

Tutorial 19 – Creating a Dynamic Text Box

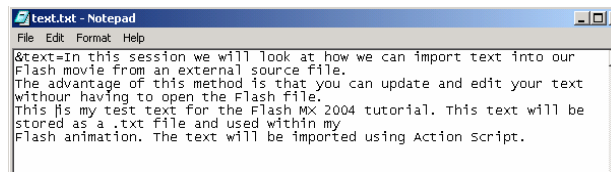
In this session we will look at how we can import text into our Flash movie from an external source file. The advantage of this method is that you can update and edit your text without having to open the Flash file.

An example of the final file can be seen at
http://www.mikejaques.co.uk/teaching/flash/text_box.swf

Creating the text file

Let's begin by creating our text file.

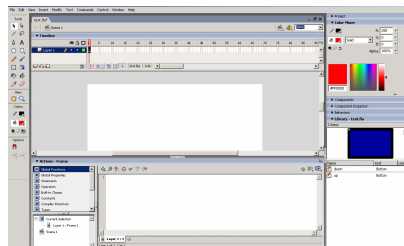
- **Step 1:** Open up your text editing software. You can use Microsoft Word or **Notepad**, or any other word processing software that allows you to save your file as **.txt**.
- **Step 2:** Start the text by typing "**&text=**". This will tell flash that our variable is called text.
- **Step 3:** Then type in some test text. I simply typed in the introduction paragraph to this session.



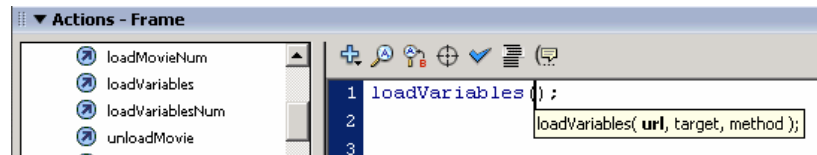
- **Step 4:** Save your file as **start.txt**. This is a text document (.txt) called "start". Make sure you save it to your student drive. When we save our Flash movie we must ensure that it is in the same place as the text file.
- **Step 5:** Close your word processor for the time being and open up Flash.

LoadVariables Action Script

- **Step 6:** Create a new Flash Movie.
- **Step 7:** Click on your first Keyframe and open up the Actions Panel (**Window > Development Panels > Actions**).

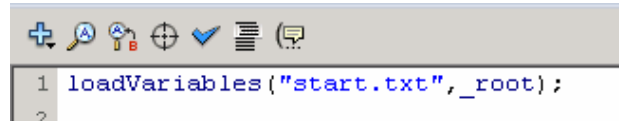


- **Step 8:** Within the Action Panel select **Global Functions > Browser/Network > loadVariables**. Double click loadVariables to add the script to our actions.



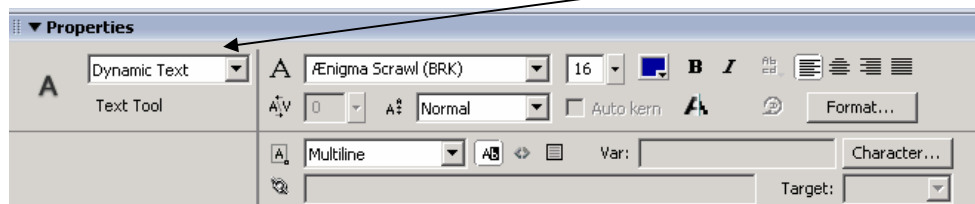
- **Step 9:** Within the brackets we need to set the parameters. Type “start.txt”,_root

Your actions script should look like this.



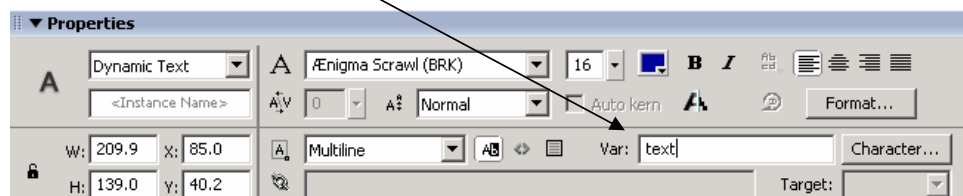
Creating the Text box

- **Step 10:** Now click back on the stage and select the **text tool**.
- **Step 11:** Within the Property Inspector set the text type to **Dynamic Text**.



Using dynamic text allows us to dynamically import text from an external source. In this example we are using a text file but we could also use a database.

- **Step 12:** Also set the font, colour and size of the text. Be sure to set the Line Type to “**Multiline**”. This will format the imported text.
- **Step 13:** Draw your text box on the stage.
- **Step 14:** With your text box still selected use the Property Inspector to set the “**Var:**” (Variable) name to “**text**”.



- **Step 15:** Save you Flash file. Go to **File > Save** and save it as **text_box.fla**. Make sure that you save the file to the same location as your text file.
- **Step 16:** Go to **Control > Test Movie**.

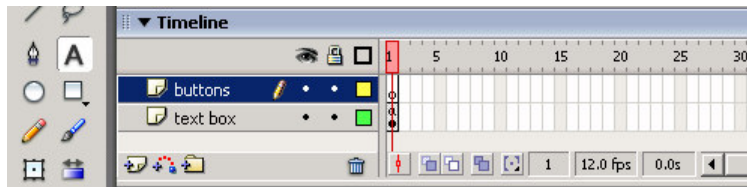
In this session we will look at how we can import text into our Flash movie from an external source file. The advantage of this method is

Your movie should play and you're text will display in the text box.

Can you see a problem? The text box only displays some of the text. The box is not big enough to display all of the text file. Rather than making the text box bigger we will now look at how to incorporate two buttons that allow us to scroll the text up and down.

Scrolling the Text box

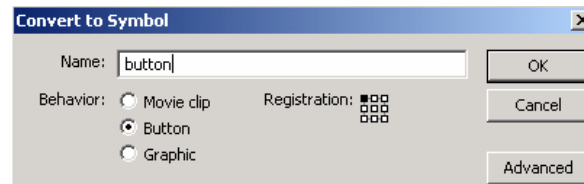
- **Step 17:** Return to your Flash movie.
- **Step 18:** Add a **new layer** to the timeline and name it as "**buttons**".
- **Step 19:** Rename the initial layer as "**text box**". You should always name your layers, as it will help to avoid confusion. Also **lock** the text box layer so that we don't accidentally change it.



- **Step 20:** On the buttons layer draw a button to represent scroll down. I simply drew a small square with an arrow in.



- **Step 21:** Select the button and then convert it to a symbol **Modify > Convert to Symbol**.
- **Step 22:** Name the symbol "**button**" and select "**button**" as the behaviour. Click **OK**.



- **Step 23:** Double click on the symbol to enter **Symbol Editing mode**.