

Dynamic Flash content with LoadMovie and Tell Target

LoadMovie

Large files take longer to load on to the web, so rather than using a few large flash movies or .swf's we create smaller more compact movies as to be more efficient and increase the speed at which our websites download. this technique is called LoadMoivie.

LoadMovie can handle these file types:

.swf -	A Flash player movie
.jpeg -	Bitmap graphic format
.mp3 -	compressed sound file format

Flash MX now also deals with **Mpeg** - Video format!

We are going to concentrate on .swf format as they all work the same.

An example of where a LoadMovie command would be useful is in the situation of the website that has sound or a sound track playing for the duration of the time the website is viewed. It would be better in this instance to have the sound in a completely different movie so that the user has the choice to play it or not. Sounds become increasingly annoying especially if you have been to the website more than once therefore it would make sense to not have to download the whole sound clip if you didn't want it.

Another example might be that your website has a fantastic and complicated navigation system and this would be better off separate to keep loading to a minimum, as well as this the other pages on the web site have large graphics or complicated and timely animation sequences. In this instance the navigation would be better off on a separate movie and allow the pages to load on request, meaning that the person seeing your website can load it quickly and without waiting for animation, or large graphics which they may never look at.

It is the later example we are going to focus on and from there you can experiment with your use of LoadMovie.

First things first

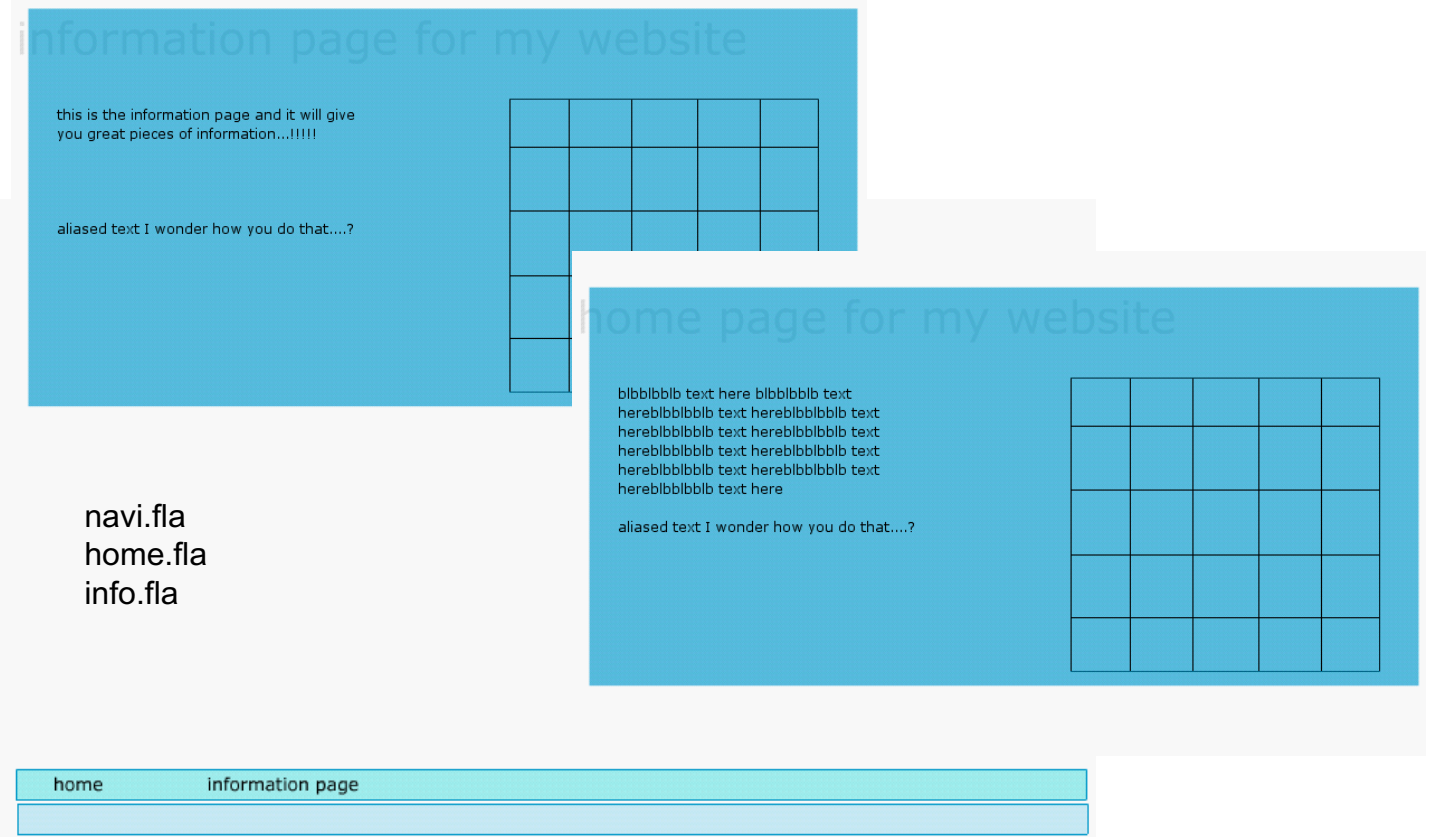
Rather than having a number of different scenes or Movie Clips that are played when a button is pressed we now need to start creating separate flash movies for each of these pages or things that warrant separate loading. To do this we need to cut them out from an existing Flash Movie and create new independent flash Movies (.fla's) from them or get into the habit of doing this from the start.

