

SlideShowPro User Guide

(for SlideShowPro v.1.5.3)



slideshowpro

DYNAMIC, CUSTOMIZABLE PHOTO GALLERIES
FOR FLASH MX 2004, FLASH 8 AND FLASH CS3.

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Introduction

SlideShowPro is a component for Macromedia Flash MX 2004, Macromedia Flash 8, and Adobe Flash CS3 that helps you share your pictures online. With over 60 customizable options, SlideShowPro works how you want it to.

To get you up and running quickly, this user guide begins with a trio of “quick start” instructional chapters: “Installation,” “Your first slideshow” and “Display your slideshow online.” These three sections will help you publish a slideshow using only the default settings of SlideShowPro, and will give you a basic understanding of how the component works.

Once you’re ready to customize your slideshow, move on to “Introducing the component inspector” chapter. This introduces you to the panel where nearly all of your editing will occur for the rest of this user guide.

Next up are three main sections -- “Interface,” “Behavior,” and “Enhancements.” “Interface” describes each of SlideShowPro’s user interface areas in detail, and outlines the options available to you with each. “Behavior” covers SlideShowPro’s actions, from auto-playback to transitioning between images. Last but certainly not least, “Enhancements” gets down to business with complete walkthroughs for adding extra features to your slideshow, from image captions to thumbnails and more.

At the end of the guide are instructions for using SlideShowPro with Flickr, an overview of using ActionScript to programmatically control the component, tips and tricks, troubleshooting, and finally how to update your component when updates are released.

By the end of this guide you’ll know nearly everything there is to know about SlideShowPro. If you have any suggestions on how to improve the guide, or get lost, by all means go to the web site and contact us. We’d appreciate the feedback.

Let’s get started!

Installation



SlideShowPro is distributed as an Macromedia/Adobe Extension file (MXP) and is installed through Macromedia/Adobe Extension Manager. To install SlideShowPro, quit the Flash authoring application (if it is currently running).

Unzip the ZIP file you received after purchasing the component, and open the folder it created. Inside will be a file with a “.mxp” extension. Double-click on the MXP file.

If you have Extension Manager installed, the application will launch and walk you through the installation process. If your computer returns an error, stating that it doesn't know what to do with the file, visit http://www.adobe.com/exchange/em_download/ to download the latest version of Extension Manager. Install Extension Manager, then retry installing the MXP file.

When Extension Manager completes, you should see “SlideShowPro” listed in the Manager interface (as shown in Figure 1 below).

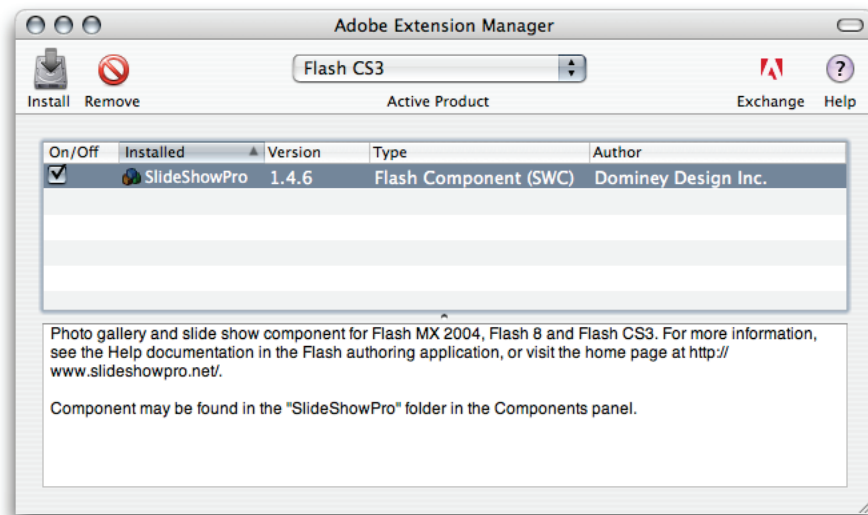


Figure 1: Extension Manager with SlideShowPro installed

You have successfully installed SlideShowPro, and may now quit Extension Manager. Launch Flash, and move on to the next section of this guide (“Your first slideshow”).

Note: if you already have SlideShowPro installed and are looking for information on how to upgrade, refer to the “Updating Previous Versions” section at the end of this user guide.

Your first slideshow

This walkthrough will get you up to speed with how SlideShowPro works by demonstrating how to create a simple slideshow.

CREATE A FLASH DOCUMENT

The first step is to create a FLA. Launch Flash, and select “File > New” from the application menu. In the left frame of the dialog that appears, select “Flash Document” if you are using Flash MX 2004 or Flash 8, or “Flash File (ActionScript 2.0)” if using Flash CS3. Click “Okay.”

Next, select “Window > Properties” in the top menu to open the Properties panel. Increase the frame rate of your movie. The default frame rate of 12fps is too low for optimum playback. Change this number to 31fps.

ADD SLIDESHOWPRO

Click on the “Window” menu option in the top menu. If using Flash MX 2004, select “Development Panels > Components.” If using Flash 8/Flash CS3, select “Components.” The Components panel will appear (Figure 2). Toggle the “SlideShowPro” item open to reveal the component inside. Click on the component, hold the mouse button down, and drag it to the Stage (the large white area underneath the timeline). An instance of SlideShowPro will appear using default settings for width, height, and color.

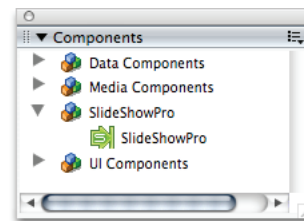


Figure 2: Components panel

Click on the instance of SlideShowPro on the Stage to select it. Return to the Properties panel. Change both the X and Y fields to 0 to align SlideShowPro with the upper-left corner of the Stage.

Note: If you will be using SlideShowPro Director or the iPhoto plugin for OS X to publish your images, skip the rest of “Your first slideshow.” Director users, go to the “Setup” instructions in the Director User Guide. iPhoto Plugin users, go to the “Plugin Instructions” section of the iPhoto Plugin User Guide.

CREATE A PROJECT FOLDER

You now need a place to save your FLA. Create a new folder named “slideshow” anywhere on your computer. Save the FLA to your “slideshow” directory and name it “slideshow.flr”.

CREATE IMAGE DIRECTORIES

Again in your “slideshow” folder, create a new folder named “gallery.” Open “gallery” and create a new folder named “album1.” This folder will hold all the images for your first album. Finally, open “album1” and create a new folder named “large.” Your directory structure should now resemble Figure 3.

Gather together the photos you wish to display and place them in the “large” folder.

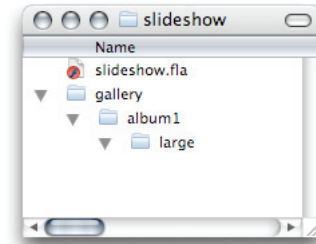


Figure 3: Project folder

CREATE AN XML DOCUMENT

XML is the glue between SlideShowPro and your images. Without an XML file, SlideShowPro won’t know what to load or how to build your gallery.

Using your favorite text editor (Dreamweaver, BBEdit, TextMate or even Notepad is fine), create a new document and enter the following:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="" description="" lgPath="">
    <img src="" />
  </album>
</gallery>
```

This is the basic template of your XML document. Save the XML file to the “slideshow” project folder and name it “images.xml.” Your directory structure should now resemble Figure 4.

Now we’re going to fill the template with our gallery data. In the album element, add a title and description for your collection of photos, then add to the lgPath attribute the relative path to the “large” folder you created earlier, which in this case would be gallery/album1/large/.

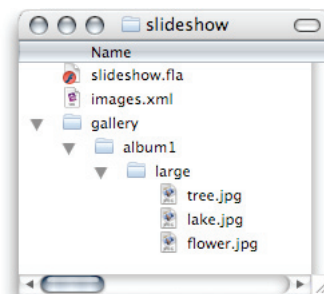


Figure 4: Updated directory structure

Now for your images — edit the src attribute in the img element with the file name of the first image you’d like to show. If your image were named “tree.jpg”, the element would be ``.

For every additional image you wish to show, create another img element and fill it with the file name. Your XML file should now resemble the following:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
    lgPath="gallery/album1/large/">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

```

        lgPath="gallery/album1/large/">
    
    
    
</album>
</gallery>

```

When you have one `img` element for every image in the “large” folder, save and close the XML document.

PUBLISH

Select “File > Publish Settings” from the top menu. Click on the “Flash” tab, and ensure that “Version” is set to “Flash Player 7” (or higher) and “ActionScript version” is set to “ActionScript 2.0.” Finally, click the “Publish” button at the bottom of the window. Flash will export two files to your “slideshow” folder — `slideshow.html` and `slideshow.swf`. Double-click on `slideshow.html` to load it in your browser. Your images should now be appearing in SlideShowPro!

ADDITIONAL ALBUMS

Now that you know how to create a single album, what about additional albums? Simply repeat the process by creating a new album folder (“album2” for example) in your gallery directory, and add your new album information to your XML file. Here is what the XML looks like with more than one album:

```

<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
    <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
        lgPath="gallery/album1/large/">
        
        
        
    </album>
    <album title="Cars" description="Images of classic cars"
        lgPath="gallery/album2/large/">
        
        
        
    </album>
</gallery>

```

ONWARD

Congratulations! You have successfully published your first slideshow. The next section will detail how to upload your slideshow to your web site, plus tips on how to embed your SWF in an HTML document outside of the “slideshow” folder. If you are comfortable with these topics, you can skip to the “Introducing the component inspector” section. Everyone else, follow along.

Display your slideshow online

Now that you've built a slideshow on your desktop, it's time to share your creation with the rest of the world. Simply open your FTP application, connect to your web site, and navigate to the directory where you want the slideshow to be.

Next, take the "slideshow" project folder from the previous chapter and upload the whole folder (with the exception of the FLA file). When complete, navigate with a web browser to the HTML file in the "slideshow" folder you just uploaded. Your slideshow should appear!

EMBED SLIDESHOW IN A SEPARATE HTML DOCUMENT

But what about viewing your slideshow in a *different* HTML document? One that is outside of the "slideshow" folder? If you attempt to do this by copying over the Flash embed code, *your slideshow will not work*. The reason? By default, whenever a SWF is loaded into a HTML document all paths become relative to where the HTML document resides. So by attempting to load your SWF in a HTML document that's outside of the "slideshow" folder, your SWF won't be able to find your images.

So how's it done? It's actually pretty easy. Let's begin.

EDIT PLAYER EMBED CODE

Open the HTML document Flash published in the "slideshow" folder. Copy the entire block of code starting with `<object>` and ending with `</object>`. Open the other HTML document you want to view the slideshow in, and paste the block of code wherever you like.

Second, edit the two links to your SWF. One will look like this:

