

Adding Interaction to Flash AS3

Flash CS4 is different and so is Actionscript 3

Flash from CS3 onwards has changed quite a bit from previous versions, meaning that some tasks have to be relearned - even things really taken for granted. One of the major changes is to actionscript which now works a little differently than before. To somebody who can program - the changes make total sense - but to others those changes might appear confusing and annoying, but once you can get used to the 'new way' then you should find your workflow improved.

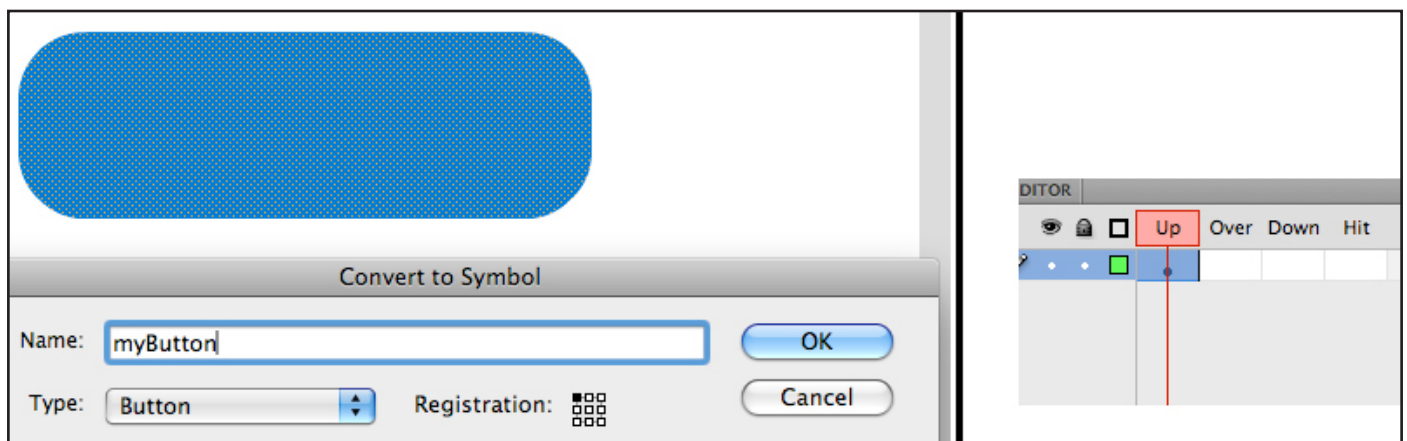
Creating interaction - buttons

One of the most obvious ways Flash has changed is in the way you create and code buttons. Before you created your button and then added actionscript directly to it. Now you have to add the actionscript to the main time line for the button. This is beneficial because it places all actionscript in one location greatly reducing confusion with location of actionscript which could be very painful on large projects.

Making a button

You create a button in exactly the same way as before:

Simply create a shape or graphic and then convert it to a button symbol. You then have a special time line for a button which has four keyframes: UP : OVER : DOWN : HIT



You can then make the button look and feel how you want, with whatever roll over conditions you desire.

Next you put the button on the stage and give the button an 'instance name', this will be the name you will use in the actionscript to identify the button. You can set the 'instance name' in the properties box for the button. Make sure the name you give is individual and contains no spaces. Also try and make sure the name is not too long and that it makes some sense e.g. call a button that goes back something like 'backButton'. Simple.

Writing the actionscript

The actionscript works a little differently. First there are a couple of lines of code that will be pretty new to you.

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

```
function myFunction(event:MouseEvent):void {  
    // your actionscript here will happen when myButton is clicked e.g.  
    gotoAndPlay(2); // goes to frame 2 and plays  
}
```

The first line above adds a listener for the button called myButton. This tells the computer to listen to when myButton is clicked and then it calls the function myFunction and whatever is inside myFunction will then execute.

You need to add listeners to any button you want the user to interact with and then create a corresponding function which will be executed on a mouseEvent. So when the user presses the button anything in the corresponding function {inside the curly braces - will execute}.

Some benefits of new way of coding buttons

A main benefit of this new way of coding would be that all your actionscript code is in the same place. To make this simple make a new layer in the timeline and name it actionscript, then put all your actions on that layer.

When you code the buttons in frame 1 for your movie, the actionscript will stay (persistence) the same along the timeline until you choose to change. So a button that will take you to frame 2 can do the same thing throughout the movie until you decide that you want to change the function.

Like a lot of coding most of the time you can copy and paste code around so that you don't have to rewrite the code everytime, just be aware of the bits you need to change e.g. the instance name for the button and the function call and name (and whatever action happens in the function when it is executed).

Some useful links

<http://flashspeaksactionsript.com/moving-from-flash-as2-to-flash-as3-button-press/>

<http://www.flashandmath.com/basic/buttons0/index.html>