N.B. The only really important guide for these separate movies is that they need to be the same physical size as the parent movie you will load them into to aid imposition!

Even if the movie to be loaded only has something very tiny in it!

We are going to create a website that requires us to load in the pages around the navigation and the navigation movie controls the insertion of the pages by LoadMovie.

I have created text pages for you to use, these are located on your server and are called:



These are what the template pages look like.

In the Navi fla page we need to place the load movie controls. We can add LoadMovie actions to both keyframes and on buttons and that's handy because without that ability this wouldn't work!

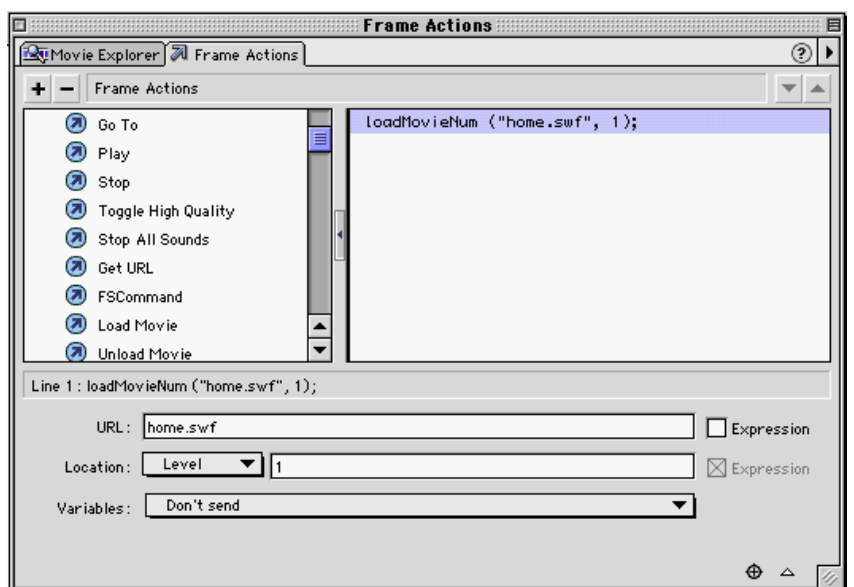


You will see in the Navi fla file that I have the navigation on one layer and an empty layer waiting for the pages, this is where the first LoadMovie

control goes. Double Click on the blank frame to open the actions window.

On the left here you can see the action entered to so this select the Basic Actions book (the top one) and then double click on the LoadMovie action, it will then appear on the right hand side of the scripting window. The extra areas below show you the content you need to fill in

URL - is the name of the file you want to load, it can be a local or global file. If it is global then you need the full address.



The location level is the most confusing section really so don't expect to understand it completely. If at all. the basic principle here is the level determines where the loaded document will be displayed. If you load the movie into level 0 then the loaded movie will replace the calling document. So if the navi page is 0 then the home page can sit at level 1, above the base movie.

In this instance the navigation can then have buttons that load other movies to replace the content held in level 1.