```
<param name="movie" value="slideshow.swf" />
```

The other like this:

```
<embed src="slideshowpro.swf"
```

Edit *both* of these with the new path to the SWF in the "slideshow" folder. This may be a relative path (e.g., `slideshow/slideshow.swf`) or an absolute path (e.g., `http://www.mydomain.com/slideshow.swf`).

ADD BASE ATTRIBUTE

This base parameter is a special override forces the Flash Player into making all links relative to the SWF, not the HTML document.

Add the following alongside the other existing `<param>` elements in your HTML document:

```
<param name="base" value="." />
```

Then add the following anywhere inside your existing `<embed>` element:

```
base="."
```

Your `embed` element should then look similar to this:

```
<embed base="." src="slideshow.swf" quality="best" scale="noborder"
      bgcolor="#666666" width="550" height="400" name="slideshow"
      align="middle" allowScriptAccess="sameDomain" type="application/
x-shockwave-flash" pluginspage="http://www.macromedia.com/go/
getflashplayer" />
```

Save your HTML document, and load it in your web browser. Your slideshow should be working again!

ALTERNATIVE OPTION - ABSOLUTE LINKS

If for some reason you'd rather not use `base`, you have the option of using absolute paths. Here's how you do it.

First open the HTML document you want to view the slideshow in. If you haven't done so already, copy over the player embed code (as outlined in "Edit Player Embed Code" above).

Second, edit the two links to your SWF in the embed code (also outlined above) so they both contain an absolute link to your SWF. For example:

```
http://www.mydomain.com/slideshow/slideshow.swf
```

Third, open the FLA you used to publish the SWF. Change the "XML File Path" value in the SlideShowPro's Component Inspector panel (see the "Introducing the component inspector" section of this User Guide if you don't know what this is) to an absolute value. For example:

