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Using Symbols in Flash

By [Darren W. Hedlund](#)
2005-04-04

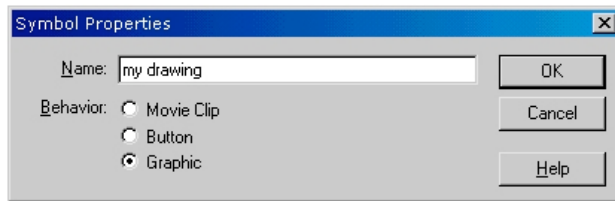
Using Symbols in Flash

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In Flash, a symbol represents a movie clip, button or graphic that you have created. Symbols make it easier to use the same object over and over again without having to re-create it, which is a waste of time. In this section, we will learn how to create, modify and remove symbols you have created. We will also learn how to add effects to these symbols, enhancing your movie.

Converting to symbols:

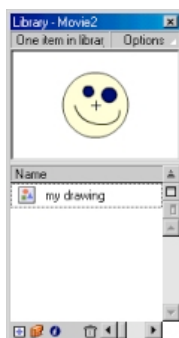
In the stage area, draw a graphic of your choice, using any tool and colors of your choice. Once you have a new shape on your stage, select it. Your drawing is now selected, from the menu, go to "Insert> Convert to Symbols". A window will appear in the middle of your screen called "Symbol Properties". Choose the graphic option, then name your symbol "my drawing". (Shown in figure 1.9)





Click OK and you will be taken back to your stage. Select your drawing by clicking it once now, and you should notice a line surrounding it.

Library:

Flash takes it upon itself to add all your graphics and buttons to a small database called the Library. This is where flash allows you to view, edit and remove items you have created. To view the Library, hit CTRL+L and it will show up. (Shown in figure 2.1)



Resizing and Rotating:

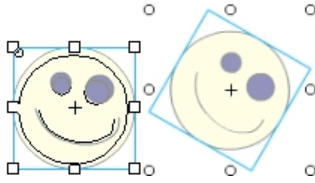
Using the shape you have converted into a symbol, select it, and click on the  button, and resize it to any size you want. Select your symbol again, and this time click on the  button, and rotate your symbol by dragging it in a circular motion using the little white circles surrounding it. When you are done, deselect your symbol. (Shown in figures 2.2 and 2.3)

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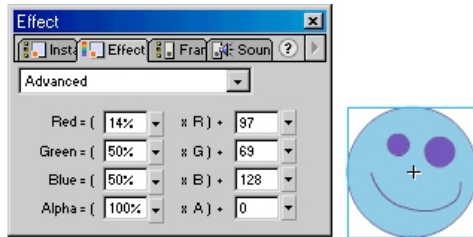
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(figure 2.2 and 2.3) Resizing and Rotating symbols

Adding effects:

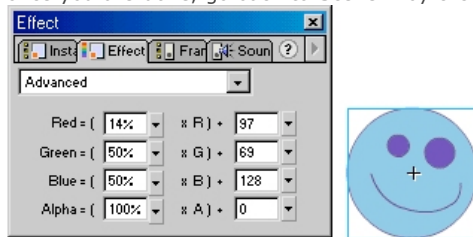
Select your symbol, and from the menu, go to "Window > Panels > Effects". You can set any effect you want to your drawing, in this sample, I used my light yellow happy face and turned into a light blue happy face using the Advanced Effects. You can play around with these options by selecting one of the options in the pull down menu, until you get the result you want.



(Figure 2.4)

Editing, Renaming and Deleting symbols:

Select your symbol on your stage, and hit DELETE. Your graphics is now gone from the stage, but not from the library. In the library, choose your symbol, and now slide it onto the stage area. Now you have your drawing back where it used to be. To rename, edit, delete or duplicate, you must right click on your symbol in the library, and select one of the above. Click on Edit, and you will be taken to a new stage, where you will be able to edit your drawing, and once you are done, go back to Scene 1 by clicking on the "Scene 1"



button above your timeline. Now rename your symbol to My First Drawing. If you are getting tired of your little drawing, now's the time to get rid of it, right click on it in the Library, and select DELETE. An alert window will show up, and you must click YES to completely delete it. Now you are left with a blank movie clip, perfect for the next lesson.

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» Using Symbols in Flash

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