

Flash CS3/Photoshop CS3

Customise Flash video controls

Customising the standard video controls in Flash is a vital step to make video-based sites look more professional, says **Paul Wyatt**

There are a lot of brilliant websites presenting Flash-based video where the video controls look five years behind the times and stick out like a sore thumb. Many of these sites rely on the standard controllers available in Flash, and the slick, chrome-like templates are usually at odds with the sites' look and feel.

This tutorial explains how to change these controls by adapting an existing Flash template. While this can be confusing, the file 'tutorial_example_complete.swf' on this issue's disc shows you what we'll be making. The CD also contains a Photoshop template that you can use to produce all the button instances. You can make your own video controls and easily integrate them into your Flash video work.



Paul Wyatt

Paul Wyatt has designed websites, print and animated creative for brands and properties such as Smirnoff, The X Factor, Sony BMG, Lycos, Garnier and 2 entertain. Find out more at www.paulwyatt.co.uk.

On the disc

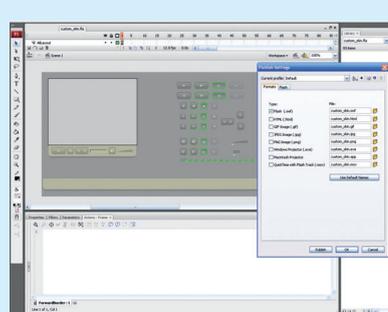
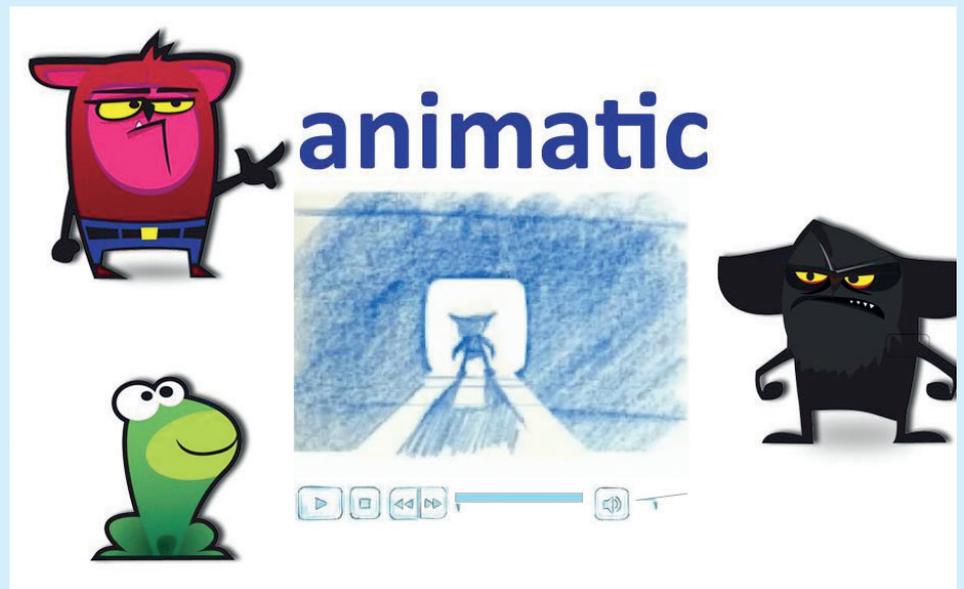
The files you need to complete this tutorial can be found in Disc Contents\ Resources\flash.

Time needed

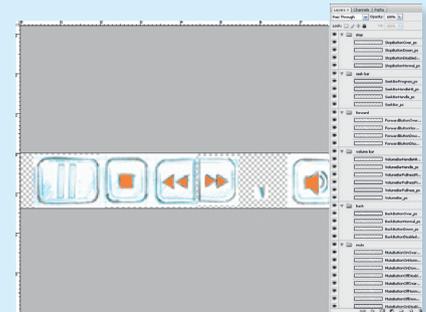
45 minutes

Skills

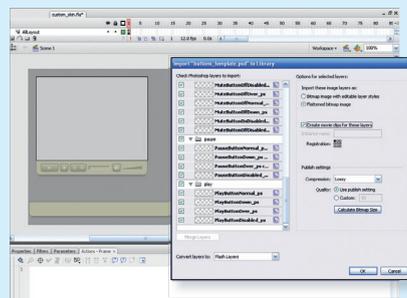
- Understand how the Flash video controls are constructed
- Create video controls tailored to a website's look and feel
- Add video to a website



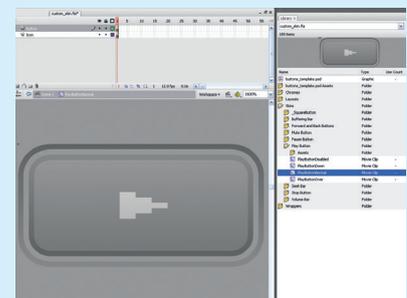
01 Copy the CD folder 'flash' to your hard drive. Search for the ActionScript 2.0 folder and open the FLV Playback skin 'MojaveExternalAll fla'. Save this to your working directory as 'custom_skin fla'. Select File>Publish Settings and in the Formats tab deselect HTML. Click the folder icon, browse to the ActionScript 2.0 folder and name the file 'custom_skin.swf'. Click OK.



