

## Load Movie

This tutorial will focus on the loadMovieNum action in Flash. This action has several advantages:

- You can load several movies on top of the currently playing timeline
- You can load movies into targets, which are movie clips
- You completely optimize the performance of your movies

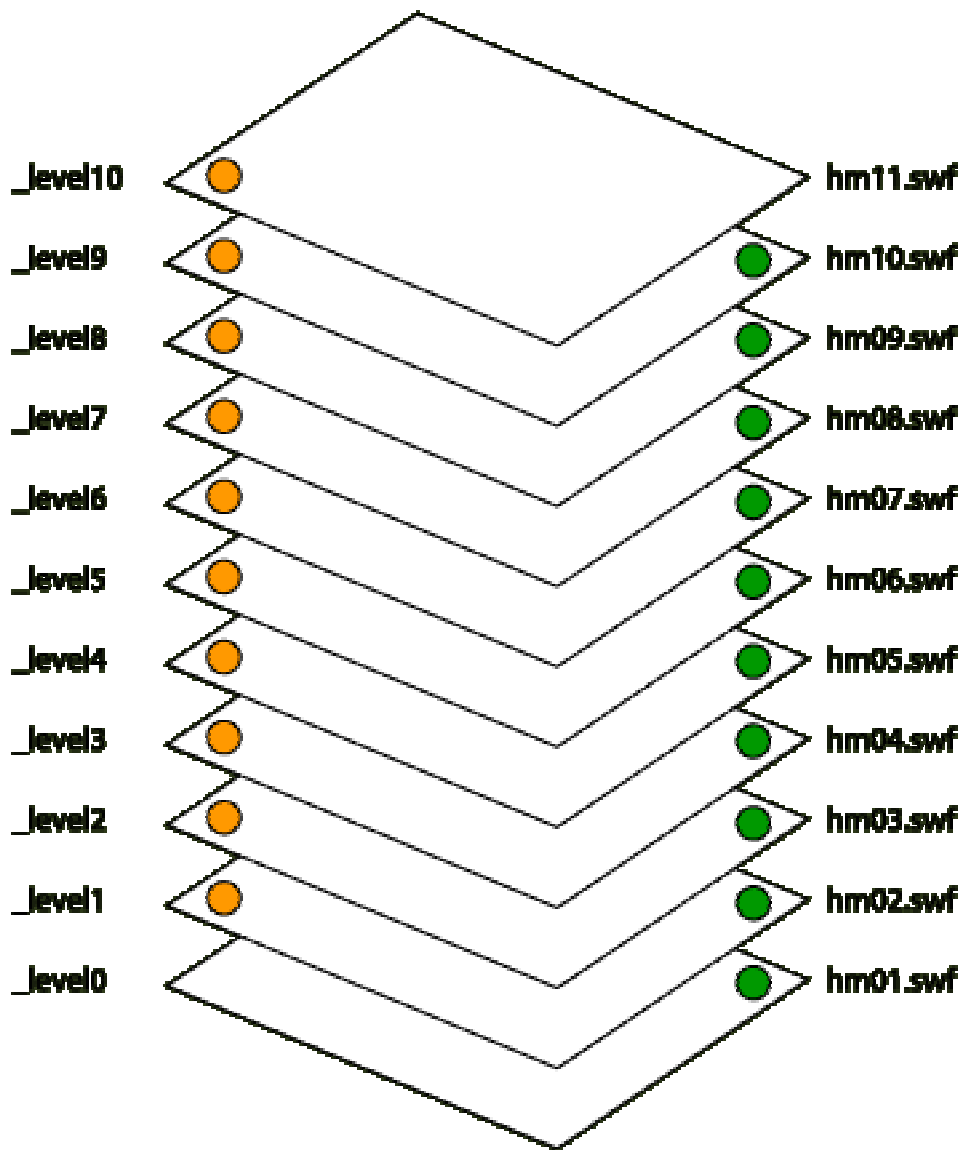
We won't be looking too closely into loading movies into targets here but that's also really interesting.

Here's the problem I ran into and how loading movies solved it for me. I built a multi-scene (11 scenes) movie that was really bulky. 960k. Even with a Preloader, the movie really just ran poorly, especially on slower connections. There were a few large audio files and bitmaps causing the chunkiness of the swf.

