Flex in a Week, Flex 4.5
Video 1.08: Laying out a form in Flash Builder Design mode

In this video, you will learn how to lay out your application using Design mode and the pre-built Flex components.

This will include using the video playback components.

This is the Employee Portal: Vehicle Request Form that I will build upon in this series.

It allows employees of a fictional company to reserve a company car for a period of time.

The Employee DropDownList control will eventually be populated with data that comes from an XML.

In this video, I will focus just on laying out the interface, including this video control.

All of the display elements are MX and Spark components, which you learned about in the last video.

You will learn about modifying the default look-and-feel of the components and adding the data in later videos.

This is the starter file for the main application.

You can see that it contains the Application tag block, and the Declarations block, which you will learn about later.

I am clicking on the Design button in the Editor view to switch to Design mode.

In the Components view, I am looking in the Controls branch and dragging a Label control onto the Design area.

I am dropping it in the upper left corner.

With the Label selected, you can see that the Properties view shows the properties for the Label control.

Notice that it is a component in the Spark namespace.

I am giving the text field a text value of Employee Portal: Vehicle Request Form and then hitting the Enter, or Return, key.

You will see that the new value is reflected in the Design area.

In the Style segment of the Properties view, I am changing the font size to 16 and clicking the first T button to set the font weight to bold.

All of these changes are reflected in the Design area.

Watch the control in the Design area as I perform the next steps.

Still within the Properties view, I am using the Size and Position segment to set the control's X value to 10 and its Y value to 34.

These numbers are set in pixels.

The control has moved to the specified x/y coordinate.

Flash applications can layout components either using absolute positioning with x/y properties or using relative positioning.

You will learn more about both as this video training series progresses.

For now, note that the 0,0 point of any Flash component is its upper left corner.

The x value increases as you move to the right and the y value increases as you move down.

You can supply negative values to move components off screen, which can be very valuable for animation purposes.

From the Components view Layout branch, I am dragging a Form container below the Label control and using the blue guidelines to align the controls to their left edges.

The Insert Form dialog appeared when I dropped the component into the Design area.

I am clicking the OK button to keep the default values, which will automatically resize this form container to fit its children.

Look at the Properties view.

You can see that the Form container is in the Spark namespace.

I am making sure the Form containers x value is 10 and changing its y value to 70.

There are two types of components in Flex: containers and controls.

Controls are UI elements like Button, ColorPicker and DataGrid.

Containers, like this Form component, are used to layout controls and have specific formatting results.

The first child control that I am placing in the Form container is Spark component named DropDownList control.

Watch the blue guidelines and dashed, pink line I am using to ensure that the DropDownList control is placed inside the Form container.

Watch me as I click on the label to the left of the control to select the FormItem container that was automatically added to the display.

In the Properties view, I am typing Employee: for the Label property.

Now I will walk through laying out the rest of the form.

I am dragging a TextInput control below the DropDownList control.

When I click on the label next to it, I am selecting the FormItem container and changing its value to Office Phone:.

I'm adding a second TextInput control and changing it's associated label to Mobile Phone:.

I am adding a FormHeading control to the form below the last TextInput control.

I am changing its value to Dates Requested

Below that, I am dragging a DateChooser control and giving it a label of Pickup Date:.

Look at the Properties view.

You can see that the DateChooser control is in the MX namespace.

Remember that you can mix and match the components from the different namespaces in the same application.

You will learn more about these rules throughout the series.

I am adding a second DateChooser control and giving it a label of Return Date:.

Next, I am going to add a Button control using Source mode.

Doing this in Source mode will allow me to avoid the label value from the FormItem container that is automatically added for you when you drop a control into the Form container in Design mode.

I'm clicking on the Source button in the Editor.

You can see all the form code with each UI control that you added to the form surrounded by a FormItem container with a label.

I'm adding a Spark FormItem container tag block and then adding a Spark Button control inside of it with a label property of Submit Request.

When I save the file and run the application, you can see the form is displayed in the browser.

You will probably notice that the application doesn't automatically display a scrollbar.

If your browser window is small enough, there is no way for you to access the rest of the form.

You will learn how to add scrollbars to your application towards the end of this day of training.

The last element that I will add to the application is a video.

I am switching back to Design mode and then dragging the VideoDisplay control to the Design area and dropping it to the right of the Form container.

In the Properties view, I am setting the Source property value to a Flash video file that is stored on a remote server (http://www.adobetes.com/f45iaw100/ex1_02_video.flv).

I'm setting the width and height values to 325 and 267, respectively, like you will in the exercise.

I am also going to set the Muted property to true so that I can speak over the video playback.

When I save the file and run the application, you can see that the video control doesn't have any playback controls.

Back in Flash Builder, I have deleted the VideoDisplay control and am dragging the VideoPlayer control to the Design area.

Again, I will set the Source property value to the Flash video file that is stored on a remote server (http://www.adobetes.com/f45iaw100/ex1_02_video.flv).

Now I am resizing the control to be 325 pixels wide by 267 pixels tall and then setting the Muted property to true.

When I save the file and run the application.
You can see the VideoPlayer control has a play/pause button, a seek bar, volume controls and a full screen option.

For your next step, watch the video titled "Introducing styling and skinning".