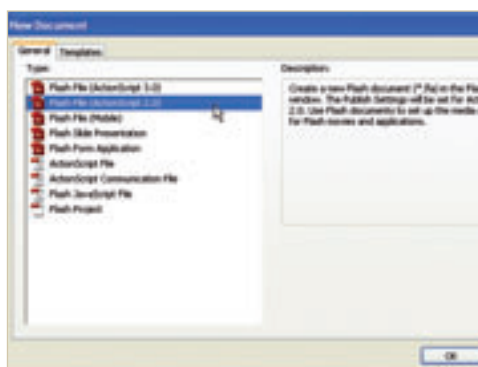


# Let's talk SWX, baby!

LEARN HOW EASY IT IS TO CREATE A FLICKR APPLICATION USING SWX

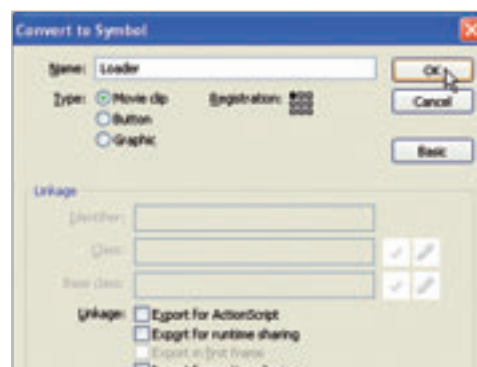
 **HAVE YOU HEARD** the buzz around this new API called SWX? The creator of SWX, Aral Balkan, was at the recent Flash on the Beach conference, and until speaking with him, we didn't realise the power and speed of this API. Like all APIs, they are meant to make it easy for you to connect to a data source and manipulate the data. In this tutorial, you will be using SWX to connect to the Flickr API. Now, if you're a developer, the Flickr API will not seem very daunting, but if you

are a novice or a designer with no real coding background, just looking at the documentation is enough to scare the living daylights out of you. Balkan decided to create an API that is a wrapper around the Flickr and other APIs such as Twitter, to make it easy for all developers and designers to create mashup tools. For example, you are able to view the most recent photo added to Flickr by writing a few lines of code. Let's start this tutorial using that example.



## 01 Setting the stage

Open up Flash and create a new Flash document. Make sure this is a Flash File (ActionScript 2.0) because this current version of SWX only supports ActionScript 2 – the new version is expected in the new year to support ActionScript 3. Save your file as 'example1.fla'.



## 02 Loader

Name the first layer 'assets', select the stage and draw a square. Now select the square and make it a Movie Clip (F8 or Menu>Modify>Convert to Symbol and select Movie clip). Call it 'Loader'. Open the Properties panel and select the square. Call it 'loader' in the <instance name> field.



## 03 Image holder

Now you have to create a Movie Clip to hold your loaded image. Like you have just done for the loader Movie Clip, create a new Movie Clip, calling it 'image' and also using the same name in the <instance name> field. You should now have two Movie Clips like above.





## TECHNIQUE

### More on SWX

Because SWX has been so popular, let's look at some of the resources that are following in the same footsteps



#### 01 SWX Explorer

As well as creating SWX, Aral has built SWX Explorer. Explorer helps you with the APIs giving you all the method calls and input fields for the parameters, with an easy-to-use interface. Find it at <http://swxformat.org/php/explorer/>.



#### 02 SWX JAVA

Another new site has come to life for SWX, helping all those people with Java knowledge. SWX Java will run on standard servlet engines like Tomcat and JBoss. It is also fully compatible with the SWX ActionScript Library. Visit <http://swxjava.org/>.



#### 03 SWX Ruby

SWX Ruby is another website with a fast-growing userbase. It helps 'Rubyists' to create mashups using the SWX APIs, and also mobile applications and other data-driven sites. Check it out at <http://swxruby.org/>.



#### 13 Fancy example

We'll now take what you have learnt and create another FLA file. Begin by setting up the stage and background as above. We have placed some sample files for you to play with and add on the cover disc. Add another layer and call it 'buttons'.



#### 15 Viewer

Import pol.png from the cover disc. Make it a Movie Clip called 'holder' in the <instance name>. Inside that, create a Movie Clip called 'image'. In the <instance name> Mask of the image and loader layers, create a loading animation to sit under the image layer, visible until an image is loaded.

#### 17 Button code

Create onPress Events for both the buttons and rotate through the images on each press, also updating the text field. Navigate back to the stage and add a new layer. Place a Dynamic text field on it. Call the text field 'name\_txt'.

```
next_btn.onPress = function() {
    if (currentImage < maxImages-1) {
        currentImage++;
    } else {
        currentImage = 0;
    }
    holder.image.loadMovie(evtObj.result.
photo[currentImage].src);
    name_txt.text = currentImage+" -
"+evtObj.result.photo[currentImage].alt;
};

previous_btn.onPress = function() {
    if (currentImage != 0) {
        currentImage--;
    } else {
        currentImage = maxImages-1;
    }
    holder.image.loadMovie(evtObj.result.
photo[currentImage].src);
    name_txt.text = currentImage+" -
"+evtObj.result.photo[currentImage].alt;
};
```



#### 14 Buttons

Next, add two buttons to the stage. We chose one from the default library (Menu>Windows>Common Libraries>Buttons). Rotate the button on the left and name the button on the left 'previous\_btn' and on the right 'next\_btn' in the <instance name> field under Properties.

#### 16 ActionScript

Add the code below to the Actions panel. Here, you have some new variables which will control which image is viewed and also the maximum amount of images to load. You will also see an object which holds the image data, and lastly a new Dynamic text field assignment.

```
import org.swxformat.SWX;
var currentImage:Number = 0;
var maxImages:Number = 10;
var evtObj:Object;
evtObj = new Object();
var swx:SWX = new SWX();
swx.gateway = "http://swxformat.org/php/swx.
php";
swx.encoding = "GET";
swx.debug = true;
var callParameters:Object =
{serviceClass:"Flickr", method:"swxPhotosGetR
ecent", args:["small", null, 10], result:[this,
resultHandler]};
swx.call(callParameters);
function resultHandler(evt:Object) {
    evtObj = evt;
    holder.image.loadMovie(evtObj.result.
photo[0].src);
    name_txt.text = currentImage+" -
"+evtObj.result.photo[currentImage].alt;
}
```



#### 18 Preview

The file can be found on the cover disc called Example2. fla. Test your file; click your buttons to rotate through the images. You can add more images by changing the maxImages variable. Now you have had a look at what SWX can do with Flickr, try out some of the other APIs.







### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
flex\_.zip  
wwwroot\_.zip

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Upload files with Flex and ColdFusion, restricting file types and size

#### TIME REQUIRED

1.5 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Manage content with a Flex upload component

GET TO GRIPS WITH THE FILEREFERENCE CLASS AND UNDERSTAND HOW FLEX CAN UPLOAD FILES FROM CLIENT TO SERVER

**EVERY TIME WE** turn on our monitors, we see a site that is allowing a user to broadcast or manage content, whether its imagery with Flickr or videos on YouTube. Most content management systems for websites incorporate an uploader, thus removing the FTP necessity required to update files on a remote server. What we are going to do is create a Flex component to upload files from client to the server, but with a touch of jazz. We are going to step in and fill the

gaps that conventional uploaders leave wide open, eg, lack of progress reporting, static usage-guide information and plain appearance. In the tutorial, we will even show you how to conveniently organise files on the server according to file type. For the component's CSS, view <http://examples.adobe.com/flex2/consulting/styleexplorer/Flex2StyleExplorer.html>, copying code to a CSS file named styles.css in the server CSS directory.





## YOUR EXPERT

**Simon Bailey** is a freelance Flash and Flex developer whose site is based at <http://newtricks.com>. Main areas of expertise are building rich internet applications using Flash, Flex and ColdFusion. He is also involved in Flash Video applications and Flash Media Server.

# Manage content with a Flex upload component



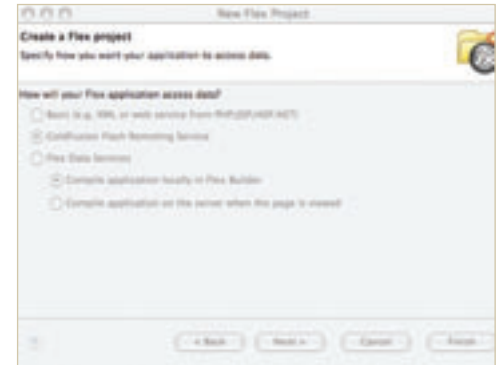
## 01 Server options

We are using ColdFusion as a local server for testing and for the server side script to handle the upload. View [http://livedocs.adobe.com/flex/201/html/wwhelp/wwhimpl/common/html/wwhelp.htm?context=LiveDocs\\_Book\\_Parts&file=17\\_Networking\\_and\\_communications\\_173\\_6.html](http://livedocs.adobe.com/flex/201/html/wwhelp/wwhimpl/common/html/wwhelp.htm?context=LiveDocs_Book_Parts&file=17_Networking_and_communications_173_6.html) for a PHP script as an alternative to ColdFusion.



## 02 Server directory structure

In the server root directory (typically wwwroot in ColdFusion), create a new folder named 'FlexUploader', and then create a document structure as shown above. This is where our server side script, published Flex files (ie SWFs) and uploaded images will be stored. Ensure you follow the document naming and structure exactly.



## 03 Flex project settings

In Flex Builder 2, select File>New>Flex Project and select ColdFusion Flash Remoting Service. Browse to your ColdFusion root folder and enter the Root URL to the FlexUploader. Next, use the Project name 'FlexUploader' and ensure Use default location is checked. For Output Folder, browse to the server-based FlexUploader.

## 04 Flex directory structure

Right-click the FlexUploader folder in the Navigator panel in File>New>Folder and name it 'view'. Repeat this process twice with names 'components' and 'css'. Drag the components folder into the view folder and right-click it to select New>MXML Component. Name it 'UploadForm', set Based on to Panel, Layout to absolute and Width to 165.

## 05 Add UploadForm

In the main FlexUploader.mxml file, add a new XML name space to the Application tag named 'view', directing it to our View>Components directory. Use the wild card \* symbol to include all the components contained within the components folder. Then add the new custom component to the main application with the ID uploadForm.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<mx:Application xmlns:mx="http://www.adobe.com/2006/mxml"
layout="horizontal"
xmlns:view="view.components.*">
<mx:Style source="css/styles.css" />
<view:UploadForm id="uploadForm"/>
</mx:Application>
```

## 06 Visual components

Load the UploadForm component and switch to Design view. Select Window>Components and open the Controls folder. Drag a label to the stage and assign the following values: Text – 'File Name'; x – 10 and y – 10. Repeat twice, with the values 'File Size', 19 and 36 followed by 'File Type', 16, and 62. Now switch back to the Source view.

## 07 Further visual

Let's see how to add further controls using code. Copy the below code; the labels we added in Design view are declared as Label tags with the prefix mx, which is the default namespace for Flex-built applications. The ControlBar is a layout component, which allows us to add controls to the bottom of the Panel.

```
<mx:Label x="10" y="10" text="File Name:"/>
<mx:Label x="19" y="36" text="File Size:"/>
<mx:Label x="16" y="62" text="File Type:"/>
<mx:Label x="83" y="10" id="f_name"
width="256"/>
<mx:Label x="83" y="36" id="f_size"
width="256"/>
<mx:CheckBox x="87" y="62" id="image_cb"
label="Image" click="assignFileType( event )"/>
<mx:ControlBar>
<mx:Button label="Browse" id="browse_btn"
click="submit( MODE_BROWSE )"/>
<mx:Button label="Upload"
id="upload_btn" click="submit( MODE_UPLOAD )"
enabled="{ mode==MODE_UPLOAD }"/>
<mx:Button label="Cancel"
id="cancel_btn" click="cancelUpload()"/>
<mx:ProgressBar id="p_bar"
labelPlacement="center" trackHeight="8"
mode="manual" height="21"/>
</mx:ControlBar>
</mx:Panel>
```

## 08 FileReference class

In the UploadForm component, enter the code below. The FileReference class is the main driving force for uploading and downloading files between a client and a server. Create a FileReference object named 'fr' and use new FileReference() to create a new instance of the class. Use the FileReferenceList class for multiple file uploads.

```
import flash.net.FileReference;
import mx.controls.*;
```

## 09 Class variables

Add the below class properties within the script tags. These are all private attributes, so are only accessible within the UploadForm class. We define private static constants which are run once when the class is first loaded – this is because we do not expect these values to change. Change the UPLOAD\_URL to your server.

```
/**
 * Change to location of fileUpload.cfm on
 * localhost or remote server!
 */
private static const UPLOAD_URL:String =
"http://localhost:8101/cfusion/FlexUploader/
cfc/fileUpload.cfm";
// Add further file types if required
private static const IMAGE:String = "image";
// Define mode types
private static const MODE_BROWSE:String =
"modeBrowse";
private static const MODE_UPLOAD:String =
"modeUpload";
// Set maximum file size for upload
private static var maxFileSize:Number = 1000;

private var fr:FileReference;
private var ff:FileFilter;
private var filetype:String;
private var armed:Boolean;

[Bindable] public var mode:String;
```

## 10 Add modes

For control over the user's interaction with the component, we will use the mode variable we created. There are two modes directly associated with our buttons, strings `MODE_UPLOAD` and `MODE_BROWSE`. Set the mode value by passing either string as a parameter to the `submit()` method when the browse or upload buttons are clicked.

```
private static const MODE_BROWSE:String =
"modeBrowse";
private static const MODE_UPLOAD:String =
"modeUpload";
[Bindable] public var mode:String;
```

## 13 File type restriction

For this application, we are restricting the file type for upload to image formats only. Enter the code below. The method is called when the `CheckBox` component has interaction. The switch method evaluates the `CheckBox` ID to determine which file type users intend to upload.

```
private function assignFileType( e:Event ):
void
{
switch ( e.currentTarget.id )
{
case "image_cb":
var selected:Boolean = ( image_cb.selected )
? true : false;
if( selected != false )
{
armed = true;
filetype = "image";
p_bar.label = "*** Click
Browse ***";
filterFileType();
} else {
armed = false;
}
break;
}
}
```

## 16 Recap

Visual components are set up, and restricted interaction ensures a file type is selected first. Assign a mode value, then run the necessary action to either open a system browser window or call an upload method upon the button being clicked. Create a new instance and assign listeners to the `FileReference` class. Filter the file type to image only.

## 11 Initiate the component

Within the `Panel` tag at the top of the script, add creation `Complete="initApp()"`. Follow the code below, which will reset the mode variable to an empty value, put our first set of instructions into the progress bar label field, create a new instance of the `FileReference` class and call the `addListeners()` method.

```
private function initApp():void
{
mode = "";
p_bar.label = "*** Select File Type
***";
fr = new FileReference();
addListeners();
}
```

## 14 filterFileType

Our `filterFileType` method utilises the `FileFilter` class to restrict the file type displayed in the system browser window. We create an instance named `ff` and will filter file types to images only. We can easily add another `FileFilter` for another file type here and add further checkboxes to account for these new filters.

```
private function filterFileType():void
{
switch ( filetype )
{
case "image":
ff = new FileFilter
("Images (*.jpg;
*.jpeg; *.gif; *.png)", "*.jpg; *.jpeg; *.gif;
*.png");
break;
}
}
```

## 17 Open browse window

Copy the below code to call the browse method from the `FileReference` class; if successful, it will open a system browser window. Pass the file filter array to restrict the files accessible for upload. If a user tries to run the `FileReference.browse()` method with a system window already open, `IllegalOperationError` will catch the error.

```
private function openBrowseWindow():void
{
try
{
fr.browse([ff]);
}
catch ( illegalOperation:
IllegalOperationError )
{
Alert.show( String(illegalOperation.
type),"illegal operation error",0 );
}
}
```

## 12 Track upload events

The `FileReference` class dispatches Events at certain stages of the upload process. We can listen out for these Events by assigning Event Listeners to our instance of the class. We will listen out for cancelling of the upload, selecting of the file in the system browser, input/output errors, upload progress and upload complete.

```
private function addListeners():void
{
fr.addEventListener( Event.CANCEL,
cancelHandler );
fr.addEventListener( Event.SELECT,
selectHandler );
fr.addEventListener( IOErrorEvent.
IO_ERROR, ioErrorHandler );
fr.addEventListener( ProgressEvent.
PROGRESS, progressHandler );
fr.addEventListener( Event.COMPLETE,
completeHandler );
}
```

## 15 Build the submit method

Assign the passed parameter to the mode variable, then see if the variable `armed` isn't true, which means a file type hasn't been selected. Set the mode to the button pressed.

```
private function submit( _mode:String ):void
{
mode = _mode;
if( armed != true )
{
Alert.show("Please select a file type!",
"ALERT", Alert.OK);
} else if ( mode == MODE_BROWSE )
{
openBrowseWindow();
} else if ( mode == MODE_UPLOAD )
{
uploadFile();
}
}
```

## 18 Selected file handler

The user selects a file from the browser window that fires the select event, calling the `selectHandler` method. Convert the file size into kilobytes and grab the file name.

```
private function selectHandler(event:Event):
void
{
var fileSize:Number = Math.round(
fr.size/1024 );
f_name.text = fr.name;
f_size.text = String(fileSize)+"kb";
if( fileSize <= maxFileSize )
{
mode = MODE_UPLOAD;
p_bar.label = "*** Click
Upload ***";
} else {
Alert.show( String("FILE
SIZE TOO LARGE!\n\nPlease select a file
smaller than "+ fileSize + "kb"), "ALERT",
Alert.OK );
}
}
```



## 19 File size limit

Remember the variable `maxFileSize`? Using an if conditional, run a check on the file size. If it's within the limit set in `maxFileSize`, change mode to `MODE_UPLOAD` and change the dynamic instructions. If it exceeds the file size limit, an alert pops up telling the user it's too big.

```
if( fileSize <= maxFileSize )
{
    mode = MODE_UPLOAD;
    p_bar.label = "Click
Upload ***";
} else {
    Alert.show( String("FILE
SIZE TO LARGE!\n\nPlease select a file
smaller than "+ fileSize + "kb"), "ALERT",
Alert.OK );
}
```

## 20 Upload, yo!

`uploadFile()` creates a new instance of the `URLRequest` class to call our ColdFusion script handling the file upload. To send the file type variable, utilise `URLRequest.method` and `URLRequest.data`, and send using the POST method. Call the upload method passing our `URLRequest` instance.

```
private function uploadFile():void
{
    var request:URLRequest = new URLRequest();
    request.url = UPLOAD_URL;
    var params:URLVariables = new
URLVariables();
    params.ftype = filetype;
    request.method = URLRequestMethod.
POST;
    request.data = params;
    fr.upload( request );
}
```

## 21 Upload progress

While uploading, the `ProgressEvent` is dispatched. Using the `setProgress()` method on the progress bar component, pass two parameters obtained from the dispatched progress Event, the amount of bytes loaded and the total bytes – this moves the tracker accordingly. Then perform a simple calculation to view number statistics.

```
private function progressHandler( event:
ProgressEvent ):void
{
    p_bar.setProgress( event.bytesLoaded,event.
bytesTotal );
    p_bar.label = "Uploading " + Math.
round( event.bytesLoaded / 1024 ) + " kb of
" + Math.round( event.bytesTotal / 1024 ) +
" kb ";
}
```

## 22 Reset the uploader

When uploaded, display an alert and reset the uploader. Now build a method to tackle clicking of the cancel button, handle a cancel event from within the browser window, deal with an input/output error and create a method to reset the whole component to its original state.

```
private function cancelUpload():void
{
```

## IN DETAIL

### ColdFusion server side script

Now we have the Flex component all set up and ready for action, let's build the ColdFusion server side code for handling the upload from the client

WHEN WE CALL the upload method on the `FileReference` class, the file is uploaded using the HTTP POST method. We will now create a ColdFusion server script to handle the upload. On the server within the folder `cfc`, create a new ColdFusion file in your chosen software and name it `'fileUpload.cfm'`. View the images adjacent to see the two steps to the code completion.

Pass the file type from Flex using the `URLVariable` class, and name the variable `'ftype'`. This variable can be accessed in ColdFusion from within the Form scope, eg, `Form.ftype`, and assigned to a locally scoped variable for use within the ColdFusion page by typing `<cfset FileExt=Form.ftype>`. Our uploader component is only currently going to pass 'image' as a file type, so run a simple if conditional to check if the variable `FileExt` is 'image' – if so, execute the `cfile` tag.

The `cfile` tag handles the file transfer from Flex and expects certain parameters, the first being action, which for our application is obviously upload. The `FileField` from Flex is `Filedata` and we set the destination for the file to be uploaded to use `ExpandPath`. `ExpandPath` returns an absolute platform-appropriate string to a designated folder. Using dot notation, step one folder up from the location of `fileUpload.cfm` and navigate through the uploads folder to images. Remember, this folder is only used if the value of `FileExt` is 'image'. Our final parameter is if there is already a file of the same name in this location – overwrite the existing file. Other options are to `MakeUnique` (makes the file name unique), `Skip` or `throw` and `Error`. Both of the latter do not save the file. Finally, set another if conditional that if `FileExt` is not 'image', simply save the image in the uploads folder.

On a final note, for uploading and downloading files, remember the SWF can only access files from its own domain. To access outside of this domain, a cross-domain.xml file is required on the server you wish to gain access to.

```
<!-- Create a variable to hold the file
type passed from Flex -->
<cfset FileExt=Form.ftype>
```

Assign a local variable for the file extension type

```
<!-- Check for a image file extension
-->
<cfif FileExt IS "image">

    <!-- Upload the file to
the images folder within the uploads
directory.
    if it already
exists over write the existing file -->
    <cfile
action="upload" filefield="Filedata"
destination="#ExpandPath('../uploads/
images')#" nameconflict="OVERWRITE" />

<cfelse>

    <!-- Default to upload folder
-->
    <cfile
action="upload" filefield="Filedata"
destination="#ExpandPath('../uploads')#"
nameconflict="OVERWRITE" />

</cfif>
```

Determine set actions dependent on the file extension type

```
fr.cancel():
    resetUploader();
}
private function cancelHandler( event:Event ):
void
{
    Alert.show( String(event.type),"Download
Status",0 );
}
private function ioErrorHandler(event:
IOErrorEvent):void
{
    Alert.show( String(event),"IOError",0 );
    resetUploader();
}
private function completeHandler( event:Event ):
void
{
    var file:FileReference = FileReference( event.
target );
    var fileURL:String = file.name;
    Alert.show( String(fileURL),"File Uploaded", Alert.
OK );
    resetUploader();
}
```

```

}
private function resetUploader():void
{
    mode = "";
    armed = false;
    f_name.text = "";
    f_size.text = "";
    p_bar.label = "Select File Type ***";
    p_bar.maximum = 0;
    p_bar.minimum = 0;
    image_cb.selected = false;
}
```

## 23 Flex bible

Adobe Press released a book titled *Adobe Flex 2 Training from the Source* by Jeff Tapper, Matt Boles, James Talbot, Ben Elmore and Mike Labriola. This is an awesome book for learning Flex basics right up to deployment of a full-scale advanced application. Chapter 17 describes the file-upload process for a component integrated into a complete RIA. Check it out!



### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

Tutorial files:  
N/A

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Building a text video player using  
Microsoft's Silverlight RIA platform

#### TIME REQUIRED

2 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Make your words move with Silverlight effects

USE MICROSOFT'S FLASH EQUIVALENT TO BUILD A TEXT SPECIAL EFFECT THAT IS SURE TO ADD GLAMOUR TO ANY SITE OR PAGE TEMPLATE

 **MICROSOFT'S SILVERLIGHT** IS its first step into the world of rich internet applications. Widely seen as a competitor to Flash, Silverlight builds on the XAML graphics language delivered with Windows Vista and version 3 of its .NET framework. The initial release of Silverlight is focused on high-definition video, and uses the same VC1 HD video codec used by HD DVD. We'll be using Silverlight to build a web-based HD video player – something that YouTube is yet to deliver!

We'll take advantage of the recently released Visual Studio 2008 to build our video application, as JavaScript is now a first-class language. You'll also need a copy of the Silverlight SDK, which can be downloaded from the Silverlight Tools and Resources page at [www.microsoft.com/silverlight/tools.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/silverlight/tools.aspx). You can add a set of ASP.NET Silverlight controls using the ASP Futures package, which is a free download from the same page.





## YOUR EXPERT

**Simon Bisson** built chunks of Web 2.0 too soon for the rest of the world, and now explores the latest web technologies for *Web Designer*. Silverlight is the latest tool to be found plugged into his browser and development tools.

# Make your words move with Silverlight effects



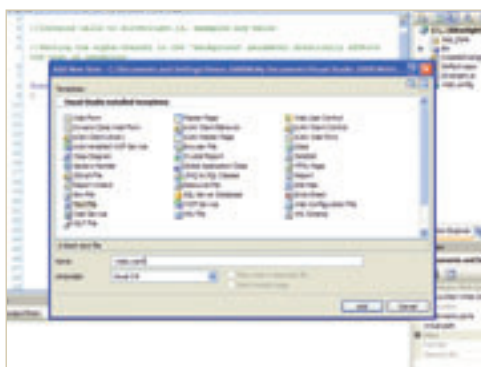
## 01 Getting started

Once you've downloaded and installed the ASP.NET Futures and Silverlight SDK, open Visual Studio 2008 and start to create a new website using the project wizards. Use the ASP.NET AJAX Futures Web Site template for your site, and choose Visual C# for any server side code.

## 04 Load the Silverlight plug-in

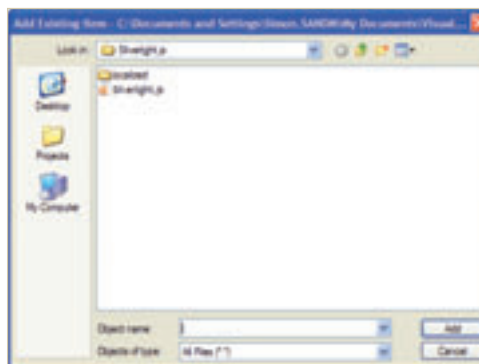
Next, add the code that will load the plug-in. First add a blank div to your HTML body and give it an appropriate name. We'll call ours 'silverlightVideoHost'. This is then used by a section of JavaScript to call a function which will open the Silverlight plug-in at the div.

