

Flex in a Week, Flex 4

Video 1.01: Introducing Flex and the Adobe Flash Platform

In this video, you will learn which technologies make up the Adobe Flash Platform.

You will also learn about the professional tools in the platform and that they can generate rich media, content and applications.

You will also get an overview of the Flex framework and the features in Flash Builder that can greatly increase your productivity for building Flex applications.

This is the Adobe Flash Platform page on adobe.com.

From here you can learn about the technologies that enable you to create and deliver compelling applications for browsers, desktops and devices.

With the Flash Platform you can build enterprise, consumer, rich media, mobile, social applications and much more.

Be sure to come to this site to check out the real-world applications that are showcased here.

As an experienced web developer, you have probably heard of Adobe Flash and visited sites created with the Adobe Flash Professional tool.

However, this tool is only one technology in the platform

You can use any of the professional tools to create rich media, content and applications that are played back in the Flash Player or AIR runtimes.

You can also add enterprise-level functionality with the server products, but this is outside the scope of this training.

As the name implies, Flex in a Week focuses on building applications with the Flex framework.

Specifically, you will be using Flash Builder to program, layout, style, skin, populate and compile Flex applications.

We will primarily focus on applications that run in the Flash Player in a browser, but you will also learn how to build an application that will run in the AIR runtime on the desktop.

Let me focus for a minute on the professional tools.

Flash Professional is an authoring environment to create content, animation, applications, and more using visual tools, a timeline or programming.

Flash Catalyst is a new interaction design tool for creating interfaces and content without writing code.

Flash Builder has helpful designer-developer workflow tools, but is largely geared towards developer productivity for Flex application development.

What they all have in common is that they can compile SWF application files - among other file types - which can then be wrapped in HTML and displayed in a browser that has Flash Player installed.

This JavaScript code was generated by Flash Builder to embed the SWF file reference into an HTML page.

You will learn more about compiling SWF files and generating HTML wrapper files in later videos.

Flash Catalyst and Flash Builder are based on the Flex 4 framework, which is a free, open source library of ActionScript 3.0 classes and UI components that can greatly improve your ability to create applications that deploy consistently on all major browsers, desktops and operating systems

The framework includes built-in components that can be used directly or extended for your customization and business needs.

The framework also includes two languages:

MXML is an XML-based declarative language that is recommended for UI layout.

ActionScript 3.0 is an ECMA-compliant scripting language that is recommended for business logic.

The Flex SDK packages the Flex framework along with a compiler and a debugger in a free software development kit that you can use to build your Flex applications.

If you use the Flex SDK, you would write your MXML and ActionScript code in any code or text editor and then use the command-line compiler to compile the application.

Flash Builder 4, formerly known as Flex Builder, is the Adobe commercial product for building applications using the Flex framework.

This tool includes everything in the Flex SDK plus many features to improve your productivity.

You will learn about Flash Builder throughout the rest of this video series, but some of the features include context-sensitive code hinting, an interactive step-through debugger with variable evaluation, a visual design environment for laying out and styling your application, data access wizards for connecting to server-side data, memory and performance profilers, automated testing support and more.

For your next step, watch the video titled “Incorporating Flex into the client/server world”.