



Shockwave Flash 2

In the second part of our series on using the Shockwave Flash Web animation package, Neal Slateford shows you how to create buttons, embed links and add sound to your World Wide Web pages.

As you bask in the glory of your new-found status as a top-flight multimedia designer, it's easy to get carried away and make every image and icon that appears on your Web site jump about, just because you can. Don't worry, this is perfectly normal. Your future fee-paying clients will expect their sites to be crammed with as much unnecessary multimedia mulch as possible - that's what designing lucrative corporate Web sites is all about.

Last month's installment showed you how to impress your friends using Flash's animation features. Now imagine what will happen to your hourly rate when you become a master of what multimedia-types call enhanced page furniture, and the rest of us call navigation buttons that make silly noises. Hold tight... [.net](#)

Setting up the HTML

To navigate around the [.net](#) site we need to set up a simple frameset with a left-frame for the navigation bar, and a main contents frame to display the called information (which will load the introductory animation made last month). Because [.net](#) isn't a charity, the pages on the actual site also include a frame along the bottom to house the dreaded advertising banners. But we'll leave that out for the purposes of this. The code for the frameset page will look something like this:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Welcome to .net.</title>
</head>
<frameset cols="120,*" border="1"
frameborder="1">
<frame src="leftframe.html"
name="navigationframe" marginheight="0"
marginwidth="0" scrolling="no">
<frame src="mainframe.html" name="main"
marginheight="0"
marginwidth="0" scrolling="auto">
</frameset>
</html>
```

Embed the navigation movie in the leftframe.html page and the animation you made in last month's tutorial in the mainframe.html page, using the EMBED SRC command [.net](#)

Creating an animated button

There are several sample buttons in the trial version of Flash for you to play with and customise (and loads more in the full version). Check them out by selecting Xtras ➔ Libraries ➔ Samples. Good though they are, we need an individual look for the [.net](#) site, so we'll create our own.

1 The movie properties box

Begin by setting the movie size and background colour in the Modify ➔ Movie box. Because the left-hand frame of our site is 120 pixels wide (see box-out), our movie should be around 110 pixels wide and 450 pixels high.



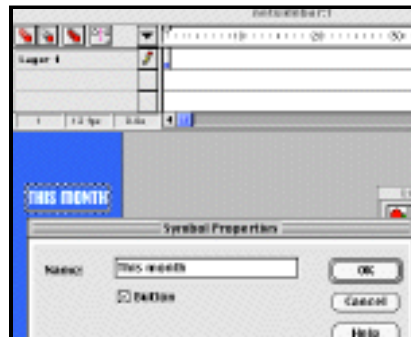
2 Check the button behaviour box

The [.net](#) site's navigation bar is made up of seven buttons, each with different actions assigned to them. Start by selecting the text tool (the big 'A' on the floating tool palette), choosing a font and typing directly on to the movie. Adjust the text size and colour from the pull-down menus. Select Insert ➔ Create symbol, and name your button. (Be sure to

check the button behaviour box). Your button will appear as a symbol in the floating library palette, the menu in which all the elements used in your Flash movie are stored. Select Window ➔ Library to see the library. Clear the button from the movie area by selecting it and hitting [Return].