```
<body>
<div id="silverlightVideoHost"></div>
<script type="text/javascript">
createSilverlightVideo();
</script>
</body>
```



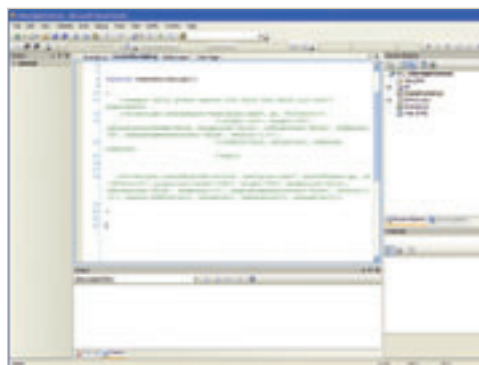
## 07 Adding an XAML file

We next need to add the XAML file for our player to the project, so use Visual Studio to add a new text file. XAML is an XML-based language, so all you need to do is name the file appropriately – in this case, 'video.xaml'. Use the Add New Item dialog to add the file to our website project.



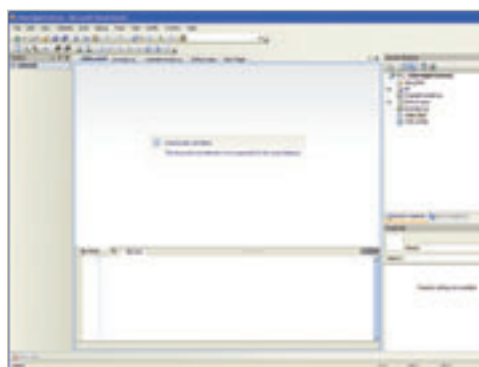
## 02 Add the JavaScript libraries

Silverlight SDK includes the key JavaScript library you'll need. In the Solution Explorer, right-click on the website and choose Add Existing Item. Navigate to the Silverlight SDK's install directory, then drill down to the Tools folder and click to import Silverlight.js and CreateSilverlight.js.



## 05 Editing CreateSilverlight.js

Open the CreateSilverlight.js file that we imported. Microsoft has used it to give us an example of how we can write our own Silverlight loader. Note that the key component of the Silverlight object is an XAML file, which we can build using Microsoft Expression's design tools.



## 08 Editing XAML in VS 2008

Visual Studio 2008 comes with a built-in XAML editing tool, so you can design XAML files and see their contents without having to reload the files in your browser. Open the video.xaml file we created to start the editor. You'll see a text editor where you can edit the XAML code by hand.

## 03 Load the Silverlight libraries

We can now start to write our page code. Add two script blocks to the head block of your page. When the page runs, these will load and handle the heavy lifting of creating and placing the Silverlight plug-in into the browser. The CreateSilverlight.js library is currently a stub – we'll need to add code to it to define an application-specific plug-in.

```
<script type="text/javascript"
src="Silverlight.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript"
src="CreateSilverlight.js"></script>
```

## 06 Creating a Silverlight object

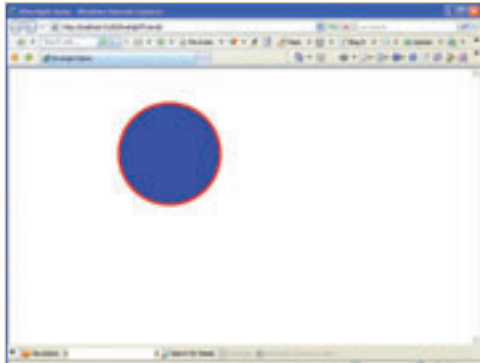
Create a 700 x 500px object at the SilverlightVideoHost div.

```
function createSilverlightVideo()
{
Silverlight.createObjectEx({
source: "video.xaml",
parentElement: document.getElementById("SilverlightVideoHost"),
id: "SilverlightVideo",
properties: {
width: '700',
height: '500',
inplaceInstallPrompt: true,
background: 'white',
framerate: '24',
version: '1.0'
},
events: {
onLoad: null
},
context: null));
}
if (!window.Silverlight)
window.Silverlight = {};
```

## 09 Creating test XAML

Test your Silverlight host code by writing simple XAML.

```
<Canvas
xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/
client/2007"
xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.
com/winfx/2006/xaml"
Width="700" Height="500"
Background="White"
x:Name="Page"
>
<Ellipse Height="200" Width="200"
Stroke="Red" StrokeThickness="5"
Fill="Blue" Canvas.Left="200" Canvas.Top="50"
/>
</Canvas>
```



## 10 Testing Silverlight

Inside Visual Studio, press F5. This launches the built-in debugger. Our application is served up by the built-in web server, and we can view it in any web browser. We've chosen to use IE7 here, though the Silverlight plug-in is also available for Firefox (as well as on OS X).



## 11 Silverlight Video

Silverlight is designed to make it easy to work with high-definition video. You'll need to find a source of WMV HD video, which you can make using Expression's Media Encoder (download a trial version from [www.microsoft.com/expression/products/overview.aspx?key=encoder](http://www.microsoft.com/expression/products/overview.aspx?key=encoder)).

## 12 Adding a media element

Making a basic media player in XAML is very simple, as it uses the element `MediaElement` to handle any media, with the `Source` property set to point to the media URL. Replace the contents of the video.xaml file with a `MediaElement`, and set its source to the location of your test video file.

```
<MediaElement Name="videoPlayer"
Source="myvideo.wmv" CanvasWidth="600"
Height="400" Canvas.Left="50" Canvas.
Top="50"/>
```

## IN DETAIL

### Silverlight 1.1

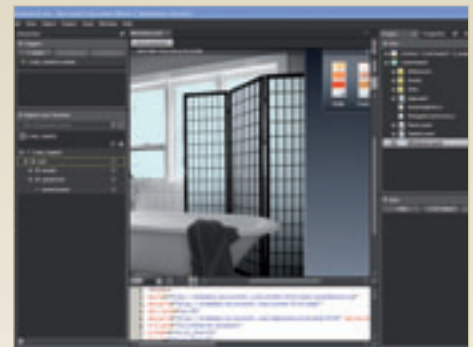
The current version of Silverlight is only the start of Microsoft's move into the world of RIAs. Silverlight 1.1 will add .NET support

THE NEXT VERSION of Silverlight is already being tested. Initially demonstrated at the Mix 07 web-development event in Las Vegas, Silverlight 1.1 is a very different beast from the initial release. While it's still based on XAML, it's moving away from using external JavaScript controls. That's because it includes a cut-down (but fully functional) version of Microsoft's .NET runtime.

Writing code inside Silverlight speeds things up considerably – there's a big difference between interpreted languages like JavaScript and the just-in-time compiler that works with .NET byte code. Microsoft is going beyond its usual Windows territory here too, as there will be a version of Silverlight 1.1 for OS X (and an open-source version called Moonlight from the team behind Mono and GNOME for Linux). You don't need to work with C# to build Silverlight 1.1 applications, as it supports Microsoft's Dynamic Language Runtime – so you can write code in Web 2.0-friendly languages like Ruby and Python.

Silverlight 1.0 is a capable tool – Silverlight 1.1 looks like it'll take things in a whole new direction, with desktop-style applications running inside a web browser. Your Silverlight applications will also be able to work with the HTML DOM – so they will be able to manipulate page content – and will even have limited access to the file system, so applications will be able to store up to 1MB of state in users' computers. There's also support for many popular Web 2.0 API technologies – including working with JSON. This should mean you won't have to change existing server applications to work with Silverlight 1.1, and it should be a drop-in replacement for AJAX users' interfaces.

Microsoft is working on a new version of its Expression Blend design tool for Silverlight 1.1, and Visual Studio Tools for Silverlight will allow you to build byte-code Silverlight applications for maximum speed. You'll even be able to debug Silverlight applications running on Macintoshes from Windows PCs.



Microsoft is pitching Expression Blend 2 as the Silverlight design tool. You can download a beta copy from Microsoft's website



You can use Silverlight 1.1 to build unconventional user interfaces and link them directly to back-end databases

## 13 Downloader object

Rather than putting in a direct link to a movie, use Silverlight's Downloader object to download media assets outside the player, then load them into the `MediaElement`. Add a new file to your application, `Page.xaml.js`, to hold the JavaScript we're using to control our Silverlight XAML.

## 14 Add the Downloader object

In `Page.xaml.js`, add the following code. This creates the Silverlight downloader object. As downloading a file is asynchronous, we'll also set up a set of Event Listeners to monitor the download progress (which can be used to build and run a progress bar) and to see when the download is finished.

```
SilverlightTutorial.Page = function()
{
}
```

```
SilverlightTutorial.Page.prototype =
{
    handleLoad: function(control,
userContext, rootElement)
    {
        this.control =
control;
        var downloader =
control.createObject("downloader");
        downloader.addEvent
tListener("downloadProgressChanged",
onDownloadProgressChanged);
        downloader.addEventLi
stener("completed", onCompleted);
        downloader.
open("GET", "myvideo.wmv");
        downloader.send();
    }
}
```



## 15 Creating a progress bar

We can use this snippet of XAML to give our Silverlight movie player a progress bar. The first `Rectangle` element draws a maroon rectangle, which we can dynamically resize. The second draws a white box, which we'll fill with the first. Finally we'll display some text to show users the percentage of the file that's downloaded.

```
<Canvas Canvas.Left="70" Canvas.Top="70">
    <Rectangle
        x:Name="progressRectangle"
        Canvas.Left="20"
        Height="10" Width="0"
        Fill="Maroon" />
    <Rectangle
        Canvas.Top="-1"
        Canvas.Left="19" Height="12"
        Width="402"
        StrokeThickness="2"
        Stroke="White" />
    <TextBlock
        x:Name="progressText"
        Canvas.Top="-4" Canvas.
        Left="230"
        Text="0%" FontSize="12"
        Foreground="White"/>
</Canvas>
```

## 18 Controlling the video

Now that we're able to download and play video, we can add basic video controls. Silverlight's `MediaElement` object supports Start, Stop and Pause – so we'll first add appropriate JavaScript to our `Page.xaml.js` code. We'll then need to tie this to some buttons. We can use standard JavaScript form controls (or ASP.NET controls) outside the Silverlight, or build appropriate buttons in our XAML. Type in the code below, then repeat it twice, replacing 'stop' with 'pause' and 'play'.

```
function media_stop(sender, args) {
    sender.findName("media").stop();
}
```



## 21 Vegas, baby!

Las Vegas' neon and bright lights are at the cutting-edge of lighting. The latest to feature are huge letters filled with shaped video screens, along with screens shaped to fit irregularly shaped buildings. We can use Silverlight's media tools to add similar effects to our web pages.

## 16 Drawing the progress bar

We can use the value of `sender.downloadProgress` to calculate the percentage of the download completed. This is then displayed as text, and used to change the width of the `progressRectangle` XAML object.

```
function onDownloadProgressChanged(sender,
    eventArgs)
{
    var plugin = sender.getHost();
    var percentage = Math.floor(sender.
        downloadProgress * 100);
    var progressText = plugin.content.findNam
        e("progressText");
    var progressRectangle = plugin.content.
        findName("progressRectangle");
    progressText.text = percentage + "%";
    progressRectangle.width = percentage *
        4;
}
```

## 19 Adding buttons

Here we're using XAML to create three simple grey buttons with rounded edges (our grey is actually gainsboro).

```
<Canvas MouseLeftButtonDown="media_stop"
    Canvas.Left="10" Canvas.Top="460">
    <Rectangle Stroke="Black"
        Height="30" Width="55" RadiusX="2"
        RadiusY="2" Fill="Gainsboro" />
    <TextBlock Canvas.Left="5" Canvas.
        Top="5">stop</TextBlock>
</Canvas>
```

```
<Canvas MouseLeftButtonDown="media
    pause"
    Canvas.Left="70" Canvas.Top="460">
    <Rectangle Stroke="Black"
        Height="30" Width="55" RadiusX="2"
        RadiusY="2" Fill="Gainsboro" />
    <TextBlock Canvas.Left="5" Canvas.
        Top="5">pause</TextBlock>
</Canvas>
```

```
<Canvas MouseLeftButtonDown="media
    begin"
    Canvas.Left="130" Canvas.Top="460">
    <Rectangle Stroke="Black"
        Height="30" Width="55" RadiusX="2"
        RadiusY="2" Fill="Gainsboro" />
    <TextBlock Canvas.Left="5" Canvas.
        Top="5">play</TextBlock>
</Canvas>
```

## 22 Working with VideoBrushes

Set the existing `MediaElement`'s `Opacity` to 0, then add the following XAML code to our canvas. This will create a text object that is filled with our downloaded video.

```
<TextBlock Canvas.Left="10" Canvas.Top="10"
    FontFamily="Verdana"
    FontSize="360" FontWeight="Bold">WD
</TextBlock.Foreground>
<VideoBrush SourceName="videoPlayer"
    Stretch="UniformToFill" />
</TextBlock.Foreground>
</TextBlock>
```

## 17 Finishing the download

Once the download has been finished, the `onCompleted` event is used to set the progress bar text to Done and then loads the video content into the video player. We do this by setting the `videoPlayer` XAML object's source to the contents of the download object. One advantage of this method is to make the player content-agnostic, so we can use JavaScript to pick and choose from a menu of videos.

```
function onCompleted(sender, eventArgs)
{
    var plugin = sender.getHost();
    var progressText = plugin.content.findNam
        e("progressText");
    progressText.text = "Done";
    var myVideoPlayer = plugin.content.
        findName("videoPlayer");
    myVideoPlayer.setSource(sender, "");
    myVideoPlayer.play();
}
```



## 20 Testing the movie

Launch the Silverlight page from Visual Studio using the local web server. You'll see the progress bar display until the movie is loaded, when it'll automatically start playing.

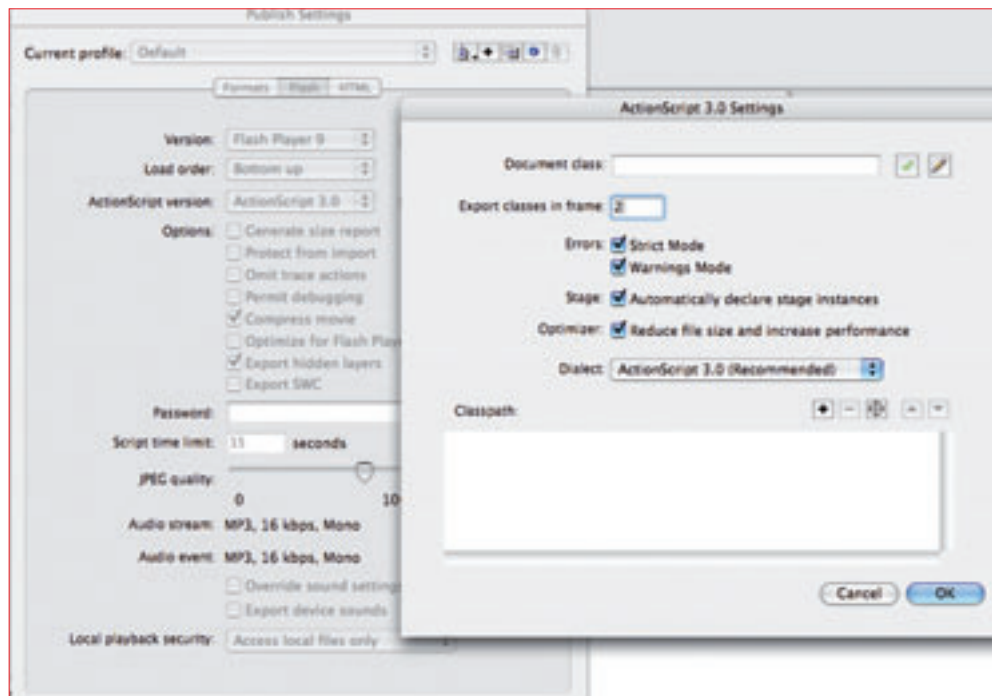
## 23 Final tweaks

We can now make some final tweaks, such as changing the background colour of the media player. Black is fine for standard video, but white works a lot better for our video text. It's also a good idea to blank out the progress rectangle. We can do this by setting its `Opacity` to 0 when the video file has been downloaded.

```
function onCompleted(sender, eventArgs)
{
    var plugin = sender.getHost();
    var progressText = plugin.content.findNam
        e("progressText");
    var progressRectangle = plugin.content.
        findName("progressRectangle");
    var progressBorder = plugin.content.
        findName("progressBorder");
    progressText.Opacity = "0";
    progressRectangle.Opacity = "0";
    progressBorder.Opacity = "0";
    var myVideoPlayer = plugin.content.
        findName("videoPlayer");
    myVideoPlayer.setSource(sender, "");
    myVideoPlayer.play();
}
```

# Tech Support Flash

It's all preloaders, window dimensions and troublesome buttons this time around as Mark Shufflebottom casts his trained eye over more techie technicalities...



Change the frame to export classes when using components. This allows you to insert a preloader to the first frame of your SWF without also having to load your component classes

## Q Preloader problems

In my Flash file I am using components on the timeline, and I need to put a preloader at the beginning of the SWF so that it will load all my content. However, I've got a slight problem in that the components load into Frame 1, so by the time my preloader kicks in, there is already a chunk of the SWF loaded. Is there any way I can get around this so that my preloader also loads these components? Thanks very much in advance!

Brad Nicholls

A The reason this is happening is because the components are set to export on Frame 1, regardless of whatever frame they are being used on. Don't worry though, it is fairly straightforward to change and everything should work, including your preloader, once the change has been made.

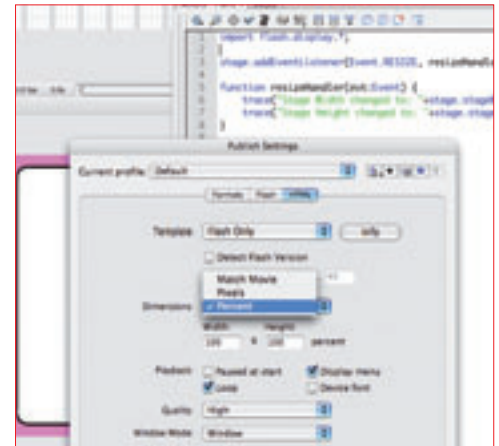
Once you've added a component to the stage, you should be able to see it in your library. Right-click on the component you are using in your library and from the drop-down menu that appears, choose Linkage. A

window should open and you can deselect the checkbox Export in first frame. Click OK and repeat this for any other components you might be using.

There is still one more setting to fix before this will work. At present, we have not set a frame to export our classes in, so there will be problems. Go to the File menu and choose Publish Settings. Click on the Flash tab in the top of the pop-up window. Click the Settings button and another Settings window will open. There is an option in here to Export classes in frame. Simply change this to a later frame, such as 2 or 3. Now click OK in both the Settings and Publish Settings windows. If you publish your SWF and test it on a server or using the bandwidth profiler, you should have a successful preloader that is able to load your components. No more problems!

## Q "When I'm sizing windows..."

Quite a lot of my sites feature centred content that pops up in boxes. I'm on a mission to find the centre of the stage and use that number.



ActionScript can detect if the stage has been resized, which is handy for checking if the size of the browser has changed when filling the browser with a full SWF

There seems to be more need for me to produce Flash content that fills the browser. I know how to publish a SWF full-size in my browser window, but I would like to know if the window has been resized and the problem is, I'm not quite sure how to do it...

Amy Bisset

A Well, you've come to the right place Amy. It is possible to check what the current Width and Height of the stage are, and it is easy to keep a track of this in Flash. First of all, create a new document and put something on the stage, just so that you can see it being filled properly. Create a new layer and then add the following code into it:

```
import flash.display.*;

stage.addEventListener(Event.RESIZE,
getResize);

function getResize(evt:Event) {
    trace("Stage Width changed to:
    "+stage.stageWidth);
    trace("Stage Height changed to:
    "+stage.stageHeight);
}
```

This code first of all imports the relevant Flash display class. Then we set up an Event Listener and attach this to the stage. When the RESIZE Event is triggered, it will call the function getResize. Then we need to actually declare this function 'getResize'. In this, we simply trace the new value of the stage Width and Height to the output window, but you can easily divide this in half to find the centre of the stage for your site content.

Test this now by pressing Ctrl+Enter. When you resize the stage, it should trace the new value to the output window. Just to make sure you are publishing this correctly, in the HTML, find Publish Settings under the File menu and click on the HTML tab in the pop-up window. Next, change the Dimensions drop-down

**"THERE ARE TWO PIECES OF INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR EVERY VIDEO: THE VIDEO ID AND THE SECONDARY ID"**





## 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

menu to Percent, then click the Publish button. Now you should be left with the fully working, scaling Flash file that detects when it's been resized of your dreams!

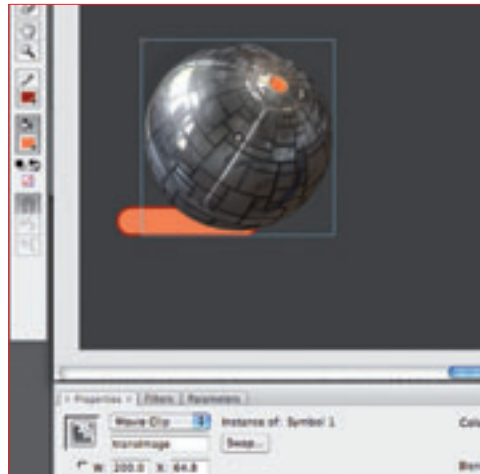
### Q Push the button

I have a button on my stage, and when I put something over it (in this case it is a transparent part of a bitmap), I'm wondering how you make the button work through it? At the moment, the transparent part of the PNG bitmap in front of it is blocking it. Any help that you can give me will be gratefully received, as it's slowly starting to eat away at my sanity!

Amy Hopkins

**A** Unfortunately, when one instance is placed over the top of another instance, the transparent area of the topmost instance still interferes with the lower instance. So as you so rightly put it, you cannot click your button. It's worth pointing out that if this simply was a PNG image over the top of a button, you could still click the button without any issue. The problem lies in that it is an instance of a symbol and contained within that symbol is the PNG, and symbol instances on the stage have a bounding box around them. For this example, let's call the button instance 'myButton' and the transparent image symbol named 'transImage'; then add the following code to a new layer to rectify the problem:

```
myButton.addEventListener(MouseEvent.CLICK, traceClick);
```



Transparent areas of symbols over buttons can cause problems for users being able to click the buttons, but a simple line of ActionScript will solve the problem

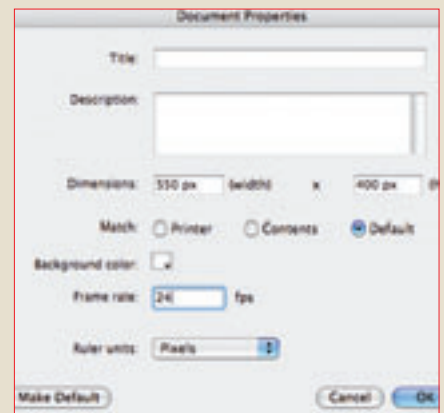
```
function traceClick(event:MouseEvent):void{
    trace("click");
}
transImage.mouseEnabled = false;
```

All we're doing is tracing the word 'click' in the output window, but you could easily replace this with the functionality you desire. The transImage instance is simply set to have mouseEnabled turned off. Test this as an SWF and you will be able to click your button. A simple bit of code to solve your problem – if only life issues were this easy to resolve!

## Expert advice

### Which frame rate is best

There is no easy solution to deciding which frame rate is the best for your Flash movie. A lot of Flash users that create animation find that using a frame rate of double the standard 12 (ie 24 if your maths is a bit dodgy) works well. The reason for this is that a lot of action can take place within 24 frames inside one second. Do not ever go over a 30-frames-per-second movie in Flash. Flash renders each frame live, and so pushing the frame rate up high will cause it to have problems in playing back. Usually the frame rate is the last reason a Flash site would ever run slow, and slow-running sites are usually the result of Flash having to compute too many Tweens or alpha fades.



Masks have their benefits but they can slow down your Flash file quite drastically, so consider other ways to avoid them

## Technique: Streaming YouTube for the client

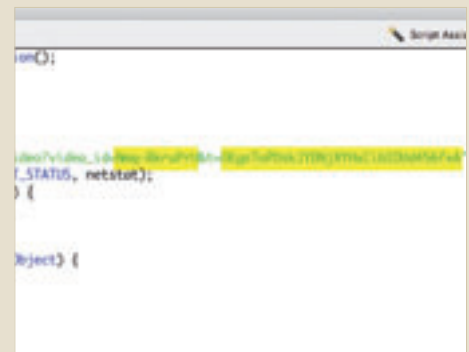
**Q** I have been asked by my client if I can load a YouTube video into a custom video application, as my client would like to use their existing videos on YouTube. This will save them tons of bandwidth, while at the same time allowing people to discover their products through YouTube searches.

Martyn Gage

**A** It is definitely possible to get YouTube video into your own custom Flash application, but the difficult part is grabbing the right information. There are two pieces of information required for every video: the first is the video ID and the next is the secondary ID. All of this information is available by scanning the source code of the page your video is displayed on YouTube.

