

Making a Class Portfolio Using Flash 5 / Dreamweaver

Brad Edwards / The Hippo Helper (www.connect.to/hippohelper)



Teachers more and more are opting to send home, or post online, **digital portfolios** of student achievement. Typically this is in the form of a CD which allows students to take home highlights of their work in a given year or maybe even entire school career.

Burning a student's work to a blank CD is not too difficult, but not that exciting either. Making an attention-grabbing **interface** will make a CD portfolio not only easier to navigate but also something to treasure in the years ahead.

In this tutorial you will learn how to use Flash to make an interface that links to individual student-made web pages which can showcase anything from work samples to Quicktime movies.

Support files for this document are available on **The Hippo Helper** website (www.connect.to/hippohelper). Right-click on '**tutorial_files.zip**' and select Save Target As. Save and unzip on your hard drive. You will need to use an extraction tool like the free Winzip.

Part 1. Making an Interface in Flash

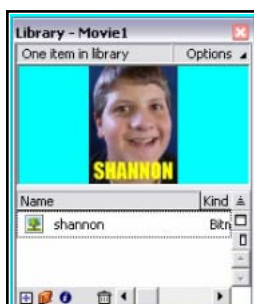


1. Assemble contents—Sound and Vision.

Flash uses a **Library** system where you store all the items you wish to use in a presentation. So it makes sense to get all of your contents organized from the start.

Look inside the 'tutorial_files' folder. I have taken photos of my students and **resized** them to 100 X 133 pixels. I resized them and added text to them in Paint Shop Pro but most graphics programs (Photoshop, Fireworks) will do this easily.

I recorded a short voice file (of the students introducing themselves) in **.mp3** format using a handheld USB storage drive. Other ways to do it include using a digital camera with movie mode or by plugging in a mic to the back of the PC and using sound editing software such as Cool Edit or Audacity.




Open up Flash. First thing we are going to do is import the image and sound files into the Flash Library. Go to **FILE > IMPORT** and navigate to the folders where your image files (those with a **.jpg** extension) are stored. Select them all and click '**Open**'. Do the same for the files in the '**Voices**' folder.

You may not see anything happen but they will be stored in your Library ready for future use. Press **CTRL+L** to open the Library to confirm.

2. Assemble contents—creating buttons.

We are going to make simple **buttons** from each student's name that will link to their files.

 Click on the **Text Tool** and then on the stage. Type '**Shannon**'. To format the word, open the **Character Panel (CTRL + T)**. Choose a suitable font, colour and size (e.g. Impact / Blue / 20).

We will now turn the 'Shannon' text into a button. Click on the word and go to **INSERT > CONVERT TO SYMBOL**. Rename it '**shannonbut**' and select 'Button' as the graphic type. Click OK and the button should now be visible in the Library (CTRL + L).



At present the button is rather drab. We will make it a **rollover** button that changes colour when your cursor rolls over it. Double-click on the button to edit it. You can now see in the Layers Panel that 'shannonbut' has four states:

- **UP** (what your button looks like on the screen)
- **OVER** (what your button looks like when your cursor rolls over it)
- **DOWN** (what it looks like when the button has been clicked on—often the same as OVER)
- **HIT** (defines what parts of the button are active, or clickable).



Right-click in the OVER state and choose '**Insert Keyframe**'. Use the **Paint Bucket** and **Fill Colour** tools to change the colour of the button to something else (e.g. red).



Ignoring the DOWN state, right-click in HIT and add a Keyframe. Use the **Rectangle Tool** to draw a rectangle over the button. This acts as a boundary that defines where the button can be clicked. You won't see this rectangle later.

We want the Student's voice to be triggered by the action of clicking the button. With the button's HIT state still selected, open the Library (CTRL + L) and find the Shannon sound file. Grab it and drag it straight onto the button shape.

Shannon

'shannonbut' UP state

Shannon

'shannonbut' OVER state

Shannon

'shannonbut' HIT state

Just above the **Layer Panel**, click '**Scene 1**' to exit button-editing mode. To test your new button (it won't do anything yet but it should change colours and trigger the voice), go to **CONTROL > TEST MOVIE (CTRL + ENTER)**.