```
http://www.mysite.com/slideshow/images.xml
```

Lastly, open your XML file. Change `lgPath` to an absolute link. Using the same XML file from the "Your first slideshow" chapter, here's how that would look:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
    lgPath="http://www.mydomain.com/slideshow/gallery/album1/
    large/">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

Publish a new SWF, and upload it (as well as the revised XML file) to your web server, overwriting the versions currently there. Your slideshow should now load using absolute paths.

ONWARD

Now that you have published your first slideshow, it's time to look at the many enhancements you can make to SlideShowPro. Topics include adding thumbnails, playing audio, changing the component's visual appearance, and much more. But first, a quick introduction to the utility you will use for many of these options: the Component Inspector.

Introducing the Component Inspector

The Component Inspector in the Flash authoring application provides a graphical interface for modifying nearly all of SlideShowPro's available properties. Open it in Flash MX 2004 by selecting "Window > Development Panels > Component Inspector" from the application menu, or through "Window > Component Inspector" in Flash 8 / Flash CS3.

Once opened (Figure 5), you will see three tabs at the top — Properties, Bindings, and Schema. You will only use the Properties tab with SlideShowPro.

If the Component Inspector panel is empty, select your instance of SlideShowPro on the stage. The panel will fill, in alphabetical order, with all of the properties at your command.

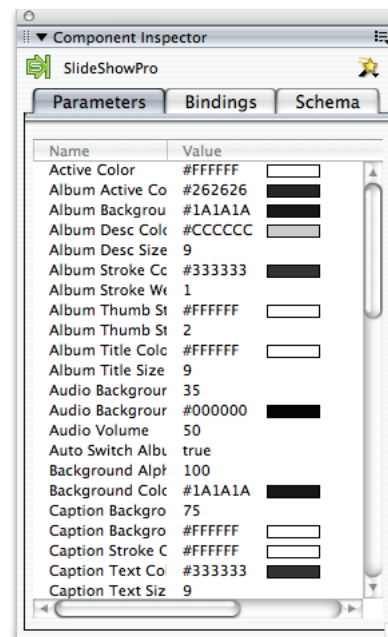


Figure 5: Component Inspector panel

COMPONENT VALUE TYPES

There are three types of items in the Component Inspector's "Value" column — color, combo boxes, and text entry fields.

Color properties are shown with their default hex values and a visual preview. To change the color assigned to a property, click its assigned value in the Value column to engage the color picker. You may manually enter a value into the hex text field, or choose one with the eyedropper from the web-safe color palette.

Combo boxes are pre-filled with all of the available options for a parameter. The options shown are the only ones available for that particular item.

Text fields accept manually typed values. The fields are pre-filled with the types of data SlideShowPro expects to receive. If a field contains a number, SlideShowPro will only accept numerical values for that property. If a property accepts more than one value (like "Typeface" and "Text Strings") each value must be separated with a comma, and without a space after the comma. (For information on the range of acceptable values for a specific textual property, open the "SlideShowPro" help booklet available through Help > Help).

ONWARD

You will use the Component Inspector numerous times throughout the upcoming sections of this user guide. Next up is a walkthrough of SlideShowPro's interface, followed by tutorials on the many enhancements you can make to your slideshow.

Interface: General

SlideShowPro is built with two interface areas for you to control your slideshow, view photos, and navigate between albums. Each major area and user interface element is detailed over the next couple of diagrams. Later chapters in this User Guide will refer to elements highlighted here.

MAIN INTERFACE

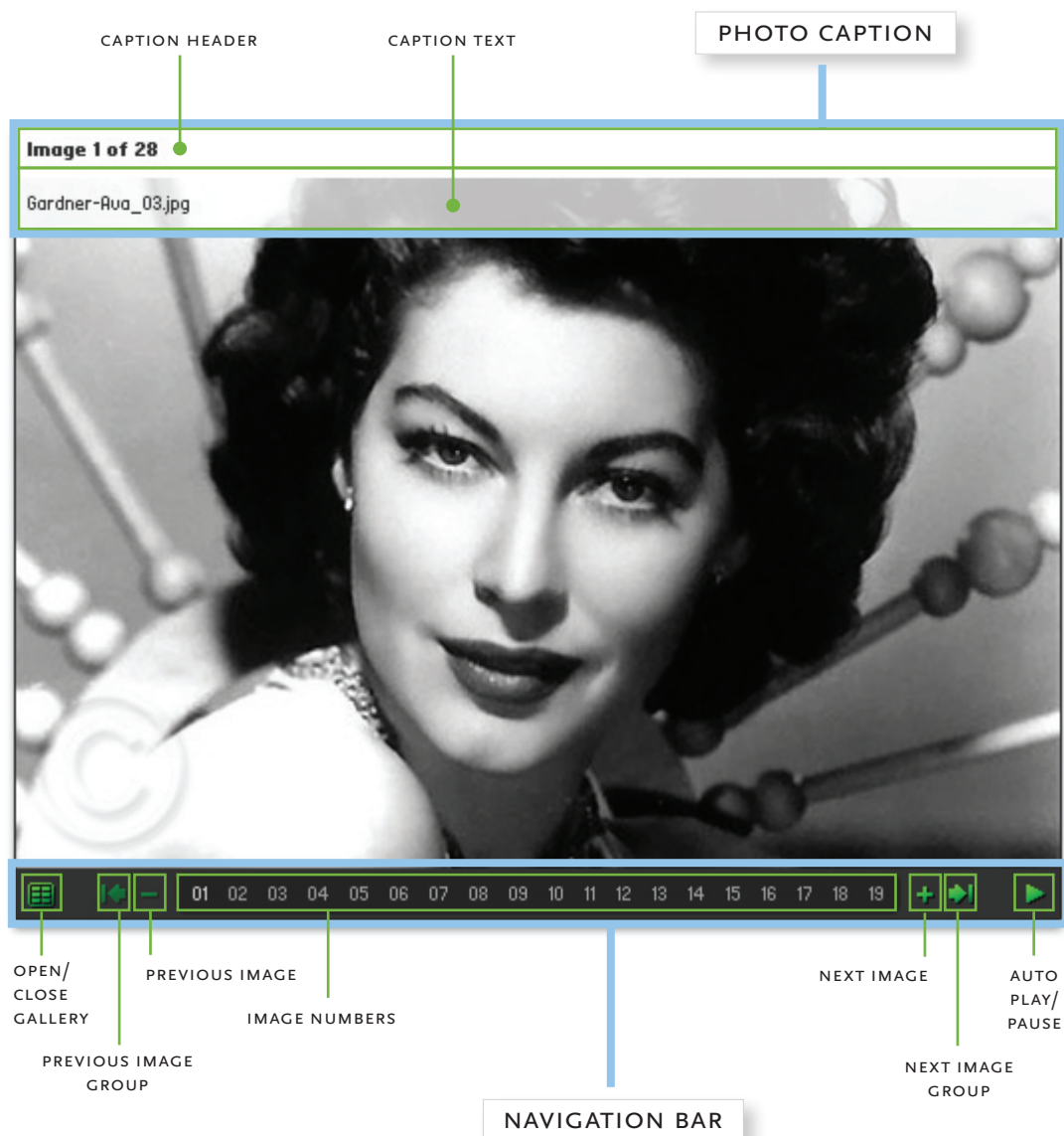


Figure 6: The main interface area of SlideShowPro

GALLERY INTERFACE

SlideShowPro's gallery is where all your albums are stored. You may use either the main interface or the gallery interface as the starting point for your slideshow.

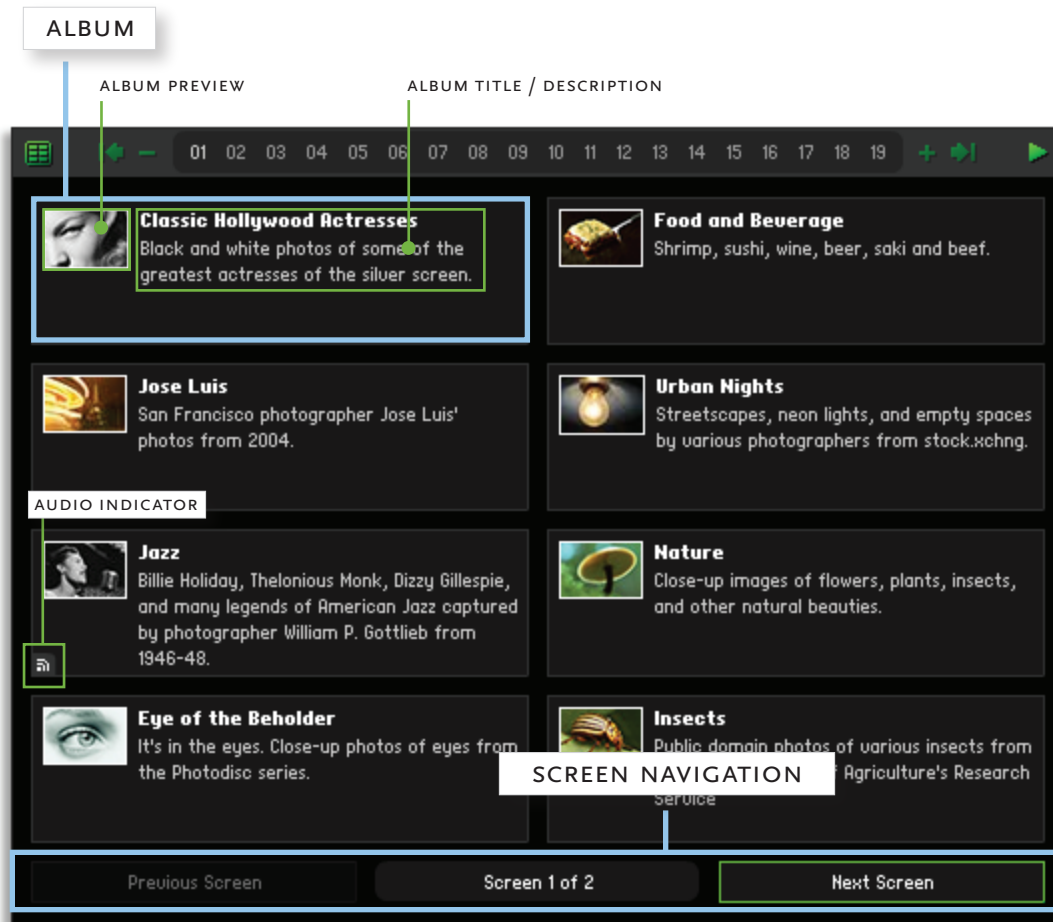


Figure 7: The gallery interface of SlideShowPro

PARAMETERS

The following options are available in the Component Inspector for changing the general style of the component itself.

Background Color: The general background behind everything in SlideShowPro. This color appears underneath all images, navigational elements, captions, and the outer stroke.

Stroke Color: The color of the outer stroke around SlideShowPro.

Stroke Weight: The pixel width of the outer stroke around SlideShowPro.

Interface: Component size

SlideShowPro was made to be flexible. You may change its width and height to any dimension you need.

COMPONENT SIZE



Figure 8: Ready to scale

To resize SlideShowPro, select the instance of the component on the stage and select **Modify > Transform > Scale** from the application menu. As depicted in Figure 8, little black boxes will appear around the perimeter of the component. Click and hold a corner block, and drag to proportionally scale SlideShowPro.

For more precise control, open the Properties Panel (**Window > Properties**) and manually modify the W: and H: values.

PHOTO AREA SIZE

In the middle of SlideShowPro you'll notice a display for "Photo Area Size" (Figure 9). This refers to the empty area inside the component where your images will appear.

The first number is the width, which is equal to the width of SlideShowPro. The second number is the height, which is equal to the height of SlideShowPro minus any inline UI elements (e.g., the navigation bar and inline captions).

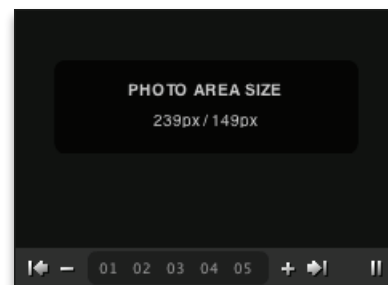


Figure 9: Photo area size display

If you resize SlideShowPro, or change the visibility of some UI elements, the photo area size will automatically update.

These numbers are important for a few reasons. One, if you're cropping / resizing photos to fit SlideShowPro, these are your target values. Two, if you are using SlideShowPro Director, these are the values you should enter when using "Image Processing" to generate slideshow photos. Third, if you are changing the size of SlideShowPro to match photos already created, this display will let you know when you've reached the right size.

MOVIE SIZE

An important point to remember when resizing SlideShowPro is that your Flash movie must be at least the same size. By default, SlideShowPro is the same size as new FLAs, but if you modify the size of SlideShowPro then you may need to modify your movie size as

well.

To check your movie size, open the Properties Panel (Window>Properties) and look for the “Size:” button (Figure 10). If you need to change your movie size, click on the same button.

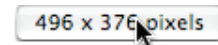


Figure 10: Movie size button

TIPS

When resizing SlideShowPro, there are a few points to watch out for:

- Don't use the Distort or Free Transform tools. SlideShowPro will not function if you twist or skew the shape of the component.
- You may use Rotate, but only if you turn off image captions and the navigation. This is because Flash cannot write dynamic text to a text field that has been rotated.
- Round your width and height to whole numbers, and do not use decimals.

Interface: Navigation

The navigation bar at the bottom of SlideShowPro is where a user controls the component. They may stop and start auto-playback, browse additional photos, navigate between photos, and open the gallery to select a different album.

SlideShowPro has two built-in types of navigation: “Numbers” and “Thumbnails.” These may be selected using the “Navigation Link Type” parameter in the Component Inspector.

NAVIGATION LINK TYPE: “NUMBERS”

This displays an album’s images using textual numbers. When a user rolls their mouse over an image number (and “Show Thumbnail Preview” is set to True), SlideShowPro displays a preview window containing that image’s corresponding thumbnail (See Figure 11 below). Clicking the image number loads the full size version.

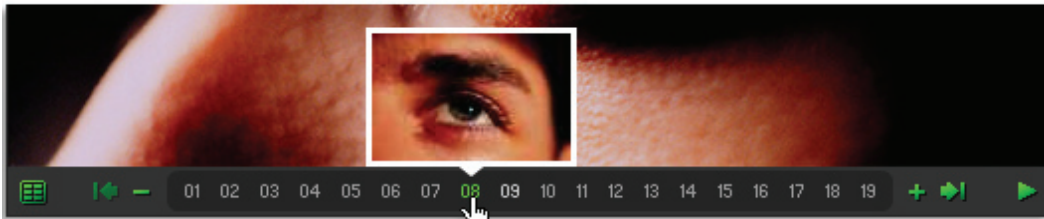


Figure 11: “Numbers” Navigation Link Type with thumbnail preview.

NAVIGATION LINK TYPE: “THUMBNAILS”

This displays an album’s images using thumbnails. When a user rolls their mouse over a thumbnail (and “Show Thumbnail Preview” is set to True), SlideShowPro displays a preview window containing that image’s corresponding thumbnail (See Figure 12 below). Clicking the thumbnail loads the full size version.

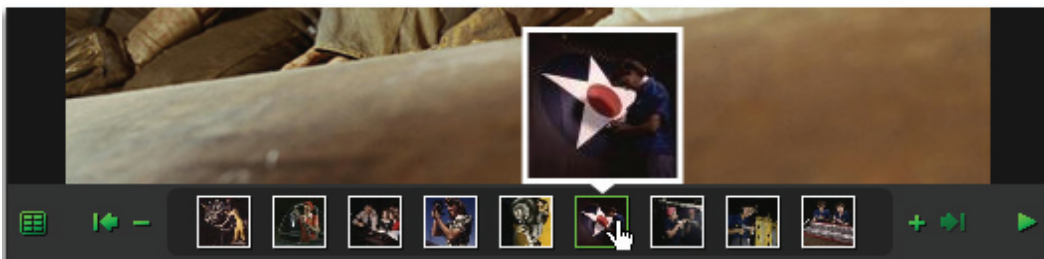


Figure 12: “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type with thumbnail preview.

Note: You need to create separate thumbnail images for thumbnail previews and the “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type. Information on how to create thumbnails can be found in the “Enhancements: Images Thumbnails” section of this User Guide.

The “Thumbnail” Navigation Link Type loads thumbnail images into containers which are assigned a width and height in the Component Inspector (“Thumbnail Link Width,” “Thumbnail Link Height”). The containers can display images with different dimensions and/or aspect ratios (e.g., landscape and portrait images) by proportionally scaling the thumbnails to fit, then cropping the center of the photo. This gives all your thumbnails a uniform appearance regardless of dimension and/or size.

NAVIGATION BEHAVIOR

With both Navigation Link Types, SlideShowPro displays as many numbers / thumbnails as it can between the previous image and the next image icon. To increase the number of items, increase the width of SlideShowPro. To decrease, do the opposite.

If the total number of images in your album is greater than the available area, pagination is turned on. You may then browse between image groups using the Previous Image Group and the Next Image Group buttons.

PLAY/PAUSE

Auto-playback is controlled with the Play/Pause button at the far right of the navigation bar. It automatically changes state depending on which display mode is currently active.

PARAMETERS

The following options are available in the Component Inspector for changing the style and layout of the navigation bar.

Navigation Active Color: The color of all navigational icons, the rollover color of navigation links (color of numbers in “Numbers” and thumbnail background in “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type), and the stroke color of the gallery screen navigation.

Navigation Background Alpha: The transparency of the navigation bar.

Navigation Background Color: The background color of the navigation bar.

Navigation Icon Inactive Alpha: The transparency percentage for icons that are inactive. Icons are automatically turned inactive during playback when they aren’t functional. Setting this to zero effectively makes inactive icons invisible, so only active icons appear in the navigation.

Navigation Item Shadow Alpha: A number containing the amount of shadow -- both overlay and underlay -- applied to each navigational icon (when the default navigational icons are used). This parameter also sets the amount of shadow that appears underneath each thumbnail link when using the “Thumbnails” Navigation Type.

Navigation Link Current Color: Highlights the link in the navigation bar that corresponds with the currently loaded image. If using the “Numbers” Navigation Link Type, this changes the color of the image number. If using the “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type, this changes the background color of the thumbnail.

Navigation Link Type: Sets the type of navigation linkage to use. Options are “Numbers” and “Thumbnails.” (See beginning of this chapter).

Navigation Links Background Alpha: The transparency of the area underneath the navigational links (numbers or thumbnails).

Navigation Links Background Color: The background color of the area underneath the navigational links (numbers or thumbnails).

Navigation Number Link Color: A number containing the hex color value of the image numbers in SlideShowPro’s navigation bar (requires Navigation Link Type set to “Numbers”).

Navigation Number Link Size: A number containing the point size of the image numbers in SlideShowPro’s navigation bar (requires Navigation Link Type set to “Numbers”).

Navigation Thumbnail Background Color: The background color of both the rollover thumbnail preview window and the “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type.

Navigation Thumbnail Link Height: The pixel height of the clip a thumbnail is loaded into when using the “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type.

Navigation Thumbnail Link Inactive Alpha: The transparency amount applied to thumbnails not currently selected when using the “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type. Range is from 0-100.

Navigation Thumbnail Link Stroke Weight: The pixel width of the stroke applied to a thumbnail when loaded using the “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type.

Navigation Thumbnail Link Width: The pixel width of the clip a thumbnail is loaded into when using the “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type.

Navigation Thumbnail Preview Stroke Weight: The pixel width of the stroke applied to the thumbnail preview windows that appear on navigation link rollover.

Show Navigation Display Control: Removes/displays the play/pause buttons.

Show Navigation: Removes/displays the entire navigation bar. Warning: this also affects a user’s ability to open/close the gallery.

Show Navigation Thumbnail Preview: Removes/displays rollover thumbnails. This is essentially the same as not including any thumbnail data in your XML file, but it's a useful toggle should you want to turn them off (but not change your XML).

Interface: Gallery

The gallery interface (Figure 13) is where all your albums are stored. Like an HTML table, the gallery creates a series of rows and columns and fills the cells with your albums. It is opened and closed through the gallery icon at the far left of the navigation bar.

The size and layout of the gallery is directly related to the overall width and height of SlideShowPro. By default, the gallery is created with two columns and four rows. If you reduce the size of SlideShowPro, and the gallery can no longer support its default settings, SlideShowPro will automatically reduce the number of gallery columns and/or rows, as well as adjust the width and height of each cell to proportionally fit your new dimensions.



Figure 13: The gallery interface

You may also manually modify the number of columns and rows. Simply change the numerical value of “Gallery Rows” and “Gallery Columns” in the Component Inspector and SlideShowPro will automatically update its preview. If you enter a number that’s too high for the size of SlideShowPro to support, it will be ignored and the maximum value available will be used instead.

When ordering your albums in the gallery, SlideShowPro always starts with the first row and column, and (by default) moves from left-to-right filling cells until reaching the end of a row, at which time it moves to the first cell in the second row and continues. If you’d rather have your albums placed in a top-to-bottom progression, you may change this in the Component Inspector by modifying the “Gallery Order” property.

If you fill all available rows and columns in the gallery interface, SlideShowPro automatically divides your content into “screens,” which allow the user to quickly flip back and forth between album collections like turning pages in a book.

ALBUM TYPES

There are two types of album layouts available through the “Album Type” parameter: “Thumb and Text” and “Thumb Crop to Fit.”