```
var nc:NetConnection = new
NetConnection();
nc.connect(null);
var ns:NetStream = new NetStream(nc);
var vid:Video = new Video(480, 360);
this.addChild(vid);
vid.attachNetStream(ns);
ns.play("http://www.YouTube.com/get
video?video_id=");
ns.addEventListener(NetStatusEvent.NET
STATUS, netstat);
function netstat(stats:NetStatusEvent) {
    //trace(stats.info.code);
}
```

```
var netClient:Object = new Object();
netClient.onMetaData = function(meta:
Object) {
    //trace(meta.duration);
};
ns.client = netClient;
```



### 01 Set up the document

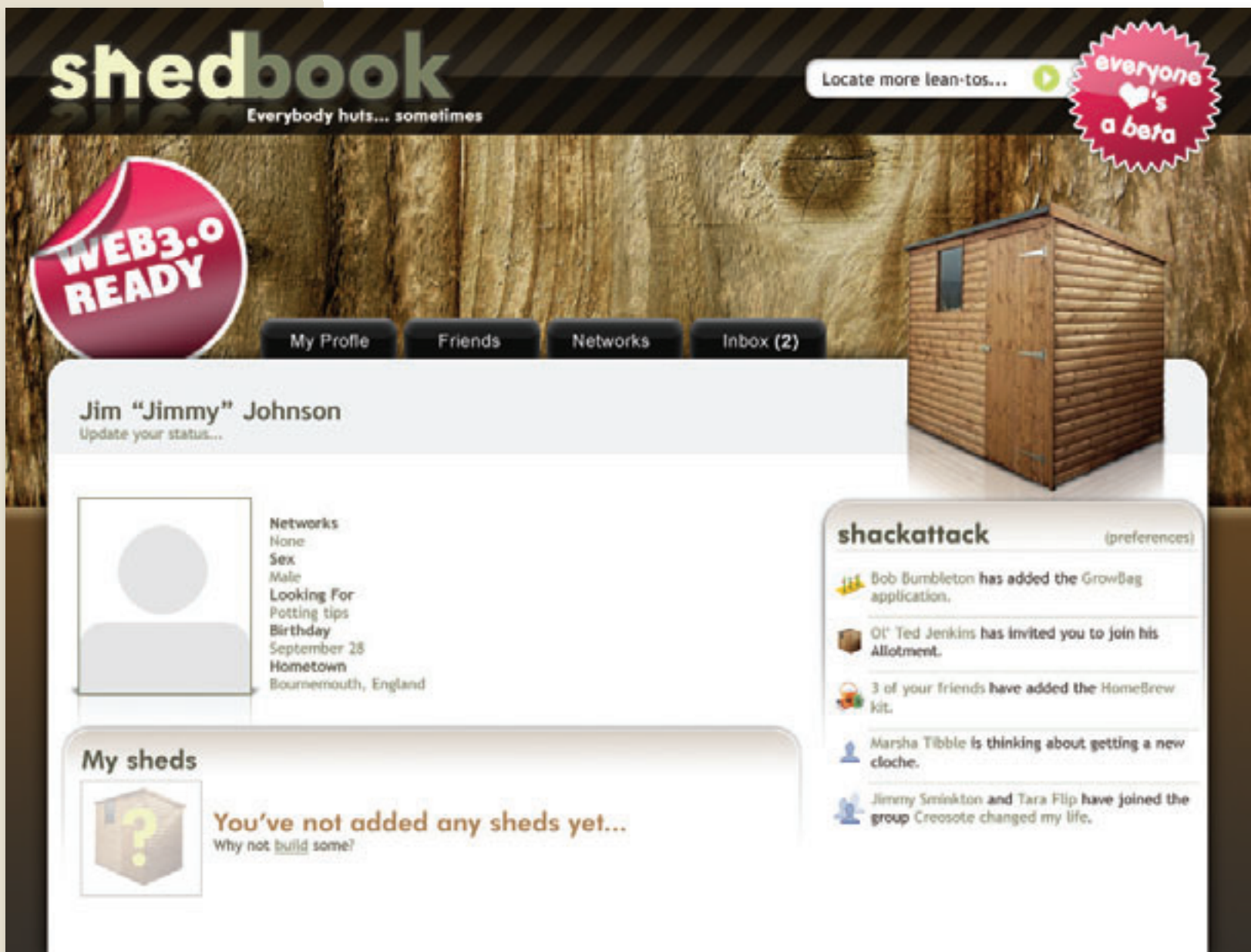
Create a new Flash document (AS 3.0) and open the ActionScript editor. Add the code as shown above which creates the video instance and the net stream to connect to the appropriate video.

### 02 Find your video

Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and browse for your video, then view the source code for the page. Look for the section in the <head> shown above. You will need both the video ID and the ID marked 't'.

### 03 Cut and paste

Cut and paste the video ID and place it in the URL following 'video\_id='. Then add the following '&t=' and paste in the 't' ID after this. Test your SWF and it should load the right video.



### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

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

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Give your page designs a contemporary look with Photoshop

#### TIME REQUIRED


2 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Ultimate Web 2.0 design

LOOKING THE PART IS VITAL TO KEEPING VISITORS INTERESTED IF YOU'VE CREATED THE NEXT SOCIAL WEB REVOLUTION

 **DESPITE THE WELL-MEANING** original connotations of the phrase (user-generated content, social interaction, collaborative development), Web 2.0 has now all but transformed into a shorthand for any shiny new site to have ventured onto the web in the past couple of years. But whether the term has now become a cliché or not, there's an undeniably distinct visual style to be found in many of the most popular sites – a style underpinned by some good,

solid design techniques. Strong colours, bold graphics, shiny buttons, discreet shadows, rounded corners and CSS-friendly layouts are very much the order of the day.

Over the next few pages of this tutorial, we'll show you how to create some of the more common elements found in Web 2.0-style page designs, and prime you with enough core Photoshop skills to see you well into Web 3.0, Web 4.0 and beyond. It's the ultimate guide to fashionable web style!





## YOUR EXPERT

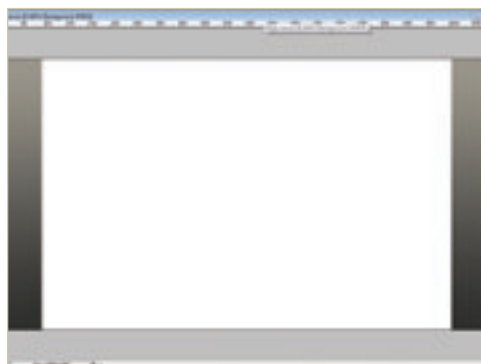
**Ian Davenport** has years of professional website design under his belt and is passionate about CSS, overenthusiastic about web standards and just a little too obsessive about accessibility. He makes use of all this on a daily basis for [www.wordsun.co.uk](http://www.wordsun.co.uk).

# Ultimate Web 2.0 design in Photoshop CS3



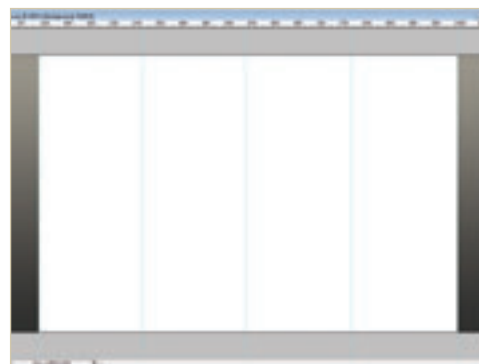
## 01 Setting up your canvas

First, we need to set up our canvas. Create a new document with a white background, RGB Color Mode, Square pixels and a Width of around 900 pixels. Height is not something we can predict, so set a figure that allows enough space to include any key elements.



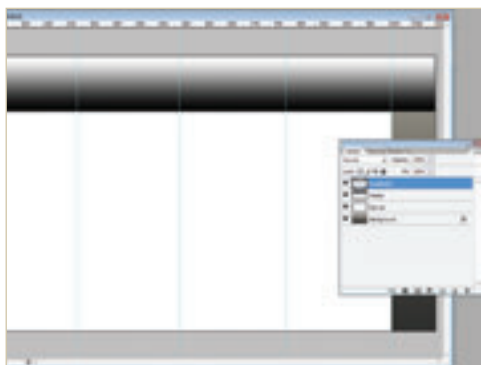
## 02 Creating a new layer

Make a new layer in the Layers window, naming it 'Canvas'. Flood-fill this layer with white. Click on the eye icon to set the layer to hidden. Select Canvas Size from the Image menu and increase the document width to about 1,100px. Fill the background with a gradient. Unhide the canvas.



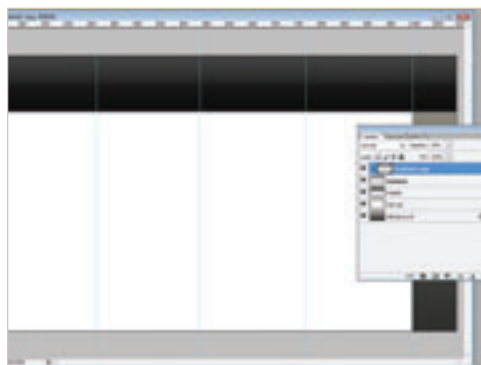
## 03 Setting the gridlines

The extension either side of the canvas gives a context for our design. Next, we need a simple grid. This helps us balance our layout. Decide how many columns you need in your page, then drag guides from the left ruler and place them within the canvas area.



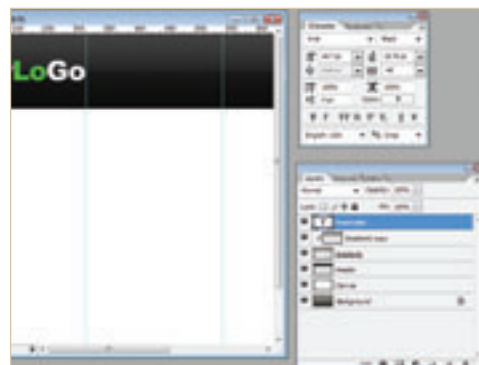
## 04 Heading things off

Right, let's give our page a bit of structure. Add a new layer and name it 'Header'. Marquee a header-sized chunk at the top of the page, and fill it black. Ctrl-click the layer thumbnail to load this layer as a selection, then make another new layer and fill with a light-to-dark gradient.



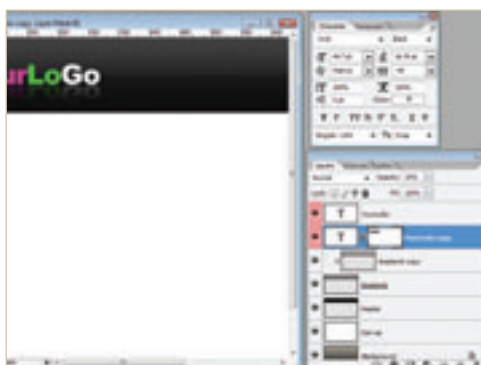
## 05 Invert the gradient

Set the Gradient layer to 25 per cent Opacity and duplicate it. Drag the duplicated gradient to halfway down the original layer and invert it (Ctrl+I), then clip it to the initial layer (Alt+Ctrl+G). This simple reflected horizon effect is a basic element in many Web 2.0-style graphical elements.



## 06 On reflection...

Reflections may be one of the more overdone effects, but they serve to ground an element on the page and add an instant sense of depth to layouts. Try a simple logo using a nice, chunky font. Consider your logo carefully to avoid descenders like 'p' and 'y', which can spoil a reflection.



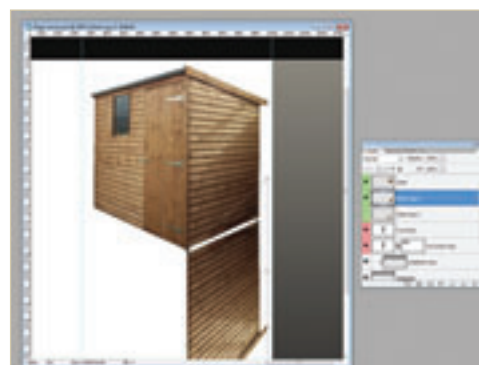
## 07 On further reflection...

Duplicate the logo layer and flip it vertically (Edit> Transform>Flip Vertical). Take the Opacity down to 20 per cent, and add a Layer Mask to this layer. Using a black 70px brush with 0 per cent hardness, draw a horizontal line on the mask, covering the lower-half of the text.



## 08 More complex objects

What if you want to reflect something that already has three dimensions to it? A simple horizontal reflection simply won't work, but the principles remain the same. In this example, there are two faces of the object visible, so we'll need two duplicate layers for the reflection.



## 09 Line up the objects

Trim the duplicate layers so each contains one face of the object. Unlike shadows, reflections occur directly below the mirrored object. Select Skew from the Transform menu and distort one of the faces so the top edge of the reflection lines up with the bottom of the original.

## TECHNIQUE

### Style without any limits

The power of CSS means almost anything is ripe for Web 2.0-ifying – even dull old form-input boxes!



#### 01 Form background

With the Rounded Rectangle tool, draw the input-box background shape. Be sure the image is sufficiently large to surround the input box and the Submit button. Add a slight inner shadow to suggest the box has been cut from the background.



#### 02 Prepare the image

Create a simple icon as a substitute for the form's Submit button. This will be saved as a separate item later, but for now we'll keep everything together. Set any background layers to transparent and select Image>Trim to trim away any transparent pixels.



#### 03 Save image for CSS

Hide the icon layer and select Save For Web from the File menu. Unhide the Submit icon and trim the image around it, before selecting Save For Web to the same location. Use `background:url(image.png)` with `border:none` in the CSS to add the image.



#### 10 Merge reflection layers

Repeat this process with all other faces as needed. Once done, merge the reflection layers and reduce the merged layer's Opacity, this time to 35 per cent. Repeat the masking process from step seven to finish. You might also like to add a shadow layer, further grounding the image.



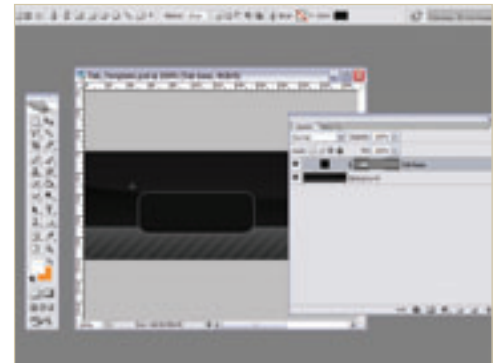
#### 12 Illusion of depth

We need to give the tab the illusion of depth, so add an Inner Shadow layer style. Here, we've got a dark base colour, so set the shadow to white with a Screen Blend Mode at 40 per cent Opacity. Set the Angle to 90 degrees and experiment with Distance and Size for best effect.



#### 14 Make it gleam

Now to add a bit of polish. Ctrl-click the tab base shape layer to load it as a selection. Nudge the selection halfway the tab height, fill with white and take the Opacity down to around ten per cent. Clip this to the base layer also. Repeat at the very top of the tab for extra sheen!



#### 11 Keeping tabs

Tabs are not only a recognisable visual cue telling visitors how to navigate your site, they're also a good opportunity to combine two key techniques: rounded corners and the trusty glass effect. Start by drawing a rounded rectangle in your tab base colour, with a radius of ten pixels.



#### 13 Give the tab a mask

Our tab currently descends a bit too far, so marquee-select the area we wish to keep and click the Layer Mask icon to mask the chosen region. If you're intending to use bitmap text rather than HTML on your tabs, add your text and use Alt+Ctrl+G to clip it to the tab base layer.



#### 15 Reusing the tab

Create a new group from the layers. The tab can then be easily reused, only requiring you to change the text layer within each group. It may also be worth saving a layered version of your tab as a single file, gradually building a library of reusable assets for future designs.



## IN DETAIL

### Reverting to type...

Good page design isn't just about shiny buttons, polished reflections and subtle gradients. An understanding of web typography is essential if your site is to be more than mere eye candy

**TYPOGRAPHY IS ABOUT** more than just choosing the right fonts for your design. Think of it as encompassing everything on your page even remotely to do with text on your page. This includes the way it looks, the space around it, how it relates to neighbouring text, line-spacing, proportional sizes, leading, kerning – the list goes on. And since a good website is nothing without content, the typography is as important a part of the overall design as any other.

Font choice is an obvious place to start. There is no right or wrong when it comes to the individual fonts, but keep in mind that any text rendered as HTML needs to be a standard web font, so make sure any graphical headings work well alongside the HTML text. Limit yourself to no more than two or three font styles on a page, with each having a distinct purpose (section headings, pull-out quotes, etc). The same applies to font sizes. This not only makes the page look neater and clearer to read, but can also cut down the amount of CSS styles needed when you construct the HTML.

White space (or negative space) is the space between elements on the page, and is one of the most important typographic tools at your disposal. It allows you to draw the reader's focus to important text, emphasise content and improve readability. Unfortunately it remains one of the most misunderstood by clients, who frequently try to fill dead space, resulting in cluttered-looking pages. You're the design professional though, so stand your ground!

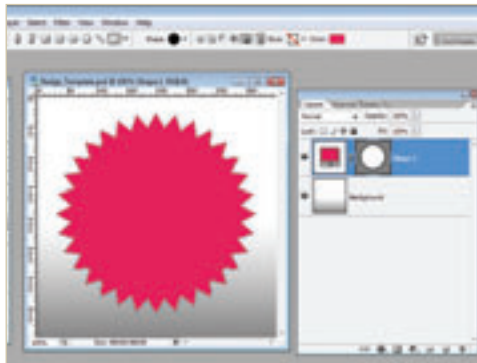
Line length is also key in creating a clean, readable layout. Studies have found that participants read varying line lengths at similar speeds, but expressed a preference for lengths of around four to six inches (or 10-15 words). This fits the natural arc of the eye, meaning it has to travel less, thus the visitor can give their full concentration to our carefully crafted page content.



Clearly defined and consistent font sizes can help page balance, readability and CSS implementation

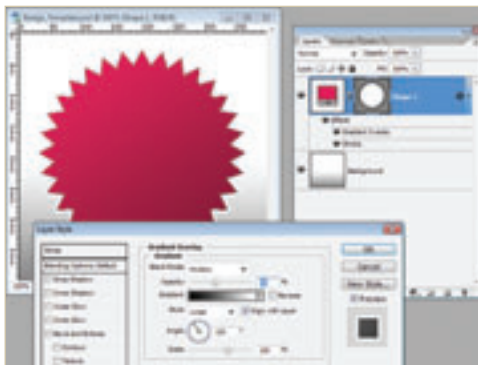


Well-placed white space on a page can help draw focus to content and improve page readability



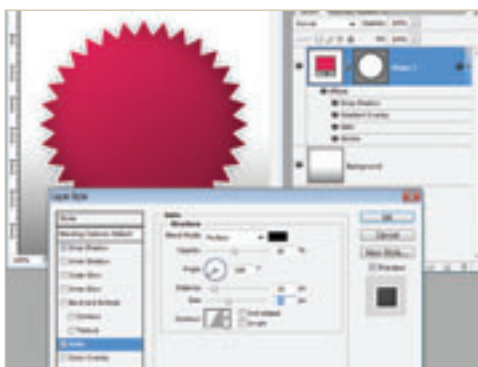
### 16 Badges: the Holy Grail

Web 2.0 badges seem to have been the subject of more Photoshop tutorials than any other topic, yet the effect is easy to achieve with some clever use of layer styles and the fake horizon technique used elsewhere. Start with a shape layer in your base colour, using the Seal vector shape.



### 17 Apply a gradient

Now add some layer styles to the badge. Start with a four-pixel white stroke positioned outside. Next add a Gradient Overlay. You need a simple black-white gradient, with a Multiply Blend Mode and Opacity of 40 per cent. Set the gradient of the angle to run from top-left to bottom-right.



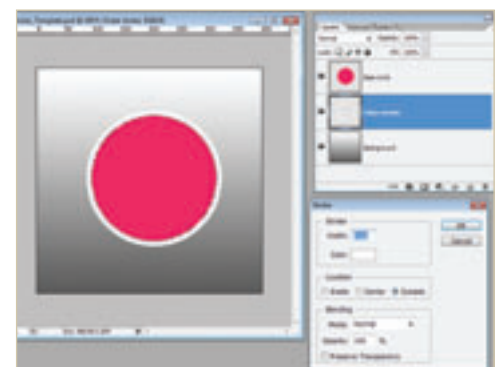
### 18 Suggesting depth

Add a slight Drop Shadow, with Distance of 0px. Subtlety is the key on Web 2.0 Drop Shadows. Finally add a Satin effect. Set Blend to Multiply, Opacity to 45 per cent, and at right angles to the Gradient Overlay. Adjust Distance and Size to darken the badge's spiked edge as shown.



### 19 Polish it off

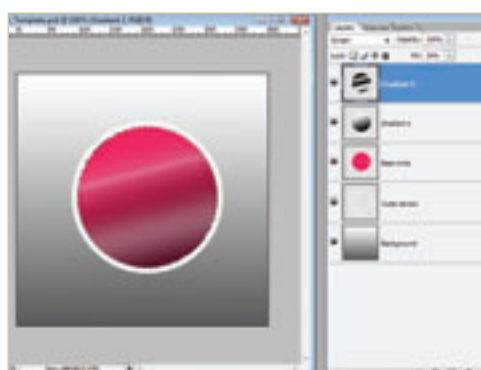
Just a quick polish needed now. Create a white area using the Ellipse marquee and position it so it roughly follows the line of the badge's gradient. Lower the Opacity to 25 per cent and clip this layer to the base shape. Add your text, following the angle of the gradient for best effect.



### 20 Stickers – the poor relation

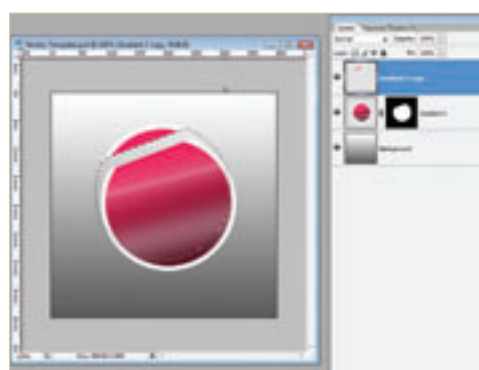
Stickers may not be as widely used as their spiky badge cousins, but they can still prove effective if used in the right context. Start with a basic circle. Ctrl-click to load this as a selection, and on a new layer, add an outside Stroke of around eight pixels from the Edit menu.

# Tutorial



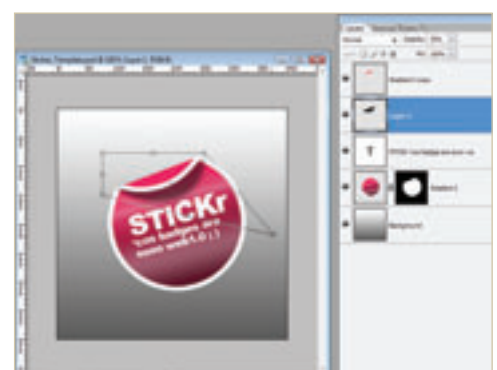
## 21 Adding a sheen

Keeping the circular selection, add a new layer. Fill with a white-to-black gradient, with a Multiply Blend at 60 per cent. Add an additional layer and fill with a slightly more complex highlight gradient. Make this follow the angle of the layer below. Set to Screen Blend with a 30 per cent Fill.



## 22 Creating a peel

Merge all except the background. Ctrl-click to load the layer as a selection. Duplicate this and hide the new layer. Deselect a slice from the top-left with the Polygonal Lasso while holding Shift, then add a Layer Mask. Reload the selection, unhide the layer and delete the selected area.



## 23 Final touches

Add your content between the two existing layers. Rotate the slice 180 degrees and line up the cut edges. Load the slice as a selection, create a new layer below, fill with black and apply a two-pixel Gaussian Blur. Set Opacity to 50 per cent, distort as shown and your Sticker is ready!





## Xtrabold by Nelson Balaban

www.xtrabold.net



### TOP TIP



#### Give your rollover states some variety

Although Nelson has stuck with one style of rollover state in this particular incarnation of his folio, having a couple of different kinds of rollover states is not only attractive, but it can actually help to break up the sections of your website. Nelson has an awesome dot-matrix rollover theme happening on his navigation items (we'll discuss how to create those later), but has left his logo links unadorned. A glow-effect rollover isn't ground-breaking, but it is always visually pleasing. To achieve this, simply duplicate your logo layer and apply a mild Gaussian Blur.

This month, we are going to attempt to dissect the folio of Nelson Balaban Jr. Despite being only 18-years old, Balaban has been involved in the digital-art scene for several years, and has seen his skill set develop from that of a gifted amateur to the diverse and fully formed arsenal of the seasoned veteran, in a comparatively short amount of time.

Balaban has an incredibly impressive portfolio, featuring a plethora of high-quality commissioned work for a diverse range of clients, as well as his numerous contributions to the two greatest design collectives in the world, depthCORE and the Keystone Design Union (KDU). He's already worked with several high-profile design agencies across South America, and is currently freelancing full-time from his home studio in Curitiba, Brazil.

His folio is a study in simplicity and modernity, featuring a minimal design with classic typographical elements and understated design intricacies, typical of designers who would rather let their work do the bulk of the talking. Replicating these effects will require us to examine some of the basic, core functions of Photoshop, so while this won't necessarily be the most challenging task, we will be examining some fundamental design techniques that every designer should have in their repertoire.

#### Custom-type logos

Custom-type logos add an original feel to the site, and are effective in lending your design a customised feel

#### Smoothed boxes

Smoothed boxes add sophistication and give your sites lines a refined touch, handy to help it stand out

Work  
Info/Contact  
Back

Jump-to Menu

Serena  
KDU I  
YSTO 2008 Catalogue Cover  
XTRAPOP  
Conscience

#### Strong palette

A strong palette is a hallmark of a confident designer, and helps to create a cohesive layout

## Rounding up

A design alteration that is simple, but effective, transforms the site's impression instantly

One of the main reasons this page looks as sophisticated as it does is Nelson's command of lines. Nearly every box out and button has a wonderful, rounded edge to it; an effect we can replicate with relative ease. Open Photoshop, create a new document and add a new layer (Shift+Ctrl+N). Then make a rectangular selection using the Marquee tool (M) of the area you want to fill. Now Smooth (Select>Modify>Smooth) the selection by five pixels to round all the edges of your selection by the chosen pixel amount. Next, choose to Fill with



your background colour to observe the full effects; experiment with the smoothening amount to achieve different effects.

## Show off your skills

Give it a go, do something different with your fonts and reap the rewards

Custom typography will go a long way to making any header you design stand out from the crowd. You can view an example of this in Nelson's XTRA logo, and see how prominent it's made. The easiest way to achieve effective custom type is to simply write your header as normal in a classic serif font and make small additions, movements and subtractions using the Pen tool. Write a word in a standard font like Times New Roman, and rasterise it. Now, make small selections using the Pen tool, and strip some weight from various letters. Make further selections, adding

EXAMPLE

curvature and removing detail from the word. Keep at it; the unique results will definitely be worth all the time you have invested.



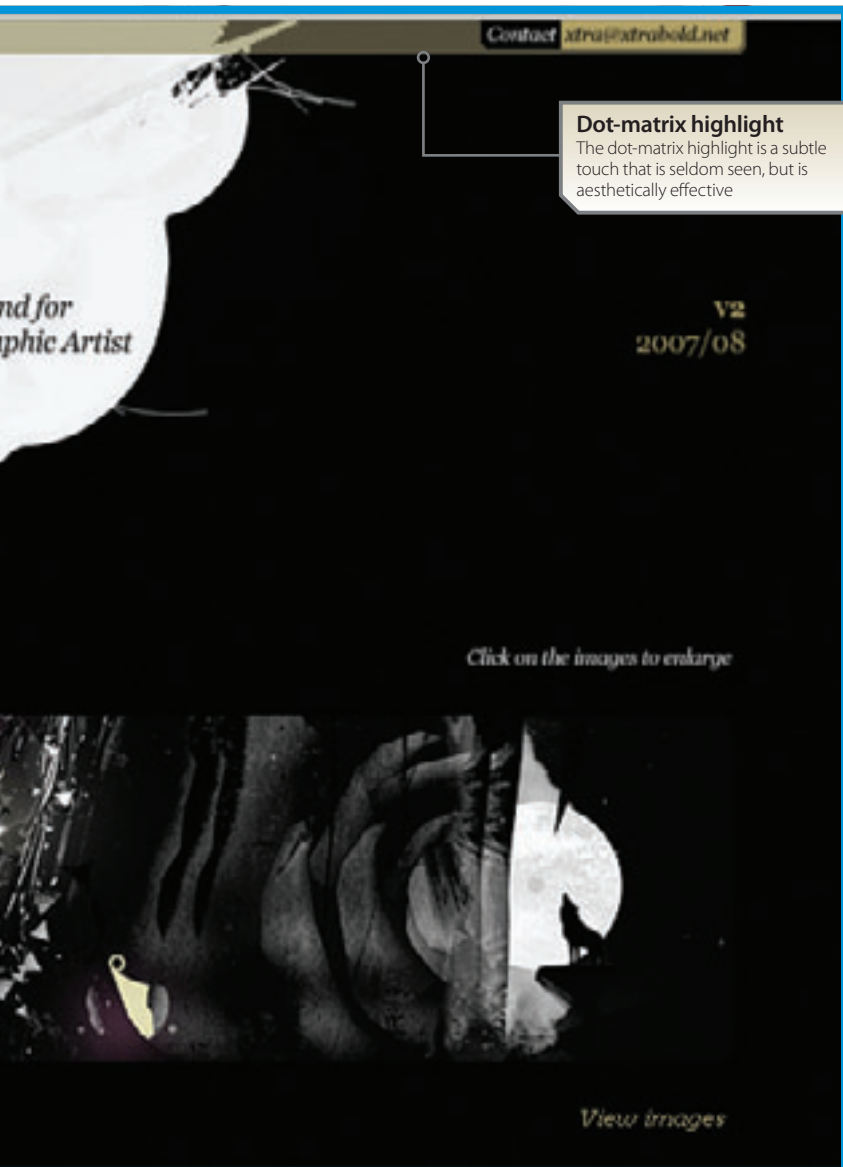


#### YOUR EXPERT

**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



## STEP BY STEP

### Dotcom Dot matrix

Create retro half-tone overlays by using dot-matrix colour highlights



#### 01 Set up your brush

Get out the Pencil or Brush tool and bring up the Brush palette. Set the Brush Tip to be one-pixel wide and set Hardness to 100 per cent. Set your Foreground Color to 100 per cent black. The trick here now is to set the Spacing on the brush to exactly 200 per cent.



#### 02 Custom Sharp

Create a new layer. Draw a horizontal line using your brush (hold the Shift key down to get a perfect 90 degrees angle) the width of the table element you wish to create. Duplicate this layer; bump it down by one pixel and to the left by one pixel. Repeat until your table is filled.



#### 03 Reduce Opacity

Make a marquee of your table area, and Smooth it as in the technique on the opposite page. Save into a new channel. Add a Layer Mask to remove the corners. Reload the selection and make a border (Select>Modify>Border) of two pixels. Clear the border selection to add extra detail to your dot-matrix area.

