

Flash[®] CS3 FOR DUMMIES[®]

by Ellen Finkelstein and Gurdy Leete



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

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Flash® CS3 For Dummies®

Published by
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com

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Published by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2007924230

ISBN: 978-0-470-12100-9

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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Ellen Finkelstein has written numerous bestselling computer books on AutoCAD, PowerPoint, and Flash. She also writes articles on these programs for Web sites, e-zines, and magazines. The seven editions of her *AutoCAD Bible* have sold more than 80,000 copies in the United States and abroad. As an Adjunct Instructor of Management she teaches e-Business and Human Resource Management courses. She writes at home so that she can take the bread out of the oven on time.

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Dedication

To MMY, for explaining that life is meant to be lived in happiness and teaching us how to realize that reality in daily life.

Authors' Acknowledgments

This book was very much a group effort. First, I'd like to thank my co-author, Gurdy Leete, without whom I could not have completed this book nor even thought of writing it. Gurdy is always a pleasure to work with, always in a good mood and helpful. He's a brilliant artist and something of a programmer, too, while I am neither. I've been quite impressed.

At Wiley, I'd like to thank Steve Hayes, our acquisitions editor, for trusting us with this book. Great kudos go to Susan Pink, our project editor, for doing such a tremendous job.

Personally, I'd like to thank my husband, Evan, and my kids, Yeshayah and Elyah, who helped out and managed without me as I wrote every day, evening, and weekend. I love you all.

Thanks to Adobe, for supporting Flash authors during the beta period while we were learning the new features of Flash CS3, testing Flash, and writing, all at the same time.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Flash community and specifically all the Flash designers who contributed Flash movies to make this book and its companion Web site more valuable. Most computer books use dummy files, and we made up a few of our own to illustrate the point, but the real-world files we received for this book will help open up new vistas for our readers. And now, a few comments from Gurdy:

I'd like to echo all of Ellen's words and thank her for being such a great collaborator. She has such a talent for explaining things with the simplicity, precision, and humor that are so characteristic of the deeper workings of the cosmos. I'd also like to thank my brilliant students Alek Lisefski (www.blue-sheepstudios.com) and Benek Lisefski (www.benekdesign.com), and my intrepid research assistants — Nutthawut Chandhaketh, of Thailand; Radim Schreiber, of the Czech Republic; Burcu Cenberci, of Turkey; and Praveen Mishra, of Nepal — whose research activities on the Internet were so helpful in writing this book. Thanks to my omnitalented M.A. in Animation student Mike Zak, for the wonderful collection of clip art drawings he created in Flash for the companion Web site. And thanks to my adorable wife, Mary, and my children, Porter and Jacqueline, for being so supportive during the many hours I spent working on this book.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

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Introduction

Welcome to *Flash CS3 For Dummies*, your friendly Web animation companion. In this book, we explain in plain English how to make the most of Flash to create stunning, animated Web sites. We aim to give you all the information you need to start using Flash right away — with no hassle.

About This Book

As though you hadn't guessed, *Adobe Flash CS3 For Dummies* covers the powerful animation product Flash CS3, from Adobe. (The preceding version was Macromedia Flash 8.) Flash CS3 is the latest version of the popular software used on some of the coolest Web sites on the Internet.

We comprehensively explain the Flash features, including

- ✓ Working with the Flash screen, toolbars, and menus
- ✓ Creating graphics and text in Flash
- ✓ Adding sound and video
- ✓ Using layers to organize your animation
- ✓ Creating *symbols*, which are objects that you save for repeated use and for animation
- ✓ Animating graphics (the key to Flash)
- ✓ Creating interactive Web sites
- ✓ Publishing Flash movies to your Web site

How to Use This Book

You don't have to read this book from cover to cover. We provide just the information you need, when you need it. Start with the first three chapters. Then play around with graphics until you create what you need for your Web site. You might want to check out Chapter 6, on layers, to help you organize it all, and Chapter 7, which covers symbols. Then feel free to jump right to Chapter 9, on animation, to create your first real Flash movie. Chapter 13 tells you how to get your movie on your Web site. Then fire up your browser, sit back, and marvel.