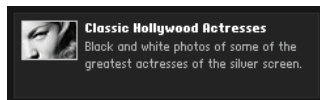


Figure 14: ‘Thumb and Text’ album type

Thumb and Text: (Default) Displays a thumbnail image to the left of your album title and description (Figure 14). If your description is too long for the album container, it will be cut off. In those cases, decrease the number of gallery rows and/or columns, or increase the size of SlideShowPro.



Figure 15: ‘Thumb Crop to Fit’ album type

Thumb Crop to Fit: Displays just a thumbnail without text (Figure 15). If your thumbnail is larger or smaller than the album container, it will be proportionally scaled and cropped (in the middle) to fit.

For detailed information on creating thumbnails, see the “Enhancements: Album Thumbnails” section of this User Guide.

PARAMETERS

The following options are available in the Component Inspector for changing the gallery presentation.

Album Active Color: The color of an album’s background changes to when the user’s mouse rolls-over the item. Album background returns to albumBackgroundColor on roll-out. This value is also used by the “Previous” and “Next” screen buttons in the gallery.

Album Background Color: The background color of each album in the gallery.

Album Desc Color: A number containing the hex color value for the descriptive text field of each album (used only with Thumb and Text Album Type).

Album Desc Size: A number containing the point size for the descriptive text field of each album. (used only with Thumb and Text Album Type).

Album Stroke Color: The color of the outline around each album in the gallery.

Album Stroke Weight: The pixel width of the outer stroke around each album in the gallery.

Album Thumb Stroke Color: The color of the outline around each album’s thumbnail in the gallery. (used only with Thumb and Text Album Type).

Album Title Color: A number containing the hex color value for the title text field of each album. (used only with Thumb and Text Album Type).

Album Title Size: A number containing the point size for the title text field of each album. (used only with Thumb and Text Album Type).

Album Type: The type of album layout to use. Options include “Thumb and Text” and “Thumb Crop to Fit.” See the first page of this chapter for more information.

Gallery Background Alpha: The transparency of the gallery’s background color.

Gallery Background Color: The background color of the gallery.

Show Gallery: Removes/displays the gallery. Options include “Never,” “Always” and “Startup”. When set to “Never,” the gallery icon is removed from the navigation bar and a gallery is not created. When set to “Always,” the gallery is available for users to open. When set to “Startup,” your slideshow will begin with the gallery window open so a user may select an album (instead of auto-starting with the first).

Show Gallery Navigation: Removes/displays the gallery screen navigation (at the bottom of the gallery window). Options include “Never,” “Auto”, or “Always.” By default (when set to “Auto”), the gallery navigation at the bottom of the gallery window automatically appears only if there are too many albums to fit within one screen. If all the albums can fit on the first screen, then the gallery navigation disappears. When set to “Never” the gallery navigation never appears regardless of how many albums you load. When set to “Always” the gallery navigation always appears regardless of how many albums you load.

Interface: Image scaling and alignment

SlideShowPro allows you to load as many images as you want, of any size, and offers numerous options to control their scale, alignment, and style.

IMAGE SCALING

SlideShowPro allows you to load images that are smaller or larger than itself. You may modify how SlideShowPro scales your images through the “Image Scaling” property in the Component Inspector. Options include:

None: Turns off image scaling entirely. Your images will not be scaled.

Crop to Fit: Proportionally scales an image until it completely fills the photo area. The image is then cropped in the middle.

Scale: Proportionally downscales or upscales an image to fill as much of the photo area as possible. This is the default setting.

Downscale Only: Proportionally downscales an image to fill as much of the photo area as possible. Images smaller than the photo area are not scaled.



Figure 13: Examples of Crop to Fit and Scale. Green box is SlideShowPro sized horizontally and vertically.

Note: Some loss of image quality/sharpness may occur if you use scaling. If you are sensitive to this, you should turn image scaling off format your photos to fit the area.

IMAGE ALIGNMENT

The “Image Align” parameter allows you to modify where your images are aligned within the photo area. Alignment is only used when Image Scaling is set to “Scale,” “Downscale Only” or “Never.”

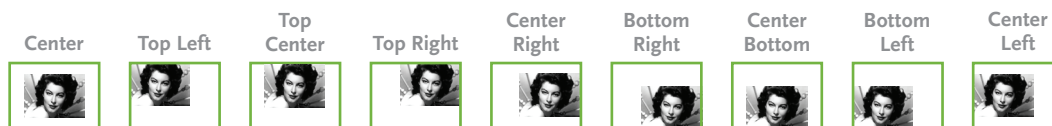


Figure 14: Images smaller than SlideShowPro with “Image Scaling” set to “None”

IMAGE FILE TYPES

SlideShowPro allows you to load any image type that is supported by the Flash Player version you publish to. If you publish to Flash Player 7, SlideShowPro can load non-progressive JPGs only. If you publish to Flash Player 8 or 9, SlideShowPro can load any JPG type, GIF or PNG. You may also load SWFs instead of images, though SlideShowPro wasn't necessarily designed for loading movies so your mileage may vary.

PARAMETERS

In addition to the aforementioned parameters, the following options are also available in the Component Inspector for changing the style of images.

Image Stroke Color: The color of the outer stroke around each slideshow image.

Image Stroke Weight: The pixel width of the outer stroke around each slideshow image.

Interface: Typography

There are two types of text fields in SlideShowPro — General, and Headers. General text fields are used for the majority of textual content in SlideShowPro, including the navigational image numbers, photo captions, audio player, album descriptions, and gallery navigation. Header text fields include the caption header, album titles, and the gallery screen counter. SlideShowPro also allows you to customize the point size of nearly every typeface in the application.

SYSTEM AND NON-SYSTEM TYPEFACES

By default, SlideShowPro uses what’s known as “system text” for both General and Header text fields. These include typefaces that are nearly universally available on every computer an end-user would use to view your presentation. Like HTML, SlideShowPro will use whichever typeface in the descending, comma-separated list of font names it finds first on a user’s computer.

If you’d rather have a more stylized look, you may assign two non-system typefaces for General and Header text fields. You would chose this option if you wanted to use bitmap fonts, or a unique TrueType / PostScript font that is most likely unavailable on an end-user’s computer.

Note that you cannot mix text field types in SlideShowPro. Both the General and Header font must be either system or embedded, but not both.

IMPORT INTO LIBRARY

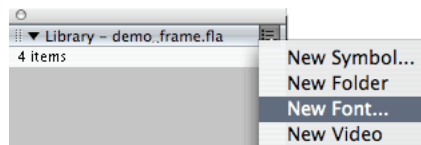


Figure 15: New Font selected from menu

To use a non-system font in your movie, you first must embed the typeface you wish to use. As shown in Figure 15, open the Library panel (Window > Library). Click on the button in the upper right corner of the panel to toggle open the Library menu. Select “New Font”.

SELECT FONT

A new dialog window named “Font Symbol Properties” will appear (Figure 16). Click the double-arrow button to the right of the “Font:” field in the Font Symbol Properties dialog. Select the name of the font. Then, give your font a simple name in the “Name:” field. Leave all the other options alone. Click OK.

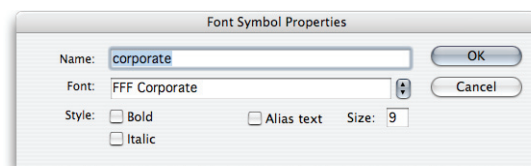


Figure 16: Font Symbol Properties window

SETUP LINKAGE

Right-click on the font in the library, and select “Linkage...” from the contextual menu. A new dialog box will appear (Figure 17) named “Linkage Properties.” Head straight for the “Export for ActionScript” option. Click on the box, and the “Identifier:” field will automatically fill with the name of your font. “Export in first frame” will also be automatically selected — leave this on. When done click OK.

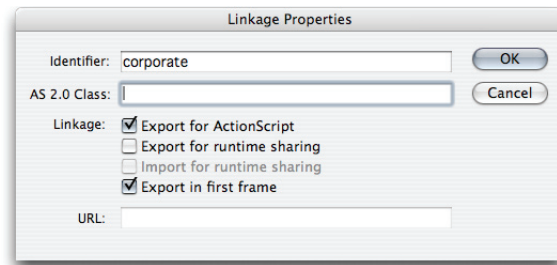


Figure 17: Linkage Properties window

SET TYPEFACE PROPERTIES

With your instance of SlideShowPro selected on the stage, open the Component Inspector, and enter the name of your font into either the “Typeface - General” or “Typeface - Headers” text fields. Then set “Typeface Embed” to “true”. If you want to use the same face for all text fields, simply re-enter the linkage name in the applicable “Typeface” field.

PARAMETERS

In addition to choosing the font you’d like to use with SlideShowPro you may also change any of the text field’s color and/or point size. The following is a list of all type properties available for modification through the Component Inspector.

Text Alignment: a string that aligns all text fields in the component left or right.

Typeface - General: String containing the title of the system typeface(s) or embedded font’s linkage ID. Used for all general / non-header text fields in the component. See beginning of this chapter for more detailed information.

Typeface - Header: String containing the title of the system typeface(s) or embedded font’s linkage ID. Used for all header text fields. See beginning of this chapter for more detailed information.

Typeface Embed: Boolean for whether the component should embed the typefaces assigned to “Typeface - General” and “Typeface - Header”. Should only be set to “true” if you are using non-system / custom typefaces.

Interface: Preloaders

SlideShowPro preloads all images before they are displayed and indicates progress through an animation that appears in the center of the window. Once an image has finished loading, the animation disappears and the preloaded image appears.

PRELOADER PARAMETERS

Preloader Style: The type of preloader you'd like to use. Options include:

“Pie” (default)

A circular animation that displays progress like hands on a clock.

“Bar”

A semi-transparent rectangular box that fills with opaque color animating from left to right. The width of the box is automatically calculated to 30% of the overall width of SlideShowPro so that it appears visually balanced regardless of component size.

“Line”

Identical to “Bar” but much more minimal with a height of only 1 pixel. A “Preloader Alpha” setting of 100 is recommended for this style for best visibility.

Preloader Alpha: The transparency percentage for the preloader animation.

Preloader Color: The color of the circular preload animation.

Show Preloader: Toggles visibility of the preload animation in the photo area.

Behavior: Image transitions

Transitions add visual interest to your slideshow by animating images as they load and unload from view. By default, SlideShowPro will cross fade one photo into the next, but there are a variety of other transition styles and controls for you to choose from.

TRANSITION PARAMETERS

Transition Style: The style of transition applied to images when unloading and loading in the viewer. Choices are “None,” “Cross Fade,” “Complete Fade,” “Lens,” “Photo Flash,” “Wipe Top,” “Wipe Right,” “Wipe Bottom,” “Wipe Left,” “Wipe Top to Background,” “Wipe Right to Background,” “Wipe Bottom to Background,” and “Wipe Left to Background.”

Transition Length: A number that indicates (in seconds) the duration of the transition.

Transition Pause: A number that indicates (in seconds) how long each image “holds” before automatically loading the next image in queue.

Behavior: Playback

SlideShowPro offers a variety of playback options for your photos. Like an audio player, you can shuffle, repeat, stop, start, and loop. This walkthrough will describe the customizable playback properties available to you.

PLAYBACK PARAMETERS

By default, SlideShowPro auto plays your content in sequential order. It loads the first image from the first album in your gallery, and after a configurable amount of time loads the second, then the third, and so-on. When SlideShowPro reaches the last image, and there is another album available after the current one, it will automatically switch albums and load the first image of the next album in queue. If there is only one album, it will stop.

You may modify this default behavior by changing the values of any of the following properties in the Component Inspector:

Auto Finish Mode: This property instructs SlideShowPro how to behave when reaching the final image in an album. This applies only to slideshows in “Auto” Display Mode. There are four options available:

Switch: (Default) The next album is loaded and auto-playback continues. (Note: if there is only one album, SlideShowPro will restart).

Restart: The current album restarts instead of switching to the next album. The album restarts with either the first image, or if Image Order is set to “Random,” a randomly selected first image. Each time it restarts while in “Random” Image Order the order is reshuffled.

Stop: Auto-playback stops and Display Mode changes to “Manual.”

Open Gallery: Auto-playback stops and the gallery window is opened so the user may pick another album. Once selected, auto-playback restarts.

Display Mode: This controls the automatic playback of your presentation when first loaded by a user. By default, it is set to “Auto,” which means SlideShowPro will automatically load the next image in queue after the “Transition Pause” timer (see “Behavior: Transitions”) has expired. Changing this to “Manual” will instruct SlideShowPro to load the first image, but not set a timer. It will simply stop and await user input.

Image Order: Set to “Sequential” by default, which means your images are loaded in the order in which they appear in your XML document — line by line. Changing this to

“Random” will shuffle the order of images in your albums in an order that is unique for every user who loads your slideshow.

SWITCHING BETWEEN AUTO AND MANUAL DISPLAY MODE

Regardless of how you set SlideShowPro to start, if you allow navigational controls in your slideshow a user can change the playback behavior. If SlideShowPro is in Auto mode, and the user clicks on an image number or chooses a new album, SlideShowPro will change to Manual mode. If SlideShowPro is in Manual mode, and the user clicks the play button at the far right of the navigation bar or presses the space bar (if “Keyboard Access” is set to “True”), SlideShowPro will change to Auto mode. To disallow any user control, set “Show Navigation” to “False.”

AUTO-START ALTERNATIVE

If you’d rather not auto-load an image at startup, and would prefer to allow users to pick an starting album themselves, set the “Show Gallery” parameter to “Startup.” This will enable the gallery window to automatically open when SlideShowPro loads, and await further instruction from the user.

PARAMETERS

In addition to the aforementioned parameters, the following options are available in the Component Inspector for changing behavior.

Show Display Change: Toggles visibility of the play/pause visual feedback item in the photo area.

Show Preloader: Toggles visibility of the preloader animation in the photo area.