## Striking shapes

Use your head and get creative with an interesting header shape

Getting an awesome header shape like the one Nelson has created here doesn't have to be difficult. There are two ways to go about this. The first, easy way, is to model up an abstract 3-D shape in Cinema4D and then render yourself an Alpha Mask – problem solved. Alternatively, you could fill alternating circular and rectangular marquees in a new layer and a Layer Mask; think about transforming the selections often to get varying results. To get extra-fine detail, use the Line tool (U) on a one-pixel width in new layers. Keep experimenting, consider applying



the Wave filter to get some curvature happening. That's the trick to making a site stand out, having the confidence to try out new things.

## Fashion trends

Make a great impression when your site walks down the virtual catwalk

At the moment, it is fashionable and becoming increasingly common for designers to use stark, simple palettes in their web design. To replicate this effect, all you really need to do is to find a highlight colour to sit nicely on top of a black-and-white base. The easiest and most efficient way to do this is to lay down a black background, then fill a paragraph with miscellaneous text and sit a coloured header on top of it. Next, rasterise the coloured header and increase the hue and saturation, found in the (aptly named) Hue/Saturation panel (Ctrl+U to bring it up). Finally, alter



the hue until you find a tone that best suits your purposes. Then simply sit back and admire your handiwork; great results achieved with very little effort!



### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
All the files you'll need  
on the CD

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Use the MooTools JavaScript library to  
add animation to your site

#### TIME REQUIRED


1 hour

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Add animated effects to HTML with MooTools

TAKE A LOOK AT MOOTOOLS TO HELP ADD VISUALLY INTERESTING INTERACTIONS TO YOUR SITE WITHOUT THE HASSLE OF FLASH

 **MOOTOOLS IS A** downloadable, compact JavaScript framework for creating a variety of great effects for your website. The name MooTools actually comes from 'My Object Orientated JavaScript Tools'.

In this tutorial, we are going to create an animated menu that impressively slides in and has animated buttons as you roll over them. The advantage of using MooTools is that search engines can much more easily follow regular links on an HTML

page than with Flash-published content. This means there is more chance of all your pages being picked up by the robots as they spider your site.

We are also going to look at the slide-show plug-in class that uses the transitions in MooTools to create an animated slide show. If you are familiar with the Ken Burns Effect in Apple's iMovie, then this does much the same thing, but rendered live on your web page.





## YOUR EXPERT

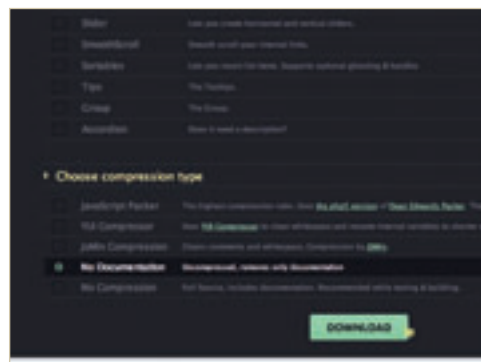
**Mark Shufflebottom** teaches on the BA and MA Interactive Media courses at Bournemouth University. He teaches 3D applications, interface design, online gaming, small-screen device production and, of course, all things Flash and ActionScript.

# Add animated effects to HTML with MooTools



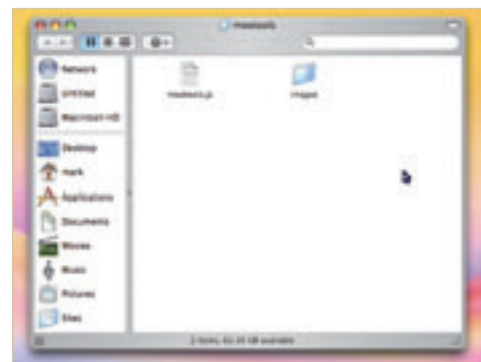
## 01 Get MooTools

Open your web browser and head over to <http://mootools.net> and you will see some of the effects in action on this page. Click the Downloads tab. You have to select each part of MooTools to download, so click all the options down to Fx.Transitions as shown.



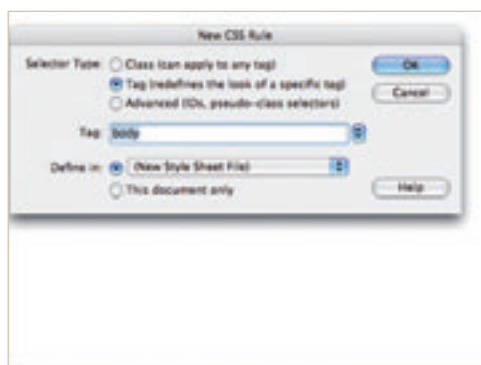
## 02 Download the file

Scroll down to the bottom of the page but don't click Download yet. Hit Choose compression type and select No Documentation. Now click Download. You might also want to download a version for reference with documentation, but never use this as it is more than double the file size.



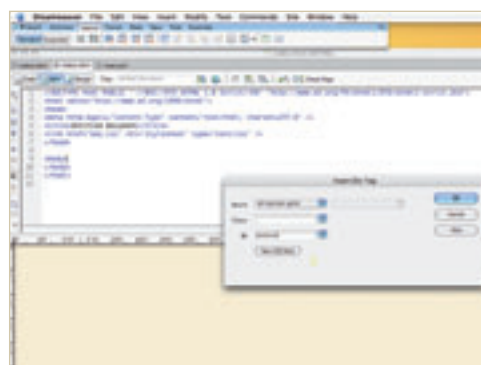
## 03 Create a new project folder

On your computer, create a new project folder and place in it the MooTools JavaScript file that downloaded. Rename the file 'mootools.js' to keep it short. From the cover CD, copy across the images folder from the Project Start folder so that you have all the assets to begin the project.



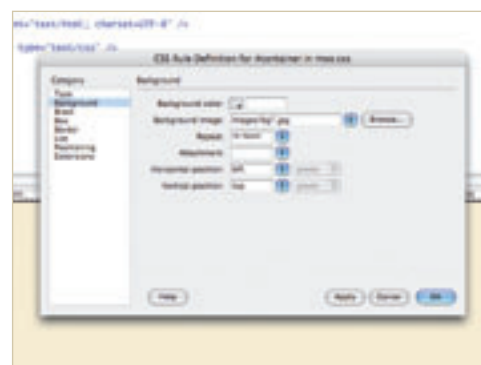
## 04 A new HTML page

Create a new XHTML Strict page and save it as 'index.html' in the same location as your mootools.js file. In the CSS panel, click on the New CSS Rule icon. Fill the body tag in as shown above, then click OK. When prompted to save the style sheet, save it as 'moo.css', same place as before.



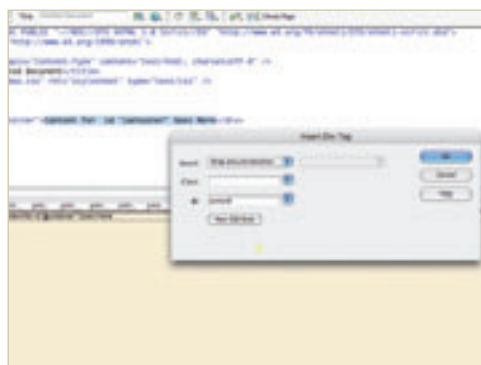
## 05 Change the body

Make the font Arial or Helvetica, sans serif, 12 pixels in size. Click Background and make the colour #f9edcf, then click Box and change the margin and padding to 0 pixels. Click OK to save and then choose Layout on the Insert panel. Click the Div icon and fill the pop-up menu as above.



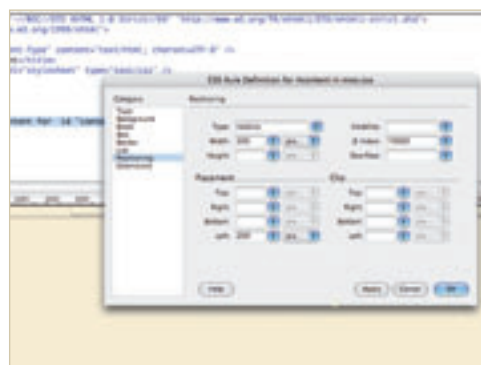
## 06 Add the container CSS

Click the New CSS Style button and it will automatically create a selector named '#container'. Click OK then choose the Background option. Browse to the images folder and choose bg1.gif as the background image. Set it to no-repeat and position in the left-top corner.



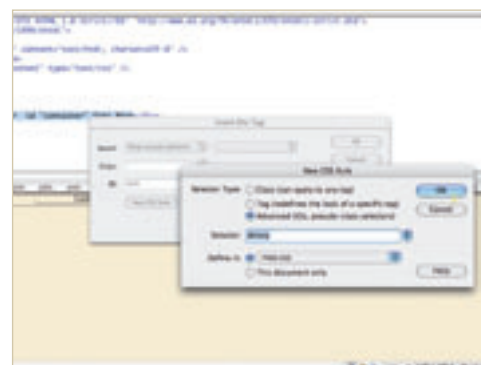
## 07 Position the container

Click on the Box option and add 900 for the width. Uncheck Same for all for the margins, and add both left and right as auto. Click Positioning and choose Relative, then click OK to close and click OK again to close the Insert Div window. Click Insert Div Tag and name the ID 'content'.



## 08 Create content CSS

Click the New CSS Style button then create the #content selector. Select Background, choose bg2.jpg for the background image, and set repeat to no-repeat. Click Box, set the Width to 505, the Padding Right to 120 and Left to 70. Then click Positioning and copy the settings above.



## 09 Add the intro div

Click OK to apply the CSS settings, then click OK again in the Insert Div Tag window. Again, select the Insert Div icon from the Insert panel. Give this the ID 'intro', then press the New CSS Style button and create the #intro CSS. Click OK to access the CSS Rule Definition window.

# Tutorial

## TECHNIQUE

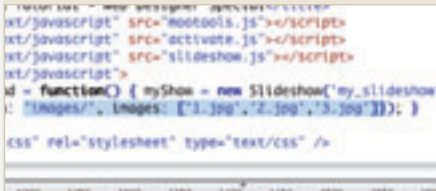
### Go beyond with a slide show

After the tutorial, you will be able to add a slide show to your site. Here we explain how to customise your own slide show



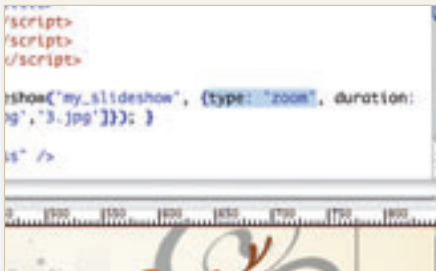
#### 01 Changing times

This section of code contains the duration that each image is kept on the screen for during the slide show. The time is in milliseconds, and so 4,000 equates to four seconds. The figure of 1,000 refers to a one-second transition.



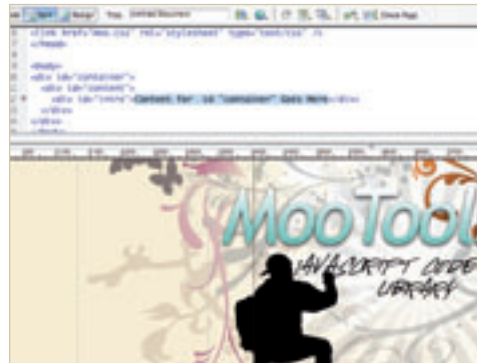
#### 02 Image-conscious

Inside the brackets, you can add your images that you would like to include in your slide show. You can add as many images as you like to the slide show. Notice that the folder for the images is also just before this in the code.



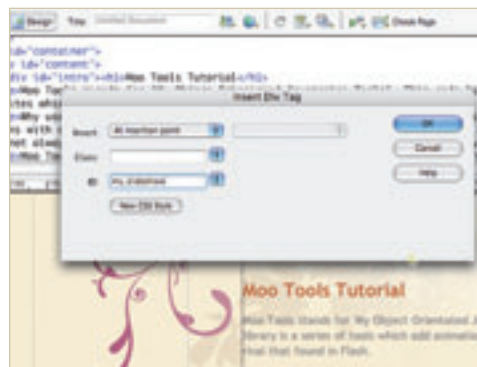
#### 03 Moving around

The actual style of slide show can be changed. Here we are zooming on each image, but you can pan and also use a combo. For the full lowdown on all the settings, pay a visit to <http://electricprism.com/aeron/slideshow>.



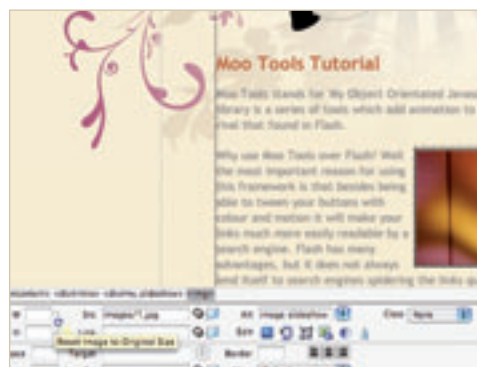
#### 10 Intro CSS

Make the Type size 15 pixels with a line height of 20 pixels and the font colour #666666. Click on Box and uncheck Apply to all, then add a 480 pixel top padding. Click OK to close the CSS Rule window then click OK to close the Insert Div Tag window. Your design should look like that above.



#### 12 Insert a new div

Click OK to open the CSS Rule Definition window. Change the Font size to 24 pixels and the colour to #C0491F. Click OK to close the window, then position your cursor before the second paragraph in the code window. Click the Insert Div icon on the Insert panel, naming it 'my\_slideshow'.



#### 14 Insert image

With the text selected in the div tag, go to Insert>Image and browse for 1.jpg from the images folder. Add 'image slide show' as the alternate text and click OK. In the Properties panel, click the Reset Image to Original Size icon to insert the width and height for the image.



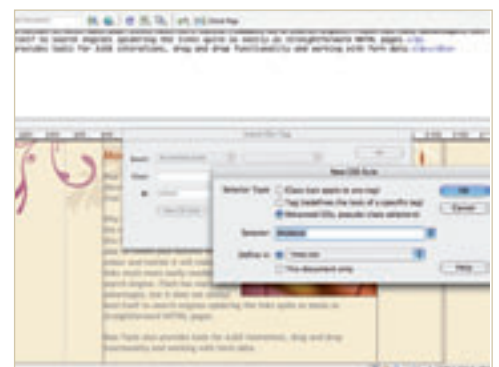
#### 11 Create heading CSS

Type over the top of the 'intro content goes here' text with the text in the window shown above. Select the text 'MooTools Tutorial' and make it a Heading 1 tag in the Properties palette. Now click on the New CSS Rule icon in the CSS panel. Define the CSS just as an H1 tag.



#### 13 CSS slide show

Click the New CSS Style button and create the #my\_slideshow style. Click Box in the CSS Rule Definition window. Add a Width of 250 pixels, Float the panel right and change the Padding Top to three pixels. Click OK to save the CSS and click OK to close the Insert Div Tag panel.



#### 15 Code view

In Code view, position your cursor before the last div tag at the end of the document, and click the Insert Div tag icon on the Insert bar. Name the div ID 'sidebar'. Click the New CSS Style button and click OK to create the #sidebar selector style. In CSS Rule Definition, click on Positioning.



## IN DETAIL

### Getting more Moo into your site

Our introduction to working with MooTools is a great way to get some interactive animation on your site, but you may well have other needs for MooTools, and here we explore how to go further

**OBVIOUSLY THERE IS** a lot of MooTools which we simply haven't had a chance to cover in the main tutorial, and no doubt this taster has left you wanting to know some more of the uses that it can be put to.

Thankfully, the MooTools site (<http://mootools.net>) contains more than enough help to push the limits of your site interaction further. One of the first stops you will need to call into is the Demos section of the site. Once in here, you will be presented with a long list of examples on the left of the site. Clicking each of these titles opens the sample demo in the main window. The breadth of demos is very impressive and you will find code showing examples of making AJAX interactions, drag-and-drop tweens and a whole host of graphical, animated effects. What is particularly impressive about each of these demos is that not only are you presented with a working example on the page, but these are accompanied by links to delve straight into the code. On each example is a link direct to the JavaScript, the HTML and CSS code that make up the whole example completely.

All of this makes implementation really easy, as it is simply a case of cutting and pasting the code into your own site. This has been well-thought through by the author, probably to stop the huge number of requests for the implementation of the framework, but it helps makes development almost immediate for yourself.

MooTools also includes links for each example through to the documentation, so that rather than having to trawl tediously through the entire framework's documentation, you are taken straight to the relevant pages for the code that matters.

As a final note, it is worthwhile reading the Getting started using demos page before launching into the demos, as this provides useful information for setting the code up within your page.



The Getting started using demos page contains vital information to using the demos and ought to be read before viewing them

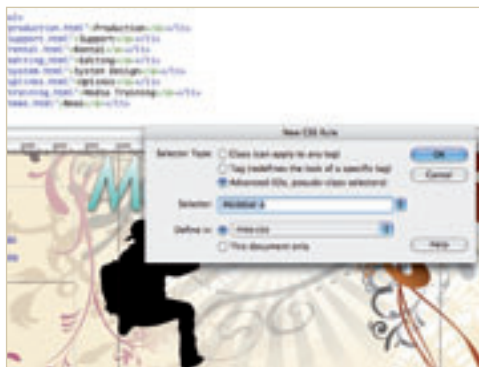


The demos are well-presented with useful links to the JavaScript, HTML and CSS code, as well as links to the relevant documentation



### 16 Unordered list

Change the Type to absolute with a width of 200 pixels and set the z-index to one. Click OK to close and then OK to close the Insert Div Tag window. Add an unordered list as shown above, setting each of the text names to the appropriate link for that page.



### 17 CSS for unordered list

In the CSS panel, click on the New CSS Rule then change the selector name to 'sidebar ul'. Click OK. Click on the List category and change the Type drop menu to 'none', which removes the bullet. Click OK to close and add another New CSS Rule, changing the Selector name to 'sidebar a'.



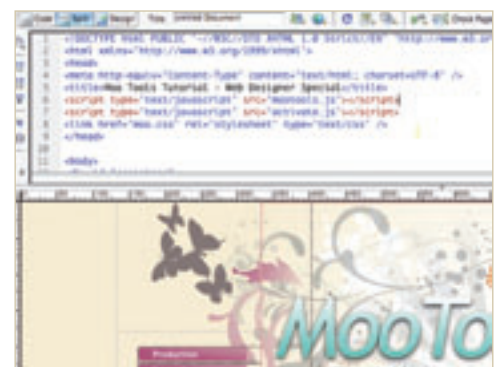
### 18 Link CSS

Edit the CSS Rule and make the font colour white, the weight set to Bold with the decoration None. Click Background, browse the images folder for button.png, then set the repeat to no-repeat and the horizontal position to left. Click Box and fill in the details as above.



### 19 Finish the links

Finally, click on the Block category and change the display drop menu to block. Click OK to close the CSS Rule Definition window. This is a good time to save both the index and the CSS file. You can also use this opportunity to check out your work by previewing it in a browser.



### 20 Link to JavaScript

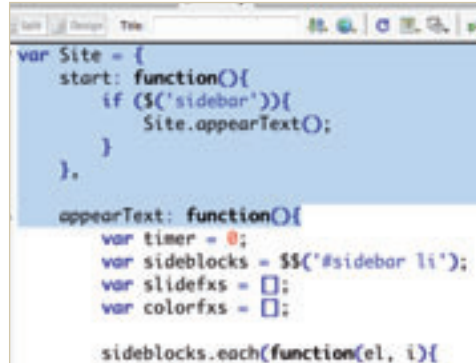
In the Code view, add a title to your document, then immediately under that, add the link to the mootools.js file which you downloaded in step two. Under that, link to the activate.js file. Create a new JavaScript file and save it as 'activate.js' in the same folder as your other files.

# Tutorial



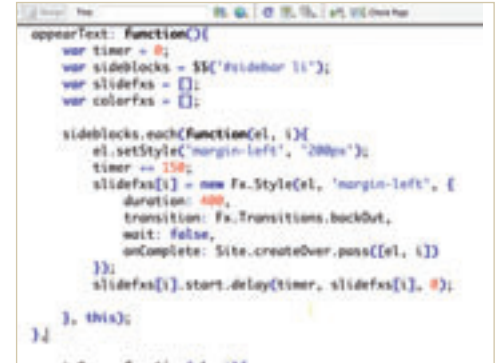
## 21 Copy the code

From the CD, locate the Project Start folder and open the file step21.js. Select all the code and copy it. Switch back to the activate.js file in Dreamweaver, paste the code in and save the file. Preview your page in the browser; it should now have animated buttons when loading and on rollover.



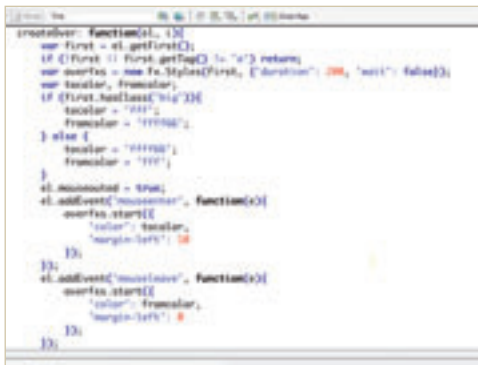
## 22 Explaining the code

Let's take a look at the JavaScript code which powered this. The first line of the code declares a variable called Site – this variable is called when the page loads. It checks that sidebar exists as a div and then runs the appearText(); function. This function is declared directly below it.



## 23 appearText function

This checks how many links are in the unordered list in the sidebar. Each is set to 200 pixels further in, so that it can be animated out. If line 15 was changed to -200, it would animate the links from the left. The createOver function is added to each link to give the animation for each rollover.



## 24 createOver function

This whole function sets up the duration of the tween and defines colours to tween between for the rollover and rollout mouse events. If you want to use a different coloured background, change the tocolor and fromcolor variables in this function.



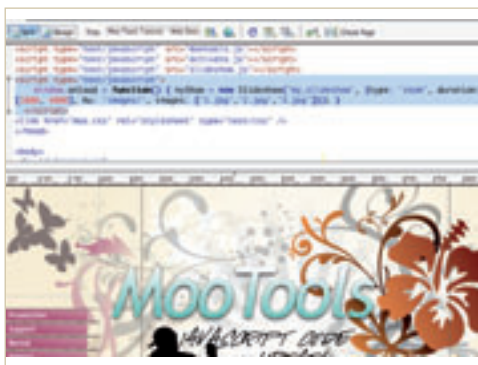
## 25 Getting the slide show

Open your web browser and point it at <http://electricprism.com/aeron/slideshow>. On this page you will see an example of the slide show in operation. Scroll to the Download section and right-click on the slide show.js packed link. Choose Save Link As from the pop-up menu.



## 26 Change the name

When the file has downloaded change the name of the file to the shorter 'slide show.js'. Next, look inside the Code view of the index.html page, and add the line which is highlighted in the screenshot above to link the slide show to this document.



## 27 Call the slide show

Create a new line in the Code view just below the line added in the previous step. Now add the code shown above which actually calls the JavaScript slide show, and tells the slide show the duration of each image and transition, as well as the images in the slide show.



## 28 Analysing the slide show

When the slide show is created, it uses the div my\_slideshow as we created in steps 12 and 13. If you need to set up another slide show, then simply put in the name of the div here. You can also change the Type to combo which zooms and pans the image.



## 29 Save and test

Save all the documents open and preview your page in your browser. As well as the animated links, you will have a slide show running which can have as many images added as necessary. The slide show is particularly useful as you do not need to import images into an application like Flash.







### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

Tutorial files:  
Boilerplate.html,  
Boilerplate.css

### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

To create boilerplates to act as a  
default document in Dreamweaver

### TIME REQUIRED


10-15 minutes

### SKILL LEVEL



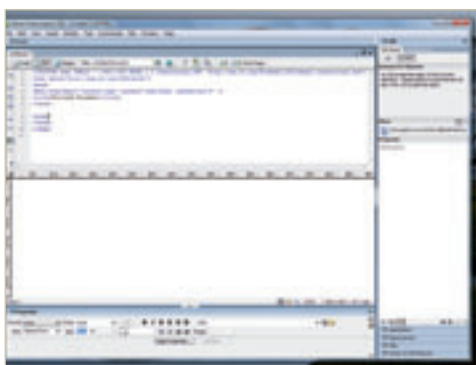
# Speed up the CSS design process with boilerplates

QUICKEN FUTURE WORKFLOWS BY CREATING A STRIPPED-DOWN TEMPLATE WITH THE BARE ESSENTIAL HTML AND CSS CODE

 **THE WEB DESIGN** process undoubtedly involves the constant reuse of code, especially HTML and CSS. The simple solution is to create templates that contain a collection of code commonly used in documents. Boilerplates are essentially stripped-down or simplified templates. Creating a boilerplate is a relatively simple process that involves a little planning on the part of the designer. Decide which common elements appear in HTML and CSS documents and add to

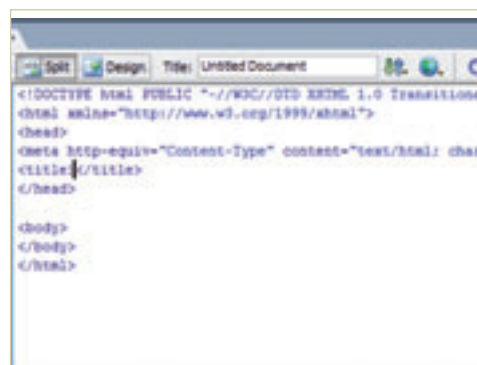
the page. A typical HTML example would include a wrapper, header, body and footer, while CSS would include padding, margins and body text.

To fully appreciate the true worth of a boilerplate, a little filename tweaking is required. Dreamweaver stores the default HTML and CSS files deep inside its folder structure. But once found, simply rename and add your own newly created boilerplate to take its place.



## 01 New document

HTML editors commonly have a preset starting point for a default HTML document. Dreamweaver will start with the DOCTYPE declaration, which includes the location. Beyond this, the program includes the necessary HTML tags, a meta tag to define the character set and a title element.



## 02 No more title

The default HTML document includes the title element which is occupied by the text 'Untitled Document'. This will be applied to all new HTML documents and is a poor choice should a designer forget to change it. The solution is to leave the title element in but keep it empty.



## 03 Import URL

CSS is an essential component of any design work and adding a link element to import a CSS file is a wise move. Go to the Text menu and select CSS Styles>Attach Style Sheet. Click Browse and locate a style sheet, or add a file name, ie, x, and press OK to include the text.





## YOUR EXPERT

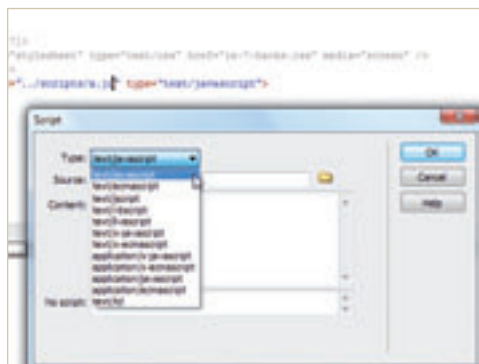
Steve Jenkins is a keen designer and developer who started creating websites after attending Bournemouth University and loves tackling the most testing of Dreamweaver problems. To see a sample of Steve's work, take a visit to [www.thesouthend.co.uk](http://www.thesouthend.co.uk).

# Speed up the CSS design process with boilerplates