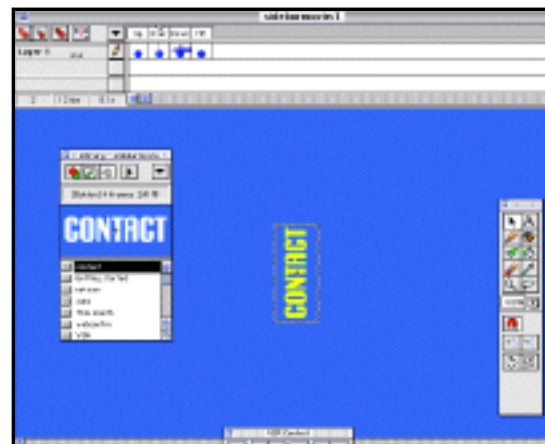
Buttons are edited in a separate area from the main movie. Access it by clicking on the symbol you wish to edit in the library palette, and select Edit Symbol from the library's pull down menu. Alternatively select Edit ➔ Edit Selected from the main menu.

The Symbol Editing area will appear with the button in the middle of the screen. You can return to the main movie area at any time by clicking on the small blue arrow at the top right of screen, or by selecting Edit ➔ Edit movie. Every button you create is represented by a tab with its name at the side of the area.



3 The symbol editing area

Each button can have up to four different states - 'UP' is how the button will first appear on screen, 'OVER' is its appearance when the mouse is over the button, and 'DOWN' is its appearance when the button is clicked. The 'HIT' state is used to define the area of the symbol you wish to be active, should you wish it to be less than the whole button. The four states appear in the four frames of timeline at the top of the page. In order for a frame and state to change appearance it must be a key frame. Using the layer pop-up menu (as we did for the animation last month), select Insert Frame, then Insert Keyframe until each button state has a blue dot beneath it. You edit each state by dragging the timeline marker through the frames and different states.



Flash advice here

Remember to visit Macromedia's Flash support site at <http://www.macromedia.com/support/flash/>. It is the best place to look for on-line help with Flash. You'll find a Flash FAQ, technical notes and more.

Macromedia also has its own newsgroups, including one for Flash. It's largely frequented by Web design professionals, so do check out the FAQ before asking a beginners question, or you're liable for a flaming. Access them through your newsgroups program by typing forums.macromedia.com/ into the host preferences box.



On this month's CD-ROM we have a demo version of Flash 2 for Windows 95 and Mac 68K and PPC. We also have Shockwave plug-ins for Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer.

If you missed the first part of this Shockwave Flash tutorial, it is on the coverdisc in PDF format. Check it out.

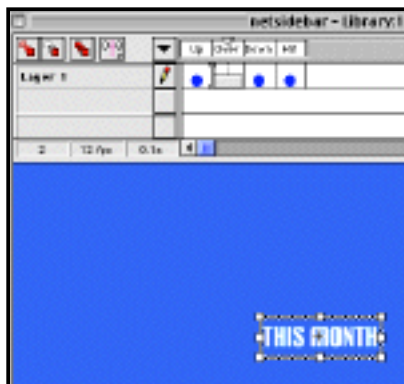


Why don't you...

- Take a look at the Flash version of the **.net** homepage at <http://www.netmag.co.uk/>
- Send in details of a site you have created using Shockwave Flash and you may find your site featured in a future edition of **.net** netmag@futurenet.co.uk is the address for you.

4 Change your button's 'over' state by experimenting with the Modify ➤ Transform tools

We want the button to appear normally in its first state, so drag the timeline to the second state. Select Modify ➤ Transform ➤ Scale and make the button slightly bigger by dragging the edges of the box around the button. Change its colour by selecting the text icon from the tools palette and selecting the colour from the pull-down menu. Play your button by hitting [Return] and as the timeline pointer moves through the stage the button will change states, increasing in size and changing colour.



