

MM203 week 3 class notes

Symbols allow more complex animation. You can rotate symbols and adjust alpha at the symbol level. Inside the symbol you can edit other aspects of the animation. For example, if you create a shape and convert it to a symbol, you can do shape tweening to the shape inside the symbol and motion or classic tweening to the symbol at its default level. Double clicking a symbol, either on the stage or in the library allows you to edit the symbol at the level underneath the default level.

Symbol types:

- Movie clip – timeline is free from the document's timeline
- Graphic – timeline is locked to the document's timeline.
- Button – has Up Over Down and Hit states

Nested symbol animation

Symbols can be placed inside symbols and animation can be created on each level of that nested symbol. To navigate the timelines of each symbol, you double click the symbol to go into it. In the top left corner of the stage window you can see where you are in the hierarchy. Each symbol you create has its own timeline. If you want to control how and when the animation plays, you should use graphic symbols. If you want the animation to continually loop, you should use movie clip symbols.

For example, if animating a flame moving through space, you could animate the flame on one level and animate the movement of the flame across screen in another. For that you would use a movie clip symbol so the animation of the flame flickering could play continuously.

Animating button states

Normally buttons have three basic states, but you can place movie clips into these single keyframe slots to create more animated button states. To do so you will use movie clips for the separate button states. You can edit the contents of those movie clips independently by double clicking that movie clip in the library and editing the timeline for that movie clip. You can line up the movie clip to the original object placement using the registration point as reference.

Adding alpha transparency to masking

Usually a mask is created by converting a normal layer into a mask layer above the layer you want to mask. What is visible or not is controlled by the vector shapes in that mask layer. But normal mask layers do not take into consideration alpha channels. If you want to take advantage of alpha gradients as a masking tool, you must approach masking in a different way.

Instead of converting the layer that contains the masking object to a mask layer, leave it as a normal layer. The object in that layer must be a movie clip symbol. The item that is to be masked must also be a movie clip symbol and in its own separate

layer. Both of these movie clip symbols should also have “Cache as bitmap” enabled under their Display option in the Properties window. Along with these two layers, each containing a movie clip symbol, should be a third empty layer into which you will place your actionscript on frame 1. To add your actionscript, bring up your Action panel from the Windows menu. The actionscript you are adding is:

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maskedobject.mask=themask;
```

maskedobject is the instance name of the movie clip that is your object being masked and *themask* is the instance name of the movie clip that is your mask. You can set these instance names from the Properties window by selecting the movie clip symbol you want to set the instance name for and giving it a name. With this actionscript command and the option, “Cache as bitmap”, enabled the alpha change within the mask it will effect the masked object accordingly.