Repeat these steps to make buttons with the following names: Jake, Katrina, Rachel and Evangelos.

3. Assemble contents—make a screen.



The basic idea for this interface is that when you click on a name it will bring up a photo of that child. We are going to make a drawing of a TV screen to make it look like the photo is appearing on the screen.

Experiment with the drawing tools to make a TV. There is no right or wrong way. I have used the Rectangle Tool to create the TV and the **Arrow Tool** to give it a more rounded appearance. Bear in mind the screen must be big enough to hold your photos. Try dragging one of the photos from the Library onto the stage to test this.

Once you are happy with your TV, use the Arrow Tool to drag an imaginary box around the TV and all its components. With the TV selected, go to **INSERT > CONVERT TO SYMBOL**. Rename the symbol '**tv**' and select 'Graphic'. Click OK and the TV will be in your Library.

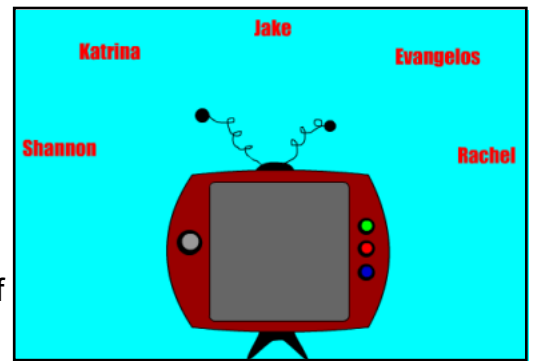


Your Library should now be full of Photos, Sounds, Buttons and Graphics, ready for us to start building the interface.

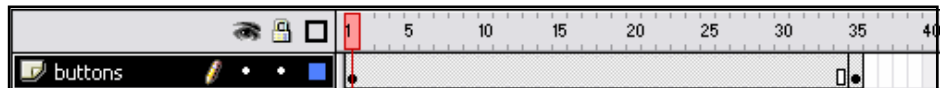
4. Interface layout.

Clear everything from your Flash stage. Don't worry about deleting objects—**instances** of each object are stored in your Library.

Set a background colour for your interface by going to **MODIFY > MOVIE**. This is where you can change the size of the stage also but for now we'll leave it at the default setting.



In the Layers Panel, double-click on Layer 1 and rename it '**Buttons**' since that is what we are going to drag onto that layer. Open the Library (CTRL + L) and drag out instances of all the buttons as well as the TV you made. Arrange them in a way you are happy with. Right-click in **Frame 35** of the 'buttons' layer and create a Keyframe. That is, the movie is 35 frames long.

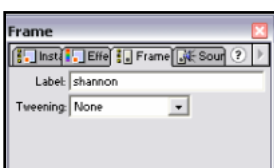
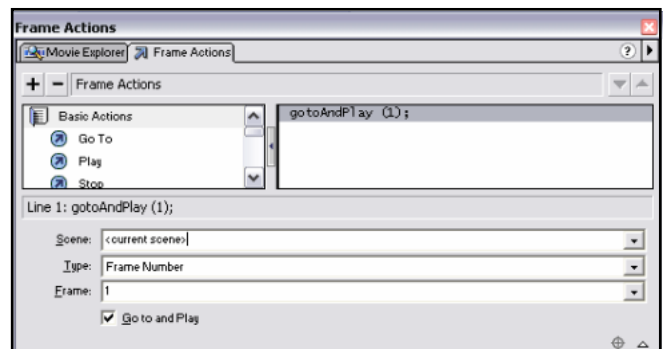


5. Adding the photos.

Create a new layer and rename it '**photos**'. For each student photograph we are going to make a small **loop** in the timeline, like a movie within a movie.

You need to define Keyframes within the animation timeline—these are points where the animation changes or actions happen.

In the 'photos' layer, right-click in **Frame 5** and create a Keyframe. We are going to assign that Keyframe an **Action**, in this case, looping back to **Frame 1**. Open the **Actions Panel (WINDOW > ACTIONS)**. In Frame Actions select **GO TO** and set it to **Frame 1**. That is, your movie will continue to loop between Frames 1 and 5 until a button is clicked.