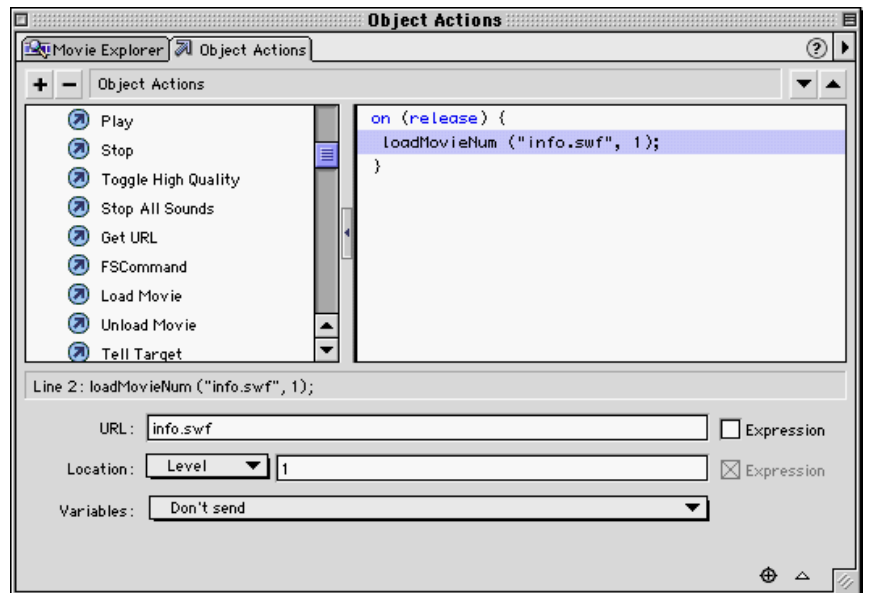
Button controls for LoadMovie work in the same way as the Keyframe LoadMovie only are attached to buttons and therefore should have the automatic action scripting for the button if activated correctly.

Click on the button for [information page](#) the information page and by using control and click (right click on a PC) choose Actions. You will then have the button action scripting window. If you add LoadMovie as before the button commands should appear automatically if not close the window and try again.

Add in the LoadMovie command and match the code written here on the right.

You will notice that the page we are loading is called info.swf and is loading in to the same level as the home page was.

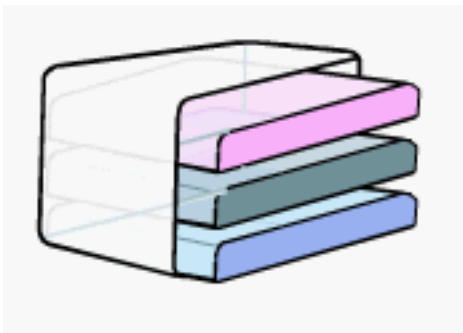
By doing this we replace the previously loaded movie. Test to see if it works by going to Control > Test Movie.



Add an action to the 'Home' button to reload the home.swf page when clicked.

Tell Target

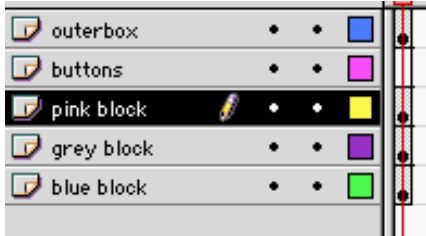
We are now going to look a new way to create complicated menu systems using tell target. Tell Target is another basic command that allows you to play movie clips on demand and brings in the help of the 'Blank Button' and your knowledge of Movie clips. I have produced a test file for you to use and it is called 'Navigation_new fla' on the server. It looks like this:



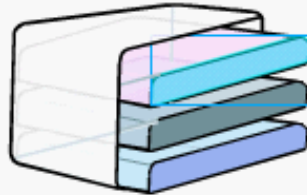
The idea behind this navigation is that it needs to be fluid and look like the coloured blocks are being pulled and pushed in and out of the box. this could have been done with movie clips attached to buttons but it loses a lot of integrity and fluidity that way so we are using Tell Target.

In the Library I have placed all the things you need to carry out this example but first we need to look at how to place the actions onto the movie clips and buttons associated with them.

You will see I have left a layer free with 'Buttons' as its title this is where we will start:



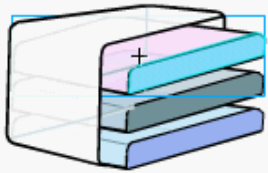
Out of the library pull the 'Blank button' and place it on the correct layer but so that it lines up with the front of the pink block. As in the picture below:



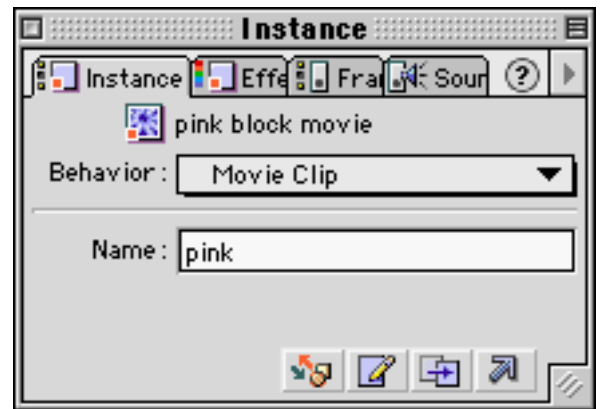
It should look like this, as we know this signifies a blank button and is invisible to the user.

