

Flash MX 2004 Importing Text Tutorial

Flash MX 2004 has rich text formatting capabilities that go beyond what Flash MX could do, including the ability to use Cascading Style Sheets to improve the look of imported text and support for more HTML tags. This tutorial will show you how to import a HTML file into a Dynamic text box. The advantage to this is that you can have prepared HTML files that you can create in an HTML editor instead of having to type a lot of text into Flash. Flash allows you to import HTML files with limited formatting possibilities.

Creating the HTML Files

1. Open BBEdit (Mac), HomeSite (Win) or a similar HTML editor.
2. Create your HTML file. Don't include the Doctype and Head sections of the HTML document and don't include the ending HTML tag. Just the body and any content within it will be read by Flash and displayed into the Dynamic Text Field. Note here the use of images, lists, and heading tags. These can be styled by the CSS file we'll create next.

```
<body>
<h1>This is just a test</h1>
<p>This is to test
Flash's ability to use style sheets. Flash MX and earlier could pull
plain text, simple HTML, and XML files into a dynamic text field with
the loadVars function. Flash MX 2004 has added capabilities to
include using cascading style sheets and more complex HTML.</p>
<h3>Links:</h3>
<ul>
  <li><a href="http://www.flashmagazine.com">Flash
Magazine</a></li>
  <li><a href="http://www.ultrashock.com">Ultrashock</a></li>
  <li><a href="http://www.macromedia.com/devnet">Macromedia
Developer Center</a></li>
  <li><a href="http://www.markme.com">Macromedia User's
Group</a></li>
  <li><a href="http://www.flaskit.com">Flash Kit</a></li>
</ul>
</body>
```

Creating the CSS File

A major source of aggravation in Flash MX was that you couldn't really get good looking HTML into a Dynamic Text Field because it didn't support some formatting tags. Now with CSS support, your HTML will look the way you want to.

3. Open BBEdit (Mac), HomeSite (Win) or a similar HTML editor.
4. Create your CSS file. Here I've used simple selectors for H1, H3, and P. Then I added some effects for the links in the file.

```

body {
    font-family: "Trebuchet MS", Helvetica, sans serif; }
h1 {
    font-size: 24pt;
    line-height: 28pt;
    color: #3A3A3A; }
h3 {
    font-size: 21pt;
    line-height: 24pt;
    color: #696969; }
p { font-size: 11pt;
    line-height: 16pt;
    color: #333;
    text-indent: 20pt;
    }
a:link { text-decoration: none;
    color: #3399ff; }
a:visited { text-decoration: none;
    color: #ff9900; }
a:hover { text-decoration: underline;
    color: #6699cc; }
a:active { text-decoration: none;
    color: red; }

```

Creating the Flash File

1. Open up Flash and Create a New File.
2. Grab the Text tool and draw a Dynamic Text Field on the left side of the stage. Here, we'll be using ActionScript to set the properties of the text field, so you don't have to set them in the Properties bar. What you do need to do though is set the Instance Name to `content`.
3. Rename the existing layer Text and add a new Layer above it. Rename this layer actions.
4. Click in the first frame of the actions layer and open the Actions Panel (F9).
5. Add the following script:

```

var ss:TextField.StyleSheet = new TextField.StyleSheet();
ss.load("styles.css");
content.styleSheet = ss;

content.multiline= true;
content.wordWrap = true;
content.html = true;

story = new XML();
story.ignoreWhite = true;
story.load("one.html");
story.onLoad = function () {
    content.htmlText = story;
}

```

Let's go through this so you understand what's happening. First off, a new variable is being created called "ss" (ss for style sheet). The data type for that variable is being applied specifically to a TextField. Then a new TextFiled StyleSheet class is being defined. Next, we load the style sheet we built earlier into the Flash Player. Finally, the stylesheet is applied to the Dynamic Text Field called "content."

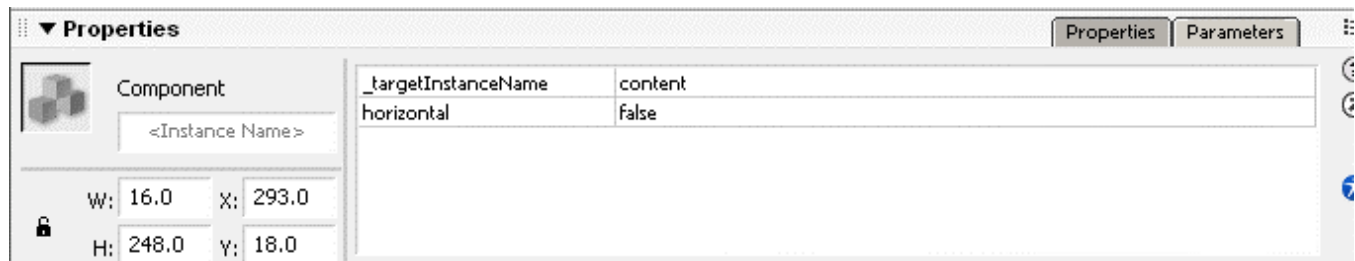
In the next 3 lines of code we set the parameters of the text field: making multiline, word wrap, and html true or on. Now we can get the HTML file we prepared earlier and pull it into the Dynamic Text Field. A new XML object is being created and the ignoreWhite property is set to true to preserve proper formatting. Then we load the HTML file and with the onLoad function we apply it to the content Dynamic Text Field.

Test your movie to make sure that the text appears in the text field (Control + Enter or Command + Enter).

Scrolling the Content

We've got our HTML into the text field, but we can't see all of the content, unless you made a huge text field. In order to get the text to scroll, we can use the UIScrollBar component.

1. Open the Components Panel, Window > Development Panels > Components.
2. Drag the UIScrollBar component from the UI Components set onto the stage. Drag it to the right edge of the content text field. It should snap to the text field.
3. Click the Parameters tab in the Properties panel and you'll notice that when you snapped it to the text field, the parameters were set so that the scroll bar affects the content text field.



4. Test your movie again and this time you should be able to scroll the text field.

Summary

Using this technique makes editing a site a lot easier. Editing Flash files is not that simple. Editing a text file is. If your site is text heavy, then using this method would allow you to have more control over the editing process. For example, if you open and change any of the text files and change them in some way, the next time you play the Flash movie, the text files will be updated. Also making changes to the style sheet will change the look of the text in the files as well.