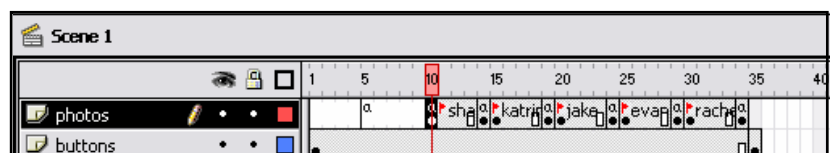
Now we will make similar mini-loops for each student photo. Create a Keyframe in **Frame 10**. Open the **Frame Panel (CTRL + F)** and type in 'Shannon' as the label. Then, from the Library, drag out an instance of the Shannon photo and position it on your TV screen.

Now insert a Keyframe in **Frame 14** and make it loop back to Frame 10. Open the Actions Panel (WINDOW > ACTIONS). In Frame Actions select GO TO and set it to Frame 10.

The 'Shannon' button now needs to be set so it opens the mini-loop we have just made. Click on the 'Shannon' button on the stage and make sure the Actions Panel is open. Select GO TO and set it to Frame 10. The button should now link to Frame 10, and continue to loop between Frames 10-14 until another button is clicked. Test your movie to try it out (CTRL + ENTER).

From Frame 15 continue making 4-frame mini-loops and setting button actions for the other students (Katrina, Jake, Evangelos, Rachel) following the previous steps. Replace photos as necessary.

Test your movie (CTRL + ENTER). The buttons, when clicked, should trigger the photo and student's voice.



5. Making the link.

So far we have made a button that links to a picture of a student. Looks good, but now we need to be able to navigate to that student's own personal page, which the student will have made. We are going to turn the photos of each student into a button that links to their web page.

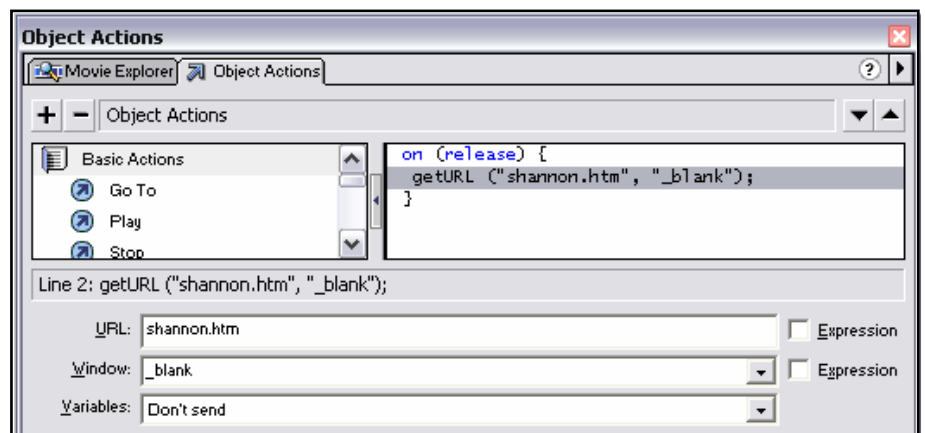


Click in Frame 10 of the 'photos' layer. You should see Shannon's photo on the stage. Click on it to select it and go to **INSERT > CONVERT TO SYMBOL**. Make it a **button** and name it '**shannonbut2**'.

Double-click on the picture to enter button-editing mode. Right-click in the OVER state and insert a Keyframe. This time we are going to distort the photo slightly. Go to **MODIFY > TRACE BITMAP**. This should give a nice blurry effect to the OVER state of Shannon's picture. Finally click '**Scene 1**' to return to your movie.