```
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html" charset=utf-8 />
<title></title>
<style type="text/css">
<!--[if IE 7]>
<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="ie-7-back.css" />
</endif>
</style>
</head>
<body>
</body>
</html>
```

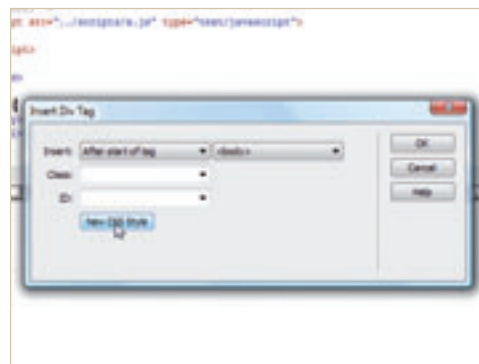
## 04 Browser hacks

CSS isn't perfect and the addition of a conditional element to deal with issues that certain browsers have is good design practice. Above, an IE7 comment has been added, but further comments for other browsers, eg, IE6, can also be added, ready to be called into action when necessary.



## 05 JavaScript

If JavaScript is a regular addition to pages, then the inclusion of a set of script tags is again good practice. To insert a set of script tags, go to Insert>HTML>Script Objects>Script, select Type: text/javascript and OK, then adjust as shown.



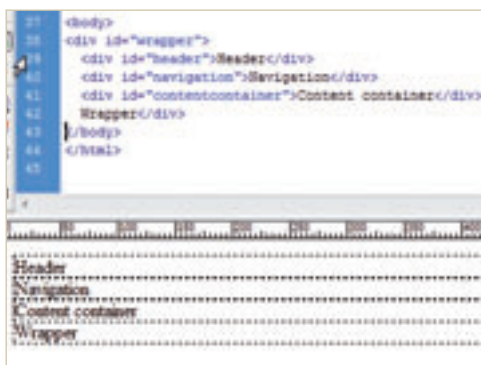
## 06 Wrapper

Deciding on default elements for the body depends on personal work practices, but a wrapper div tag is generally a popular option. Head to Insert>Layout Objects>Div Tag. From the Insert list, select After start of tag, <body>from the secondary list and finally New CSS Style.

```
<!--[if IE 7]>
<link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="ie-7-back.css" />
</endif>
<script src=".../script.js" type="text/javascript">
</script>
</head>
<body>
<div id="wrapper">
</div>
</body>
```

## 07 Name tag

Select the Advanced Selector Type and give the tag a name, ie #wrapper. The Define in: option can be assigned to any option as no CSS is defined yet. Select the preferred option and press OK three times to add the undefined div tag. Delete the text and add a text label, ie 'wrapper'.



## 10 Content container

Every site has a main content container tag. To add the content container, create a new div tag as in the previous steps. Name it accordingly. For correct placement, select the After tag and <div id="navigation"> options. Change the default text to include the label 'Content container'.

```
</head>
<body>
<div id="wrapper">
<div id="header">Header</div>
<div id="navigation">Navigation</div>
</div>
</body>
</html>
```

## 08 Header

Next up is to add a masthead/header/logo div tag. This will contain header images and text and reside inside the wrapper tag. Head to Insert>Layout Objects>Div Tag and select After start of tag, <div id="wrapper"> and click New CSS Style. To finish and add the tag, follow previous steps.



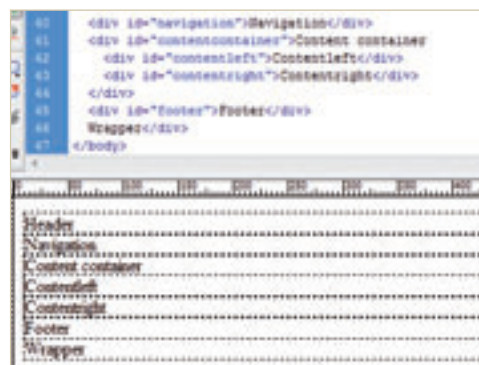
## 11 Content layout

The content of a web page is rarely laid out in a single column; typically it will have at least two columns. Here, we are going to create two tags as shown before. The first should be inserted after the start of #contentcontainer tag and the second after the tag just created.

```
</head>
<body>
<div id="wrapper">
<div id="header">Header</div>
<div id="navigation">Navigation</div>
</div>
</body>
</html>
```

## 09 Navigation

If navigation is typically placed at the top of the page but not inside the header tag, a tag needs to be created. Follow previous steps to create a New CSS Style, making sure that the new tag is inserted using the After tag and <div id="header"> options and named '#navigation'.



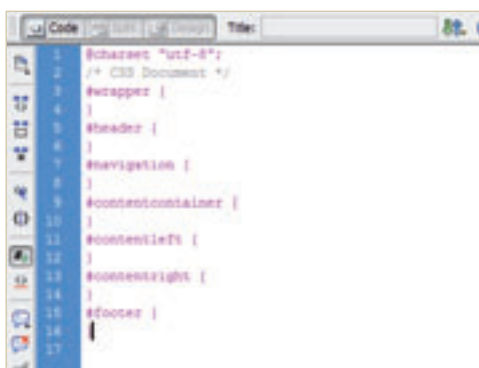
## 12 Finish with a footer

The final div tag to be applied to the document is that of a footer. Create a new div tag as show previously and name the new tag accordingly, eg, #footer. The new tag needs to be inserted after the #contentcontainer tag and the appropriate label put in place.



## 13 Insert comments

The current code layout makes it easy to recognise the start and end of each div tag. However, as code is added it becomes harder to establish closing div tags. A resolution is to insert a comment after each closing tag. Place the cursor and head to Insert>Comment and add comment.



## 14 New CSS file

Now head to the File menu. Select New>CSS and click Create to open a new CSS document. Save the file as 'boilerplate.css'. Head back to the HTML document and copy the CSS within the head of the page. Switch back to the CSS file and paste in the CSS code. Save again.




## 15 More CSS

The previous step adds the initial CSS, but more can be added as desired. For example a default section could contain zero margins and zero padding for the body. Setting link defaults and the body font is another option. For easy referencing, a table of contents can be added.

## IN DETAIL

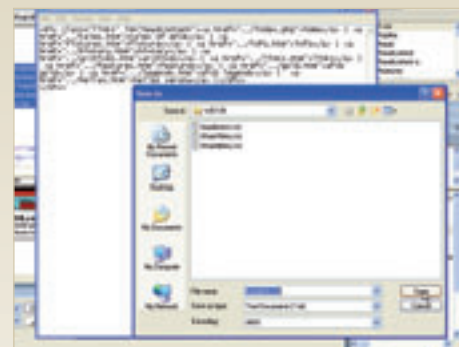
# Create a library of templates and code

Build a library of basic boilerplates to swap in and out as the default HTML and CSS documents. Plus, create a collection of commonly used code to add when needed

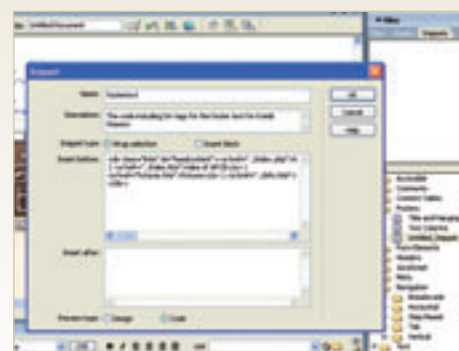
 **THE BOILERPLATE TUTORIAL** is an exercise in creating a universal template that saves time in the design process. Web designers are constantly designing web pages that use a lot of recurring code. When creating a layout, it will inevitably have at least a header, body and footer. The body will have further common features such as two or three columns. The boilerplate created in the tutorial is only one example of how recurring themes can be placed in a template. Different designers will want to use a different default HTML and CSS document to the one created. The answer is to use the same principle, but apply and build to a design that suits the designer. Another solution is to create a number of different boilerplate templates and set as the default when it suits. However, remember to back up the original default document just in case anything goes wrong.

Basic boilerplates are ideal for the basic structure of a page. However, the addition of too much code will render the principle redundant. The alternative is to create snippets of frequently used code. There is the option to cut and paste common code into a text editor such as Notepad for Windows users and BBEdit for Mac users. A well-titled code snippet can then be opened at will and pasted direct into a document. Alternatively, the text file can be dragged and dropped directly onto the Dreamweaver workspace where it will open.

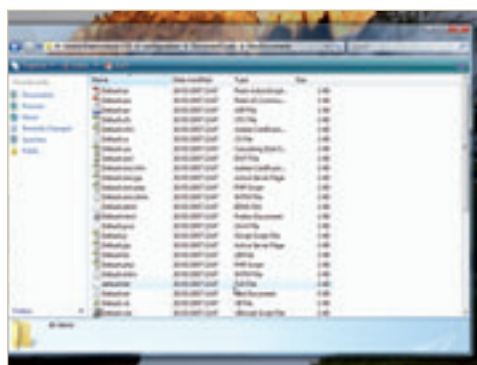
Dreamweaver does provide a Snippet window (Window>Snippet) that includes a host of code. To insert a code snippet, place the insertion point where you want to insert the code snippet, or select code to wrap a snippet around. Then in the Snippets panel, double-click the snippet. Alternatively, right-click (Windows) or Ctrl-click (Mac) the snippet and select Insert from the menu. To create a new code snippet and add your own code, click the New Snippet icon. In the Snippet dialog window, add a name, description and code, then press OK.



Add snippets of code to your favourite text editor, and save to create a library of commonly used code

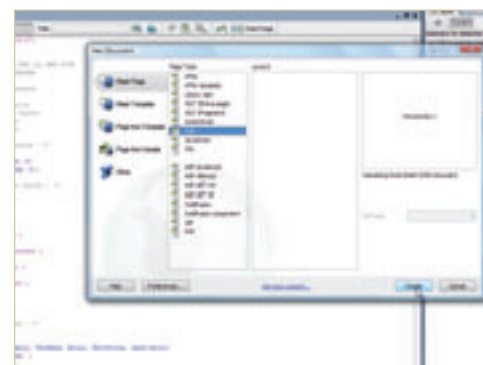


Open the Dreamweaver Snippets window and use the code already in place to create your snippets



## 16 New Documents

To make the HTML and CSS documents created previously the Dreamweaver HTML default document, first go to C:>Program Files>Adobe>Adobe Dreamweaver CS3>Configuration>Document Types>New Documents. This will vary slightly depending on which version is installed.

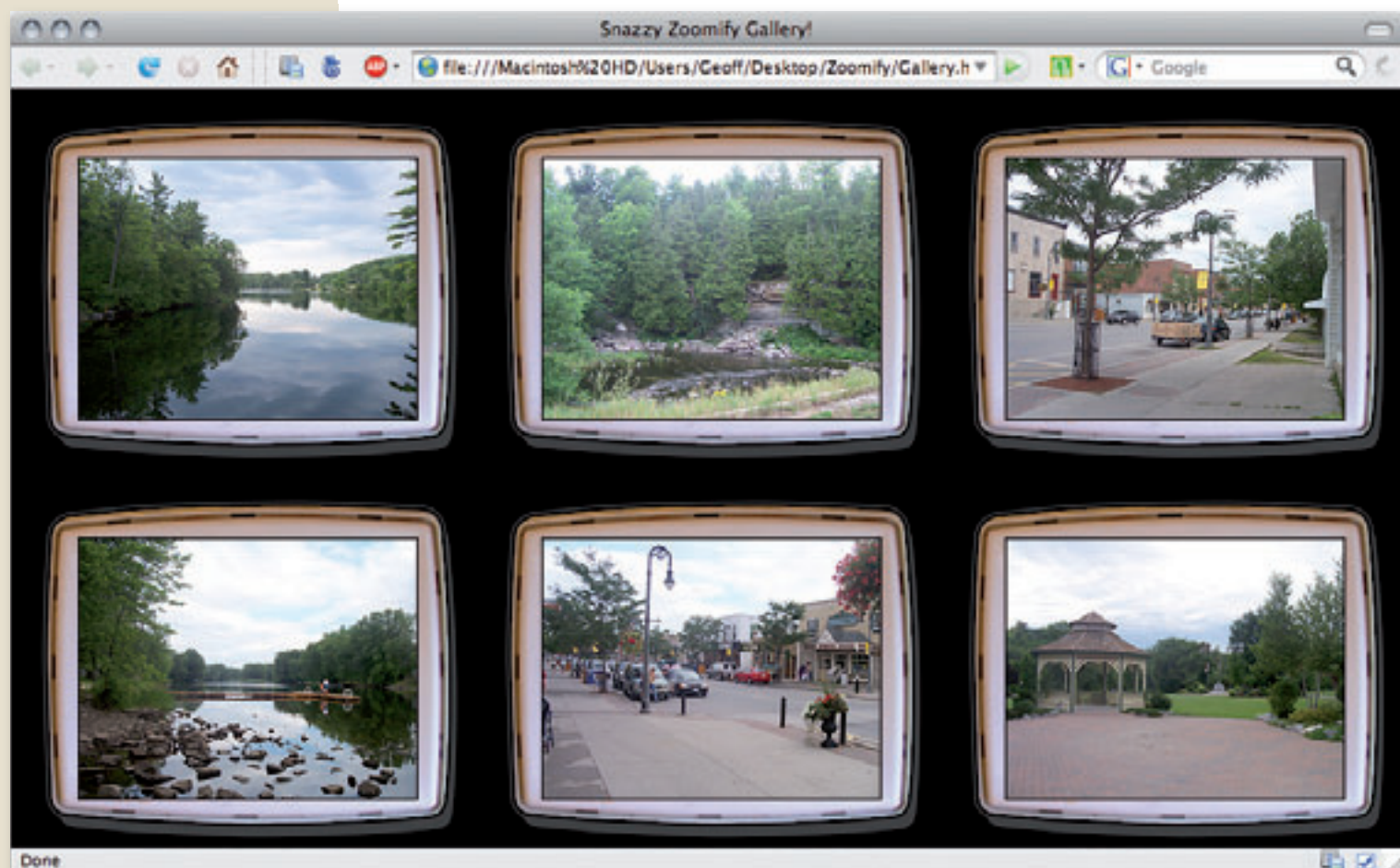


## 17 Create defaults

Find Default.html and Default.css. Right-click and rename 'Defaultoriginal.html' and 'Defaultoriginal.css'. Copy and paste in the two files created, ie, boilerplate.html, boilerplate.css. Rename as 'Default.html' and 'Default.css'. In Dreamweaver, open a default HTML or CSS file to view.







### THE BRIEF

#### ON THE CD

**Tutorial files:**  
You'll find all the files you need on the CD

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

To build a gallery utilising Zoomify objects, iframes and divs

#### TIME REQUIRED

1.5 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



# Use Zoomify to build a dynamic image gallery

EXPORT ZOOMIFY OBJECTS FROM PHOTOSHOP AND MANIPULATE THEM IN DREAMWEAVER TO CREATE A CUSTOM GALLERY LAYOUT

 **YOU'LL SEE HOW** to make use of Photoshop CS3's new built-in Zoomify export command, which allows visitors to zoom in, pan around, and explore your images. But rather than simply exporting images as individual Zoomify objects, we'll build an entire Zoomify gallery. We'll do this by bringing the Zoomify objects into Dreamweaver and building a gallery with them from scratch. We'll begin by setting up and exporting our images from Photoshop; then we'll customise the gallery

layout in Dreamweaver—specifically, we'll use div tags and CSS rules to tightly control the layout. Further, we'll want to hide the Zoomify controls as they're not needed on our final gallery page. To do this, we'll make use of HTML's iframe tag. You'll see how to insert iframes and how to customise them. Before beginning, make sure to copy the tutorial files to your computer and define a new site in Dreamweaver, using the tutorial folder as your site folder.

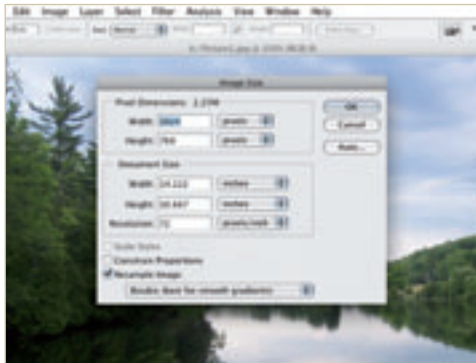




## YOUR EXPERT

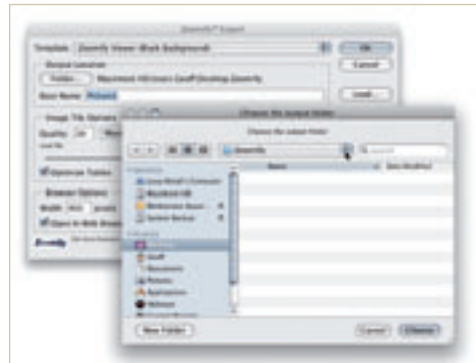
**Geoff Blake** has provided a wide range of graphic design, consulting, artwork, and web design services for the past ten years in Canada. He also writes articles and books (most recently, *Ten Ton Dreamweaver*), leads seminars and is a presenter with Total Training.

# Use Zoomify to build a dynamic image gallery



## 01 Preparing the images

To begin, open Picture1.jpg in Photoshop. If you want to reduce the size of your image, use the Image Size dialog box (Image>Image Size). The size of your image in Photoshop determines the size of the resulting Zoomify image on your web page – here, in our Zoomify gallery.



## 02 Export Zoomify objects

Choose File>Export>Zoomify. In the Zoomify dialog box that appears, select Zoomify Viewer (Black Background) from the Template menu. Next, under Output Location, click the Folder button, then select the site folder you defined in Dreamweaver. Leave Base Name as Picture1.



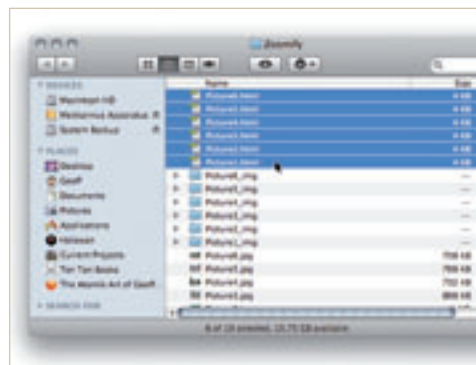
## 03 Setting the object's size

The Image Tile Options set the quality and compression of your Zoomify image. Use the Quality field, the pull-down menu or the slider to set the image quality. In the Browser Options area at the bottom, set the Width and Height fields to 240 and 205 respectively, then click OK.



## 04 Exploring the object

Your Zoomify page opens in your web browser. Take a moment to see how Zoomify objects work; use the controls at the bottom of the window to zoom in and out, or try clicking to zoom and dragging to pan around in the window. Also, hit the Esc key to reset the Zoomify object.



## 05 Export the remaining five

For our gallery, we'll need a total of six photographs, so repeat the first three steps for the other five photographs supplied in the tutorial files. When you finish exporting each as a Zoomify object, you'll have six HTML pages in your site folder named Picture1.html, Picture2.html, etc.



## 06 Set up the TV graphic

Next we'll set up television screens that will hold the Zoomify objects in our gallery. From the tutorial files, open up Television.psd. In the Layers panel (Window>Layers), double-click on the Television layer. In the Layer Style dialog box that appears, click the Drop Shadow category.



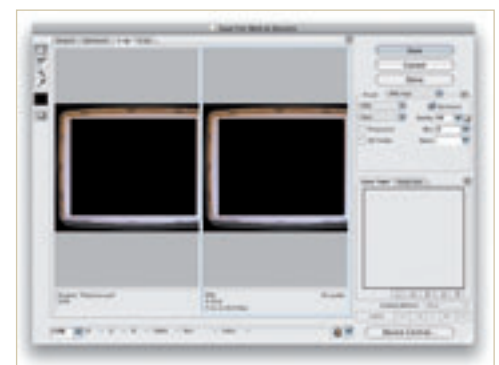
## 07 Set a Drop Shadow

In the Drop Shadow category, set the Blend Mode to Normal; then click on the colour swatch beside the Blend Mode menu. In Photoshop's Color Picker, choose a dark grey then click OK. Next, set the Opacity to 100 per cent, Distance to ten pixels, Spread to ten pixels and Size to 0px.



## 08 Set an Outer Glow

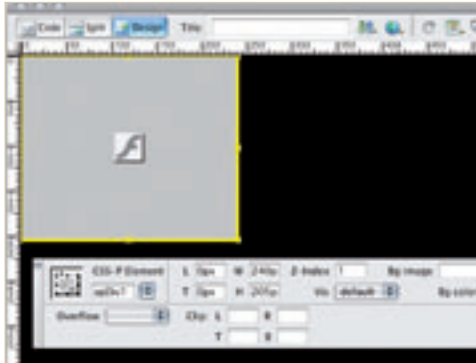
Next, click in the Outer Glow category. Set the Blend Mode to Normal and the Opacity to 100 per cent. Beneath Noise, click the colour swatch, and in the Color Picker choose the same dark grey that you set in the previous step. Finally, set the Spread to 40 per cent and the Size to five pixels.



## 09 Set a Stroke effect

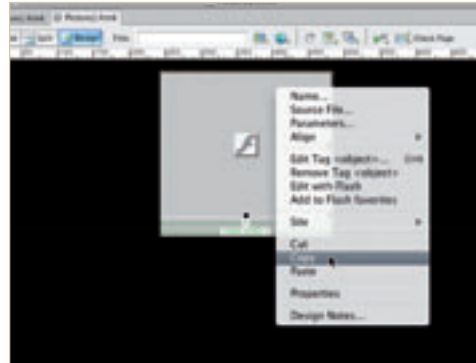
Finally, click the Stroke category. Set Size to two pixels and Position to Center. Choose black from the colour swatch at the bottom, click OK to close the Layer Style dialog box, then choose File>Save For Web & Devices and save your optimised image into your site folder as 'Television.jpg'.

# Tutorial



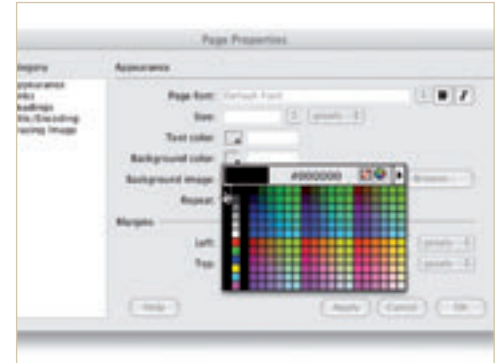
## 10 Edit the Zoomify page

Open Picture1.html in Dreamweaver and cut the Flash object. Select and delete the yellow frame, then choose Insert>Layout Objects>AP Div. Click on the div's edge and in the Property Inspector, set L and T to 0px, W to 240px and H to 205px. Click inside the div and paste, then save.



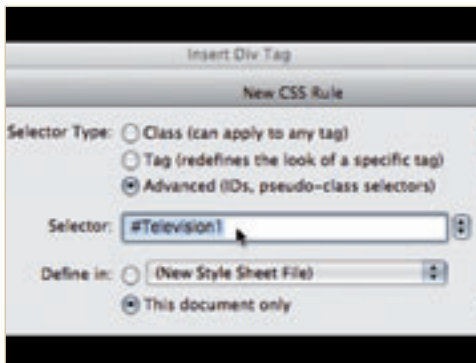
## 11 Copy the Zoomify page

Next, open Picture2.html, copy the Flash object and close the file. Replace the Flash object in Picture1.html with the one copied from Picture2.html then choose File>Save As and overwrite Picture2.html. Repeat this process for Picture3.html through to Picture6.html.



## 12 Create the gallery page

Now to create the gallery page in Dreamweaver, which will hold our Zoomify gallery images. Choose File>New and create a new blank HTML page, then save it as 'Gallery.html' in your site folder. Choose Modify>Page Properties, set the Background color to black, then click OK.



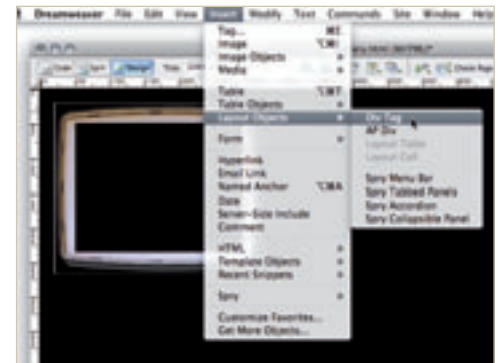
## 13 Setting the first object

Choose Insert>Layout Objects>Div Tag, then in the Insert Div Tag dialog that appears, click New CSS Rule. In the New CSS Rule dialog, set Selector Type to Advanced; then, in the Selector field, type '#Television1' and set Define in to This document only. Click OK when you're done.



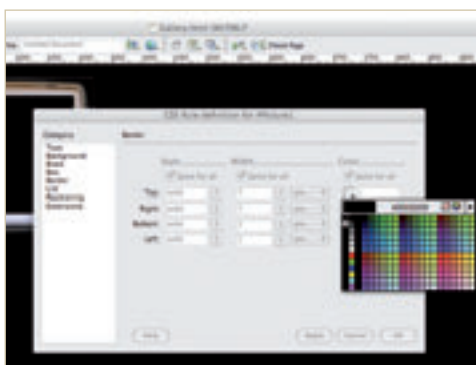
## 14 Setting the div's options

In the dialog that appears, open the Background category, then click Browse and select Television.jpg. Set Repeat to no-repeat, then open the Positioning category. Set Type to absolute, Width to 300px and Height to 245px. Next, set Top and Left to 20px. Click OK, then OK again.



## 15 Nesting a div

Dreamweaver automatically inserts placeholder text into your div, which you can delete. With your cursor still inside the Television1 div, choose Insert>Layout Objects>Div Tag again, then click the New CSS Rule button. Type '#Picture1' in the Selector field, then click OK.



## 16 Entering details

Open Positioning, then set Type to absolute, Width to 240px, Height to 185px and Overflow to hidden. Under Positioning, set Top to 29px and Left to 28px. In the Border category, set a solid, one-pixel black border around all four sides. Click OK, then hit OK again.



## 17 Creating the second object

We'll need five more pairs of divs. Select the Television1 div by clicking on its edge, then copy it. Click in an empty area of the page and paste, then take a look in the CSS Styles panel. Double-click on #Television2. Then in the Positioning category, set Left to 350px and click OK.



## 18 Complete the set

Continue copying the first div and pasting, using the following positioning values for the pasted divs: set #Television3's Left to 680px, #Television4's Top to 290px, #Television5's Top to 290px and Left to 350px. Set #Television6's Top to 290px and Left to 680px.



## 19 Inserting the first iframe

Now for the coding bit. Open SuppliedCode.rtf and copy the entire contents. Back in Dreamweaver, click the Code view button in the top-left. In the code, highlight the placeholder text that Dreamweaver inserted into the Picture1 div, then paste the copied code. This code creates an iframe which loads Picture1.html, which if you recall, holds the first Zoomify object.