You'll want to check out other chapters when you need them so that you can create text and buttons, add sound and video, and build an interactive Web site. Chapter 12 provides some ideas for putting all the Flash features together for your best Web site ever.

Keep *Adobe Flash CS3 For Dummies* by your computer while you work. You'll find that it's a loyal helper.

Foolish Assumptions

We assume that you're not a master Flash developer. If you want to use Flash to create high-quality Web sites and you're not an expert animator, you'll find this book to be a great reference. *Adobe Flash CS3 For Dummies* is ideal for beginners who are just starting to use Flash or for current Flash users who want to further hone their skills.

Because people usually add Flash movies to Web sites, we also assume that you know some of the basics of Web site creation. You should know what HyperText Markup Language (HTML) is and understand the process of creating and structuring HTML pages as well as uploading them to a Web site.

If you want some help on the topic of Web sites, you might want to take a look at *Web Design For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, by Lisa Lopuck (published by Wiley Publishing, Inc.).

Conventions Used in This Book

Sometimes it helps to know why some text is bold and other text is italic so that you can figure out what we're talking about. (A typographic convention is *not* a convention of typographers meeting to discuss the latest typography techniques.)

New terms are in *italics* to let you know that they're new. When we suggest that you type something, we show you what we want you to type in **bold**. Messages and other text that come from Flash, including programming code, are in a special typeface, like this.

When we say something like "Choose File→Save As," it means to click the File menu at the top of your screen and then choose Save As from the menu that opens. When we want you to use a toolbar or toolbox button (or tool), we tell you to click it.

How This Book Is Organized

We start by presenting an overview of the Flash universe and then continue in the general order that you would use to create a Flash movie. More basic material is at the beginning of the book, and more advanced material (but not too advanced!) comes later.

To be more specific, this book is divided into seven parts (to represent the seven states of consciousness — okay, we don't have to get too cosmic here). Each part contains two or more chapters that relate to that part. Each chapter thoroughly covers one topic so that you don't have to go searching all over creation to get the information you need.

Part I: A Blast of Flash

Part I contains important introductory information about Flash. In Chapter 1, we tell you what Flash is all about, show you what the Flash screen looks like, and explain how to get help when you need it most. You also find instructions for starting a new movie and opening an existing movie, and we give you a list of steps for creating your first animation. Chapter 2 explains in more detail the steps for creating a Flash movie. We also explain some basic concepts that all Flash users need to know.

Part II: 1,000 Pictures and 1,000 Words

Part II explains all the tools available for creating graphics in Flash. Chapter 3 explains the unique drawing tools included in Flash. We also explain how to import graphics if you don't feel like creating your own. Chapter 4 shows you how to edit and manipulate graphic objects, and Chapter 5 is all about creating text. Chapter 6 explains *layers*, which help you organize your graphics so that they don't interfere with each other.

Part III: Getting Symbolic

Symbols are graphical objects that you save to use again and again. Whenever you want to place an object on a Web page more than once, you can save the object as a symbol. You can also group together many individual objects, making them useful when you want to manipulate, edit, or animate them all at one time. Chapter 7 explains creating and editing symbols. Chapter 8

describes how to create buttons — not the kind that you sew, but rather the kind that you click with your mouse.

Part IV: Total Flash-o-Rama

Part IV explains how to put all your graphics together and make them move. Chapter 9 covers animation in detail — from frame-by-frame animation to *tweening*, where Flash calculates the animation between your first and last frames. Tween movement to make your objects move or morph into new shapes. You can also tween color and transparency.

Chapter 10 shows how to create interactive Web sites that react to your viewers. For example, when a viewer clicks a button, Flash can jump to a different part of a movie or go to a different Web page entirely. To create interactivity, you use *ActionScript*, Flash's JavaScript-like programming language. We tell you how to put ActionScript to work.

Chapter 11 is about adding multimedia — sound, music, and video — to your Flash movies and buttons.

