

Digital Content Development Course

Session one overview

This session we will have an introduction to Flash CS3. We will start right at the beginning, looking at the interface for Flash (what all the windows are and what the buttons do) and we will take a look into how it works.

We will start by making an interactive slideshow that shows pictures, plays sound and video. We will take a peak at interactivity and also at techniques useful to animation.

Structure

Talk about audio tours

Have a look at your data recorded from last week

Introduction to Flash

How to upload flash to custom Google map

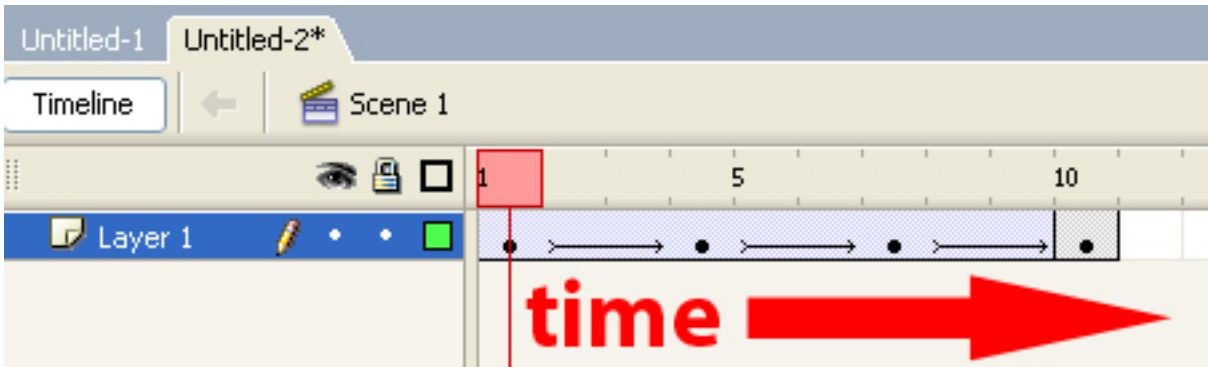
External work

Put together your multimedia piece in Flash using the data you have gathered from the sites you chose around the College. This should be completed to show next week

Beginning Flash - useful concepts

Flash has become a the most popular method for adding animation and interactivity to web pages; Flash is commonly used to create animation, advertisements, and various web page components. It is also used to integrate video into web pages, and more recently, to develop rich Internet applications. Flash is part of the Adobe range which means that it integrates with Photoshop, Illustrator and Premiere which means that your 'workflows' between applications you commonly use are clean.

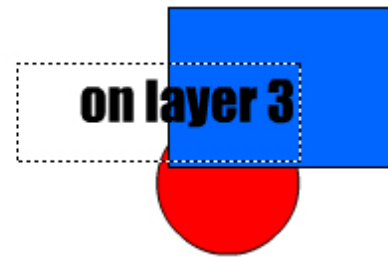
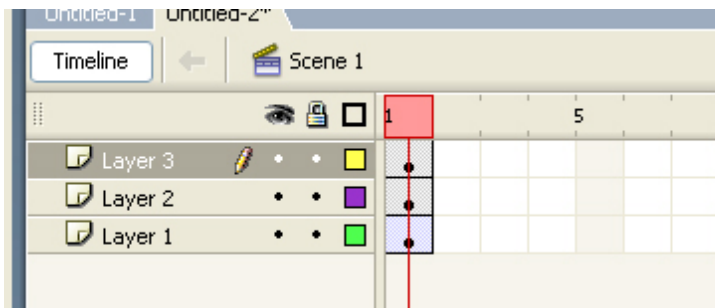
As Flash has developed over the years the features that it offers are extremely diverse and people use Flash for a myriad of reasons and therefore work in completely different ways. So where to start? With the timeline, layers, key frames and symbols.



The Timeline

Flash originated as a simple tool to create animations for the web, indeed it is still used to create much of the animation you will see on the internet. Even if you have no interest in animation learning the basics of animating will give you the basic skills in how to use Flash.

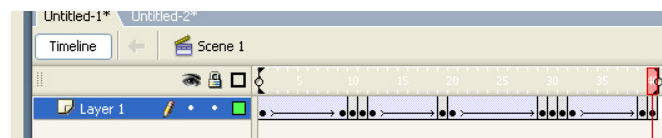
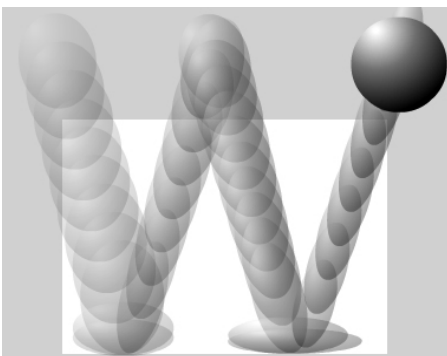
The above image is a close up of the timeline. The timeline is a 'line' made of a series of still frames. As the animation plays the 'playhead' moves from left to right play each still frame.



Layers

Like in Photoshop Flash has layers. And like in Photoshop the top layer is visually in front of everything else. As you can see above there are three layers and on the right you can see that each graphic object (the red circle, blue square and black text) are on separate layers. The top layer (layer 3) is in front of everything else.

Eventhough you don't have to have objects on different layers it is always good practice, it makes things more clear and also it makes animating objects far easier especially tweening.



KeyFrames

Keyframes are a really important concept to understand. Keyframes are not only used in Flash, but in many computer applications, including After Effects, Maya and Final Cut Pro.

If you look at the timeline on the right you can see the keyframes as big black dots that appear at intervals along the timeline. They control the movement of the ball on the right. On the right you can see an 'onion skin' of a bouncing ball, the animation is of the ball bouncing starting top right and bouncing in a 'W' pattern.

Onion skinning is a tool which allows you to see all the frames of an animation in one image layered over the top of each other. It allows you to see the flow of your animation.

So what do the keyframes do? Well when you want to move or change a feature of a graphic object (for example the ball) you have to make a keyframe.

So in the ball example we have a keyframe for the ball at the top and then we have keyframes when it hits the bottom, then again at the top and so on. In the frames in between the keyframes the computer works out where the ball from the keyframes, so if the frame is in the middle of the keyframes then the movement will be in the middle. This is called tweening. Basically tweening does some of the job of animating for you, so you don't have to animate every single frame.

Symbols

Symbols are a very important concept in Flash. Symbols are Flash objects that can do certain things. There are three types of symbol: Graphic symbol, Movie Clip symbol and button symbol. They all have slightly different functions. The Graphic symbol is used for graphic objects, for example when you import a graphic you would want to make it into a graphic symbol then you can change the graphics colour or transparency. A button symbol (you guessed it) is useful for making interactive buttons and the movie clip symbol is useful for more complex effects, basically it is like having a movie within a movie (complicated to conceptualise but powerful to use).

You now have some of the basic principles, the timeline, layers, keyframes and symbols. You will be using them all the time in your flash projects.

Some inspiration and help

<http://www.mediastorm.com/0014.htm>

<http://yugop.com/>

<http://pete-rogers.co.uk/flash/subvert/index.html>

<http://www.gotoandlearn.com/>

http://www.flashkit.com/tutorials/Getting_Started/