Enhancements: Album thumbnails

By default, SlideShowPro displays albums with a title and description. You may enhance this by adding a thumbnail image alongside your text, or you may remove the text altogether and use an image for your album display. This walkthrough will show you how to do both.

OPEN THE GALLERY PREVIEW

Before we begin, we'll need to see the gallery in the live preview of SlideShowPro on the stage of your FLA. To open it, temporarily set "Show Gallery" in the Component Inspector to "Startup." The gallery window will open.

CHOOSE AN ALBUM TYPE

If you skipped the "Interface: Gallery" section of this User Guide, go back to learn about the two available options. Choose one by toggling the "Album Type" parameter in the Component Inspector.

ALBUM TYPE: THUMB AND TEXT

If you chose "Thumb and Text" your thumbnails may be any size or dimension you wish. They will be loaded into your album and displayed without any scaling or modification.

ALBUM TYPE: THUMB CROP TO FIT

If you chose "Thumb Crop to Fit," you'll notice that the live preview of SlideShowPro changed to include an "Album Size" text field and some numbers below it (Figure 18). These are the dimensions of each album. You will use these dimensions to create your thumbnails.

Note that if your thumbnails aren't the same size as these dimensions, SlideShowPro will automatically scale them to fit the area, then crop their center.

To change the size of each album, either modify the width/height of SlideShowPro, or modify "Gallery Rows" and "Gallery Columns" to increase/decrease the number of albums. Albums must be at least 25px square.

USING DIRECTOR?

From this point on it is assumed you are *not* using SlideShowPro Director to publish your content. If you are using Director, simply go to the "Image processing" tab inside "Edit album," and select the image you want to use in the "Album preview" utility. Enter the

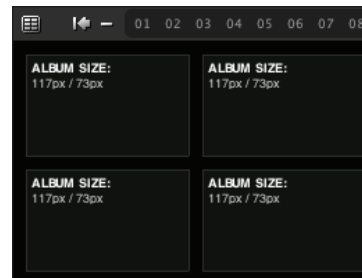


Figure 18: Preview of Thumb and Crop

dimensions you need and click “Generate.” The thumbnail will be automatically created. You can skip to the “Publish” portion of this walkthrough.

CREATE THUMBNAIL IN PHOTOSHOP

If you are creating your images by hand, open the image you’d like to use as your thumbnail in a photo editing program (like Photoshop) and either scale it to the size you need, or crop out a focal point.

Tip: If you resize your image in Photoshop (using Image>Image Size), select “Bicubic Shaper” in the “Resample Image” pull-down. It will sharpen your photo as part of the resizing process.

When your thumbnail is ready, save it to the root of the “album1” directory alongside your “large” and “thumbs” directory and name it whatever you like. For this walkthrough we’ll name it “albumThumb.jpg”

EDIT THE XML DOCUMENT

Next, open the “images.xml” document, and add a “tn” attribute to your album with a relative link to the “albumThumb.jpg” you just created. Your XML should now look similar to this:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
    lgPath="gallery/album1/large/" tnPath="gallery/album1/thumbs/"
    tn="gallery/album1/albumThumb.jpg">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

PUBLISH

Publish a movie (File>Publish Preview>Flash) and your thumbnail should appear!

STYLING ALBUM THUMBNAILS

By default, SlideShowPro applies a 1 pixel thick white border around album thumbnails, but you may change this by editing the following properties in the Component Inspector:

Album Thumb Stroke Color: The color of an album thumbnail’s border.

Album Thumb Stroke Weight: The pixel width of an album thumbnail’s border. Setting this to 0 removes the border.

Enhancements: Audio

Adding audio to your slideshow is a great way to provide users with music or narration alongside your photos. You may add one audio track and caption per album, and SlideShowPro will automatically stream your audio and display a small audio player for playback control. This walkthrough will show you how.

CREATE AN MP3 FILE

The first step in adding audio to your slideshow is to create an MP3 file. Whether you plan to use an existing file or encode a new one, it's a good idea to create a new version optimized for web delivery, where file size counts.

The lower the bit rate of your MP3, the smaller the file. Regardless of what bit rate you choose, you must encode it with one of the following supported bit rates (kbps):

8 / 16 / 20 / 24 / 32 / 48 / 56 / 64 / 80 / 112 / 128 / 160

All MP3s must also be encoded with a sample rate of 44.1 khz.

CREATE AN AUDIO DIRECTORY

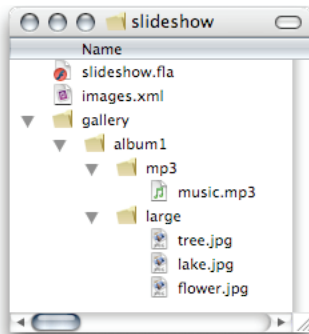


Figure 19: MP3 folder added

Navigate to the folder where your slideshow files are contained and create a new folder named “mp3” inside the album you want the audio played with. When finished you should have your mp3 folder alongside the “large” folder you created in the basic setup (see Figure 19). Place your MP3 file in the “mp3” directory.

ADD AUDIO TO THE XML DOCUMENT

The next step is to open your XML document, add an “audio” attribute to the album element you want audio with, and fill the attribute with the path to your MP3 file. If you placed the MP3 file in the aforementioned directory alongside your “large” folder, your XML would look like this:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
    lgPath="gallery/album1/large/" audio="gallery/album1/mp3/audio.
    mp3">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

ADD AN AUDIO CAPTION

SlideShowPro’s audio player, which appears in the lower-left-hand corner when an album is selected that contains audio, has a text field that displays information about the song, artist, or anything you want. Simply add an `audioCaption` attribute to the same album edited earlier, and fill it with your text. Your revised XML document would then look like this:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
    lgPath="gallery/album1/large/" audio="gallery/album1/mp3/audio.
    mp3" audioCaption="Talking Heads - Nothing but Flowers">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

SET AUDIO LOOPING

By default, SlideShowPro will stop playback of your album’s audio when it reaches the end of the MP3 file. If you would like to change this behavior (so the audio loops back to the beginning every time it finishes), change the “Audio Loop” property in the Component Inspector to “True.”

You’re done! Now whenever a user loads the “Nature” album the audio player will appear, it will automatically stream the Talking Heads song, and either stop or restart upon completion depending on how you set the “Audio Loop” property.

PARAMETERS

The following options are available in the Component Inspector for changing the style and layout of the audio player, in addition to audio playback behavior.

Audio Background Alpha: A number that sets the transparency value of the audio player background.

Audio Background Color: The background color of the audio player.

Audio Loop: A boolean that controls whether an album’s audio restarts upon completion. The default value is false.

Audio Pause: A boolean that sets whether an album’s audio is paused when the user changes playback mode. The default value is true.

Audio Volume: A number that sets the playback volume of gallery audio files. The default value is 50.

Show Audio Player: Removes/displays the audio player UI (if your album has audio in it).

TIPS

- You may mix albums with and without audio. Albums containing audio will display a small icon in their lower-left-hand corner.
- If your audio sounds too fast or slow when played in SlideShowPro, ensure your MP3 file was encoded with one of the bit rates at the beginning of this walkthrough, and is using a sampling rate of 44.1 khz.

Enhancements: Image caching

This “Cache Images” parameter controls whether images should be invisibly preloaded into the browser cache at startup, and offers two options to control the “aggressiveness” of image loading.

Note: This is different than the loading process that occurs when your images are requested by SlideShowPro (see: “Interface: Preloaders” in this guide).

Cache Images options include “None”, “Thumbnails” and “All”.

“None” (default)

All images (both large and thumbnail) are loaded into the browser cache *on user request*. This ensures that SlideShowPro only loads into the browser cache images a user has requested. This setting is most helpful on servers where bandwidth is a concern, for only content requested by the user is retrieved from the server.

“All”

All images (both large and thumbnail) are loaded into the browser cache *at startup*. SlideShowPro loads all images from the current album into the browser cache ahead of the user, so when they request an image (that has already been loaded) they don’t have to wait or view a preloading animation. The image loads immediately. This setting is most helpful on servers where bandwidth is not a concern and a faster overall user experience is needed.

“Thumbnails”

Same as “All” setting, except only thumbnail images are loaded into the browser cache. SlideShowPro loads all thumbnail images from the current album into the browser cache ahead of the user, so when they rollover an image number in the navigation the thumbnail immediately appears. This setting is a good compromise between “none” and “all”.

Note: If you choose the “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type (see “Interface: Navigation”), thumbnails will not be preloaded through this parameter. This is to avoid duplicate loading of images at startup.

Enhancements: Image captions

Image captions are a great way to enhance your slideshow by providing textual information about your photos. SlideShowPro offers a variety of caption styles and properties for you to choose from. This walkthrough will show you how.

EDIT THE XML DOCUMENT

The first step is to add caption attributes to your XML document. For every photo you want a caption for, add a caption attribute to the img element, and fill it with whatever you like. The following example demonstrates this:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
    lgPath="gallery/album1/large/">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

CAPTION PRESENTATION

Choose how you want your captions to appear through the “Show Captions” property. Options include:

Never: Caption area never appears.

Inline Top: Captions are displayed inline at the top of the photo area in a static area that spans the width of the component window.

Inline Bottom: Same as “Inline Top” except caption appears above the navigation bar at the bottom.

Overlay Mouse Over Top: (Default) Caption area drops down as a layer from the top of the photo area when the user rolls their mouse pointer over the loaded image, and disappears when they roll-out. Area spans the width of the photo it is assigned to.

Overlay Mouse Over Top (If Available): Same as “Overlay Mouse Over Top” except SlideShowPro will first test for the existence of a caption. If none exists, caption area will not be displayed.

Overlay Mouse Over Bottom: Same as “Overlay Mouse Over Top” area slides up from the bottom.

Overlay Mouse Over Bottom (If Available): Same as “Overlay Mouse Over Bottom”

except SlideShowPro will first test for the existence of a caption. If none exists, caption area will not be displayed.

Overlay Auto Top: Caption area drops down as a layer from the top of the photo area every time an image loads. Area spans the width of the photo it is assigned to.

Overlay Auto Top (If Available): Same as “Overlay Auto Top” except SlideShowPro will first test for the existence of a caption. If none exists, caption area will not be displayed.

Overlay Auto Bottom: Same as “Overlay Auto Top” except area slides up from the bottom.

Overlay Auto Bottom (If Available): Same as “Overlay Auto Bottom” except SlideShowPro will first test for the existence of a caption. If none exists, caption area will not be displayed.

Note: If you use a caption option that doesn't include “If Available,” SlideShowPro will fill your caption with filler text. This text is editable in the Text Strings parameter.

CAPTION HEADER

By default, captions include a header above the caption text that displays additional information about your photos. Options include “Image Count,” “Image Title,” “Album Title,” and “File Name.”

Image Count: Will display “Image [image number] of [total album images]”.

Image Title: The title of an image as assigned in the XML file by adding a `title` attribute to an image element, like so:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
    lgPath="gallery/album1/large/">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

Album Title: the title of the album from which the current image originates.

File Name: The file name of the image. This is equal to the `src` attribute value in an image element in the XML file.

If you'd rather not display the caption header, set **Show Caption Header** to "False."

CAPTION STYLE

Last but certainly not least, you can change the typography and color of your captions through the following parameters:

Caption Background Alpha: The transparency value of each photo caption background.

Caption Background Color: The background color of each photo caption.

Caption Stroke Color: The background color of each photo outline.

Caption Text Color: A number containing the hex color value of all text fields in the caption area.

Caption Text Size: A number containing the point size of all text fields in the caption area.

PUBLISH

Publish a new movie. Your captions will now appear using all the options you chose above.

Enhancements: Image hyperlinks

SlideShowPro allows you to attach hyperlinks to images, with additional control over where the link is loaded — the current browser window, in a new browser window, or in a specific frame. This walkthrough will show you how to add image hyperlinks to your slideshow.

EDIT THE XML DOCUMENT

Continuing the XML structure from the basic setup walkthrough, you first add a `link` attribute to any image you want to assign a hyperlink to, and fill it with the URL, like so:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
    lgPath="gallery/album1/large/">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

Your images are now enabled, and their assigned URLs will be loaded in a new browser window. If you'd like to change this default behavior and load your links in the current browser window, or in specific frame, add a `target` attribute to your image element, like so:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
    lgPath="gallery/album1/large/">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

All three images will now load in the current browser window. You may assign `_blank` to target if you'd like, but it's not necessary since that's the default setting for SlideShowPro.

JAVASCRIPT

If you would prefer to pop-open a new browser window set to a particular width and height, or call a JavaScript method in the HTML document containing SlideShowPro, you may do so by including JavaScript in the link attribute.

For example, the following image (when clicked by the user) will pop open a new browser window set to a width of 300 pixels, a height of 300 pixels, and load Google's home page:


```

```

Enhancements: Image thumbnails

Thumbnails provide users with a small, bandwidth-friendly preview of a full size image. When “Show Thumbnail Preview” is set to True in the Component Inspector, they appear as pop-up previews in both the “Numbers” and “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Types, as well as the navigation itself with the latter.

The following is a walkthrough on how to create thumbnails and integrate them into your slideshow based on the type of navigation you are creating.

Note: If you are using SlideShowPro Director, you do not need to follow these instructions. All thumbnails are created for you automatically.

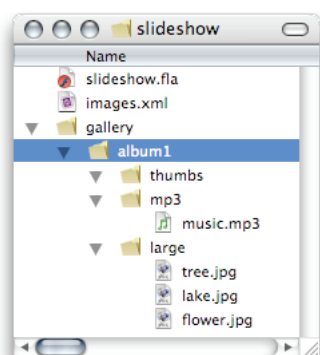


Figure 20: ‘slideshow’ folder with ‘thumbs’ folder added for first album

CREATE A NEW DIRECTORY

To add thumbnails to your slideshow, first open the “slideshow” folder created in the “Your first slideshow” walkthrough. Navigate to the “gallery/album1/” directory. Alongside your “large” folder, create a new folder and name it “thumbs.” See Figure 20.

THUMBNAIL OPTION ONE: “NUMBERS” NAVIGATION

The “Numbers” Navigation Link Type uses textual numbers to represent your images, and only uses thumbnails as a pop-up preview on rollover.

To start creating thumbnails, open each of your large images in an image editing application (like Photoshop), reduce each of their dimensions to a width and height that seems appropriate for a thumbnail, or crop a particular part of the subject if you’re feeling creative. Each thumbnail may be any width or height you want — SlideShowPro will automatically expand the preview window to match its dimensions.

If you’re using this option, skip to the “Save Thumbnails” section ahead.

THUMBNAIL OPTION TWO: “THUMBNAILS” NAVIGATION

The “Thumbnails” Navigation Link Type displays thumbnails as pop-up previews on rollover, as well as in the navigation bar for your image links.

If you choose to use both the pop-up preview and navigation bar for your thumbnails, you should optimize your thumbnails for the larger pop-up preview. The same thumbnails will be proportionally scaled and cropped to fit the dimensions of the

thumbnail navigation. If you don't plan on using pop-up previews, you should optimize your thumbnails using the dimensions you set for the thumbnail navigation.

In either case, set the “Thumbnail Height” and “Thumbnail Width” parameters to the thumbnail size you wish to use in the navigation.

SAVE THUMBNAILS

When done, save the thumbnails — *each with the exact same file name as their full size versions* — to the “thumbs” directory you just created.

You should now have images with the same file names in both your “large” and “thumbs” directories.

EDIT THE XML DOCUMENT

Next, open the “images.xml” document. If you are using the relative paths for your images (the default), add a “tnPath” attribute to each of your albums with a relative link to the “thumbs” directory you created earlier. Your XML should now look similar to this:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers"
    lgPath="gallery/album1/large/" tnPath="gallery/album1/thumbs/">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

If you are using absolute links for your images, you can skip “tnPath” and add your thumbnail data as absolute links, like so:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes and flowers">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

PUBLISH

Publish a new movie in Flash, roll-over either the numbers or the thumbnails in the

navigation, and your pop-up previews will appear.

ADDITIONAL PARAMETERS

In addition to the aforementioned parameters, the following options are available in the Component Inspector for modifying your thumbnails.

Thumbnail Color: A hex value that controls the color of both the pop-up preview pane, as well as the background of thumbnails in the navigation.

Thumbnail Inactive Alpha: A number containing the amount of transparency applied to unselected thumbnails in the navigation. If set below 100, any thumbnail in the navigation will receive this value until the photo associated with it is loaded, or a user rolls over the image with their pointer. The default is 100 (no transparency).

Enhancements: Keyboard control

Allowing keyboard control in your slideshow can make navigating your presentation faster and easier. To turn this feature on, select the instance of SlideShowPro on the stage of your Flash document, and set the “Keyboard Control” property to “True.” Publish a new SWF to update your movie, which will now accept the following keyboard inputs:

G: Open/close gallery interface

N: Hide/show navigation bar

Left arrow: Load previous image

Up arrow: Skip to next image number group

Right arrow: Load next image

Down arrow: Skip to previous image number group

Space Bar: Pause/Auto-Play SlideShowPro

Enhancements: Permalinks

SlideShowPro allows you to automatically publish links to albums and images. These links (or, to borrow a phrase from the weblog world, “permalinks”) produce web-friendly URLs that allow SlideShowPro to behave just like HTML, whereby every image has a hyperlink that can be copied and re-used for direct access.

Adding permalink support requires modifications to your XML and HTML documents, but the changes are straightforward and easy to setup.

MODIFY YOUR XML DOCUMENT

Open your XML file, and add an `id` attribute to each album element. This `id` will contain the unique identifier used in your permalinks. Fill it with a short identifier without spaces or ampersands. Continuing our the XML from our basic setup, your XML would now appear like so:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<gallery>
  <album id="nature" title="Nature" description="Images of trees, lakes
    and flowers" lgPath="gallery/album1/large/">
    
    
    
  </album>
</gallery>
```