The next step is to give the movie clip instance a name. Every time we pull something out of the library it is known as an instance of the library item. To activate this control over the instance and therefore Tell Target we need to give the movie clip a name.

Select the pink block on the stage like below and then look over to the right of the Flash layout and find the instance tab seen on the right here.



You will find that the movie clip name is given and the behaviour is a Movie Clip but the name box is empty.

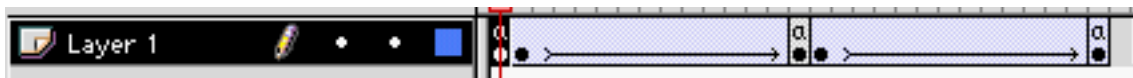


Call the instance : pink

Giving it a name allows us to control it later.

Now we need to sort out the movie clip for the pink block directly, because if you try and play this flash file you will find the movie clip plays and is not controlled and will loop continuously, because as we know flash will loop continuously until we tell it not to.

Double click on the 'Pink Block Movie' and add Keyframe 'Stop' commands on to the 1st, 15th and last keyframe so we can control how it plays and when.

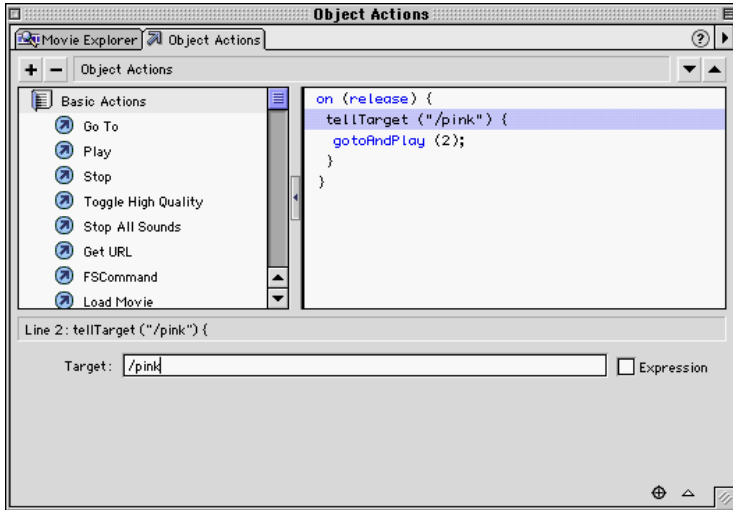


When this is done go back to scene 1.

If you play the flash movie now the movie clip for the pink block will now stop and wait.

Back to the blank button, we can now put the button actions on to the button to control that movie clip.


Right click (Control and click) on the button over the pink movie clip block and choose Actions..

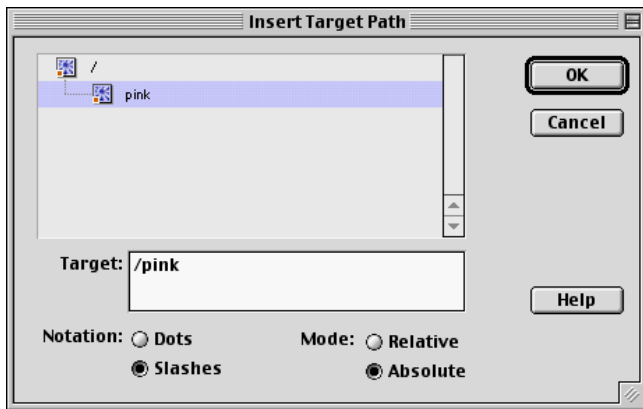


Select TellTarget from the basic actions book and double click so it appears on the right hand side.

The code should look like this:

```
on (Release) {  
  tell target () {  
    }  
}
```

Tell target now gives you a box below to enter the targeted movie clip to control and thankfully we don't need to remember. Click in the box and then click on the icon at the bottom right of this box that looks like this: 



In the window shown left here you should find the movie clip name you gave to the instance of the pink block.

Click on the icon that says 'Pink' and it will appear in the box below it saying target, then click OK.

Make the button work on 'RollOver'. Then add a GoTo command after it to go to the next keyframe in the movie clip and play, because the stop command on the first

keyframe is holding the movie clip and the second keyframe begins the payout of the block so it looks as if it is being pulled from the box.

Try it out in Control > Test Movie.

Have a go at doing the same to the other blocks so they play when a blank button associated with it is activated.