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Using the Flash Toolbar

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Using the Flash Toolbar

One of the things I really like about Flash is how easy it is to draw basic animation with the tools provided. Let's take a look at these tools:



The image above is Flash's toolbar.

Click on the different icons to see what each tool function does.

When ever you click on a tool you will notice it's properties appear as icons below the Tool Bar. Make sure you click around to experiment with these so you can gain an understanding of Flash's functionality.

 Arrow:

This is used for when ever you are not using any of the other tools. It selects individual objects or frames or a marquee for selecting multiple objects. It operates the tool bar and menu systems. etc.

 Brush:

The Brush tool is not unlike the pencil but it allows you to create thicker objects and if you're in the mood it can also do calligraphy but I'll let you figure that one out.

 Dropper:

Use the eyedropper tool to copy fill and stroke attributes from one shape or line and immediately apply them to another shape or line. The eyedropper tool also lets you sample the image in a bitmap to use as paint.

 Eraser:

Pretty self explanatory really.

 Hand:

This tool moves your whole movie around the stage and saves you from having to select everything or move individual frames.

Tip:

To quickly use the hand tool without selecting it from the tool bar hold the space bar down. You will notice your mouse pointer will change into the hand tool. Now drag the stage and when you're finished let to of the space bar.

 Ink Bottle:

This tool creates lines around objects. For example, after selecting the tool and clicking on a circle object it will create a circular line around it. This can then be turn into a separate object.

 Lasso:

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This is used for selecting single or multiple objects in hard to reach places by allowing you to draw a line which then becomes the selection.



This tool does what the title suggests. It draws lines. Useful for drawing polygons and other weird shapes the Oval and Rectangle tools can't deal with.



You will be able to zoom in on your stage and objects with this tool. Holding down the "Alt" key will change the pointer to a "minus" sign. This will enable you to zoom out.



A very useful tool which allows the designer to create circles and ovals of any size. Remember: When you draw a oval, Flash creates a border around it if you have a border colour selected. So if you don't want it there either turn the border colour off or click on the border of the object, this will highlight the border, and delete it. (these borders can be useful in your design)



This will fill objects with a colour of your choosing. In a more advanced tutorial we'll teach you how to also create gradients. The paint bucket can then be used to fill objects with gradients. (check out the Ray of Light Tutorial)



This tool draws freehand lines. Useful for strange Motion paths etc. In addition some bright sparks at Macromedia have granted you the ability to straighten and smooth the ravages of your unsteady hand. Have a play with this by choosing Modify> Curves> ...



Another useful tool and you guessed it! It draw squares. When you draw one it will create a border too if you have to border colour selected. Clicking on the border once and it will only highlight one side. A double click will highlight all four sides.



This tool allows the designer to create text in a movie or to create text fields.

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