Part V: The Movie and the Web

This part helps you put all your animated graphics and cool buttons together and publish your work on the Web. Chapter 12 outlines the various techniques that you can use to create a great Web site by using only Flash.

Chapter 13 explains how to test your animation for speed and suitability for all browsers and systems. Then we cover the details of publishing movies as well as the other available formats, such as HTML and GIF. You can also create *projectors* — movies that play themselves.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

What's a *For Dummies* book without The Part of Tens? Chapter 14 answers some frequently asked questions about Flash and introduces some fun techniques, such as simulating 3-D effects and dynamically loading music from the Web. Chapter 15 provides you with the ten best resources for Flash (besides this book, of course). Chapter 16 points you to the work of ten fabulous Flash Web designers.

Part VII: Appendixes

Last but not least, we come to the appendixes. They add valuable information to the end of this book. Appendix A adds instructions on installing Flash and setting preferences and options. In Appendix B, we show you what's what in the Property inspector and on the various panels.

Appendix C tells you what's on the companion Web site (www.dummies.com/go/flashcs3). We provide Flash movies that we illustrate in the book and others that you can just play with to see how they work. We also add our own library of graphics that you can add to your own movies.

Icons Used in This Book

Icons help point out special information. For example, sometimes they tell you that you don't care about this information and can skip over it without fear.



This icon flags new features in Flash CS3. If you have been using Flash 8 or even an earlier version, you may want to skim through this book and look for this icon to help you quickly get up to speed in the new version.



Look for this icon to find all the goodies on the companion Web site, at www.dummies.com/go/flashcs3.



This icon alerts you to information that you need to keep in mind to avoid wasting time or falling on your face.



Flash has some advanced features you might want to know about — or skip entirely. This icon lets you know when we throw the heavier stuff at you.



Tips help you finish your work more easily, quickly, or effectively. Don't miss out on these.



Uh-oh! “Watch out here!” is what this icon is telling you. If you skip this icon, you never know what might happen.

Where to Go from Here

If you haven't already installed Flash, check out the complete instructions for installing Flash in Appendix A. Then open Flash, open this book, and plunge in.

We would love to hear your comments about this book. You can contact Gurdy Leete at gleete@mum.edu or Ellen Finkelstein at ellenfinkl@bigfoot.com. Please note that we can't provide technical support on Flash. (If you need technical support, check out the resources we list in Chapter 15.)

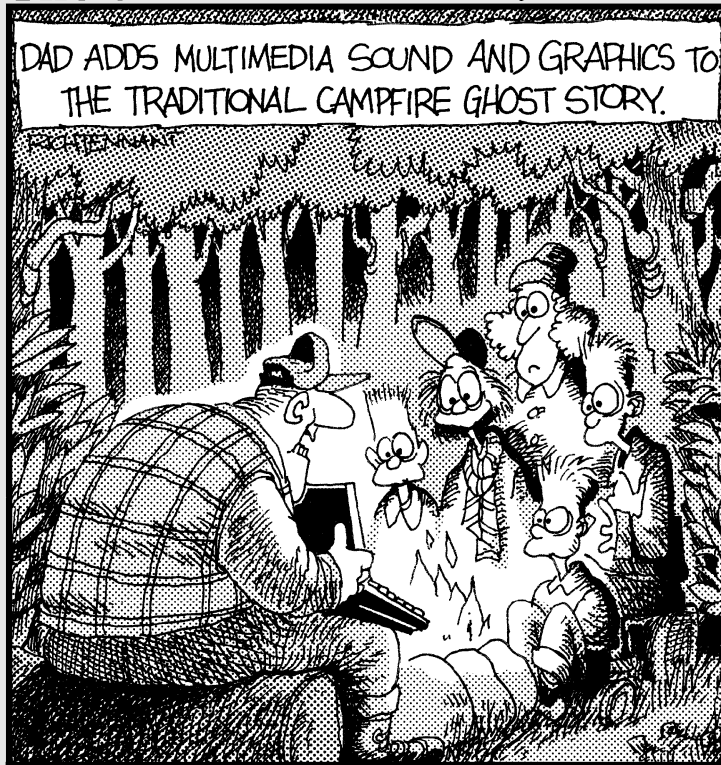
Enough of all this talk. It's time to move into the real part of this book and start creating cool Flash movies! Enjoy!

