

Flash MX how-to

Animation basics

Flash is a wee bit of a strange animal. It is based in time lines and “scenes,” objects and symbols. It is a vector based program which can act a lot like a raster-based program.

Note you MUST double-click an object with the black arrow tool to select BOTH the line and fill of the object. Many of the paintbucket and gradient interfaces are familiar from Adobe programs. However, one may also easily break apart any vector shape by dragging a selection box (with the arrow tool) around just a portion of the shape (nifty, eh)!

Keep in mind any event or transformation can happen one of three places:

1. Globally
2. To a particular object globally, or
3. To a particular object (or frame) in JUST that point in time.

To make a simple animation:

Draw a graphic primitive (i.e. a circle) on the left side of the stage. Now, go to the time line or “score” and select (click) on frame 15. Go to the INSERT menu, to TIMELINE to KEYFRAME. SINGLE-CLICK the primitive to move it to the right side.

Select ALL your frames by dragging across them in the timeline, or shift-clicking.

Go to INSERT to TIMELINE to CREATE MOTION TWEEN. Go to WINDOW/CONTROLLER and press PLAY. Your shape should flow smoothly from edge to edge.

Transforming and “Easing-in” and out:

Now select just frame 5 of the animation and move the ball to the bottom (SINGLE-CLICK to select!). Press PLAY again and notice it's a “live” tween!

With frame 5 still selected, show the TRANSFORM palette (WINDOW/DESIGN PANELS/TRANSPARENCY), and squish the ball at frame 5 (to about 80%). Play again.

>(if you accidently double-clicked the shape, you are now editing the symbol, go to the SCORE and click where it says SCENE 1 to get back to editing).

Notice it automatically tweens the shape, too! For this effect, though we want the ball to squish only at the bottom frame.

Select the tween by double-clicking on its arrow in the SCORE and de-select the SCALE checkbox in the PROPERTIES palette. (may repeat this for the “up” tween).

Now, let's add another keyframe at frame 11. Select the shape and move it to the top of the “stage.” Go to the PROPERTIES palette to EASE and use -50 or so. This will slow the ball down as it gets to that point, “easing-in” to that frame.

Second layer and shapes:

Add a second layer and create a new animation on that layer. Notice the layers stack like photoshop (top of palette is closest to eye, etc.).

Selecting only this new layer, make a new graphic at frame 15 with the pen tool. Add a keyframe 5 frames down the line at frame 20.

Now, on that new graphic in frame 20, use the WHITE arrow tool to manipulate the bezier points.

Select all the frames from 15 to 20 in the new layer and INSERT a motion tween. In the control palette, go to TWEEN and pull-down SHAPE.

Go to WINDOW/COMMON LIBRARIES and load SOUNDS.FLA. Drag a sound from the library to the frames (15-20) of the new layer. Save your movie and go to CONTROL to TEST MOVIE.