Repeat this for each one of the albums in your XML document.

SETUP SLIDESHOWPRO

Open your Flash document, and select the instance of SlideShowPro on the stage. Open the Component Inspector, and ensure that the “Permalinks” property is set to “True”. Whenever finished, publish a SWF and upload it to your server.

SETUP YOUR HTML DOCUMENT

In order for your permalinks to be created, you need to add some scripts to your HTML document. Anywhere before `</head>` in your document, insert the following:

```
<script language="VBScript">
  <!--
  Sub swfname_FSCommand(ByVal command, ByVal args)
    select case command
    case "putHREF" location.href = args
    case "putTitle" document.title = args
    end select
  end sub
  -->
```

```

</script>

<script type="text/javascript">
<!--
function flashPutHref(href) { location.href = href; }
function flashPutTitle(title) { document.title = title; }
-->
</script>

```

This chunk of code will provide a gateway for your Flash movie to communicate with Internet Explorer (VBScript) and other browsers (Firefox, Mozilla, Opera, Safari, etc.). You may copy this as-is, but you must replace `swfname` in the VBScript to the name of your Flash movie. This is typically the file name of your SWF, minus the “.swf” extension. This topic will be revisited, so if you’re confused return to this part in a minute.

For embedding Flash content, Geoff Stearns’ SWFObject is the recommended solution. It detects Flash player versions, provides alternate content, is standards-compliant, and makes the embedding of movies a whole lot more straightforward. It’s not absolutely required, but it makes this process much easier. You may download it at: <http://blog.deconcept.com/swfobject/>

After you’ve downloaded the `swfobject.js` script, place it anywhere you like on your server. Next, include the script in the head of your document, like so:

```

<script type="text/javascript" src="http://www.yourdomain.com/js/
    swfobject.js"></script>

```

Next, create a named element anywhere after the `body` element in your HTML that will serve as a container for your Flash content, and fill it (optionally) with content for users without the Flash plugin. The non-Flash content will be overwritten with your SWF.

```

<div id="flashcontent">
    <!-- insert non-Flash content here -->
</div>

```

Then embed the SWF in the container by adding the following:

```

<script type="text/javascript">
// 
var so = new SWFObject("slideshowpro.swf", "slideshowpro", "555", "379",
    7, "#666666");
so.addVariable("initialURL", escape(document.location));
so.write("flashcontent");
// ]]&gt;
&lt;/script&gt;
</pre>
</div>
<div data-bbox="171 787 816 838" data-label="Text">
<p>Replace the attributes above with the path to your SWF, the name of your movie, its width, height, the Flash Player version, and the background color of your movie. Modify the <code>write</code> method to include the name of the container element created one step back.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox="171 853 757 872" data-label="Text">
<p>Next up, the VBScript. This is where the name of your Flash movie is important.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox="171 894 434 910" data-label="Page-Footer">
<hr/>
<p>SlideShowPro User Guide (for version 1.5.3)</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox="801 896 826 910" data-label="Page-Footer">
<p>47</p>
</div>
```

Copy the name of your movie (the second attribute in `new SWFObject()`, which is `slideshowpro` in this example) and replace `swfname` at the beginning of the VBScript noted earlier. For example, `swfname_FSCCommand` would now be `slideshowpro_FSCCommand`.

DONE

Your document is now completely setup for permalinks. Whenever a user clicks on an image link, the browser's document path will automatically update with the applicable album id and image number so you (or anyone) can reference it externally.

EXTRA NOTES

Test online: It is important that you test permalinks from a web server (`http://`) and not on your local machine. SlideShowPro will not attempt to update your browser's document path unless it originates from `http`. This is to avoid annoying errors and warnings when working locally.

Extra modifications: If you view the source of the demo above, you'll notice that the `write()` method contains an attribute of `flashcontent`. This is part of an optional feature of `SWFObject`, whereby you can specify a `div` in your document to write your SWF into. In doing so, you can fill your `div` with content for users without the Flash plug-in. If they have the plug-in, the SWF simply overwrites the content. See the `SWFObject` documentation for more information.

Do you have to use `SWFObject`?: If you know what you're doing, no. The most important part is that you must use JavaScript or something applicable to assign the document.

Enhancements: Sound effects

Sound effects enhance interfaces by providing aural confirmation to user interaction. SlideShowPro supports the playback of sound effects, and offers three types of interactive events you may attach sounds clips to.

THE THREE SOUND EFFECT TYPES

Click: Engaged when a user clicks on an image number, the next/previous image buttons, the open/close gallery button, the auto-play/pause button, or an album in the gallery.

Rollover: Engaged when a user rolls their mouse pointer over an image number, an album in the gallery, or the next/previous screen gallery buttons.

Slide: Engaged when a user clicks on the next image group/previous image group buttons, or the next/previous screen gallery buttons.

IMPORT SOUND FILE INTO LIBRARY

The first step is to select “File > Import > Import to Library”, and a Finder/Explorer window will open. Navigate to the location of the sound clip (WAV, AIFF, MP3) you wish to use, then click “Import to Library”.

SETUP LINKAGE

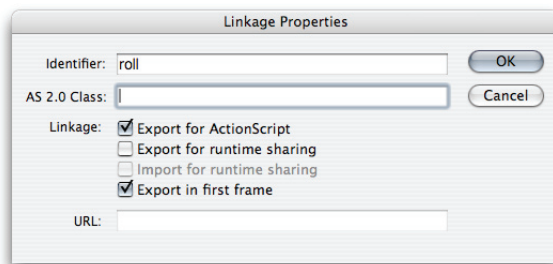


Figure 21: Establishing linkage for an audio file

Right-click on your sound clip in the library, select “Linkage...” The Linkage Properties window will open (see Figure 21). Activate “Export for ActionScript”, and give the audio file a short “Identifier” name. Copy this name as the value for the applicable “Sound FX” property in the Component Inspector.

SET AUDIO QUALITY

Be sure to optimize your audio before publishing. You can do this globally (same quality for all sound effects) by selecting “File > Publish Settings”, clicking the “Flash” tab, and choosing quality levels for Audio streams and Audio events.

Or if you’d like to set quality levels for your clips individually, right click on a sound file in the Library, select “Properties,” and change the settings to your liking. You can click “Test” to hear your sound compressed using the new settings.

The lower the bit-rate, the smaller your SWF will be. So try to find a good balance between file size and sound quality.

SET VOLUME

Once your sound effects are playing you may need to adjust their volume. If so, change the numerical value of the “Audio Volume” property in the Component Inspector to any number between 0 and 100. This value is shared by all sound effects.

Enhancements: Watermarks

Watermarks are graphical assets layered on top of photos to deter copying. They are typically semi-transparent and consist of a company logo, a photographer's name, or a copyright symbol.

SlideShowPro supports watermarks by attaching a Movie clip created by the developer, layering it above each photo, and positioning it in one of five locations. To add a watermark to your slideshow, follow these steps.

CREATE A MOVIE CLIP

In the FLA containing SlideShowPro, create an empty Movie Clip by clicking on the plus (+) symbol at the bottom left of the Library (Window > Library). Name it "watermark," make sure that "Movie clip" is the Behavior, and then toggle-on the "Export for ActionScript" option next to "Linkage." The "Identifier" field should pre-fill with the linkage id "watermark." When complete click "OK." Your movie clip will be created, and automatically opened.

CREATE WATERMARK

Fill the Movie clip with your watermark content. You may create it in Flash using vector shapes and/or type, or for fancier effects, create a semi-transparent bitmap in another software package like Photoshop or Fireworks, export the artwork as a 24-bit transparent PNG, then import it into your Movie Clip.

ALIGN WATERMARK

When your watermark content is complete, select all (Edit > Select All), and then open the Align palette (Window > Design Panels > Align). Ensure that the "To stage:" button is depressed, then click both the Align Horizontal (2nd button at top) and Align Vertical (5th button at top) buttons. Your artwork should now be centered both vertically and horizontally inside your Movie Clip. Aligning your artwork in this manner is required in order for SlideShowPro to accurately position the Movie Clip on top of your images.

ASSIGN WATERMARK TO SLIDESHOWPRO

Select your instance of SlideShowPro on the stage, and open the Component Inspector. Scroll to the bottom until you see the "Watermark" parameter. In the empty value field, enter the linkage id for your Movie Clip, which in this case would be "watermark." Next, select where you'd like it positioned -- Center, Top-Left, Top-Right, Bottom-Right, or Bottom Left.

PUBLISH

Publish a new SWF, and your watermark should be appearing on top of your loaded images in the position you chose. The position of the watermark will automatically change each time a new image is loaded so that it always covers your photos (regardless of dimension).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

An excellent Photoshop tutorial on creating the most popular style of watermark (bevelled, transparent):

<http://www.ephotozine.com/article/Watermarking-your-photos-in-Photoshop-7-and-CS>

Enhancements: XML overrides

XML overrides are special attributes you can add to your XML document to alter the properties or behavior of SlideShowPro at runtime.

PAUSE

When in “Auto” Display Mode, SlideShowPro displays each photo for the same amount of time. This is configurable with the “Transition Pause (Seconds)” parameter in the Component Inspector. But if you would like to apply custom display times for one or more of your photos, you may override this value by adding a `pause` attribute to an image element in the XML file, like so:

```

```

SlideShowPro will now stop for 10 seconds after loading the tree photo.