```
<div id="Television1">
<div id="Picture1"><iframe src="Picture1.
html" width="240" height="185" scrolling="no"
frameborder="no"></iframe>
</div>
```

## 20 Inserting the other iframes

Next, find and select the placeholder text in the Picture2 div, then paste the copied code again. This time, change src="Picture1.html" to read src="Picture2.html." This changes the iframe's source to load Picture2.html. Continue pasting over the placeholder text in each picture div, changing each div's pasted code to src="Picture2.html", src="Picture3.html." and so on.

```
<div id="Television1">
<div id="Picture1"><iframe src="Picture1.
html" width="240" height="185" scrolling="no"
frameborder="no"></iframe></div>
</div>
<div id="Television2">
<div id="Picture2"><iframe src="Picture2.
html" width="240" height="185" scrolling="no"
frameborder="no"></iframe></div>
</div>
<div id="Television3">
<div id="Picture3"><iframe src="Picture3.
html" width="240" height="185" scrolling="no"
frameborder="no"></iframe></div>
</div>
<div id="Television4">
<div id="Picture4"><iframe src="Picture4.
html" width="240" height="185" scrolling="no"
frameborder="no"></iframe></div>
</div>
<div id="Television5">
<div id="Picture5"><iframe src="Picture5.
html" width="240" height="185" scrolling="no"
frameborder="no"></iframe></div>
</div>
<div id="Television6">
<div id="Picture6"><iframe src="Picture6.
html" width="240" height="185" scrolling="no"
frameborder="no"></iframe></div>
</div>
```

## IN DETAIL

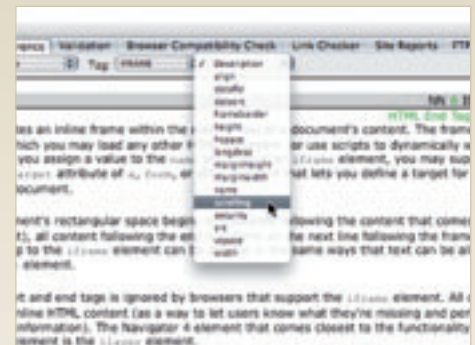
### An in-depth look at iframes

Short for in-line frame, iframes let you create a window on your page that another web page loads into. Let's take a closer look at these unique page objects

IN THIS TUTORIAL, we used iframes to load in our Zoomify objects. We used iframes here to remove part of the Zoomify interface that wasn't needed, but you can use iframes in many other ways, like loading in advertisements, snippets of other pages, to create a scrolling box and so on.

Unfortunately, Dreamweaver's support of iframes is very limited. New to Dreamweaver 8 is a command to allow you to insert iframes (Insert>HTML>Frames>Iframe), but you'll quickly realise that inserting iframes this way won't get you too far. Instead, try going through Dreamweaver's Reference panel (Window>Reference). In the Reference panel, make sure the Book menu is set to O'Reilly HTML Reference, then set the Tag menu to IFRAME. The panel will load in lots of useful information, including how iframes function, how you can use them, and most useful of all, you'll see some sample code for building an iframe – which is perfect for copying and pasting into Dreamweaver's Code view. Once you've pasted the code, you can further customise the iframe. Back in the Reference panel, you'll see a menu to the right of the Tag menu, which provides a list of all the iframe tag's attributes. For example, here's where you'll find out how to set the frame's width, height, border, scrolling and a whole lot more.

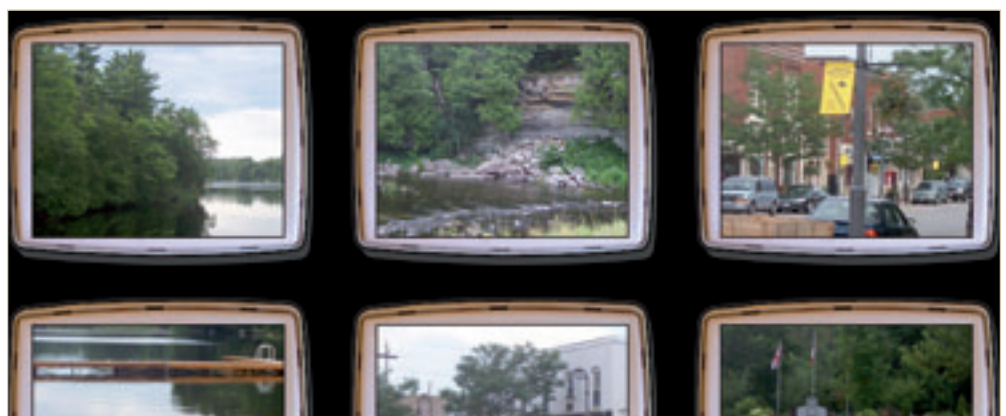
The content that appears within the iframe tags is ignored by browsers that understand iframes, and will therefore only appear in legacy browsers that cannot render the code. As for what the iframe itself can hold, the only limit is your imagination. You can load in HTML pages, graphics, even text files and PDFs! When working with iframes, it is easiest to pop the iframe into a div for maximum control. Then the positioning of the iframe can be controlled by the CSS rule that controls the div. If you're new to iframes, definitely spend some time experimenting with them and implementing them into your sites!



Here's a look at Dreamweaver's Reference panel (Window>Reference), which is the best way for inserting iframes



You can use iframes in all sorts of different situations. This News + Updates box is an iframe, for example

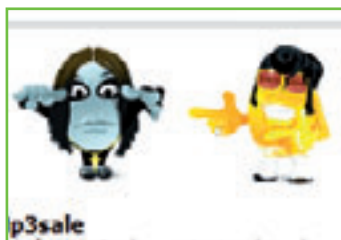


## 21 Viewing the final gallery

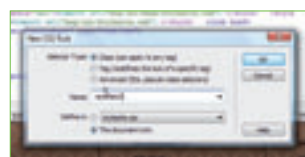
And you're done! Now head back into Design view and save your file. Next, choose File>Preview In Browser and choose a browser from the submenu. Once you're in your browser, try out your new Zoomify gallery!

## Orange web design

www.orangeonweb.com



### TOP TIP



#### Keep it current

When creating a new class or div tag, Dreamweaver presents the opportunity to add to a StyleSheet, either new or existing, or define in the current document. If starting from scratch, select Define in: This document only. This allows for the modification and tweaking of the CSS to only affect one document. When complete, simply copy and paste the complete code into a new CSS document and finally attach to the page.

**N**ot related to the communications company, Orange is a web agency that offers more than just web design. The company incorporates web design, website development, logo and icon creation and content management systems for the complete picture.

With over six years of experience, Orange has an impressive body of work which can be viewed via the website. Its best known client is Sony Ericsson, but all their work boasts a contemporary touch.

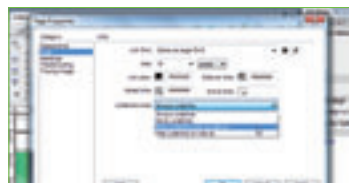
The company's undoubted design talent is on show for all to see, with its smart and current images creating a large portion of the website. The site uses an initial background image that is assigned to the body tag and repeated. This is complemented with their very attractive icon sets. The layout of the Orange site is standard practice, with a host of div tags set up as wrappers to keep the various nested div tags in place. Classes are created to position navigational elements with plenty of padding used to perfectly position text over background images.

The one standout feature of the Orange site is a simple one. It makes good use of the Float property to push the site content to the right. This helps eliminate the need for mouse travel and provides a more accessible site.

## Link styles

Tweak your links to appear and perform just the way you want them to

Links are a crucial element of any page; without them, anything beyond the home page would be pretty much redundant. By default, a link is assigned an underline and generally appears in blue. To give links more personality, head to the Modify menu and select Page Properties>Links. Note the selected style will apply to all links across a page. Starting at the top, select a Link font from the drop list, preferably the same as the standard body font. Next choose a Size, preferably ten or 12 pixels, or use ems for better scalability. The next part involves selecting the



appropriate colours. The Link color is the colour the link needs to be, eg, black if on a white background. The Rollover links' colour is ideally a colour from the same family as the standard link. Experiment to get the desired results. Finally, select the desired style, all of which are self-explanatory.



#### Background bonanza

Orange uses a body background image, overlaid with individual background-image elements

#### Tab-tastic

The site shuns traditional navigation styles, making good use of background images to draw a visitor's attention

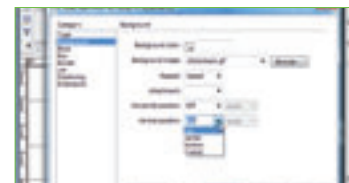
#### Transparent background

Orange makes sections of the background image transparent, letting it adopt other design elements

## Background bonanza

Introduce background images for more design flexibility and greater impact

The Orange website makes comprehensive use of background images. Adding a background image is a similar operation to adding an image, but with more flexibility. If adding an image to the body of a page, go to the Modify menu and select Page Properties>Appearance. This offers two options: Background image and Repeat. To add an image, select Browse, locate and press OK. To manipulate the default positioning, repeats horizontally and vertically, a Repeat option needs to be selected. For an image to appear just once, select no-repeat, to repeat



horizontally select repeat-x, and vertically repeat-y. For more control of a background image, select Body from CSS Style in the CSS panel. This will open the CSS Rule Definition window, then select Background. This presents more options including Horizontal position and Vertical position.





## 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



### Alternative tags

For better accessibility, comprehensive use of the Alt tag is made, with all essential elements tagged

### I seek you

Communication is key, and Orange offers a number of options including Skype and ICQ

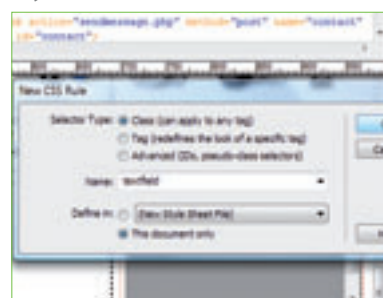
### Feedback form

The feedback form gives the fields a background colour that complements the surrounding background

## STEP BY STEP

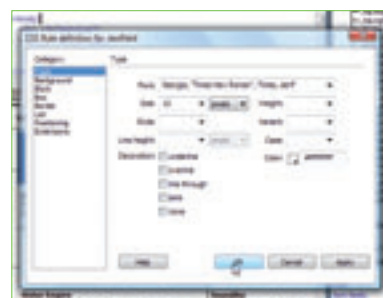
### Forming better fields

Keep a unity to your design theme by styling your form fields to match



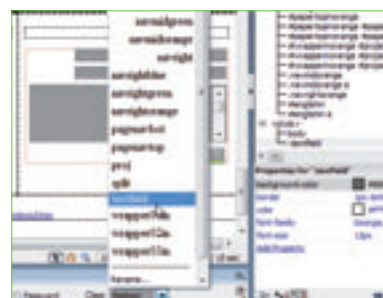
#### 01 New class, mate

By default, form fields are at best functional. In order to create bespoke fields that match a theme or colour, a class needs to be created. First head to the Text menu and select CSS Styles>New. Name the new class, then decide where to define it, ie, StyleSheet or Document and press OK to finish off.



#### 02 CSS Rule defined

Start by selecting the Font, Size, Style and Color from the Type category before switching to Background. Next select a background colour that complements and contrasts well with the text colour selected previously. Now select Border to add a border, then press Apply and OK.



#### 03 Class dismissed

Repeat the previous two steps to create a new class with slight variations on the original. Once a class has been created, it is simply a matter of applying it to the appropriate element. Next, select a text field from the form, then head to the Properties window and from there, select from the Class list.

## Pseudo classes

Expand the power of individual div tags when positioning elements

Div tags provide plenty of power and flexibility, however, in their common form they will adopt the characteristics of elements defined to work across a whole page. A good example is links. To change the properties of a set of links, eg, colour on different background, a pseudo class can be created. An original selector or div tag would work as follows; selector: { property: value; }. A pseudo class will introduce a new element, eg, selector:pseudo class { property: value; }. A practical example is to take a tag, eg #navleft {width: 290px; height: 83px;} and introduce the tag

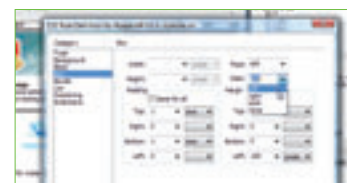


to define the link properties. The new div tag could look something like this: #navleft a {color: #000000;}. This ensures that all the links within the navleft tag are set to the desired colour. To expand the tag further still, a state, ie, hover, can be added, eg, #navleft a:hover {color: #FFFFFF;},

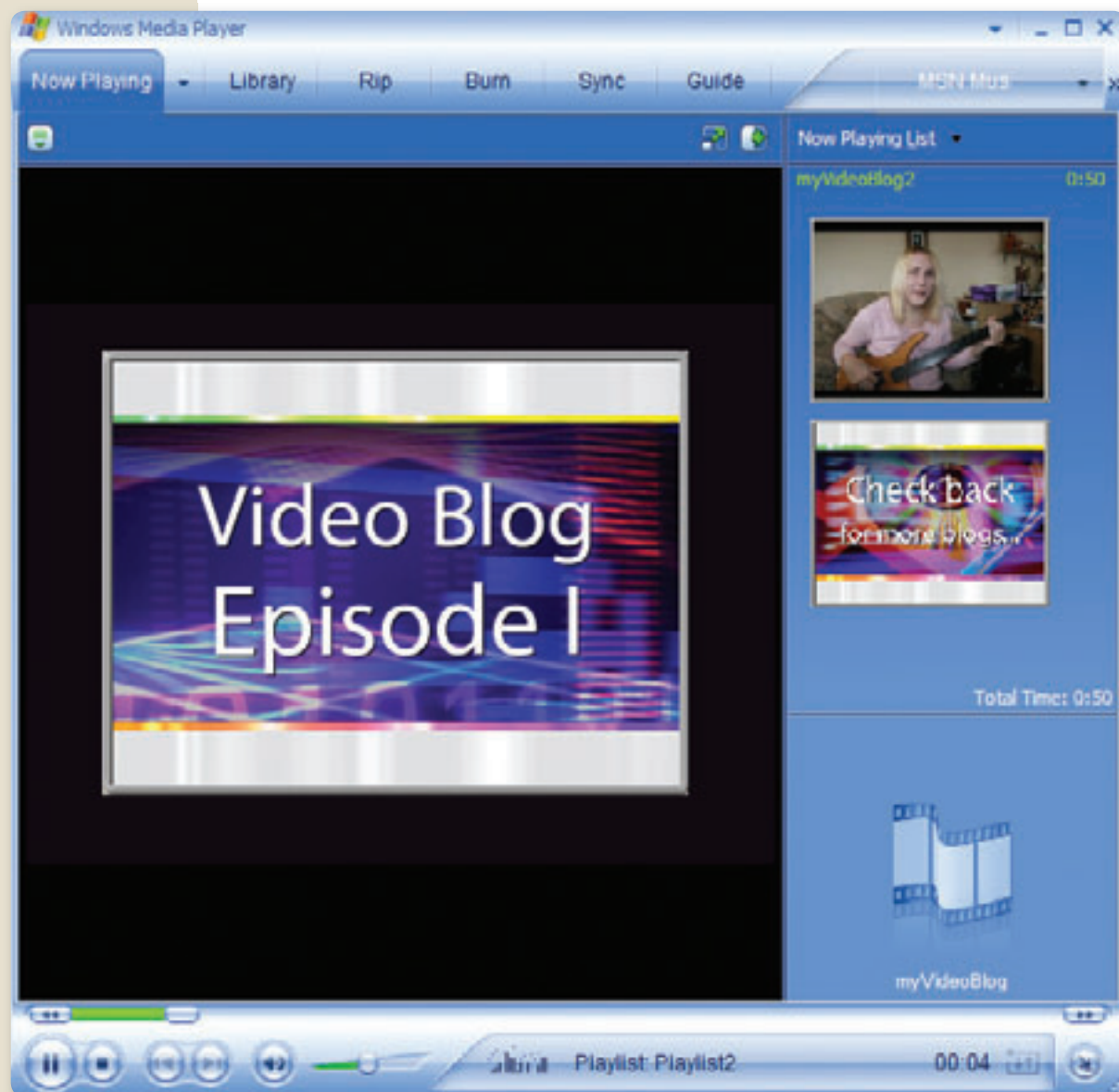
## Keep it clear

Introduce the clear property to define floating elements

In the Box category of the CSS Rule Definition window is the Clear drop-down list. The Clear property defines the sides of an element, ie, an image or text, that should not float. It turns off the floating to that specific side. The Clear property syntax is defined as Clear: none, left, right, both and inherit. None allows floating elements on both sides, while left does not allow floating elements on the left. Right does not allow floating elements on the right, while both does not allow floating elements on either side. Finally, inherit ensures that an element has the same



Clear setting as the parent. The Clear property is commonly used to place text to the left or right of an image. A example of how it works is as follows: img {float:left; clear:left;}. To apply the property to an element, simply select the element from the CSS panel and add from the drop-down list.



### THE BRIEF

#### TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Create a quick video blog or presentation using Adobe VC 3

#### TIME REQUIRED


1-2 hours

#### SKILL LEVEL



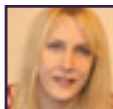
# Video blog-building in Visual Communicator 3

LEARN HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN VIDEO BLOG IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, USING ADOBE'S BRAND NEW VISUAL COMMUNICATOR 3

 **VIDEO BLOGS HAVE** never been so popular. Google, AOL and Free Vlog all offer their own tools that provide us with a means of instantly uploading and sharing our videos. The popularity of videos on YouTube, Bebo, Facebook and MySpace has only served to underline the importance of audio-visual blogs and presentations for the successful web designer. But while publishing vlogs is easy, creating the video blog itself has never been straightforward – until now.

Many audio-visual editing tools require weeks of patient practice before a web designer is sufficiently up-to-speed to create powerful video blogs and presentations. What makes Adobe's Visual Communicator 3 so exciting is its user-friendly GUI interface, which allows web designers to quickly record video presentations that showcase graphics, text, animations and effects, synchronised with audio and video that can be shared across the web.





## YOUR EXPERT

**Petra Jones** is a systems analyst who has over ten years' experience of working as a website designer and developer. Among her interests, Petra lists sound production, podcasting and interactive multimedia sites.

# Video blog-building in Visual Communicator 3



## 01 Choose your theme

Open VC3, and use the pop-up wizard's default Create show based on a Style to pick a theme for your video blog. Pick suitable opening and closing title graphics, give your project a name, headline and subtitle, then decide how you want the rest of your theme to look.



## 02 Type your blog

Now type some text to introduce your presentation or video blog into the central Teleprompter panel. The panel will act as your Autocue when you rehearse or record your video later on. Select the Project tab under the Video Preview screen (bottom-left) and Save As an MSH file.



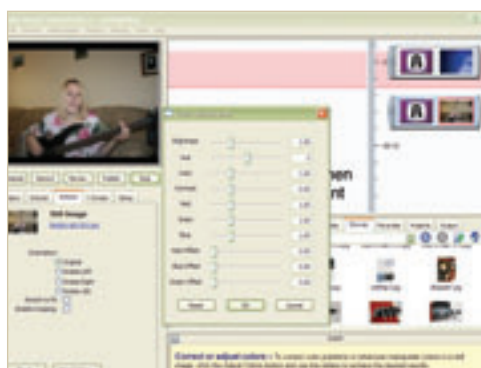
## 03 Edit title screen

If you need to change the title screen, double-click on the title screen action tray in the top-right Titles, Effects and Graphics panel, then select Actions>Edit. You can also edit when the title screen appears in the timeline by clicking and dragging the Title Screen icon to a new position.



## 04 Music and animation

Select the title screen action tray's Sound icon. Hit Browse to locate an MP3, then drag-and-drop it onto the tray to customise your background music. Add a globe animation by dragging Financial Blue Marble (under Graphics>V-Screen Animated Background) to the second action tray.



## 05 Adding images

Use Review to view any changes to your video blog. You can browse for suitable pop-up images under the Action area and add them, simply by dragging them to the action tray area above. Click on the image if you need to rotate or stretch the original, or adjust the colours.



## 06 Changing effects

The Dissolve effect is used by default. Select the image action, click on the Video Effect under Actions to browse the full list of transition effects, then drag-and-drop to your image's action tray. The Actions tab also allows you to adjust the length of time the image appears on screen.



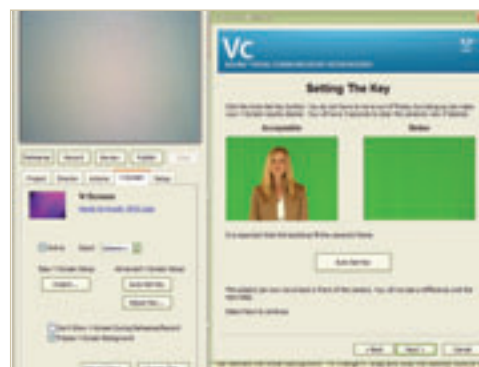
## 07 Animated titles

Go to Graphics>Text Effects and select Text Zoom Back With Dissolve. Drag-and-drop onto the timeline to add an animated title action tray. Click on your text and drag-and-drop a Credit Format text object into the right panel, then double-click it to customise each line of text.



## 08 Lower-third graphics

Sliding effects can be used to display notes or information on the bottom-third of the screen. Try adding a slide using Video Effects Slides>Slide On Up with an in-house theme like Styles>High Tech>LT Circuitude.pg. You can even use this effect to display videos on the lower-half of your blog.



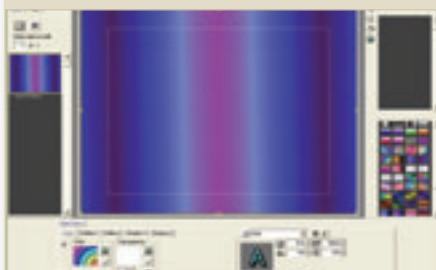
## 09 Virtual backgrounds

Select the V-Screen tab on the bottom-left to check your webcam is functioning properly. Then tick Active and press Wizard. Use a saturated green background made from plastic sheeting or cloth and use the Auto-Set Key to superimpose virtual backgrounds behind you.

## TECHNIQUE

### Advanced Title Editor

Want to customise your video blog's title screen with images, gradient fills and text effects? We show you how



#### 01 Add gradient fills

Select Tools>Launch Advanced Title Editor, or use the F10 short cut to bring up the Alpha CG tool. Select an appropriate background colour from the bottom-right gradient panel and select the Fill icon on the top-left. Now create a new layer.



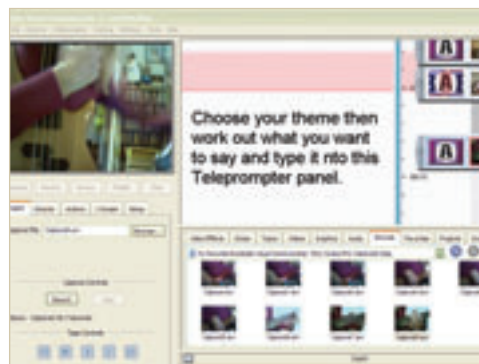
#### 02 Customise font

You can now add a suitable headline for your title screen. Customise your font by changing the Face and Outline 1 colours or patterns using the Style Editor. Click on New Layer then insert an appropriate image using the Photo icon on the top-right.