5 Select your sound and add effects

Sounds can be imported into your library palette too, in the AIF and WAV format. A few are supplied with the trial version of Flash and hundreds with the full release. Alternatively there are several sites on the Net which will let you download files for free.

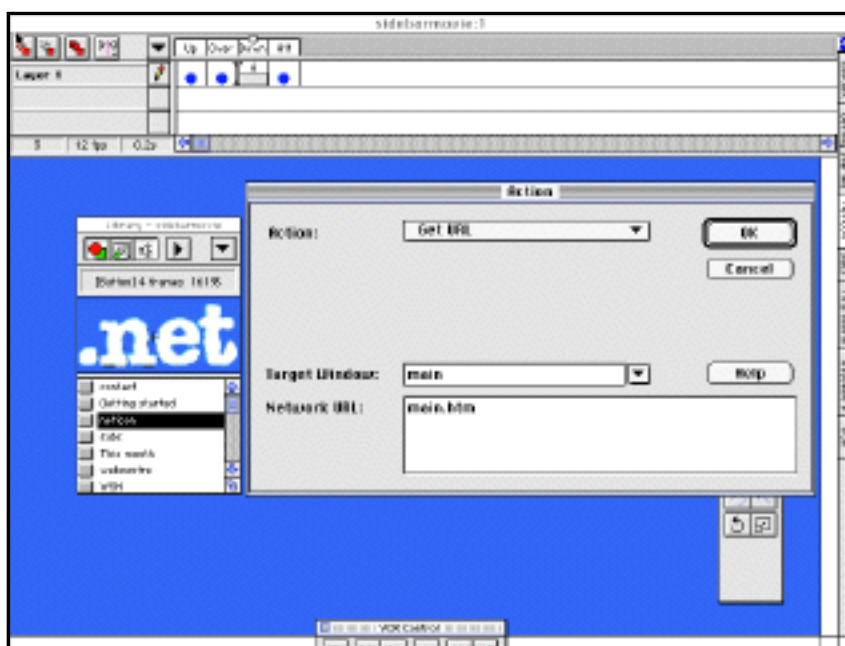
Select File ➤ Import to add sounds to your library. When our button is hit, we want

it to make a sound. Drag the timeline pointer to the DOWN state, click on the frame pop-up menu below it and select Sound. The dialog box will enable you to choose from the sounds in your library. We've selected a rather piercing beep sound. Use the effects menu to pan the sound or fade it in and out if you're feeling adventurous. Now test your button by returning to the main stage, selecting it from



the palette and dragging it into the desired position in your movie.

Select Control ➤ Enable Buttons and Control ➤ Enable Sounds and your button should react to the three states by jumping and beeping as planned when your mouse moves over and clicks the button.



6 Enter the destination URL in the Frame Action box

To add a link to your button return to the button editing area, drag the timeline to the DOWN state, access the Frame pop-up menu by clicking beneath it, and choose Frame Action. Select 'Get URL' from the menu and add the name of the file and the target frame if required. A small 'a' will appear in the Timeline to indicate that an action occurs in this frame. Duplicate the process for as many buttons as you want, and export the movie as an SWA file when you're happy with what you've created. Once your buttons are made you can treat them just like any other symbol in Flash – buttons can be animated to move around the whole movie area, not just when a mouse is moved over it. With a bit of practice and a lot of experimentation it's easy to produce some amazing effects. Now hassle the headhunters, flaunt your tweening prowess and start talking loudly about Feng Shui. You're a New Media Pro. **.net**

NEXT MONTH:

Examining the tools palate and using the drawing tools. The October issue of **.net** is on sale on Thursday 18 September.

Inspiration

There's more than one way to skin a button you know...



◀ **The Danish Society for the Conservation of Nature** (<http://www.dn.dk/>)
Not the first name that springs to mind when you envisage cutting edge multimedia, but this site houses one of the best examples of Flash animation I've seen. Be sure to watch the whole of the intro sequence and stick around for the arrival of the buttons – it's worth the wait. Brush up on your Danish before visiting.

▶ **Worldport Zone** (<http://www.worldport.com/>)

The homepage is entirely in Flash, and features a bouncing ball that appears to randomly bump the buttons around the page.

Face Off (<http://www.face-off.com/adventure/index.html>)
The official site for the new John Woo-helmed action flick starring Nicolas Cage and John Travolta as good guy and bad guy who swap bodies (!) has a version that uses both Flash and Shockwave. Play a high-tech shoot-out game, save the world from the sequel and get covered in blood. (This is the man who inspired Tarantino, remember.) Nice use of buttons with sound **.net**