Loading images from Flickr

SlideShowPro can load images, thumbnails, captions and hyperlinks from Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>), the popular online photo management service. Each user and group at Flickr has their own RSS 2.0 feed, which is automatically generated whenever new content is added to an author's account. By using Flickr's RSS feeds instead of SlideShowPro's XML format, you can not only load images from your own Flickr account, but from anyone else hosting their photos on Flickr as well.

STEP ONE: CREATE AN OPML DOCUMENT

OPML stands for "Outline Processor Markup Language" and is a standard way of sharing one or more RSS URL feeds between applications. It's essentially an XML file that acts as a container for all your RSS paths.

Create a new document in your favorite text editor, and enter the following:

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<opml version="1.1">
  <head>
    <title>My list of Flickr RSS feeds</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <outline xmlUrl="insert rss path here" />
  </body>
</opml>
```

The `xmlUrl` attribute is the most important part — this is where you insert the absolute path to the Flickr RSS feed. Where are Flickr's RSS feeds? Visit any Flickr group or user page at their web site and there will be a "Feed" link at the bottom. Right-click on the link, copy it, and paste the path into this attribute. To include more RSS feeds, simply create another `<outline>` element with an `xmlUrl` attribute and paste in another RSS feed — one on each line. Here's what our modified OPML code looks like with two RSS feeds:

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<opml version="1.1">
  <head>
    <title>My list of Flickr RSS feeds</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <outline xmlUrl="http://api.flickr.com/services/feeds/groups_discuss.gne?id=36521980043@N01&format=rss_200" />
    <outline xmlUrl="http://api.flickr.com/services/feeds/groups_discuss.gne?id=27393618@N00&format=rss_200" />
  </body>
</opml>
```

STEP TWO: SAVE THE OPML DOCUMENT

When complete, save your OPML file to the folder where you're publishing your SWF containing SlideShowPro. For the purposes of this walkthrough, we'll name it "flickr.xml".

STEP THREE: SET-UP SLIDESHOWPRO FOR OPML

Open the FLA in Flash containing SlideShowPro, or create a new one. Select your instance of SlideShowPro on the stage and open the Component Inspector panel. Change "XML File Path" to the name of the XML file you just saved ("flickr.xml") and set "XML File Type" to "Flickr RSS."

STEP FOUR: PUBLISH

Publish a new movie, and your Flickr RSS content should load. An album will be automatically generated from each feed and added to the gallery window.

EXTRA FLICKR TIPS

Load Time and Feedback: The preload time is a little longer for RSS than SlideShowPro XML documents (due to numerous server calls and verbose RSS markup), and are often so small in byte size that the preload animation finishes before showing any progress. This behavior is normal.

Multiple RSS feeds warning: Unfortunately, there is a limit on how many RSS feeds you can load/parse in the Flash Player. SlideShowPro's XML parser can parse an enormous amount of content, but there's a ceiling on how much memory/processor the Flash Player can consume when loading data from multiple sources. Try to keep the number of RSS feeds you load to a maximum of 9 feeds — anything more could cause stability problems, not to mention a longer preload for your users.

A final reminder about Flickr: By opening SlideShowPro to the RSS content of a third-party, you are relying upon them for the availability of your slideshow. If a Flickr server goes down, or the formatting of an RSS feed changes without warning, SlideShowPro may not be able to parse the data and will not load. If anything does change at Flickr, an update to SlideShow will follow soon thereafter and all users will be notified.

Tips

TRANSPARENT BACKGROUND

For a completely transparent experience, where all you see is photos, open the Component Inspector and set “Background Alpha” to 0, “Stroke Weight” to 0, and “Show Navigation” to “False.” Your photos will appear to float over the Stage.

ENDLESS PLAYBACK

To run SlideShowPro in a kiosk-style presentation mode, whereby one or more albums are loaded and looped endlessly, set “Display Mode” to “Auto” and “Auto Finish Mode” to “Switch.” For extra variety, set “Image Order” to “Random” and all your images will load in true random order (never see the same image twice until all other images in an album have been shown).

LOAD SWFS INSTEAD OF JPEGs

You aren’t limited to loading just bitmaps in SlideShowPro. SWFs may also be loaded for your large images, your image thumbnails, and/or your album preview thumbnail. Experiment with animated previews in your Gallery that show multiple images from the album instead of a static JPEG, or anything else that comes to mind!

Note: If your loaded SWF has buttons in it requiring user interaction, make sure you remove the `link` and `caption` attributes from the image element linking the SWF in your XML.

HTML FORMATTING IN TEXT FIELDS

The album description, album title, and image caption text fields all accept rudimentary HTML formatting. Supported tags include `
`, ``, `<i>`, ``, `<u>` and ``. If you include these tags in your XML document, they *must* be encoded as numerical character entities to avoid XML errors when the document is parsed. For example, if you wanted to italicize a word in your album description, you’d write it like so:

```
caption="SlideShowPro is &#60;i&#62;fun!&#60;/i&#62;"
```

`<` is the numerical entity for “<” and `>` is the entity for “>”. When parsed, the entities would be converted to brackets, and the treated as `<i>` and `</i>` respectively.

For more information about character entities, this is a good online reference:

<http://www.digitalmediamminute.com/reference/entity/>

Updating previous versions

Follow these instructions to update an older copy of SlideShowPro, as well as any movie containing an older copy of the component.

DOWNLOAD AND INSTALL

The first step is to download the latest version. If you haven't done so, login to your user account at <http://www.slideshowpro.net/usersys/member.php>. Click on the "SlideShowPro" text link under the "Your Product Purchases header." That will take you to the download page, where the latest version is at the top left. Click on the download link.

Un-zip the download. This will appear pretty much the same as the first download you received. If the Flash authoring application is currently running, quit it. Then double click on the *.mxp" file contained inside. Extension Manager will launch, and ask if you want to update the older copy. Click "yes to all". Once complete both the Help panel documentation and component will be updated. Quit Extension Manager, and launch Flash.

UPDATE EXISTING CONTENT

SlideShowPro has been now been updated in Flash, and any new movie you create with it will contain the latest version. But what about older movies with a previous version of SlideShowPro? Follow these steps to update them:

- 1 - Open any FLA created with the older version of SlideShowPro.
- 2 - Open the Components panel, and toggle open the "SlideShowPro" directory.
- 3 - Drag and drop a new copy of SlideShowPro onto the stage.
- 4 - A dialog box will appear asking if you want to replace the copy of the component that's currently in your Library. Click okay. (If you don't see a dialog box, it means the copy of SlideShowPro in your FLA is the same version as the one you are dragging in).
- 5 - A second copy of SlideShowPro will appear on the stage. Select it, and press delete.
- 6 - Your original instance of SlideShowPro is now updated to the most recent version. Publish a new SWF, and replace your older SWF with the new one. You're done!

Note: Sometimes a component will be stubborn and not update its available parameters. In these cases it is recommended that you create a new FLA with a new instance (of the updated) SlideShowPro.

Troubleshooting

- **Extension won't install in Extension Manager**

First, make sure you have the very latest version of Macromedia Extension Manager installed. If you have the current version, and it still won't install, quit Extension Manager, launch Flash, and select "Manage Extensions" from the Help menu. Extension Manager will launch and should recognize Flash. Re-try installing the extension.

- **Images aren't displaying**

First, check the Output panel in the Flash application -- if a common error occurred, you will see a message indicating where the trouble is. If there isn't a message, chances are your JPGs were saved as "progressive" instead of "baseline" images. Flash Player 7 cannot dynamically load progressive JPGs. You must use a separate application to convert your JPGs.

Second, double-check the structure of your XML document. Make sure that each element in the XML is on its own line (not compacted) and that there is a space between each attribute.

Third, check to see if your textual content ("caption," "title," "description") contain any non-ASCII characters. These can cause your XML to cause an error when loaded. If you do have international characters, HTML formatting, or special characters, convert them to numerical character entities. A good chart for these may be found here: http://www.fjordaen.uklinux.net/entities/entities_support.html

- **I want to start my slideshow with the gallery window open.**

Set the "Show Gallery" parameter in the Component Inspector to "Startup."

- **Images load fine on my desktop, but not online.**

This is most likely an issue with file naming. Make sure that the file names of your images and their "src" values in the XML file match *exactly*. In other words, "image.JPG" is not the same thing as "image.jpg".

- **When I load a SWF containing SlideShowPro into another Flash movie, nothing appears.**

Open "Publish Settings" from the File menu in your parent Flash movie, click on the "Flash" tab, and make sure "Version" is set to "Flash Player 7" (or higher) and that "ActionScript Version" is set to "ActionScript 2.0." SlideShowPro requires these settings in order to function.

- **Only part of my gallery appears**

This is likely a parsing issue with the XML file. Check the image elements in the affected gallery and look for malformed characters. A common mistake is to include punctuation inside of an attribute, e.g., `caption="This is a photo of "Lucky" my dog"` should be encoded with character entities: `caption="This is a photo of "Lucky"; my dog"`.

- **Photos don't transition as quickly and/or smoothly as the demo**

Check the frame rate of the Flash document you placed the component in. By default, 12fps is what each new document is set to, which is too low. Open the Properties panel, and change the frame rate of your movie to at least 31fps or higher.

- **I see two preloaders when loading SlideShowPro in my browser**

The first preload you see is for your XML file. The second is the first image in your starting album. The first preload only appears if your XML file is large enough in size to require a visual preloader.

- **Outer-stroke only appears on the left and top sides**

This is an issue when you set the dimensions of your Flash movie to the same width and height as the component. Solution: either decrease both the width and height of the component 1 pixel, or increase the stage size by the same amount. The stroke will now appear on all four sides.

- **My published SWF flashes uncontrollably**

Check your timeline -- chances are you have an empty keframe before or after the frame containing SlideShowPro and your movie is looping. Either remove the empty frames or place a stop() action in the frame containing SlideShowPro.

- **Typefaces aren't embedding**

If your typeface doesn't appear to be embedding, try quitting Flash, re-opening it, and publish your SWF again — sometimes fonts activated while Flash was open don't "catch" unless you do this. If you are using a font management utility, make sure the typeface you are using is "Permanently" activated. This can often be an issue in Extensis Suitcase where "Temporary" activated fonts don't properly embed.

- **Bitmap fonts / navigational icons are blurry**

First, check the x/y coordinates of the SlideShowPro component on the stage. These numbers must be set to whole pixel coordinates (no decimals). And while you're in there, make sure the width and height of the component is also set to whole pixels.

Second, check the character size settings in SlideShowPro's Component Parameters panel. Set the type size to the recommended point size of your bitmap font (most type foundries include this). If neither of these solutions work, chances are your bitmap font wasn't designed to be used with dynamic text fields in Flash. You can find plenty of great Flash-friendly bitmap fonts at Fonts for Flash, Mean Tangerine, Atomic Media, The Pixel Plant, and Miniml.

DOMNEY

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