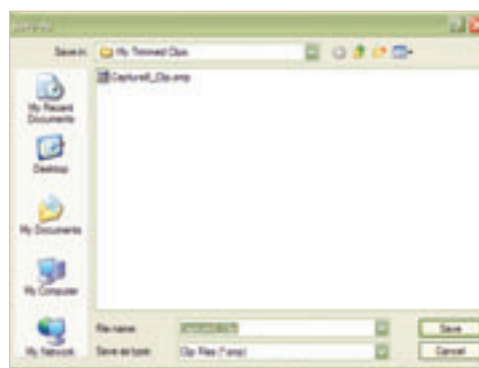
#### 03 Finishing touches

Browse for your image, choose a Load Option of Original Size, then OK. Now go to File>Save Title As to save your efforts to My Titles>Projects. Add to your video blog using Browse>My Documents>My Titles>Projects.



#### 10 Capturing your video

To record a video, simply use Project>Capture>Record. Tape Controls will let you playback, rewind and fast-forward. To add the video to your video blog's timeline, browse Adobe Visual Communicator>My Output>My Capture Clips, then drag-and-drop onto the timeline.



#### 12 Make a reference clip

The amended clip can now be saved as a reference clip in the Media Library which can be used for future blogs, and dropped into other Visual Communication projects. Select Save As Clip, and the trimmed clip will be saved as an SMP clip file under My Output>My Trimmed Clips.



#### 14 Publishing your vlog

There are plenty of choices when it comes to publishing. Use the Publish Wizard to embed your video in WMV, RM or FLV format on a web page, or alternatively publish your video straight to your web host or FTP server. Other options include saving your vlog to hard drive or DV tape.



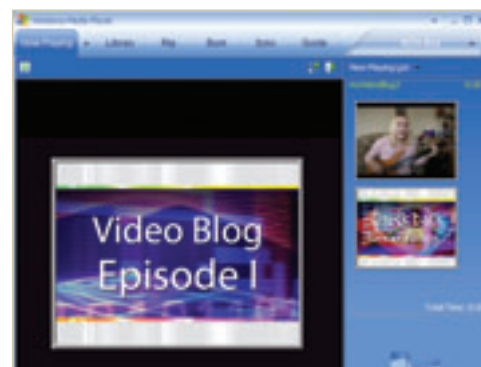
#### 11 Editing video clips

If you need to edit your video, highlight the new video in the timeline and select Actions>Trim. Use Clip Position to decide where to start your video clip, then select Mark In. Find the location where you want your amended video clip to end, then select Mark Out, then Save As.



#### 13 Rehearse and record

Click Setup to adjust your microphone settings under Audio, then check Capture Resolution and Frame Rate under Visual. Select Rehearse to do a run-through of your video blog. When ready, hit Record and read out the text from the Teleprompter to record your vlog for posterity.



#### 15 Final thoughts

Visual Communicator 3 is a user-friendly tool which makes it very straightforward for both non-technical home-video recorders and web designers alike to publish video blogs. Just keep in mind though that some blogging tools need plug-ins to display videos properly.





# REVIEWS

Struggling for those last few Christmas present ideas? Well look no further than our choices from the more deluxe end of the hardware market



## Sony HDR-SR8E

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

**£899**

**BEAUTIFUL STYLING MEETS** amazing high definition (HD) recording times with the smallest, lightest hard disk Handycam model ever from Sony.

The stylishly designed HDR-SR8E packs an immense 100GB hard disk capacity, allowing the camcorder to record beautiful HD pictures and digital surround sound for an incredible 38 hours (in LP mode). The amazing shooting capacity is enabled by powerful AVCHD compression technology that allows a long recording duration with excellent HD picture quality. As well as offering high-compression efficiency, variable bit rate recording adjusts bit rates while shooting, balancing optimal picture quality with maximum storage efficiency for higher picture quality.

Weighing just 530g (excluding battery), the HDR-SR8E is around 20 per cent smaller and 17 per cent lighter than its predecessor in the SR1E series. In addition to stunning 1,080i HD movies, high-quality still images can be captured up to 6.1 megapixels. Further still, in Dual Rec mode you can shoot 4.6-megapixel still images without interrupting video shooting. The Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T lens features a 10x optical zoom range to bring distant images closer with superb clarity, and Super Steady-Shot optical-image stabilisation further ensures sharp, clear images during still shooting. The Sony HDR-SR8E is a stunning piece of kit for producing HD videos without breaking the bank.

**Pros:** You'll find that the year's best consumer camcorder is hard to beat in terms of the overall package

**Cons:** Touch screen is a little cramped, but we're very forgiving, especially when it's hard to find other faults

**Verdict:**



## Denon AH-D5000

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

**£499**

**PREMIUM PRIVATE LISTENING** comes at a price. In this case, just under £500. Forget cost for a minute and picture yourself sitting in the comfort of your living room, savouring notes of your favourite music you didn't even know were there. Whether for on-the-go or private late-night listening, the AH-D5000s will take you somewhere special. They're also impressively light for headphones encased in mahogany.

Denon's new cans are distinguished by two signature sound-enhancing technologies. First is the latest micro-fibre diaphragm technology. The smaller size of the micro-fibre (1/100th compared to natural cellulose) results in a denser diaphragmatic material that increases frequency transmission rates for better sound and detail, affording maximum presence of acoustic sounds with low distortion. In addition, a special Acoustic Optimizer adjusts sound-pressure balance in front of and behind the diaphragm to deliver dynamic bass sounds.

The AH-D5000s include a lightweight magnesium frame, high-purity OFC cables (7N, 99.99999 per cent), and cloth-mesh jackets. We did have a couple of criticisms though. The heavy-duty cable is very long and weighty, and the mahogany finish is a bit fuddy-duddy. While the AH-D5000s have been designed for those who want to enjoy realistic sound in complete peace, there's no reason why seasoned web designers can't indulge in audible bliss.

**Pros:** With gold-plated connectors, high-grade cushioning, headphones have never felt or sounded so good

**Cons:** Costing half a grand, you also need to be over 50 years' old to endorse mahogany. At the same time, can be seen as chavvy...

**Verdict:**







# Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III

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

**£6000**

**ULTRA-HIGH RESOLUTION** and responsiveness, and ultra-low noise CMOS sensor and dual DIGIC III image processors power the lushest

digital camera to have ever hit the *Web Designer* desks. The new 21.1-megapixel (5632 x 3750 pixels), full-frame EOS-1Ds Mark III brings the power of Canon's professional imaging excellence and innovation into sharper focus than ever before.

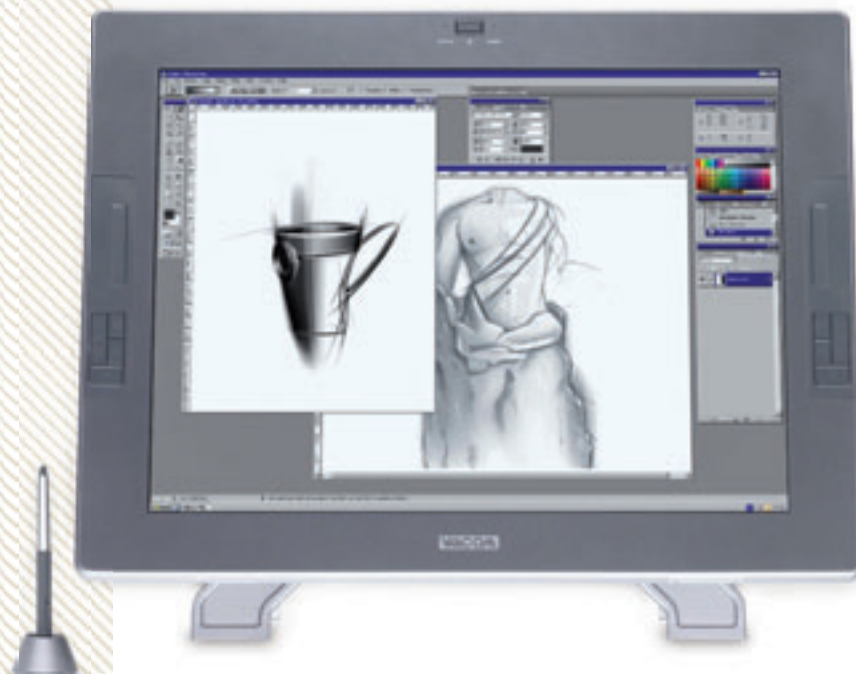
The new EOS-1Ds Mark III takes Canon's pro-digital prowess into the realm of high-fashion and commercial photo studios where bulkier, medium-format cameras previously reigned. If your business is digital photography, you'll be amazed with the camera's specifications and performance. The lighter-weight magnesium alloy body is rugged and versatile enough to take out of the studio and into the field, and the camera's five frames-per-second shooting rate for bursts of up to 56 large/fine JPEGs or 12 RAW images is unmatched in its class.

You can select any one of six recording formats ranging from 21 megapixels in large JPEG or RAW format, 16.6 or 11 megapixels in the two medium JPEG sizes, or 5.2 megapixels in the small JPEG or SRAW formats. Another first for a professional digital SLR of this calibre is Canon's complete dust management solution, called the EOS Integrated Cleaning System. Quite frankly, the camera's list of features is a never-ending story. If you want the best, start here.

**Pros:** Ability to set one of ten compression rates for each image size in any JPEG format is great for web use. Unrivalled at this level

**Cons:** Just a tad overpriced for users just after a digital SLR for YouTube-use only, but if you can afford it – what are you waiting for!

**Verdict:**



# Wacom Cintiq 21UX

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

**£1887**

**TAKE A BEAUTIFUL** interactive display and add the control, comfort and productivity of battery-free tablet technology and you have something

special. The Cintiq 21UX also has the largest interactive LCD (21.3 inches) and the highest resolution (1600 x 1200 pixels) of any Wacom display to date. Frankly, if you're a graphic designer or digital artist, you'll be praying for this under the tree at Christmas.

Not only is the 21UX bigger than most tablets, but it has improved pen capabilities to provide better precision, navigation, drawing, construction, editing, design and sketching. The pen's 1,024 levels of pressure sensitivity allow you to make the finest of touches to your designs, and the tablet's 5,080 lines-per-inch resolution, eight independent ExpressKeys and two Touch Strips should meet every retoucher's requirements.

The new seamless surface of the Cintiq 21UX is an important advance that will give you a barrier-free digital-work area with no bezel edge to bump into. But most importantly, the 24-bit colour display with ICC colour profile, 170-degree viewing angle, 400:1 contrast ratio, and 250cd/m2 brightness will dazzle. If not, how about the stand that allows it to be rotated 180 degrees in either direction and tilted +/- 60 degrees? The Cintiq 21UX works on both Windows and Apple OS, and includes a glare-reduction film for users where glare from overhead lighting can be a problem.

**Pros:** A display you can draw on. A tablet you can surf on. What more do you want? Redraft that Christmas list now!

**Cons:** The screen is so big that it can make the cursor appear to be out of registration with the pen

**Verdict:**





**Killer feature**  
The most revolutionary user interface since the mouse will totally captivate your senses

## Apple iPhone

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

**£269** (requires 18-month O2 contract)

**THE HYPE IS** over, thank goodness! Apple's revolutionary iPhone is now finally available at Apple, O2 and The Carphone Warehouse retail locations across the UK. But was the fanfare worth it? Yes and no, but mainly yes.

Impossibly gorgeous and crafted to the most amazing precision, iPhone is unlike any other mobile phone on the market. Combining four devices in one – quad-band mobile phone, 8GB widescreen iPod, two-megapixel digital camera and Wi-Fi enabled internet device – iPhone is particularly special thanks to its gorgeous 3.5-inch (480 x 320 pixel) screen and revolutionary multi-touch interface that lets you control the device with just a tap, flick or pinch of your fingers – no tatty stylus required!

Activating iPhone is also unique. Instead of waiting in a busy retail outlet, you have to use iTunes running on your PC or Mac. The software guides you through simple steps to choose your tariff and activate your iPhone. Once activated, you can then sync all of your phone numbers and other contact information, calendars, email accounts, web-browser bookmarks, music, photos, podcasts and TV shows, just like they do when you sync your iPods with iTunes.

Three iPhone tariffs are available from O2 starting at £35, which all include free unlimited usage of the O2 mobile data network. Also, in a market first, there is free unlimited use of The Cloud, the

UK's largest single public Wi-Fi network, covering over 7,500 cafes, airport lounges, pubs and other locations across the UK.

Just like the iPod Touch it's based upon, iPhone is one of the best consumer gadgets on the market. But it's not perfect. There's no doubt that it's a jaw-dropper in terms of design, the sleek interface is mesmerising and top-notch music and video features should satisfy all but the most demanding multimedia buffs. But a host of missing features such as 3G, a decent business email client, and better third-party software support let it down overall. Call quality is also variable, and web designers may require a more accommodating browser. Simply, it is brilliant, but you'll be left wanting more.

**Pros:** The world's sexiest mobile phone bar none. Buttons and styluses on phones are a thing of the past. Could this be the future?

**Cons:** Call quality can be hit-and-miss. Ask yourself whether £269 is worth spending on a contract phone

**Verdict:**







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# Amazon hoping to reinvent the wheel

ONLINE RETAIL GIANT TO TAKE ON ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST ESTABLISHED PRODUCTS WITH THE LAUNCH OF ITS NEW ELECTRONIC READER

**WITH THE DIGITAL** music market seemingly keen to shake off the shackles of clumsy CDs, it was surely inevitable that the model would be translated elsewhere. Well despite previous attempts by the likes of Microsoft, Amazon has decided to release what could be viewed as an iPod for books. The hand-held 'Kindle' device is effectively a skinny wireless terminal that displays downloaded content on an electronic ink-based screen. Designed to fit snugly into the users palm and allow non-backlit performance for comfortable reading, the Kindle will also facilitate the download of reading materials on the fly. It doesn't even work via Wi-Fi but instead uses the same high-speed data network that the latest mobile phones inhabit or the "Amazon Whispernet", which means no need for Wi-Fi hotspots or even PC synching. The online Kindle store currently boasts a range of over 90,000 books including many of the latest bestsellers for little over £5 (\$9.99), and special monthly newspaper or magazine subscriptions from titles such as the New York Times are already available. Downloads take less than a minute to complete and although the unit has enough storage for around 200 titles it allows external archiving on SD memory cards. Weighing only 10.3 ounces and thinner than a regular paperback book, the

device also sports a standard-layout keyboard which could open up the versatility of the Kindle to other applications. Despite three years on the project, Amazon Chief Exec Jeff Bezos remains realistic about the challenges facing the new product: "Books have stubbornly resisted digitisation. I think there's a very good reason for that, and that is the book is so highly evolved and so suited to its task that it's very hard to displace."



Sony and Microsoft might have tried previously and failed, but could Amazon's latest attempt at digitising books or newspapers actually work?

## Still scared?

IDENTITY THEFT CONTINUES TO WORRY ONLINE CONSUMERS

**NOT EVEN THE** government seems able to safeguard our personal details and banking records, so it's hardly any wonder that the public continue to be scared rigid by identity theft. According to a new survey by YouGov and IT management firm CA, almost two thirds of the 2,000 UK people questioned felt that internet organisations should take greater responsibility in handling their data. With 60% of the trust vote, banks were deemed most responsible, while credit card firms hit second with 40%. Governments and online retailers only marginally beat ISPs into last place, as the latter could only scrape a poor 8% in the public's perception. 69% of those canvassed did admit to being reassured by security certificates displayed on those sites they used, although there appears to be much convincing left to do by the industry.

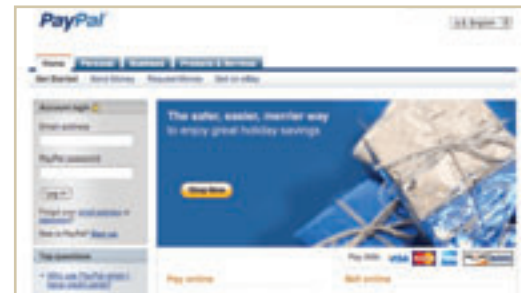


Banks like Lloyds seem to inspire most confidence, but overall there's much work to do to convince the public that the dotcom space is safe

## Easy PayPal

MAKING WEB TRANSACTIONS TO AN INTERNET STORE TO GET SAFER

**ONLINE PAYMENT GIANT** PayPal has responded to web consumer anxiety by launching a new software utility called the PayPal Secure Card. This local program adds a button to browsers to generate a special MasterCard transaction code that will be acceptable to sites who won't normally take PayPal payments. It also recognises when eCommerce or retail sites are visited and automatically fills in transaction details so that loggable key-in information isn't required. For obvious security reasons sensitive data isn't stored locally but is instead placed in user accounts on the central servers, and full browser support is promised very soon. "From a merchant's perspective this looks like any other MasterCard transaction," said PayPal's Chris George.



Buying goods that wouldn't normally be traded using Paypal can now be purchased more safely with this new Secure Card software



## Web 2.0 v small web design agencies

Chris Dicken, specialist, eCommerce software developer for Actinic

IS IT JUST ME, OR IS BEING A WEB DESIGNER JUST THAT BIT LESS GLAMOUROUS THESE DAYS?...



Five years ago, web designers were sought for their vision and expertise and they were performing a unique and exciting role that could never be filled within a standard company. Nowadays, however, it feels like people treat web designers like they do their accountant, and a company website is just something that needs to be sorted out in the same way as doing the filing or reordering stationery. On top of all that, web designers are forced to sell their sites at a low enough price point to try and stay competitive, next to cowboy designers who churn out bog-standard sites for knock-down prices.