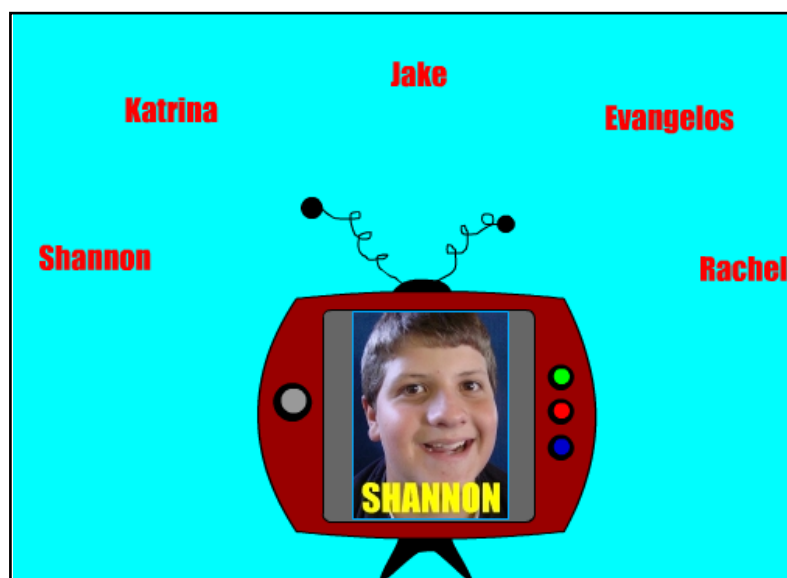


Click once on the Shannon image/button and open the Actions Panel (WINDOW > ACTIONS). Select '**Get URL**' and in the 'URL' field type '**shannon.htm**'. That is, we are linking to a web page that hasn't yet been made called 'shannon.htm'. In the '**Window**' field choose '**Blank**'. This will make the page we will be opening, open in a new browser window.



Test your movie to see if the rollover effect is working properly. If it is, repeat the process for the remaining students.

If everything is working well, we are effectively finished with Flash (although of course we could add a lot more creativity and interactivity) and are ready to make the actual student pages in **Dreamweaver**.



Part 2: Setting up a Dreamweaver Site.



This section is not necessarily a tutorial about the ins and outs of using Dreamweaver as a Web editing tool, more a case of learning how to set up a basic site using our Flash interface as the foundation. We will look at how to set up and maintain a site, create Web pages and insert graphics.

This section refers to files made in the previous activity. If not you can download the 'tutorial_files.zip' file from **The Hippo Helper Website (www.connect.to/hippohelper)**. Make the contents of this unzipped folder available on your hard drive.

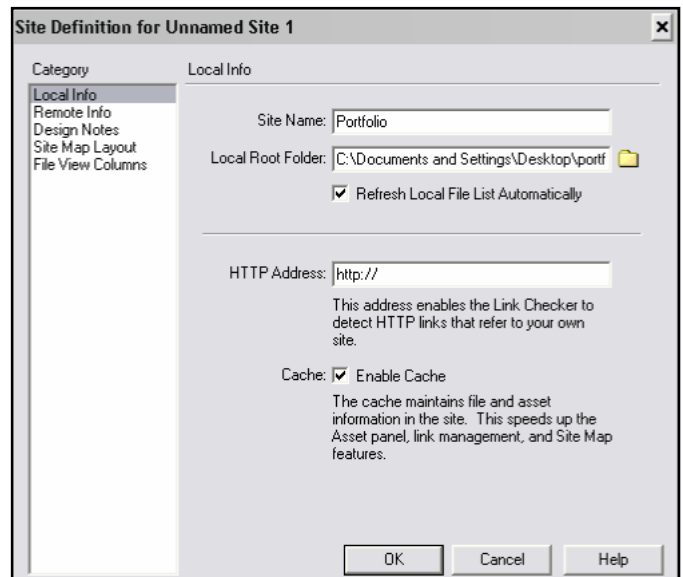
1. Setting Up.

Open Dreamweaver. Take some time to organize the screen. I like to work in a fairly uncluttered space so I choose to close most of the tools panels, only opening them as I need them.

To set up a new site go to **SITE > NEW SITE**. In the **Site Name** field, type 'Portfolio'. In the **Local Root Folder** field, you are going to define where your site will be stored. Use 'Browse' to navigate to a suitable place on your hard drive (in this case, the Desktop) and create a new folder also called 'Portfolio'. Open that folder and click on Select.