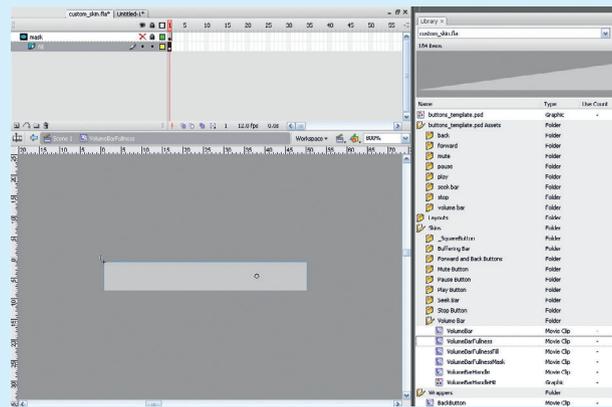
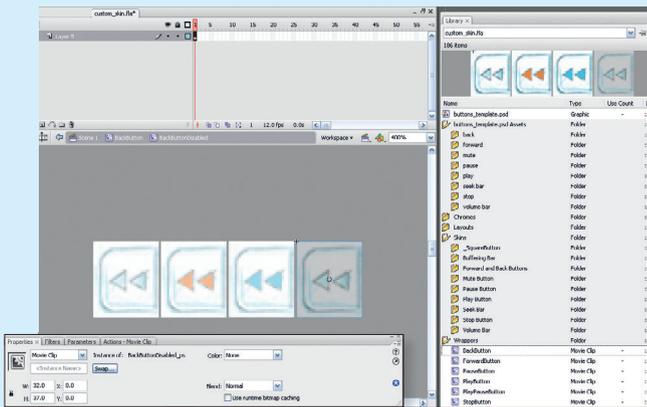
02 Open buttons_template.psd. In the Layers palette you'll see a number of folders containing button names and their various button instances. Switch back to Flash and hit Ctrl+L to bring up the library of 'custom_skin fla'. Open the Skins folder. The structure of this FLA mirrors the layer structure of the PSD, though the Photoshop layer names have been appended with '._ps'.



03 In custom_skin fla select File>Import>ImportToLibrary and select buttons_template.psd. In the PSD import dialog twirl down all the folder icons to reveal the layers. Ctrl-click all the button instance layers and select 'Create movie clips for these layers'. Click OK. A folder appears at the top of the Flash layer stack in the FLA's library named 'buttons_template.psd Assets'.

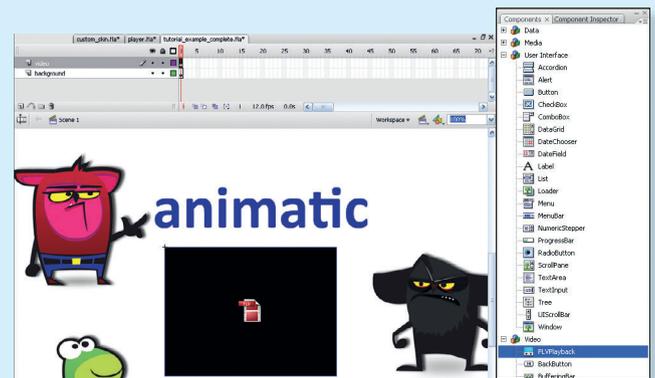
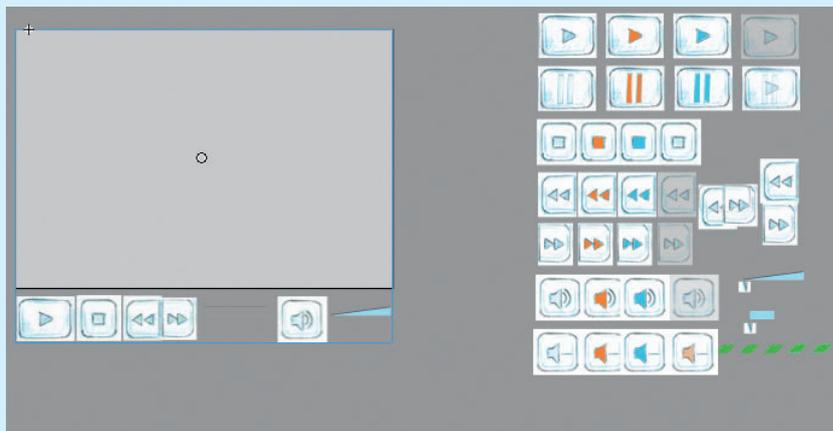