### TURNING FROM CODE MONKEY TO CONSULTANT

Having said all that, I have never met a web designer who isn't rushed off their feet with work. A designer can make a reasonable living from knocking up designs for home pages, but how can a web design business grow and expand beyond that? Is there any way that designers can reclaim that role of a uniquely skilled consultant – rather than just being seen as a glorified code monkey who knows how to drive Dreamweaver?

An obvious area for a web design agency to move into is eCommerce. An online sales channel means that a client's website can evolve from being a glorified pamphlet to being a vital source of business – and the

designer is suddenly recast from the role of 'person who makes things look pretty' directly to 'essential business consultant'.

But there is a reason that so many web designers steer clear of all but the most basic eCommerce sites. I mean, think about it: it's bad enough fixing a site to work on Safari properly, without also having to worry about whether that glitch will result in the loss of orders. Suddenly, that frantic Saturday afternoon phone call from the client becomes rather more difficult to ignore. Fortunately, there is a huge range of off-the-shelf eCommerce solutions that can take care of the trickier technical stuff and leave the designer more free to get on with making it look good.

### "THERE IS A HUGE RANGE OF OFF-THE-SHELF ECOMMERCE SOLUTIONS TO TAKE CARE OF THE TRICKIER TECHNICAL STUFF"

#### ECOMMERCE AT THE DROP OF A HAT

eCommerce solutions these days will provide all the basic features the client will ever need (shipping, tax, product options, etc) and with a bit of shopping around, it is possible to find solutions that will be flexible enough to meet a client's more complex requirements. Getting the right eCommerce solution can save a design agency masses of valuable time – maybe not initially as they have to learn the solution, but with a little bit of practice, a designer can easily turn out fully functional eCommerce sites at the drop of a hat.

But eCommerce doesn't have to be the pinnacle of the services that a designer provides. A recent survey among users of Actinic's eCommerce tools showed that a meagre seven per cent of store owners sold exclusively online (ie, their online store was their only sales channel). Everyone else sold through one or more additional sales channels, either at a retail store or via mail order or telephone ordering.

#### MORE OPPORTUNITIES WITH MULTI-CHANNEL RETAIL

So if electronic retail is now going multi-channel, with orders coming in from lots of different sources, where is the opportunity for web designers to get in on the action? Well, the reason it's worth spending some time researching eCommerce solutions is that some have order-processing systems built in that cater for multi-channel sales. This is going to mean that the client can enter their telephone orders straight into the eCommerce system where the rest of their orders are already held. And if that program allows designers to customise that order-entry screen (which some of them do) the whole order-entry system can be tailored by the designer to suit the client's requirements exactly.

On top of that, if there is also a way to transfer all the order details into the client's accounting package, then all of a sudden, as well as designing a website, the designer is setting up integrated business systems for the client, which will put them streets ahead of the rest of the competition.

But online and telephone sales are not the end of the story. If the client has a retail store, then why shouldn't the design agency be the ones who supply the EPOS (electronic point of sale) system for their tills, already set up to integrate with their online and telephone sales? This will give the client an integrated electronic retail system that has a single, manageable inventory and reporting system.

So I'm pleased to say that the future looks very bright, and that the potential is certainly there for small web design agencies to choose the right technologies and offer a range of services that will make churning out simple home-page designs very much a thing of the past.



# eCommerce gallery

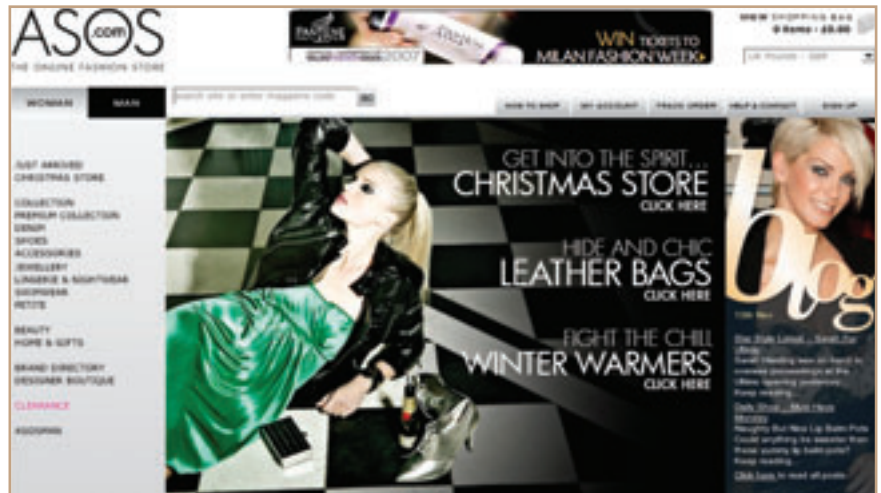
ASOS.com remains one of the most popular online fashion outlets, and is a great example how to get it right all the time

## The online shop still at the top

www.asos.com

ASOS.COM HAS BEEN one of the leading online retailers for imitation and designer clothing for some time, reaping the benefits of our celebrity-induced consumer culture with absolute precision. The first pull for the shopper is that its range covers a lot of ground. A vast and mixed selection of clothes, accessories and cosmetics are available here, all at the height of current fashion trends.

But it is with the simplicity of the site's navigation, highly organised structure and high-impact visuals that enable it to be such an immersive shopping experience, and trawling through the many pages will have you constantly adding to your basket, so we recommend that you interact with care. You also have the ability to mark anything you like as a favourite, so you can check up on an out-of-stock item at a later time. This is a great feature to ensure all parties do not miss out on a sale. You can sort the pages' items by the date that they were added or by price, and on selecting an item, you get to see it modelled from all angles.



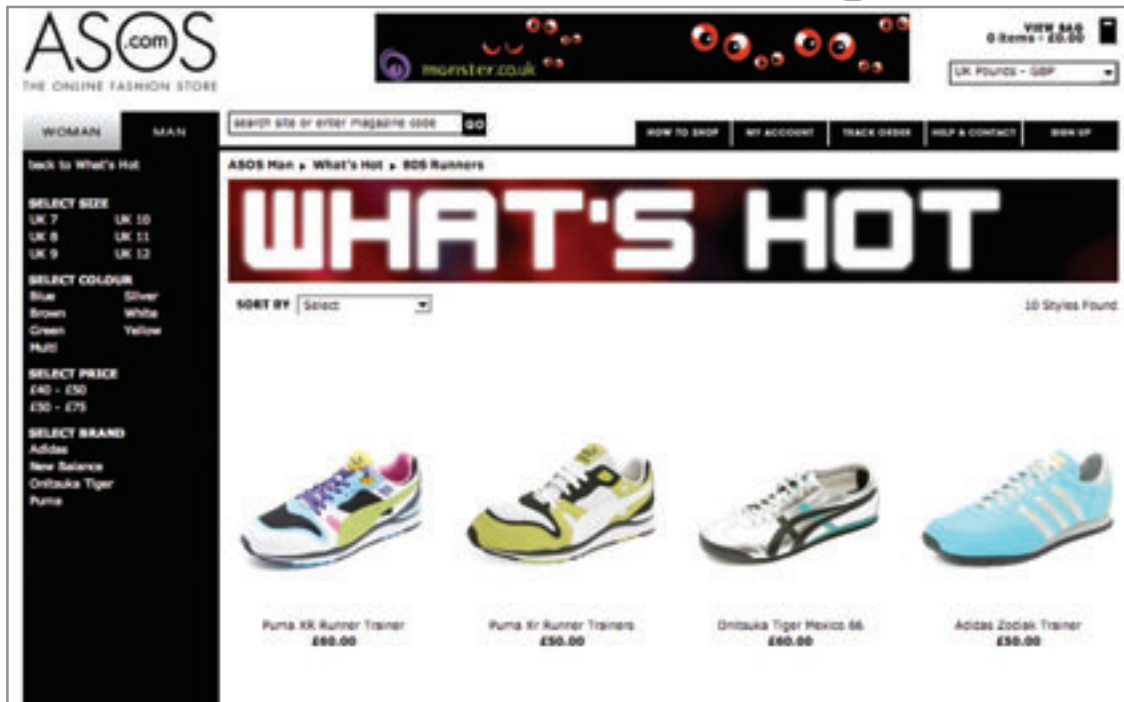
The site captures you from the off with high-end fashion photography of the latest styles and celebrity looks



The site has a distinctive style, making shopping an enjoyable experience – much better than the crazed Christmas Eve dashes!



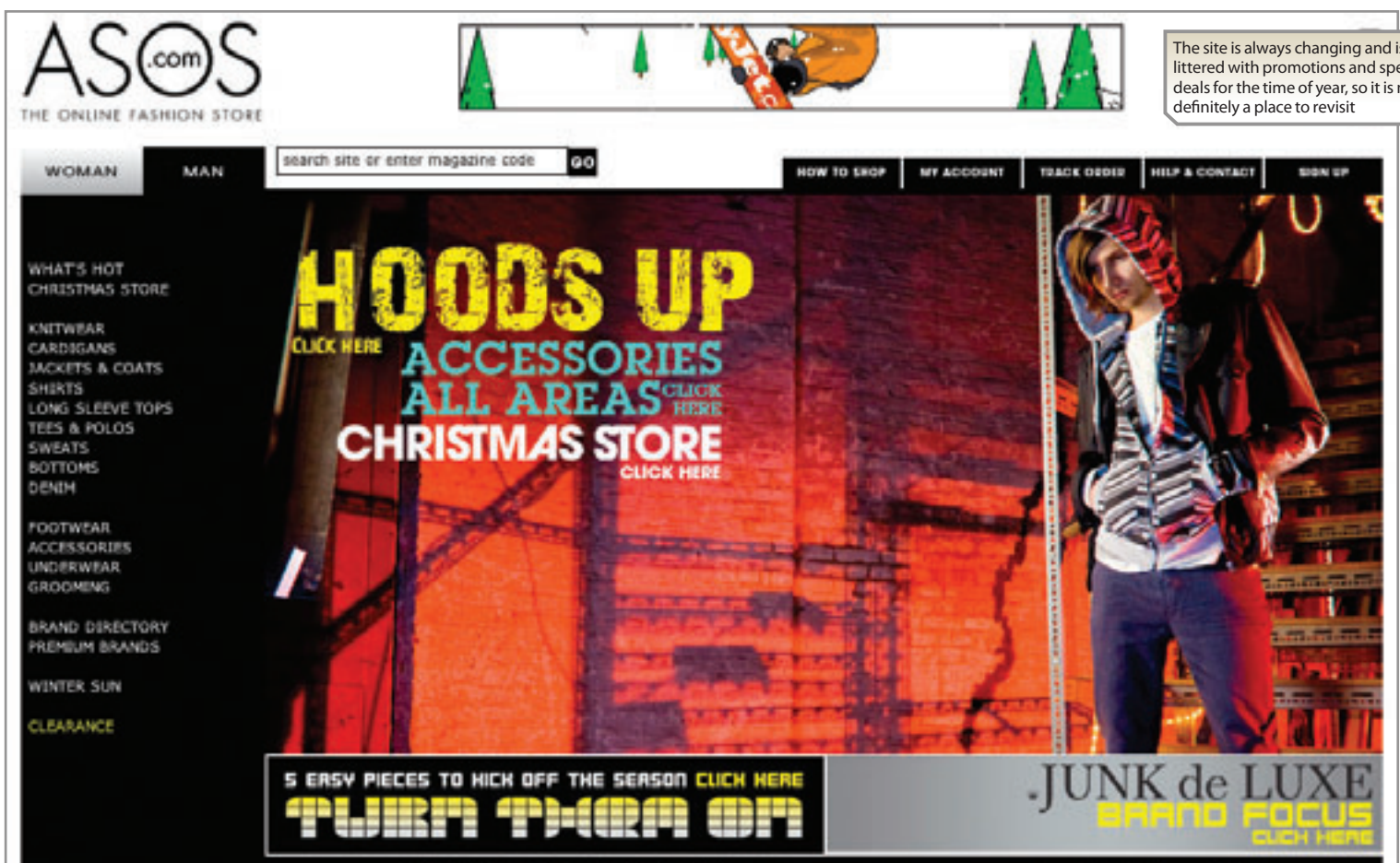
“The site is always changing and is littered with special deals for the time of year”



The What's Hot feature enables the shopper to go straight to the latest selections on offer, which are all carefully categorised

## VERDICT ASOS.com

With its regular promotions for the latest ranges and its ease of use, customers keep coming back for more. ASOS.com is well and truly still on top of its game.



The site is always changing and is littered with promotions and special deals for the time of year, so it is most definitely a place to revisit



# portfolio

## THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING

Neville has made an effort to combine simplicity and attractive design composition for the NevilDevil.com home page. The central welcome image draws the main focus and introduces colour to the predominantly dark background

### Joseph Neville

www.nevildevil.com

**Skills:** XHTML/CSS web design, Flash, ActionScript, Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Dreamweaver and Fireworks.

**Employment status:** Graphics and web designer

This freelance graphics and web designer has achieved numerous feats of digital wizardry for a variety of clients, including the University of Pennsylvania. "I developed concepts for the redesign of the Human Resources website, focusing on the reorganisation of content and creating new navigation and layouts to be more user-friendly." He confirms, "I also designed and produced graphic design projects for the division, including brochures, logos, branding, postcards, posters, flyers and ads." The website's expressive, yet simplistic nature has allowed Neville to introduce himself to the industry and prospective clients.



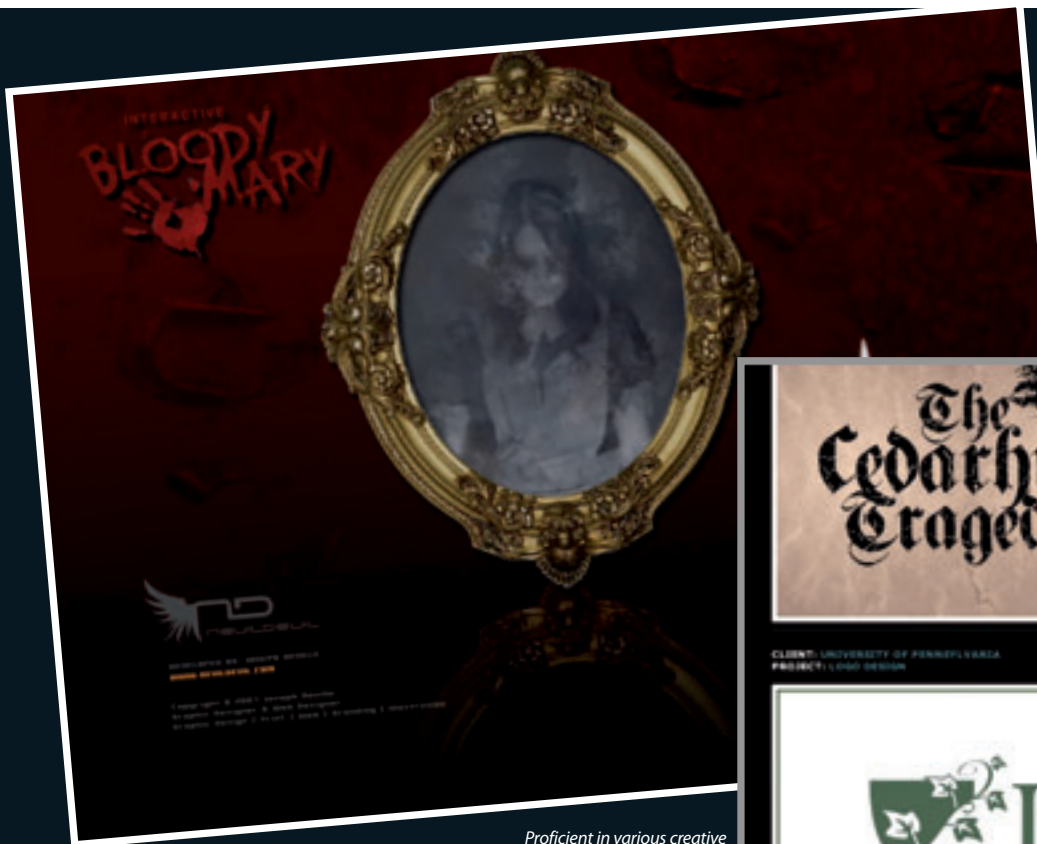
Neville uses his online portfolio to showcase his previous website endeavours, including an assignment for the University of Pennsylvania



**OUR MAILBOX WAS** overflowing this month with requests to be featured in our prized Portfolio pages, which was a welcome dilemma; here are the two that did it for us. If you think you can do better, drop us an email and let us see what you've got!

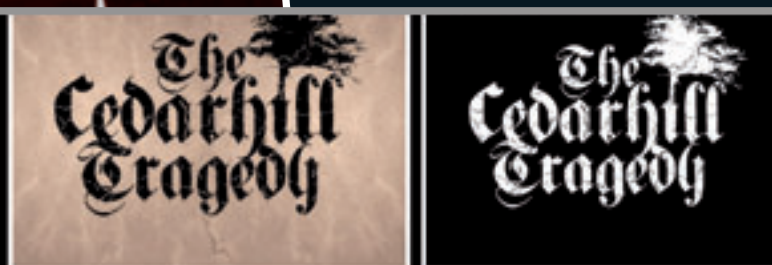
**MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

To keep this section going, we rely on students 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)



The visitor is invited to click on the mirror, repeat "Bloody Mary" and blow out the candles by clicking on the flames. The result is that an eerie ghost-like figure appears and smashes the mirror

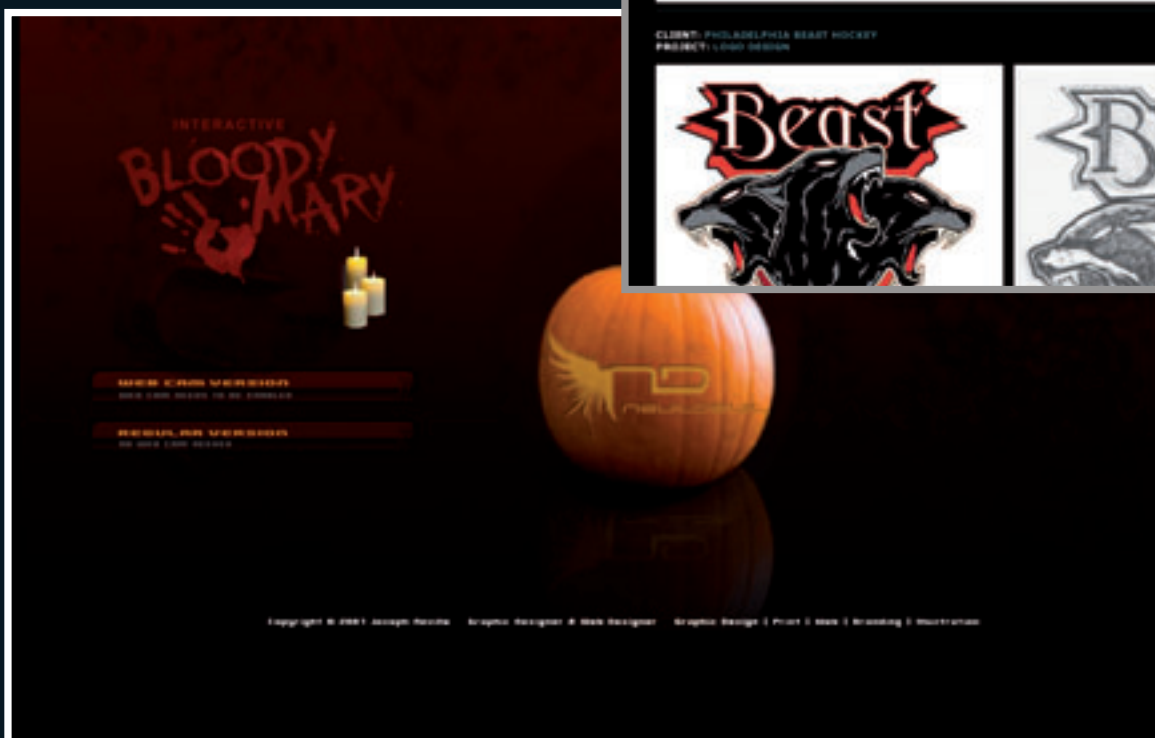
Proficient in various creative applications, Neville has had numerous requests to produce identity logos, such as these illustrated on his website. The various assortment of clients help to illustrate his scope as a digital artist



CLIENT: UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
PROJECT: LOGO DESIGN



CLIENT: PHILADELPHIA BEAST HOCKEY  
PROJECT: LOGO DESIGN



Illustrating his penchant for Halloween fun and interactive web design, Neville produced a 'Bloody Mary' web page, including a webcam version and a regular version

# portfolio

## THE PLACE WHERE YOUR WORK DOES THE TALKING

### Dan Lindop

www.danlindop.co.uk

**Skills:** Photoshop, Illustrator, Dreamweaver, Flash, HTML/XHTML, CSS, JavaScript and ActionScript

**Employment status:** Creative web designer  
Dan Lindop, creative web designer with over seven years of industry experience, says having a portfolio website has been extremely lucrative. "My portfolio website has proven very important. It has really helped to raise my profile, as 75 per cent of new leads come through my website too. Most importantly, as a web designer, it is crucial that your own portfolio site is up-to-scratch. Who would hire a web designer whose own portfolio website was poor?" Lindop told us that there were two main aims behind his site: one was to showcase his design work and the other was to explain to potential clients what he could do for them. "I think it accomplishes both of these tasks, while remaining quick and easy to use. Simple is often best when it comes to the web."

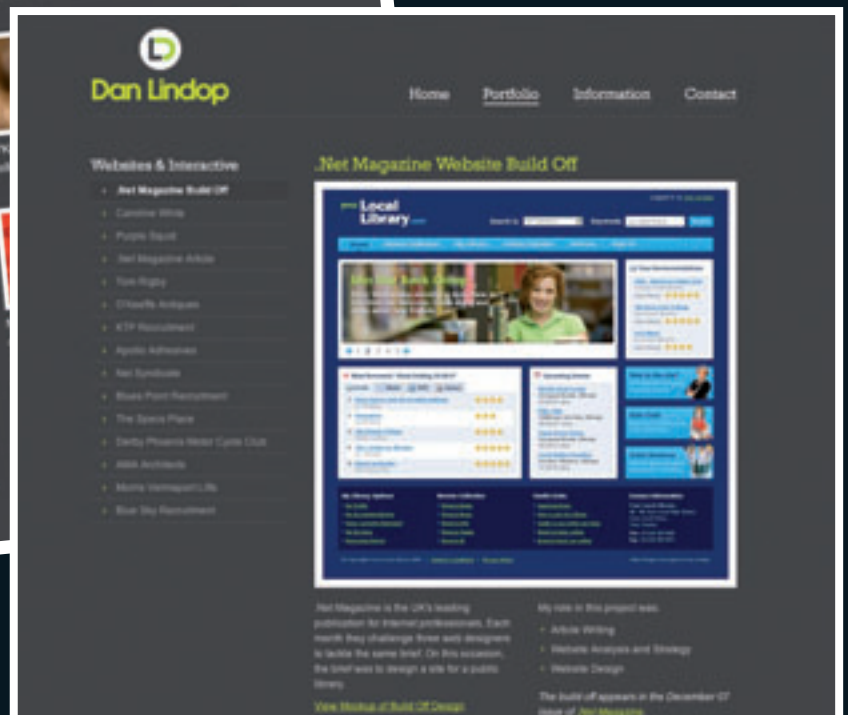


The opening web page features a rolling-text speech bubble, proclaiming Lindop's guarantee to design websites that meet the customers demand

Once a visitor navigates onto a thumbnail, they are taken to another web page, which gives further details of the project and lists other achievements for the visitor to flick through in a structured list



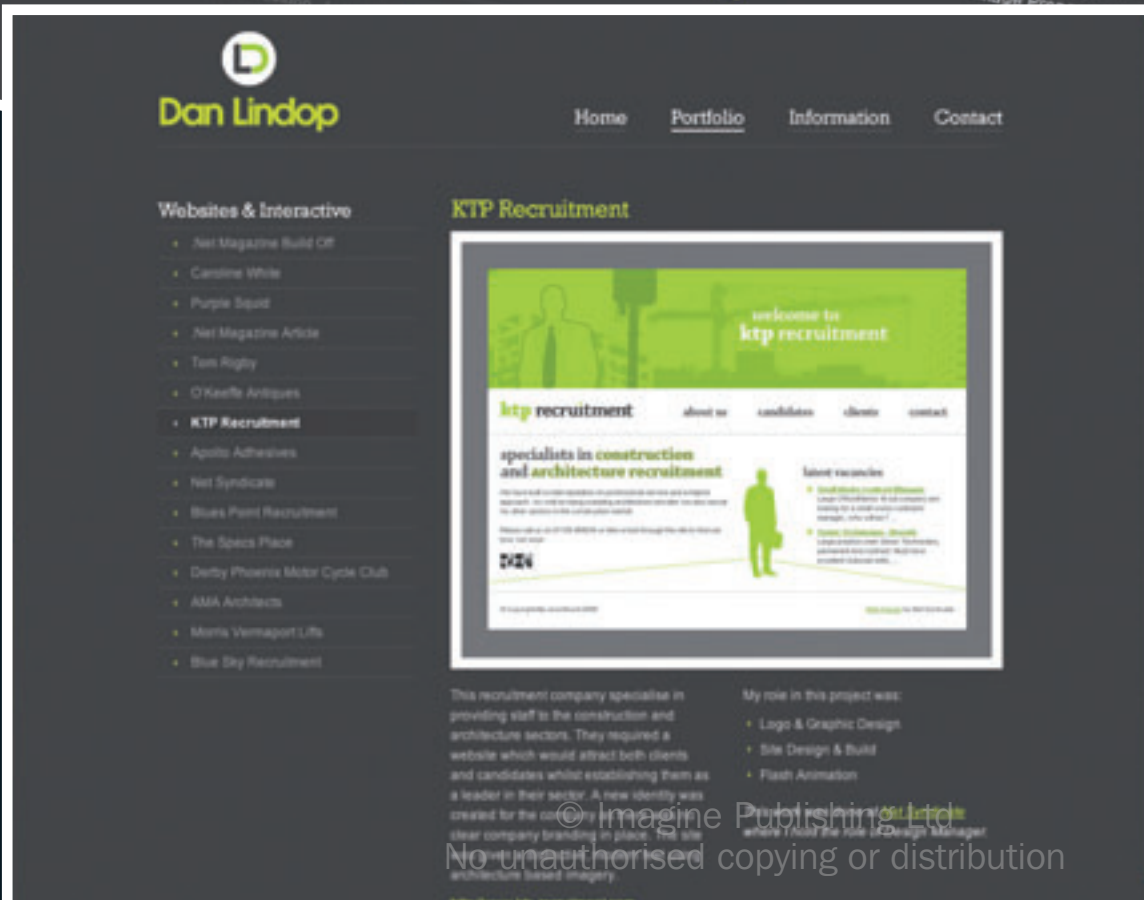
Hosting dozens of thumbnail images, visitors get a real sense of the level of work Lindop has previously produced, as they are offered a handy snapshot showcase







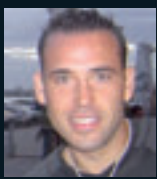
Lindop has maintained a subdued background colour palette throughout, and has highlighted essential information in a bold, luminous green to attract the visitor's attention



Another benefit of featuring a subdued grey as the portfolio background colour is that the examples of the clients' websites make a vibrant exclamation in comparison

## WD: the sky's the limit

Ask yourself a simple question. What can *Web Designer* do for you? Be inspired by this success story from Marc Levy, and see what direction your life takes!



**What do you get when you take a young businessman with two degrees and a love of art, a small start-up company**

**on foreign soil in need of a website, a couple of hours in transit in London, and two copies of *Web Designer* magazine? Well, I got a new passion, a totally new direction for my start-up company and skills I'd never even imagined possible.**

My name is Marc Levy and I am the owner and manager of iSpace, a Sydney-based graphic-solutions business, for which the seeds were planted by some reading I did on an aeroplane almost three years ago.

I'd always been an art-orientated person, but it was only when I emigrated from South Africa to Sydney, Australia in 2002, that I realised the extent to which websites determined success in a truly competitive marketplace.

I owned a signage and graphic design company, and so I was looking for someone to make me an impressive website that stood out as artistically beautiful, yet functional, without overkill in terms of Flash, as I'd always been wary of Flash.

I entered hours of meetings with local web companies to discuss my project requirements, but there was nothing

that really knocked my socks off. So I started researching web design on the internet, and documenting the best aspects of each site I discovered.

And then I spent that space of time on the streets of London, found and devoured my first two *Web Designer* mags and felt everything change.

Back in Sydney after my travels, I decided to buy a Dreamweaver video. It was exceptionally hard to understand at that stage, but despite the challenges, I decided to do everything it took to become a web designer, and complement my existing business.

I'd taught myself Photoshop after all, so how hard could web design be? Well, web design is like a fine wine – it gets better with time, age and experience. So for someone starting out, the backlog can be daunting!

It didn't take me long to realise that gaining an understanding of web design was going to be just as difficult as acquiring my degrees – and I'm not kidding when I say this.

Trying to catch up on what I missed out by not being in the industry, I saved up and began to import backdated issues of *Web Designer* in loads of five or six. Those trips to the post office made me feel like I was en route to cash in a winning lottery ticket – I was hooked!

Ten magazines later, I was starting to get to grips with certain things, but still felt like I was drowning, so I approached

a local web designer who was kind enough to give me three lessons. During this period, I managed to buy a Power Mac G5 – though I did go without other things (like food and sleep) to afford it. I've always believed in having the right tools to do the job.

### THE INTERNET HAS CHANGED THE WORLD

Information flows quickly and is easily accessible to the public. How it is presented on a computer screen is critical to success in business today.

I was dreaming of understanding thoroughly how to create information architecture, and present it online in the form of developing web pages. Almost 18 months later, that first site I dreamed of is complete. It needs a little fine-tuning, but it's almost exactly what I saw in my mind right at the start. What's more, that first site is just one of many I've created since then. Today, my business iSpace focuses on helping clients to improve the way they present themselves in business, whether on-screen or in the tangible sense. Take a look for yourselves at [www.ispace.com.au](http://www.ispace.com.au).

I'm realistic enough to know that although I had an aptitude for visual creativity and digital expression, a good business website needs to be functional – it needs to relay information to a marketplace. It's not just a piece of art with no function, so understanding this point is critical if you plan to create websites for corporate communication purposes. Understanding that the front-end visual needs to look beautiful, but equally as important the back end needs to be a functional expandable piece of internet architecture with adaptability.

I make a point of encouraging other web design hopefuls to push on in developing a sound and real understanding of this dynamic and intoxicating industry.

My style and philosophy (based on the theory of photorealism I learned at school) is this: the detail in every



*Webeon is the web design arm of iSpace and has already worked on numerous projects*

tiny inch is what reflects superior skills and really separates the men from the boys in the industry. It's also about understanding how to fuse colour, create the ultimate harmonies and produce a visual masterpiece.

I realise that art is a very subjective thing, and that some people love certain things and others hate them, but I also believe that there is a definitive point at which you can start to satisfy a number of people at once.

In addition, I can't speak highly enough of the value inherent in creating relationships with other web designers and web developers. This is critical to surviving as a small boutique company or as a freelancer, because the truth is that you're never going to master every element of the web. I have crossed over the line of understanding the technical side. If you don't have a real desire to get this side under control, you may want to think about using an outsource business model to get a technical expert to take your design work and turn it into a functional website.

My final word of advice to other designers has to be this: once you have the skills, they're yours forever. So strive to understand the industry, put in the extra time and make sacrifices if necessary to further your knowledge.

Who knows? One day, you could land up taking your small or start-up company in a whole new exciting and lucrative direction, just because you spent ten minutes reading an article in a web design magazine. It worked for me.



*Mark's business site at [www.ispace.com.au](http://www.ispace.com.au) spans many different design disciplines*