Part I

A Blast of Flash

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



In this part . . .

In this part, you discover what Flash can and can't do and start to make your way around the Flash world. In Chapter 1, we introduce you to Flash, show you what it looks like, and explain how to use its toolbars and menus. You find out about the Stage and the Timeline, two central Flash concepts. Play your way through your first animation to get firsthand experience in the power of Flash.

In Chapter 2, you get an overview of the entire process of creating a Flash animated movie, from developing your concept to publishing your movie in the format a browser can display. We explain how to set properties that affect your movie as a whole and how Flash works with various kinds of graphics. We close with the steps for printing your movie on paper. This part provides the foundation for future success.

Chapter 1

Getting Acquainted with Flash CS3

In This Chapter

- ▶ Introducing Flash
 - ▶ Figuring out what you can create with Flash CS3
 - ▶ Knowing when not to use Flash CS3
 - ▶ Starting Flash
 - ▶ Perusing the screen
 - ▶ Using Help
 - ▶ Creating your first animation
 - ▶ Closing Flash
-

Once upon a time in a galaxy that seems far, far away by now, there was the Internet, which contained only plain, unformatted text. Then came the Web, and we gained text formatting and graphics. Then the Web grew up a little, and Web page graphics got fancier with things such as small animations in banner ads. But people, being used to movies and TV, wanted an even more animated and interactive Web experience. Along came Flash.

Flash, once from Macromedia but now from Adobe Systems, is the software that runs some of the coolest Web sites around. When you surf the Web and see sites that contain animation across the entire page or buttons that do spectacular stunts when you click them, you're probably seeing some Flash magic. If you create a Web site, you can use Flash to rev up the basics and actively respond to users' choices so that your viewers will say, "Wow!"

In this chapter, you find out what Flash is all about, what the Flash screen looks like, and how to use Help. Then you create your first, simple animation so that all the rest of this book makes sense.

Discovering Flash

Flash offers a powerful system for creating animation for the Web. In a nutshell, here's an overview of how you use the system:

- 1. Create a Flash movie by creating graphics and animating them over the duration of the movie.**

Besides animated graphics, you can add navigational buttons, check boxes, and other user interface elements. You can add a few Flash components to a Web site or create an entire Web site.

- 2. Use the Publish command in Flash to publish the movie into a Flash Player file that a browser can display.**

At the same time, Flash creates the appropriate HyperText Markup Language (HTML) code that you need for your Web page.

- 3. Insert HTML code into your HTML document that references the Flash Player file.**

It's similar to adding a graphic to a Web page. Or you can use the HTML code alone as a new Web page for a fully Flashed page.

- 4. Upload the new or edited HTML document and the Flash Player file to the location where you keep other files for your Web pages.**

- 5. Open your browser, navigate to your Web page, and presto! — there's your cool animation, navigation, or other Flash element on your Web page.**

You need the Flash Player to see the effects that Flash creates. These days, the Flash Player comes installed with most computer systems and browsers, so most people can view Flash-driven Web sites immediately without any special download or preparation. When you display a Web site that contains Flash effects, your system uses the Flash Player to play the animation. Users who don't have a Flash Player can download it for free from Adobe at www.adobe.com.

Web sites are getting more and more sophisticated. By using animation, special effects, and interactive techniques, you can distinguish your Web site from the also-rans. Creating animation isn't hard, and you don't have to be a professional graphic artist, either. Anyone can create simple animations to enhance a Web site; it just takes a little time.

To find Web sites that have successfully used Flash, check out the Adobe site at www.adobe.com/products/flash/flashpro/productinfo/customers/ and look at some of the examples. Don't get discouraged by seeing some of the truly sophisticated results at these sites. You can start with a simple, animated site and go from there. (Chapter 16 lists ten great Flash designers and where you can find their work.)