You should now see that your website has been set up with the directory path of C:\WINDOWS\Desktop\portfolio\ (or similar).

Close the Site Files folder in Dreamweaver to return to the main screen. Now it's time to make the pages of our website—one page to hold the Flash interface we made and one each for the students' individual portfolio pages.



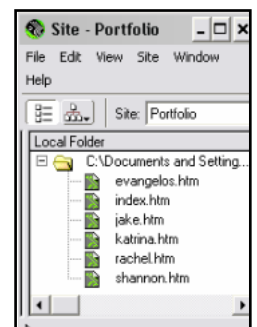
2. New Pages.

There are probably better ways to set up your pages but this is as easy as it gets. Your screen should be blank, and it should say 'Untitled Document' in the Title Field.

Change the **Title Field** to read 'Welcome to our Class Portfolio!' and save the page immediately (**FILE > SAVE AS**) as 'index.htm'. The first page of a Website is almost always known as 'index.htm'. Ensure that your page has been saved in the 'Portfolio' folder you already set up.

Now, without closing the page, rename the Title Field to read 'Shannon's Page' and save it as 'shannon.htm' (remember, no capitals!). Follow this pattern until you have created an appropriately titled blank page for all the students (Jake, Katrina, Rachel and Evangelos).

Open your Site Files (**SITE > SITE FILES**). You should see the 6 pages you just created. You can close that window for now.



3. Adding Graphics.

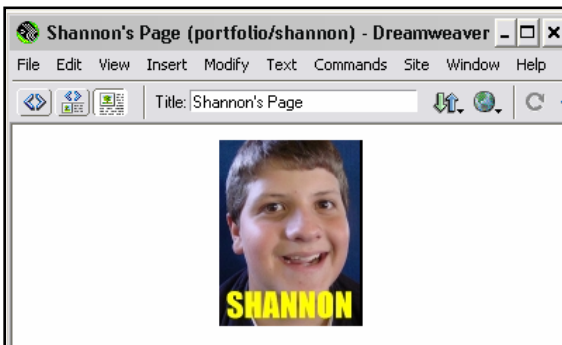
From the Site Files window open up the index.htm page. We are going to insert the Flash (.swf) file we made earlier.

Open the **Properties Inspector** (**CTRL + F3**) and centre your cursor on the screen.



Insert your Flash movie by going to **INSERT > MEDIA > FLASH**. Navigate to where you saved your Flash (.swf) movie file. You will get a message asking if you want to copy the movie file into your Web (root) folder. You do, so click 'yes'. Click '**Save**' to copy the file into your folder.

Hit **F12** to see your page **previewed**. It should link to the students' pages, which are empty. Save and close 'index.htm'.



Open 'shannon.htm'. All we are going to do at the moment is add a photograph identifying the student. This page is up to the student to design, with links to his work samples throughout the year, photographs and multimedia files.

To insert a picture go to **INSERT > IMAGE** and navigate to the original photos from your Flash tutorial. Most likely they are still in the 'portfolio_files' folder you downloaded from Hippo Helper site. Find the '**shannon.jpg**' picture

and insert it. Again you will be asked to copy the image into your root folder—do this and then save and close the Shannon page.

Open all the students' pages in turn and add their photographs one by one. Save and close all pages.

Preview your site (F12) and you should find that your original Flash interface links to individual pages, each featuring a student photo.

4. Tidying Up.

One final thing we have overlooked so far is the usual practice of saving all image files to a central folder within your Website folder. Believe me, you'll appreciate this final step when it comes time to uploading or publishing your site—reducing clutter now makes things a lot easier later.

Open your Site Files (**SITE > SITE FILES**). You should see all the web pages you have made, plus all the photos and Flash movie. Right-click anywhere in the '**Local Folder**' box. Create a new folder and call it '**images**'. Click and drag all image files (those with a .jpg extension) into the 'images' folder. If you are asked to update your pages do so.

Congratulations! You should now have the basis of a Student Portfolio!