04 In the Flash library select the Play Button folder. Click through the button's different states. Double-click the MovieClip 'PlayButtonNormal' to edit it. Create a layer and into this drag an instance of the MovieClip 'PlayButtonNormal_ps' from the Play Button folder in the 'buttons_template.psd Assets' folder. Place this above the existing layers, then delete the layers with the original button.



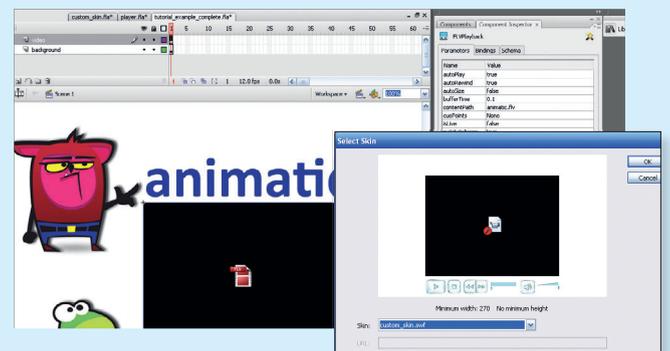
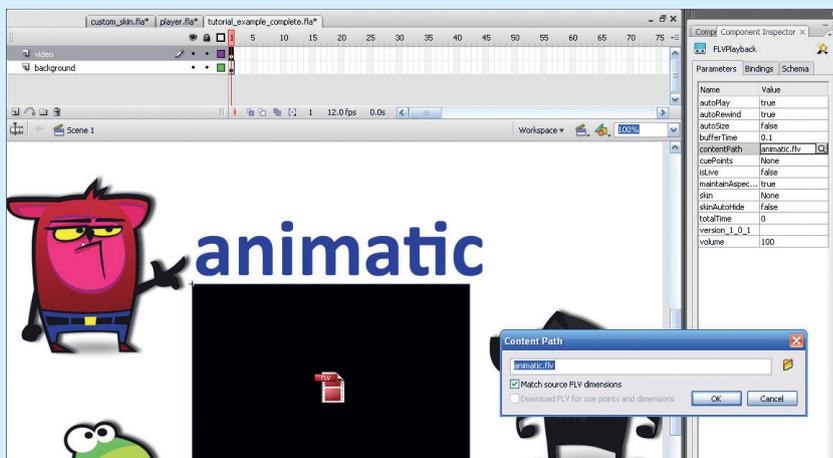
05 Repeat this process for each state of each button. To make sure the buttons all line up open the 'wrappers' folder in the Flash library and open the MovieClip Play Button containing all the instances for the button. Double-click each state to edit in place. In the Properties panel, change the X and Y positions to 0. Do this for the other buttons' states.

06 The Volume and Seek Bar buttons are special cases, as they rescale according to the video's size. This can cause bitmaps to pixelate. For the Volume and Seek Bars replace the MovieClips 'VolumeBarHandle' and 'SeekBarHandle' with their Photoshop counterparts. The rescaleable vector elements are then opened and the originals recoloured to match the style.



07 Another rescaleable vector area within the Flash buttons template is found within the Chromes folder. This contains the background upon which the buttons rest. You can change the shape and colour or replace this with another vector creation of your own. In this case I've deleted the Chromes folder so the buttons rest on the background of the Flash website.

08 After replacing and positioning the button instances, go to File>Publish. From our earlier settings the output SWF will appear in the ActionScript 2.0 folder mentioned in Step 1 with the name 'custom_skin.swf'. Open 'tutorial_example fla'. Create a layer called 'Video'. Select Window>Components and drag an instance of the FLVPlayback component into this layer.



09 Click on the FLVPlayback component and select Window>Component Inspector. In the Value parameter to the right of Content Path click the small magnifying glass. In the Content Path dialog select the folder icon to navigate to 'animatic.flv'. Click OK. In the 'skin' parameter click the magnifying glass and select 'custom_skin.swf'. Click OK.

10 Hit Ctrl+Enter to test your controls. Your custom Photoshop template video controls have been snapped into place below the video. Check all the instance states work correctly. If any are blank or look like the original Flash template then go back through the Flash library and make sure you've replaced the state with the Photoshop version.