I broke the movie up into 11 separate swf files, naming them hm01.swf to hm11.swf. When the user goes to the site, the first movie they see is hm01.swf. The level that they are seeing is `_level0` (or the root level some would say). Upon clicking a button, they load the hm02.swf file into `_level1`. Then they can click on a link in the hm02.swf movie that will load hm03.swf into `_level2`. Here's where I, conceptually, had difficulty with the proper scripting for the buttons and the idea behind controlling movies loaded into levels.

First of all, I found out that when you have a movie loaded into `_level1`, there is only 1 level 1 to be loaded into. This sounds pretty obvious but let's take a look at a scenario in the given example for clarification. Once hm02.swf has been loaded into `_level1`, if I scripted a button in the hm02.swf movie to load hm03.swf into `_level1`, it would replace the movie that was loaded there (hm02.swf) with itself (hm03.swf). You can also replace `_level0`.

Here's a diagram of what's going on:



Here you can see rectangles representing each swf file as its loaded into different levels. The levels are shown at the left. The green and orange circles are the particularities of my problem. Using the loadMovie action to load a movie is pretty straightforward. You set the movie you want loaded in the URL field and then you tell it which level to load it into. Now the green buttons in this case have the loadMovie action assigned to them. You can see in an ascending order how they are loading movies and which levels they are loading them into.

Scripting the orange (back) buttons, I thought I could use a loadMovie action as well. That's not the best approach though. For example, in the hm03.swf movie, if I script the back button to loadMovie hm02.swf into \_level1, there's a problem. That movie was already loaded into that location. So the button won't even work. What I really needed was to simply unload the movie from that location. So the back button looks something like this for the hm03.swf: unloadMovieNum(2) The 2 in the parentheses is referring to the level. So level 2 get's unloaded revealing the layer beneath it.

Here's a small version of the problem in a swf version: (movie1.swf)

So let's look at this movie-by-movie, level-by-level to understand how it all comes together.

### **Movie1.fla**

1. Movie 1 will be the movie that holds \_level0.
2. Click on the green button.
3. Click on the (+) plus button in the actions panel and go to Actions > Browser/Network > LoadMovie.
4. In the URL field type movie2.swf.
5. In the Location field type 1. Notice that you have an option for Level or Target with the pop-up menu. Here we are loading movie2.swf simply into level 1 and not into any specific Movie Clip as a Target.
6. Go to the Control Menu > Test Movie to create the .swf file.

### **Movie2.fla**

7. Movie 2 will be on \_level1.
8. Click on the green button.
9. Click on the (+) plus button in the actions panel and go to Actions > Browser/Network > LoadMovie.
10. In the URL field type movie3.swf.
11. In the Location field type 2
12. Click on the Orange button.
13. Click on the (+) plus button in the actions panel and go to Actions > Browser/Network > unloadMovie.
14. Click in the level field and type 1. This is the level that this movie is playing on.
15. Go to the Control Menu > Test Movie to create the swf file.

### **Movie3.fla**

16. Movie 3 will be on \_level2.
17. Click on the green button.
18. Click on the (+) plus button in the actions panel and go to Actions > Browser/Network > LoadMovie.
19. In the URL field type movie4.swf.
20. In the level field type 3
21. Click on the Orange button.
22. Click on the (+) plus button in the actions panel and go to Actions > Browser/Network > unloadMovie.
23. Click in the level field and type 2. This is the level that this movie is playing on.
24. Go to the Control Menu > Test Movie to create the swf file.

### **Movie4.fla**

25. Movie 4 will be on \_level3
26. Click on the Orange button.
27. Click on the (+) plus button in the actions panel and go to Actions > Browser/Network > unloadMovie.
28. In the level field type 3. This is the level that this movie is playing on.
29. Go to the Control Menu > Test Movie to create the .swf file.

### **Getting it All to Work**

30. Click on the Window menu and return to movie1.fla
31. Go to the Control Menu > Test Movie.
32. Click on green button to load movie2.swf into \_level1.
33. Clicking on the orange button will unload movie2.swf from the \_level1 position.
34. Clicking on the green button will load movie3.swf into \_level2.

### **Conclusion**

Another thing that you'll notice here is that the movies are loading over each other without clearing visibility. So when movie2.swf gets loaded into \_level1, it doesn't cover movie1.swf. That's because all of the movies have no background object covering the size of the stage. If you want to cover up movies in lower layers, create a graphic symbol the size of the stage and have it be the bottom-most layer in your movies. If you have any questions, drop me a line: [al@lemieux-design.net](mailto:al@lemieux-design.net)